



AJ-103: CRIMINAL EVIDENCE

Effective Term

Fall 2026

BOT Approval Date

03/20/2025

Discipline

AJ - Administration of Justice

Course Number

103

Course Title

Criminal Evidence

Short Title

Criminal Evidence

Credit Status (CB 04)

D - Credit - Degree applicable

Units**Lecture Units**

3.00

Total Units

3.00

Hours**Lecture Contact Hours**

48-54

Out of Class Hours Lecture

96-108

Total Contact Hours

48 - 54

Total Out of Class Hours

96 - 108

Total Student Learning Hours

144 - 162

Distance Education

Yes

Distance Education**Distance Education Type**

Both Fully Online and Hybrid Online

Fully Online Delivery Requirements:

- a. Students must be notified via the college schedule of classes and the syllabus for the class if proctored tests are required for this course
- b. Any planned face-to-face meetings, such as an orientation or study session, must be optional

c. The MSJC curriculum committee requires the use of accessible, asynchronous discussion as a component of every fully online course

Are you using publisher content?

No

Regular Substantive Interaction

Instructor-to-student, student-to-student, and student-to-content contact shall be distributed in a manner that will ensure regular substantive interaction (RSI) is maintained not only weekly but also for the duration of the course. Instructor interactions should be equivalent in time, quality and consistency to the engagement students would receive in a face-to-face course—for example, through announcements, discussion participation, personalized feedback, video messages, or other instructional communications. Instructors are expected to be responsive to student inquiries within a 24-72 hour time frame excluding holidays. RSI will be maintained through a variety of methods:

- Orientation - Students must be oriented to the online and face-to-face portions at the start of the course.
- Announcements - Announcements using the course management system must be posted at least weekly to keep students current on course events, due dates, materials, etc.
- Discussion Forums - Content-related discussion forums within the designated CMS will include appropriate instructor participation and will be initiated and maintained, with timely feedback provided. Instructors are required to monitor the discussions and related activities to provide guidance and direction. Open-ended discussion boards may be used to further learning and interaction.
- MSJC Communication – Instructor will use MSJC-administered communication tools (such as email or the designated CMS communication tools) to regularly communicate with and provide ease of access to students.
- Timely Feedback - Timely feedback on student work will be provided by the instructor, which may include comments and/or rubrics, within the Grades area of the designated CMS.
- Scheduled Meetings – Hybrid and synchronous courses will meet at regularly scheduled times.

ADA Compliance - All course interactions and content must be designed with accessibility in mind and meet ADA requirements.

Additional Regular Substantive Interaction

These Face-to-Face meetings will take place in a designated classroom, on campus, and at a specific time, for at least five sessions. The remainder of the sessions may be conducted using teleconferencing. All contact methods will ensure ADA compliance and be accessible to students with specific needs.

C-ID (Admin Only)

C-ID AJ 124

Catalog Description

This course provides students with fundamental information about the rules governing the admissibility of evidence in criminal cases. The essential information includes an overview of the criminal trial process, the Federal Rules of evidence, witness competency, circumstantial evidence, physical evidence and the exclusionary rule. The identification, collection, preservation, and processing of evidence are also examined.

Requisites

Recommended Preparation

Recommended Preparation (note that students can enroll in the class even if they haven't take the recommended course)

ENGL-C1000.

Codes

TOP Code (CB 03)

2105.00* - *Administration of Justice

CIP Code

43.0107 - Criminal Justice/Police Science.

Repeatability Code

No

Grading Option

Letter grade OR P/NP

Minimum Qualifications

Minimum Qualifications	And/Or
Administration of Justice	End

Learning Objectives

Learning Objectives

Learning Objective
1. Classify and evaluate the various types of evidence usually found at a crime scene and appraise and select appropriate methods of collection.
2. Examine and assess the role of the judge and jury concerning the analysis of evidence presented in the courtroom.
3. Scrutinize the importance of the admissibility of evidence in the various court processes and evaluate each court proceeding regarding evidentiary issues in the adjudication process.
4. Distinguish and validate through critical analysis what constitutes relevant and admissible evidence in specific criminal investigations.
5. Survey and evaluate the types of scientific criminal evidence currently allowed in both Federal and State Courts.
6. Analyze and value the basic concepts of the admissibility of criminal evidence, the Fourth Amendment, and the accused right to the ethical application of due process.
7. Analyze and consider critical evidence-related topics such as the "Best Evidence Rule," or the U.S. Patriot Act as they apply to the admissibility of criminal evidence.
8. Analyze and understand the importance of developing communication skills to interact effectively with diverse populations with regard to race, gender identity, sexual orientation, and cultural differences within both the public and private sectors.

Learning Outcome Information

Course Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcome
1. Students will be able to examine the Constitutional Amendments known as the Bill of Rights and assess the impact of each might have on the criminal justice system.
2. Students will be able to document the proper procedure for the collection, packaging, and processing of evidence located at a crime scene.
3. Students will be able to analyze the adversarial process in the presentation of evidence in court considering the roles of the prosecutor, defense counsel, judge, and jury.
4. Students will be able to identify the historical and ethical developments of the rules of evidence.
5. Students will be able to compare and contrast the different rules of evidence in state and federal court
6. Students will be able to examine the Constitutional Amendments known as the Bill of Rights and assess the impact each might have on the admissibility or inadmissibility of evidence.
7. Students will demonstrate effective communication with diverse populations by analyzing the impact of race, gender identity, sexual orientation, and cultural differences, and presenting strategies for fostering inclusive dialogue in both public and private sectors.

