CRIMINAL LAW SYLLABUS: (Professor Steve Shannon)

Introduction

Criminal law is an introductory course covering basic, substantive criminal law. In this course, we will examine the theoretical underpinnings of the criminal law and punishment and methodologies for analyzing statutory and common law crimes and defenses to crimes. In this course, we will rely upon statutes, case law, and commentaries in our analysis of crimes such as homicide and rape, as well as inchoate crimes, attempted crimes and conspiracies to commit such crimes. We will spend considerable time reviewing the Model Penal Code through the semester.

Criminal law is an intriguing subject that constantly is evolving as society defines the rules that govern our conduct towards one another. Through this class, you will see the nexus between lawmaking and judicial decisions and gain a greater understanding of how unforeseen cases result in the evolution of our laws.

Casebook


Grading

Grades in this class will be based on a final exam and on class participation (valuing quality over quantity). The majority of your grade will be based on your performance on the final exam. Class participation, including attendance, may adjust your grade up or down. At the beginning of the semester, students will be assigned particular weeks in which they should expect to be actively involved in class discussions.

Class Attendance and Protocol

Class attendance obviously is important and will be monitored. If you fail to attend class with some frequency without sufficient explanation, you may be precluded from taking the final exam.

Use of the internet is not permitted.

Contact Information

If you need to contact me, please email me at steve.shannon@fairfaxcounty.gov. I do not use a GMU email address or TWEN.
Assignments

1/11 1-29 Nature of Criminal Law
1/13 31-72 Principles of Punishment
1/20 73-92 Proportionality of Punishment
1/25 93-121 Modern Role of Criminal Statutes
1/27 133-156 Actus Reus
2/1 157-185 Mens Rea
2/3 185-227 Strict Liability; Mistakes of Fact and Law
2/17 229-252 Causation
2/22 253-292 Criminal Homicide
2/24 303-333 Intentional Killings (continued); Unintentional Killings
2/29 333-365 Unintentional Killings (continued)
3/2 365-406 Capital Murder
3/14 417-433 (background); 433-450; 454-472 Forcible Rape
3/16 477-496 Mens Rea; Non-Physical Threats; Fraud; Rape Shield Laws
3/21 501-507; 521-556 Self-defense
3/23 556-565; 575-586 BWS; Defense of Others/Property/Habitation

3/25 586-594 (6 pm; Rm 332) Defense of Others/Property/Habitation; Necessity
3/28 613-627; 634-642 Necessity; Duress; Intoxication
3/30 642-673 Insanity
4/4 676-683; 762, N. 1; 764-765; Insanity; Inchoate Crimes: Attempt 771-775; 779-782; 792-800
4/6 800-820; 830-855 Inchoate Crimes: Attempt, Solicitation, Conspiracy
4/11 856-870; 877-889 Conspiracy (continued)
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