

NOVA COLLEGE-WIDE COURSE CONTENT SUMMARY LGL 217 - TRIAL PRACTICE AND LAW EVIDENCE (3 CR.)

Course Description

Introduces civil and criminal evidence, including kinds, degrees, and admissibility of evidence. Studies methods and techniques of evidence acquisition. Emphasizes Virginia and federal rules of evidence. Focuses on the elements and various problems associated with the trial of a civil or criminal case. Lecture 3 hours per week.

General Course Purpose

This course is designed to acquaint the student with the rules of civil and criminal procedure, with the stages of civil and criminal trials, and with the pleadings and other documents used in litigation. The course is further designed to familiarize the student with the types of evidence, the rules of admissibility, and the steps necessary to prepare and present evidence.

Course Prerequisites/Corequisites

Although there are no prerequisites for this course, proficiency (at the high school level) in spoken and written English is recommended for its successful completion.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- understand the differences between criminal and civil proceedings, and be familiar with the steps of criminal and civil trials
- understand the methods and purposes of pretrial discovery and pretrial motions, and be familiar with the documents used in each stage of litigation
- understand the types and admissibility of evidence, and be familiar with the techniques used to preserve and present evidence
- understand the role of the legal assistant in preparing for and assisting during trials, and assist a lawyer in every stage of litigation

Major Topics to Be Included

- change civil vs. criminal to civil v. criminal
- causes of action, remedies and defenses
- subject matter and personal jurisdiction
- pleadings and service of process
- third party practice
- pretrial discovery
- settlement negotiations and settlement agreements
- jury rights and jury selection
- steps of a trial
- posttrial appeals
- types of evidence
- relevance
- admissibility
- hearsay and hearsay exceptions
- competency of expert and fact witnesses
- impeachment
- real and scientific evidence
- chains of custody and foundations

Extra Topics Which May Be Included

- alternative methods of dispute resolution
- proposals for litigation reform