Content

Course Lecture Content

1. **Introduction to Criminal Evidence**
 - a. Burden of Proof
 - b. The Judge and the Jury
 - c. The development of the law of evidence
 - d. The US Constitution
 - e. The US Supreme Court
 - f. State Constitutions and State Courts
 - g. State Judicial Systems
 - h. Precedent

- i. The development of due process
 - j. The 14th Amendment
 - i. The Due Process Clause
 - k. Fundamental Fairness-discuss if all races receive similar treatment during a trial
 - l. Total Incorporation
 - m. Selective Incorporation
 - n. Rule of Evidence
 - i. Federal Rules of Evidence
 - ii. Uniform Rules of Evidence
 - iii. State Rules of Evidence
2. **The Criminal Justice Process**
- a. The criminal complaint-speak to racial disparity in the judicial system
 - b. First appearance
 - c. Preliminary hearing
 - d. Grand jury
 - e. Arraignment-address racial disparity in the bail procedures
 - f. Suppression hearings and pretrial motions
 - g. Discovery
 - h. Plea bargaining
 - i. Jury selection-discuss the makeup of real life juries, do they really represent a jury of peers?
 - j. The trial
 - i. Opening statements
 - ii. Prosecution's case-in-chief
 - iii. The Contemporaneous Objection Rule
 - iv. Cross-examination
 - v. Defense's case-in-chief
 - vi. Prosecution's rebuttal and defendant's rebuttal
 - vii. Closing arguments
 - viii. Jury instructions
 - ix. Jury deliberations
 - x. Jury unanimity
 - xi. verdict
 - k. The judicial sentencing process-discuss if all races receive impartial sentences
 - l. Sentencing guidelines and the role of the jury in sentencing
 - m. Criminal appeals
 - n. *Habeas Corpus*
3. **Types of Evidence**
- a. Relevance
 - b. Competence
 - c. Exclusion of relevant evidence base on prejudice and other concerns
 - i. Prejudicial, misleading, and confusing evidence
 - ii. Other grounds for excluding evidence under Rule 403
 - d. Direct and circumstantial evidence
 - e. Testimonial and real evidence
 - f. Substitutes for evidence
 - g. Judicial notice
 - i. Adjudicative facts
 - ii. Indisputable facts
 - iii. Common knowledge
 - iv. Matters capable of accurate determination
 - v. Personal knowledge of the judge
 - vi. Procedure
 - h. Presumptions
 - i. Conclusive and rebuttable presumptions
 - ii. Presumptions and social policy

- i. Presumptions and criminal law
 - i. Mandatory presumptions and criminal law
 - ii. Rebuttable presumptions and criminal law

4. **Direct and Circumstantial Evidence**

- a. Jury decision-making
- b. Circumstantial evidence of ability to commit the crime
 - i. Specialized skill
 - ii. Means to commit the crime
 - iii. Physical capacity
 - iv. Mental capacity
- c. Circumstantial evidence of an inference of consciousness of guilt and of guilt
 - i. Flight
 - ii. Concealing evidence
 - iii. Offers to plead guilty
 - iv. Possession of stolen property
 - v. Sudden wealth
- d. Circumstantial evidence that an individual is the victim of rape
- e. Character evidence
 - i. Character and public policy
 - ii. Character as an essential element of a crime
 - iii. Victim's character in a criminal case
 - iv. Victim's character in a homicide case
 - v. Character and habit
- f. Other acts evidence
- g. Other acts evidence and circumstantial evidence of identity
 - i. *Modus Operandi*
- h. Other acts evidence and circumstantial evidence of intent
 - i. Intent
 - ii. Knowledge
 - iii. Motive
 - iv. Threats
 - v. Opportunity
 - vi. Act not performed inadvertently, accidentally, involuntarily, or without guilty knowledge
 - vii. Prior false claims
 - viii. Plan
 - ix. Preparation

5. **Witnesses**

- a. Introduction
 - i. Oath or affirmation
 - ii. Personal knowledge
- b. Mental capacity
- c. Narration
- d. Competency hearings
- e. Hypnosis
- f. Child testimony
- g. Judges as witnesses
- h. Jurors as witnesses
- i. Spousal competence
- j. Religion
 - i. Criminal convictions
- k. Mental incapacity
 - i. Impeachment
- m. Bias
- n. Prior felony convictions

