



RANGER COLLEGE  
STEPHENVILLE, TEXAS

COURSE SYLLABUS

**Fundamentals of Criminal Law**

**CRIJ 1320**

**3 credit hours**

**INSTRUCTOR:**

**Jesus Hernandez**

Instructor: Jesus (Jesse) Hernandez  
E-mail: Jhernandez@ranger.edu  
Office Hours: By Appointment  
Telephone: 817-798-4007  
Office: Tuesday/Thursday 11:00-12:15

## **I. Texas Core Curriculum Statement of Purpose**

Through the Texas Core Curriculum, students will gain a foundational knowledge of the development of the system of criminal law in the United States, its historical basis on English Common Law and other ancient codes, develop an understanding of how the criminal governs behavior and personal interactions in our society, and the elements that must be present in order for a specific crime to have occurred..

## **II. Course Description:**

The course is the study of the nature of law. Topics include philosophical and historical development, major definitions and concepts, classification of crime, elements of a crime, and penalties and individual criminal responsibilities.

## **III. Required Background or Prerequisite**

There are no prerequisites for this course, but a strong ability to read and a desire to learn about our system of laws will prove extremely helpful.

## **IV. Required textbook and Course Material**

**Schmallegger, F.J. and Hall, D. E.(2017). *Criminal Law Today* (6th ed). Upper Boston, MA: Pearson. ISBN #9780134163734**

## **V. Course Purpose**

The purpose of this course is to provide students with a better understanding of our system of criminal law and its application. In today's "soundbite" where so many receive their information via social media, much misinformation is accepted as fact. This course will dispel myths about the application of law and provide students with the knowledge to effectively analyze the process and outcomes of criminal cases they hear about in the news or via social media outlets.

## **VI. Learning Outcomes**

Criminal law is the most serious approach used by society to control human behavior. As citizens grow increasingly fearful of becoming crime victims, the call for “tougher” criminal laws gets louder. Knowledge of the strengths and limitations of criminal law is integral to an understanding of the criminal and the field of criminology. On completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Discuss the history of laws in the American Criminal Justice system as it relates from Common Law in England
- List the origins of criminal law
- Define mens rea and actus reus
- Identify the mens rea and actus reus of various crimes and case studies
- Be able to identify the specific elements of various types of crimes

## VII. Core Objectives

This course meets the following of the six Core Objectives established by Texas:

☒ **Critical Thinking Skills (CT)** – Creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis; evaluation and synthesis of information

☒ **Communication Skills (COM)** – effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication

**Empirical and Quantitative Skills (EQS)** – The manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions

**Teamwork (TW)** – The ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal

**Social Responsibility (SR)** – Intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities

**Personal Responsibility (PR)** – The ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making

## VIII. Methods of Instruction

This class includes lectures, assigned readings, discussion and PowerPoints.

## IX. Method of Assessment

- Quizzes (80 percent of total grade) (PR. SR)
- Final Exam (20 percent of total grade) (CT.COM, SR. PR) There will be a comprehensive in-class final exam focusing on 1) the technical terminology of the

material that we have studied throughout the semester, the historical influences on our system of criminal law, the elements of specific personal and property crimes.

Grading Scale:

Exam #1	100 pts.			
Exam #2	100 pts.			
Exam #3	100 pts.			
Exam #4	100 pts.			
Final exam	100 pts.			
Total	500 pts.			
A = 90-100%	B = 80-89	C = 70-79	D = 60-69	F = Below 60

**X. Course/Classroom Policies**

The following rules and guidelines about classroom behavior are to be memorized, internalized, and strictly adhered to. Failure to do so will negatively impact your experience of this class, not to mention your grade.

1. **Arrive on time.** Class begins promptly at the scheduled time. This means you should be in your seat and ready to begin.
2. **Always bring the assigned reading to class.** If there is an assigned reading on a given class day, class time will be devoted to discussing that reading. We will also read some things aloud together. In order for you to participate in close readings and discussions, it is imperative that you have in hand all of the assigned texts for each day, including printouts (preferably annotated by you) of any texts provided electronically.
3. **Come to class prepared.** You are expected to participate in class discussions and come to class meetings having completed all assigned readings and written work.
4. **Turn in assignments on time.** By accepting this syllabus, you agree to accept a score of zero on any late work.
5. **Don't cheat.** Any assignment reflecting cheating, plagiarism, or any other form of academic dishonesty will receive a grade of zero. A second instance will result in automatic failure of the class and a report being filed with Ranger College's Vice President of Instruction. The consequences of this report can be quite severe for your academic future. For more details, see the section of the Ranger College Catalog (available at [www.rangercollege.edu/catalog.pdf](http://www.rangercollege.edu/catalog.pdf)), titled "Student Misconduct," subsection "Academic Dishonesty."
6. **Six absences = Dropped from class with a failing grade.** I expect you to attend class regularly. As per Ranger College's stated absence policy in the general college catalog (see pages 25-26 at <http://rangercollege.edu/catalog.pdf>), the only absences that will be excused are "official" ones, defined as those that occur due to authorized Ranger College activities (such as sporting events). Unofficial absences are counted

from the first day of class as listed in the College Calendar, regardless of the date of your registration.

7. **Email:** I am happy to communicate with you by email and will do my best to respond within 24 hours during the week. Messages sent over the weekend will be read on Mondays. In the subject line of any email that you send me, please indicate the content of the email.

### XI. Course Outline/Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading to Complete	Assignment Due
January 22/24	Syllabus/ Nature and History of Crime	Chapter 1	
January 29/31	Criminal Liability and the essence of crime	Chapter 2	
February 5/7	Principles of criminality, causation, parties to crimes	Chapter 3	
February 12/14		Chapter 4	<a href="#">Exam 1 February 14</a>
February 19/21	Types of defenses	Chapter 5	
February 26/28	Excuses and insanity	Chapter 6	
March 5/7	Crimes against the person: Homicide/ Assault	Chapter 7	Review self - defense/Start on Assault
March 12/14	Spring Break	No Classes	
March 19/21	Crimes Against Persons, sex offenses and other crimes	Chapter 8	
March 26/28	Property and computer crimes	Chapter 9	<a href="#">Exam #2 March 28</a>
April 2/3	Offenses against public order/	Chapter 10	
April 9/10	Offenses against public morality	Chapter 11	
April 16/18	Terrorism and	Chapter 12	<a href="#">Exam 3 April 18</a>

	human trafficking		
April 23/25	Victims and the law	Chapter 13	
April 30/May 2	Punishment and sentencing	Chapter 14	<a href="#">Exam #4 May 2</a>
TBD	<a href="#">May 7</a>		Final Exam

## **XII. Non-Discrimination Statement**

Admissions, employment, and program policies of Ranger College are nondiscriminatory in regard to race, creed, color, sex, age, disability, and national origin.

## **XIII. ADA Statement**

Ranger College provides a variety of services for students with learning and/or physical disabilities. Students are responsible for making initial contact with the Ranger College Counselor, Gabe Lewis ([glewis@rangercollege.edu](mailto:glewis@rangercollege.edu)). It is advisable to make this contact before or immediately after the semester begins.