- i. Felony convictions to impeach nonparty witness
 - ii. Felony convictions to impeach defendant witness
 - o. Crimes involving a dishonest act or false statement
 - i. Time limits
 - ii. Pardons, annulments, and certificates of rehabilitation
 - iii. Juvenile adjudications
 - iv. Appeals
 - p. Character for truthfulness
 - q. Uncharged crimes and immoral acts
 - r. Prior inconsistent statements
 - s. Specific contradiction
 - t. Physical and psychological incapacity
 - u. Rehabilitation
 - v. Corroboration
 - w. Recorded recollection
 - i. Present recollection refreshed
 - ii. Past recollection refreshed
- 6. **Crime scene evidence and experiments**
 - a. Crime scene evidence
 - b. Chain of custody
 - c. Scientific evidence
 - d. Laying the foundation for scientific evidence
 - e. Right to defense experts
 - f. Judicially accepted scientific tests
 - i. Fingerprints
 - ii. Blood alcohol
 - iii. Blood typing
 - iv. DNA
 - v. Analysis of controlled substances
 - vi. ballistics
 - g. Other judicially recognized tests
 - h. Tests not accepted by the courts
 - i. Polygraph
 - i. Experiments
- 7. **Documentary Evidence, Models, Maps, and Diagrams**
 - a. Authentication of documents
 - b. Methods of authenticating documents
 - c. Self-authenticating documents
 - i. Government documents
 - d. Visual images
 - i. Authentication of photographs and videos
 - ii. Authentication of medical images
 - e. Authentication of objects
 - f. Authentication of voice communication
 - g. The Best Evidence Rule
 - h. Application of the Best Evidence Rule
 - i. Models, Maps, Diagrams, and Charts
 - j. In-Court exhibition
- 8. **Hearsay**
 - a. The development of the rule against hearsay
 - b. The definition of hearsay
 - c. The reasons for the Hearsay Rule
 - d. Hearsay objections
 - e. The 6th Amendment and hearsay
 - f. Exceptions to the Hearsay Rule

- g. Admissions and confessions
 - i. Admissions by a Party
 - ii. Adoptive Admissions
 - iii. Authorized Admissions
 - iv. Admissions by an Agent
 - v. Admissions by a Co-Conspirator
 - h. Prior statements
 - i. Prior Inconsistent Statements
 - ii. Prior Consistent Statements
 - iii. Identifications
 - i. Hearsay Exceptions when Declarant is Not required to be available
 - j. Present sense impression
 - k. Excited utterance
 - l. Then-Existing Mental, Emotional, or Physical Condition
 - m. Medical Treatment-Diagnosis
 - n. Business records
 - o. Absence of business records
 - p. Public records
 - q. Vital statistics
 - r. Unavailability of Declarant
 - s. Former testimony
 - t. Statement under belief of impending death
 - u. Declaration against interest
 - v. Statement of personal or family history
 - w. Statement offered against a party that wrongfully caused the Declarant's unavailability
 - x. Residual exception
 - y. Hearsay within hearsay
9. **Privileges**
- a. Attorney-client privilege
 - i. Holder of the privilege
 - ii. Scope of the privilege
 - iii. Exceptions
 - b. Clergy-penitent privilege
 - i. Holder of the privilege
 - ii. Definition of clergy
 - iii. Scope of the privilege
 - iv. Confidentiality
 - v. Exceptions
 - vi. Waiver
 - c. Physician-patient privilege
 - d. Psychotherapist-patient privilege
 - e. Husband-wife privilege
 - i. Marital communications privilege
 - ii. Marital testimony privilege
 - f. Government privileges
 - i. Executive privilege
 - ii. State secrets privilege
 - iii. Official information privilege
 - iv. Confidential informant's privilege
 - v. Grand Jury privilege
 - g. News media privilege
10. **The Exclusionary Rule**

- a. The Exclusionary Rule
 - i. The Exclusionary Rule and Federal Courts
 - ii. The Exclusionary Rule and State Courts
 - iii. The Extension of the Exclusionary Rule to State Courts
- b. Debating the Exclusionary Rule
 - i. The justification for the Exclusionary Rule
 - ii. Arguments against the Exclusionary Rule
 - iii. Discuss *Mapp v. Ohio*-equitable justice
 - iv. Alternative remedies to the Exclusionary Rule
- c. Invoking the Exclusionary Rule
 - i. Standing
 - ii. Exceptions to the Exclusionary Rule
 - iii. Collateral Proceedings
 - iv. Attenuation
 - v. Good Faith Exception
 - vi. Independent Source
 - vii. Inevitable Discovery Rule
 - viii. Impeachment
- 11. **Searches and Seizures and Privacy**
 - a. The historical background of the 4th Amendment
 - b. Searches
 - i. Expectation of privacy
 - c. Informants and electronic eavesdropping
 - d. Plain View
 - e. Expectation of privacy
 - f. Open Fields
 - g. Curtilage and aerial surveillance
 - h. Technology and searches and seizures
 - i. Public places and private businesses
 - j. Abandoned property
 - k. Seizures of persons
- 12. **Stop and Frisk**
 - a. Reasonable suspicion
 - i. The Balancing Test
 - ii. Reasonable suspicion and *Terry v. Ohio*
 - iii. The reasonable suspicion determination
 - iv. Facts constituting reasonable suspicion
 - b. Informants and hearsay
 - c. Drug courier profiles
 - d. Race and reasonable suspicion
 - i. Equitable selection of searches
 - e. The scope and duration of *Terry* stops
 - i. Movement
 - ii. Length of detention
 - iii. Intrusiveness
 - f. Stop-and-Identify Statutes
 - i. Automobiles and *Terry* stops
 - g. Frisks
 - i. The *Terry* Standard
 - ii. *Terry* searches of passengers in automobiles
 - iii. *Terry* searches of automobiles
 - iv. *Terry* searches for illegal narcotics
- 13. **Probable Cause and Arrests**
 - a. Arrests
 - b. Probable Cause

- i. Direct observations
 - ii. Hearsay
 - iii. The *Aguilar-Spinelli* Test
 - iv. Totality of the Circumstances
- c. Reasonableness and Arrests
 - i. Equitable judicial process of arrests
- d. Probable Causes, Warrants, and the Courts
- e. Arrests and Warrants
 - i. *Arrests in the home*
 - ii. *Exigent circumstances*
 - iii. *Deadly force (lethal) and arrests*
 - iv. *Non-deadly (less than lethal) force*
 - v. *Misdemeanor arrests and citations*
- 14. **Searches and Seizures of Property**
 - a. Search warrants
 - i. *Knock and announce*
 - b. Warrantless searches
 - i. Searches incident to an arrest
 - ii. Searches incident to an arrest and the contemporaneous requirement
 - iii. Searches of the area of immediate control and automobiles
 - iv. Misdemeanors and searches incident to an arrest
 - v. Pretext arrests and searches incident to an arrest
 - c. Consent searches
 - i. The scope of a consent search
 - ii. Withdrawal of consent
 - iii. Third-party consent
 - d. Probable cause searches of motor vehicles
 - i. Probable cause searches of containers in automobiles
 - e. Other warrantless searches
 - i. Inventories
 - ii. Administrative inspections
 - iii. Special-needs searches
- 15. **Interrogations and Confessions**
 - a. Interrogations
 - b. Three Constitutional limitations on police interrogations
 - c. Due process
 - i. The *Voluntariness Test*
 - ii. Voluntariness
 - iii. The *Due Process Test* today
 - iv. Fair and equitable, diverse application of due process
 - d. The right against self-incrimination
 - e. *Miranda v. Arizona*
 - i. *Miranda and the Constitution*
 - ii. *Custodial interrogation*
 - iii. *The public safety exception*
 - iv. *The Miranda Warning*
 - v. *Invoking the Miranda Rights*
 - vi. *Waiver*
 - vii. *Waiver: Question first and warn later*
 - viii. *Waiver following invocation of the Miranda Rights*
 - ix. *Interrogation*
 - f. *Sixth Amendment right to counsel*
 - i. *Police interrogations*
- 16. **Eyewitness Identification**

- a. The psychology of identification
 - i. Perception
 - ii. Memory
 - iii. Identifications
- b. The Sixth Amendment and eyewitness identifications
- c. The Sixth Amendment and critical stages of criminal prosecution
 - i. The threat of suggestive lineups
 - ii. The role of the defense attorney
 - iii. Tainted lineups and courtroom identification
- d. The Sixth Amendment and prearrest identifications
- e. The Sixth Amendment and photographic displays
- f. The *Due Process* test
- g. Suggestiveness, reliability, and the totality of the circumstances
 - i. The *Due Process* test and suggestiveness
- h. The requirement of police involvement

Methods of Instruction

Method

Discussion

Integration

Group discussions which examine and evaluate selected topics regarding the admissibility of evidence to include: direct and circumstantial evidence, testimonial and real evidence, and various applicable case laws (i.e. *Terry v. Ohio*, 392 U.S. 1; *Weeks v. United States*, 232 U.S. 383; and *Chimel v. California*, 395 U.S. 752).

Group discussions in this course will focus on the critical examination and evaluation of selected topics related to the admissibility of evidence in criminal cases. These discussions will delve into the distinctions between different types of evidence, such as direct and circumstantial evidence, as well as testimonial and real evidence, providing students with a comprehensive understanding of how each type is utilized in the legal system.

DE Adaptations for MOI

Class participation in discussions will encourage additional comprehension of the course material, specifically, laws and U.S. Supreme Court cases. The discussions will allow students to examine case laws and evaluate the constitutionality of these laws as they relate to criminal evidence. This will be accomplished through regular use of the discussion boards in CMS, or through the chat, conversation, or group features.

In the online learning environment, students will engage in discussions through the CMS to critically analyze the admissibility of evidence and evaluate key U.S. Supreme Court cases, such as *Terry v. Ohio*, *Weeks v. United States*, and *Chimel v. California*. These discussions will also incorporate principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion, encouraging reflection on the impact of legal decisions on diverse communities. Participation will enhance students' understanding of legal concepts, develop their critical thinking skills, and foster the ability to apply course material to real-world scenarios.

All accessibility requirements will be met to ensure that all students, including those with disabilities, have equitable access to participate in discussions and fully engage with course content.

Method

Homework

Integration

Student participation in homework assignments will enhance comprehension of course material, specifically focusing on laws and U.S. Supreme Court cases relevant to criminal evidence. Through this activity, students will critically examine and assess the admissibility of evidence and apply these concepts by analyzing what constitutes relevant and admissible evidence in specific criminal investigations. The homework will also encourage students to evaluate constitutional issues related to criminal evidence, including the Fourth Amendment and due process. This will be accomplished through regular use of the discussion boards in CMS, or through the chat, conversation, or group features.

DE Adaptations for MOI

Students will be required to answer short essay questions at the end of each chapter in the assigned textbook. Class participation in discussions will encourage additional comprehension of the course material, specifically, The Federal Rules of Evidence and U.S. Supreme Court cases. This will be accomplished through regular use of the discussion boards in CMS, or through the chat, conversation, or group features. All accessibility requirements will be met to ensure that all students, including those with disabilities, have equitable access to participate in discussions and fully engage with course content.

Method

Lecture

Integration

Presentation of course material with the assistance of hand-outs, audio/video, PowerPoint and props in order to illustrate the importance of the preliminary crime scene investigation, follow-up investigations, identification and preservation of evidence, and the completion of accurate reports documenting legal seizure of evidence.

Lectures in this course will be designed to enhance the learning experience by covering a wide range of critical topics related to criminal evidence, while also integrating principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Through a combination of multimedia tools, including handouts, audio and video resources, slide presentations, and props, lectures will explore the key aspects of preliminary crime scene investigations, follow-up investigations, and the identification and preservation of evidence. The importance of producing accurate reports to document the legal seizure of evidence will be emphasized throughout the course.

Additionally, lectures will address current local, national, and global legal proceedings, focusing on how evidence is presented in trials and its influence on case outcomes, while considering the impact of cultural diversity and systemic inequities within the justice system. Key legal topics such as due process, plea bargaining, the trial process, the exclusionary rule, and distinctions between direct and circumstantial evidence will be discussed in detail. By integrating DEI principles, these lectures will ensure students understand not only the legal framework surrounding criminal evidence but also how factors like race, gender, and socioeconomic status can influence the handling and interpretation of evidence in real-world scenarios.

DE Adaptations for MOI

Lectures using video, audio, and PowerPoint, will expose students to various aspects of evidence to include identification, collection, processing and admissibility in court. The lectures will be posted using the CMS platform for distance education and accessed through the assignment area or other conferencing tools.

All audio and video materials will be closed captioned to ensure accessibility and compliance with ADA requirements, creating an inclusive learning environment. By combining diverse resources with direct instruction, students will develop a comprehensive understanding of criminal investigations and the importance of meticulous documentation in legal contexts. Lectures will be accessible through the CMS platform, allowing students to view them at their convenience and engage with the material via various conferencing tools. This approach supports diverse learning styles and fosters an interactive, flexible online learning environment, enabling students to grasp the complexities of evidence and its role within the legal framework.

Method

Papers and Reports

Integration

Students will be required to research and complete a written case brief on a U.S. Supreme Court case relating to the admissibility of evidence (i.e. *Carpenter v. United States* 585 U.S. (2018); *Maryland v. King* 569 U.S. 435 (2013)). Students grades will be posted in the CMS along with instructor feedback.

Students in this course will receive instruction on how to prepare a variety of written assignments, including reflection papers and a midterm assignment. The reflection papers will allow students to critically engage with key course concepts and prepare them for the midterm assignment. While the midterm assignment will focus on pivotal topics such as search and seizure, the Fourth Amendment, stop and frisk, and probable cause. These assignments will challenge students to apply legal principles, analyze case law, and demonstrate their understanding of how constitutional protections influence criminal investigations and evidence collection. The writing tasks are designed to develop strong analytical and communication skills, essential for success in the field of criminal justice.

DE Adaptations for MOI

During this course students will complete a research paper from selected U.S. Supreme Court cases that play a major role in the investigative process; specifically, searching a person's residence for evidence to a crime at the scene of a homicide. Research papers will be uploaded into the CMS to allow for grading and feedback by the course instructor.

For online students, participation in these writing assignments will take place through the course management system (CMS). Students will submit their reflection papers and midterm assignment via the designated assignment submission areas. These assignments will be structured to meet accessibility requirements, ensuring that all students, including those with disabilities, can fully engage with the material.

The instructor will provide detailed feedback within two weeks of submission, delivered through the CMS. This will include personalized comments and suggestions for improvement, fostering a continuous learning experience. By using a rubric and providing timely feedback, the course ensures that all students, regardless of their learning environment, can effectively engage with and improve their writing and analytical skills.

Method

Role Playing/Simulation

Integration

Students will participate in the investigation of a mock crime scene in order to identify the type of crime (Penal Code Section), as well as the interpretation and identification of evidence, and selection of the process for collection. The student will also be exposed to the process of interviewing witnesses and the interrogation of suspects involved in the mock crime scenario. The student will also identify any Fourth and Fifth Amendment issues concerning the discovery and collection of evidence and subsequent interrogation of suspects during the investigation.

DE Adaptations for MOI

Class participation in discussions will enhance comprehension of course material, specifically focusing on laws and U.S. Supreme Court cases relevant to criminal evidence. Online students will have the ability to fully participate using teleconferencing tools available within the CMS, allowing them to engage in real-time discussions, ask questions, and collaborate with classmates. These tools will support live interaction and group activities, mirroring the in-person experience as closely as possible. All accessibility requirements will be met, ensuring that all students, regardless of disability or location, have equitable access to participate in discussions, view content, and engage with course materials seamlessly.

Methods of Evaluation

Method

Exams/Tests

Integration

Exams and quizzes on class lecture, textbook reading assignments, and case laws to assess the student's retention of course material. Exams and quizzes will consist of true/false, multiple choice, or short essay questions. Exams will cover student understanding of terminology, knowledge of the subject, criminal statutes, ability to evaluate evidence, admissibility of evidence concerns, and any other legal issues involved in the collection and presentation of evidence in court.

DE Adaptations for MOE

In the fully online format, exams and/or tests will be administered, graded, and assessed entirely through the course management system (CMS). These assessments will focus on students' ability to identify, understand, and apply major topics outlined in the course content, aligning closely with the specified learning objectives.

To ensure fairness and accessibility for all students, exams will be designed with a variety of question types, including true or false, multiple choice, fill-in-the-blanks, and short answer questions. This diverse format provides an equitable opportunity for students to demonstrate their understanding and mastery of the material.

Upon completion, exams will be submitted to the online grading system within the CMS. They will be evaluated based on accuracy and completeness, and students can expect to receive feedback within two weeks. This feedback will be provided through the grade book, chat function, or other accessible conferencing tools, facilitating ongoing support and engagement with course content.

Method

Homework

Integration

Students will complete selected essay questions at the end of each chapter in the assigned textbook to gauge their understanding of critical concepts in criminal evidence. Through these essays, students will demonstrate their ability to classify and evaluate types of evidence, select appropriate methods for evidence collection, and assess the admissibility of evidence in court proceedings. Responses should reflect a thorough understanding of the role of the judge and jury in the analysis of evidence, as well as an ability to distinguish and analyze relevant and admissible evidence in specific investigations. Essays will be evaluated on their accuracy, completeness, and clear relationship to course material, ensuring students engage deeply with evidence-related topics.

DE Adaptations for MOE

Online students will be required to respond to short essay questions located at the end of each chapter in the assigned textbook to reinforce lecture material. This will be facilitated through regular use of the discussion boards in the CMS, along with chat, conversation, or group features, enabling interactive and flexible engagement with course content. Instructor feedback will be provided within two weeks to support learning and improvement. All materials and activities will meet accessibility requirements, ensuring that all students have equitable access to fully participate and engage in the online environment.

Method

Research Projects

Integration

Students will be required to research and complete a written case brief on a selected U.S. Supreme Court case relating to the admissibility of evidence. Example topic: What are the legal issues surrounding the arrest and interview of a person per the *Miranda v. Arizona* 384 U.S. 436 case? The student will be evaluated on their ability to analyze and document the case in a logical sequence to include; facts of the case, decision of the court, and the rationale for the court's decision.

DE Adaptations for MOE

Students will be required to submit a research paper on a current U.S. Supreme Court case regarding the admissibility of certain evidence or searching of private residences. The student will include in their analysis the ethical and constitutional issues and challenges. The student will submit these assignments by uploading them into the assignments area within the CMS for grading and feedback by the instructor. Feedback will be provided within 2-weeks and all accessibility requirements will be met.

Method

Simulation

Integration

Student will review a mock crime scene in order to identify evidence located at the scene. Student will be evaluated on recognition of the type of evidence and the legally accepted process for evidence collection and preservation. The Student will also be evaluated on recognition of any Fourth or Fifth Amendment issues regarding the evidence collection.

DE Adaptations for MOE

Students will review a virtual mock crime scene in order to identify evidence located at the scene. Evaluation will be based on recognition of the type of evidence and the legally accepted process for evidence collection and preservation. The Student will also discuss any Fourth or Fifth Amendment issues regarding the evidence collection. The student will submit a written report documenting the crime scene and all investigative action taken by the student in processing the crime scene. The simulation will be accessed through the assignments area in CMS and submitted in this same manner for critique and evaluation by the instructor. Instructor feedback will be provided within 2 weeks and all accessibility requirements will be met.

Assignments**Assignment Type**

Writing

In-class and/or outside of class

In-class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Formative

Assignment

Write a reflective research paper consisting of approximately 1,000 to 1,200 words, detailing your experience in the class thus far. The first Reflection assignment should address the topics discussed in the first few weeks of the semester, which include an overview of the criminal justice process, types of evidence, trial process (your experiences, if any), and witness testimony. This paper serves as an opportunity for you to reflect on the topics discussed and showcase your understanding of the subject matter. Utilize the course content as a foundation for your reflections, demonstrating your comprehension of the material covered.

Guidelines:

1. Reflect on the topics covered in the course up to this point.
2. Provide insights into your personal experiences and observations related to the course material.
3. Discuss any challenges faced and how you overcame them. (Speak to any personal experiences you may have encountered. Did you receive fair and impartial treatment?)
4. Offer critical analysis and evaluation of key concepts (collection of evidence) introduced in the course.
5. Support your reflections with references to specific examples or evidence from the course content.
6. Ensure clarity, coherence, and organization in your writing.

Your take aways:

- Demonstrate your deeper understanding of the subject matter through reflection and analysis.
- Apply course concepts to your personal experiences and observations.
- Showcase your critical thinking skills in evaluating and synthesizing course material.
- Strengthen your writing skills by effectively communicating ideas and insights.

Submission: Upload your research paper to the designated area in the course management system (CMS) by the specified deadline. Be sure to adhere to formatting and citation guidelines as outlined in the course syllabus.

How assignment will be adapted in online format

This assignment will be administered, submitted, and assessed entirely through the course management system (CMS) to accommodate online learning. All course materials, including assignment instructions, supplementary resources, website links, etc., will be made accessible to students via the CMS.

Students will submit their assignments through the CMS, and instructors will provide feedback within two weeks of submission.

Feedback will be delivered through the grade book function, and messaging, within the CMS.

It is imperative that all course materials and communications adhere to accessibility guidelines to ensure inclusivity for all students.

Assignment Type

Reading

In-class and/or outside of class

In-class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Formative

Assignment

Read and analyze the section of the text that explores the types of evidence. This reading covers the collection of evidence and the various types of evidence including direct, circumstantial, testimonial, real, substitutes for evidence, and stipulations. After reading this section of your textbook you should have a better understanding of how these types of evidence are introduced into a trial and they may be excluded from a trial.

Following the reading, either individually or in small groups, prepare to discuss the collection of evidence at a crime scene, how the evidence is handled by the person collecting it, how the chain of evidence is maintained, and how the evidence is presented at trial.

Additional discussion points may include:

- Grounds for exclusion of evidence
- Indisputable facts
- Common knowledge
- Conclusive and Rebuttable Presumptions

Guidelines:

- Thoroughly read and analyze the assigned section of the chapter types of evidence.
- Work as an individual or in a group to discuss the collection and presentation of evidence in a trial.
- Provide insightful contributions, supported by evidence from the reading and additional research if necessary.

- Engage in meaningful dialogue with peers, fostering critical thinking and exploration of key concepts.
- Respectfully consider differing perspectives and viewpoints during discussions.

Submission: Participate in a group or as instructed and be prepared to discuss and present your findings and engage in active discussion, presenting depth of your analysis, and adherence to discussion guidelines. Your contributions should demonstrate a synthesis of course material and critical thinking skills.

How assignment will be adapted in online format

The reading assignment and subsequent discussions will be assigned, submitted, and graded through the course management system (CMS). Online courses should make course material, including assignment instructions, supplemental resources, website links, etc., available to students through the CMS. Students will submit the assignment through the CMS and will be provided with instructor feedback through the grade book function, or messaging using the CMS, within 2 weeks of submission. Any material for students and communications must meet accessibility guidelines.

Assignment Type

Writing

In-class and/or outside of class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Summative

Assignment

Write a research paper consisting of approximately 1,200 to 1,500 words (about 5-pages, not including the title or reference page), discussing searches and seizures, the 4th Amendment, (Mapp v. Ohio-equitable justice), stop and frisk, Terry Stops (cover reasonable suspicion), and probable cause. The assignment should address the topics as outlined, demonstrate your knowledge of each, and reflect an understanding of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) principles where applicable. The assignment should address the topics as outlined and demonstrate your knowledge of each. This paper serves as an opportunity for you to research the topics and showcase your understanding of the subject matter. Utilize the course content as a foundation, demonstrating your comprehension of the course material.

Guidelines:

1. Review and research the noted topics.
2. Provide insights into your personal experiences, knowledge, and observations related to the subject matter.
3. Ensure you cover each topic in detail and comprehensively. You may choose to include any challenges you faced and how you overcame them. (Speak to any personal experiences you may have encountered. Did you receive fair and impartial treatment?)
4. Offer critical analysis and evaluation of key concepts (Search, seizure, etc.) introduced in the course.
5. Support your research with references to specific citations from the course content or other reputable sources.
6. Ensure clarity, coherence, and organization in your writing.

Your take aways:

- Demonstrate your deeper understanding of the subject matter through research and analysis.
- Apply course concepts to your personal experiences and observations (where appropriate).
- Showcase your critical thinking skills in evaluating and synthesizing course material.
- Strengthen your writing skills by effectively communicating ideas and insights.

Submission: Upload your research paper to the designated area in the course management system (CMS) by the specified deadline. Be sure to adhere to formatting and citation guidelines as outlined in the assignment instructions and the course syllabus.

How assignment will be adapted in online format

The research assignment will be assigned, submitted, and graded through the course management system (CMS). Online courses should make course material, including assignment instructions, supplemental resources, website links, etc., available to students through the CMS. Students will submit the assignment through the CMS and will be provided with instructor feedback through the grade book function, or messaging using the CMS, within 2 weeks of submission. Any material for students and communications must meet accessibility guidelines.

Course Materials

Textbooks

Walter P. Signorelli (2024), Criminal Law, Procedure, and Evidence, 2nd Edition, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, ISBN 9781032539096

Lippman, Matthew (2016). Criminal Evidence Sage Publishing . ISBN: 9781483359557
Worrall, J., Hemmers, C., Nored, L. (2017). Criminal Evidence: An Introduction 4th Oxford Press. ISBN: 9780190639280
Criminal Evidence First Edition, Robert Donley, Pearson Publishing (2019), ISBN # 978-0132899062.

Class Size Information

Class Size

40

Class Size Category

A - Lecture/discussion 40

Diversity and Inclusion

Course Design and Materials: Course will incorporate diverse perspectives, authors, and examples that reflect a variety of cultures, identities, and lived experiences. Instructional materials will be reviewed regularly to ensure representation, inclusivity, and alignment with equity-minded practices across disciplines.

Inclusive Learning Environment: Instructors will establish classroom norms and policies that promote respect, civil discourse, and belonging in both online and face-to-face classes. Clear expectations for communication and engagement will support a learning space where all students feel valued and heard.

Accessible Instruction: Course content will be delivered using accessible design. Materials will follow accessibility guidelines within the CMS, including captioned media, readable document formats, and multiple means of engagement to support diverse learning.

Equitable Teaching Practices: Instructors will use transparent and grading criteria, varied assessment methods, and timely feedback to promote fairness and student success. Opportunities for revision, reflection, and multiple demonstrations of learning may be incorporated when appropriate to the discipline.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogies: Instructional strategies will encourage critical thinking about diverse perspectives and systems of power relevant to the course content. Faculty will foster opportunities for students to connect course material to real-world contexts.

Ongoing Reflection and Improvement: Faculty will engage in continuous professional development related to IDEAA principles and reflect on course practices using metacognition to identify opportunities for increased equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Explain how diversity and inclusion(e.g., gender, culture/race, sexuality, etc.) is infused into the course.

The AJ 103 Criminal Evidence course incorporates a variety of methods to encourage and promote student-to-student interaction. Collaborative learning is emphasized throughout the course, offering multiple opportunities for students to engage with their peers, share perspectives, and deepen their understanding of the material. A student-to-student discussion board is provided to encourage student-to-student engagement with minimal interference from the instructor.

Group discussions serve as a key form of interaction and evaluation, allowing students to interpret course content together and ask questions. These discussions foster collaboration and amplify student voices, creating a space where ideas can be explored and refined through peer engagement.

In addition, group activities are an essential part of the curriculum, providing students with opportunities to work together on projects such as surveys on contentious topics, like the theoretical foundations of evidence or legal liabilities. These collaborative activities may include breakout rooms, small group discussions, and online discussion boards, help students build a sense of community and understand the value of teamwork in both online and in-person environments.

Students may also work in small groups to develop presentations from various theoretical perspectives. Whether in discussion forums, breakout rooms via accessible video-conferencing software, or in-class settings, these group projects allow students to apply course concepts collaboratively, engage in critical discussions, and refine their understanding. The goal of these interactions is to enhance fluency with the course material, foster a collaborative learning environment, and promote community building among students.

Describe how assignments, instruction, evaluation, course content, and interactions are contextualized for diverse learners promoting an equitable course.

The AJ 103 Criminal Evidence course fosters strong instructor-to-student interaction to support student learning and engagement. The instructor plays a pivotal role in presenting course material, clarifying concepts, and highlighting the connections between key

topics. Problem-solving techniques are demonstrated by the instructor to improve students' comprehension and application of the material.

The instructor also evaluates assignments using clear rubrics and provides timely, constructive feedback to help students progress. For example, during discussions on topics like evidence collection and interpretation, the instructor moderates the conversation, offering valuable insights and guiding critical discussions. These interactions help students develop critical thinking skills, encouraging them to incorporate sociohistorical and sociopolitical factors into their analyses.

Additionally, the instructor encourages students to connect course content with real-world scenarios, enhancing their understanding of how evidence plays a role in law enforcement and the justice system. Feedback is delivered through various channels, including accessible video conferencing software, the grading functionality of the course management system (CMS), or individual meetings. This personalized approach ensures students receive the support and guidance necessary for success throughout the course.

Interactions

Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-student interaction.

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Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-content interaction.

The AJ 103 Criminal Evidence course promotes student-to-content interaction through a variety of activities and instructional methods designed to enhance engagement and deepen understanding of the material. Students interact with the content via the course management system (CMS) discussion forums, breakout rooms in accessible video-conferencing software, and in-class discussions. These platforms allow students to critically apply legal principles, analyze outcomes of landmark decisions, and engage with real-world examples, including discussions of racial disparity, inequality in sentencing, and disparities in the bail system.

A range of instructional methods is used to present course content, including lectures, individual and group activities, visual and virtual demonstrations, and case studies. This diverse approach ensures students have multiple ways to engage with the material, whether through reading assignments, multimedia presentations, or hands-on activities.

For example, students may select and analyze a specific constitutional amendment, interpret its original intent, and explore its modern application in the legal system. Additionally, students are encouraged to examine topics such as racial disparity in criminal justice, unequal sentencing practices, and the inequities surrounding bail, fostering deeper discussions about fairness and justice in the system. Through these tasks, the instructor models how students can effectively engage with course content, fostering critical thinking, reflection, and the ability to recognize how legal concepts influence their everyday lives. This active interaction with the content ensures a comprehensive learning experience.

Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-self interaction (metacognitive).

The AJ 103 Criminal Evidence course emphasizes the development of metacognitive skills, encouraging students from diverse racial, cultural, and personal backgrounds to engage in self-reflection and critical thinking about how the course material relates to their own lives. Metacognition involves not only understanding the content but also becoming aware of one's own thought processes and strategies for learning.

Students are prompted to reflect on their recent experiences, especially those where they made data-driven decisions, allowing them to consider how the concepts learned in class can be applied to their personal and professional lives. This self-analysis helps deepen their understanding of the material, making it more relevant to their unique experiences and perspectives.

The course encourages flexible thinking and challenges students to consider diverse perspectives, particularly those connected to the judicial system. Students are asked to reflect on how their own cultural, social, and personal backgrounds influence their interpretations of legal concepts, while also exploring alternative viewpoints. This helps them critically examine their own biases, feelings, and thought processes.

Opportunities for self-reflection are regularly integrated into the course through weekly online discussion posts, written assignments, and in-class conversations. These activities not only reinforce learning but also give students the chance to assess their understanding, identify areas for growth, and recognize how their individual perspectives shape their engagement with the material.

The goal of this metacognitive approach is to empower students to become more self-aware learners, equipping them with strategies for critical thinking that extend beyond the classroom. By honing these skills, students are better prepared to navigate complex legal concepts and apply their learning in meaningful ways, both academically and professionally, while appreciating the diverse perspectives of their peers.

Key: 101