



FALL 2025 COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Number: 515-001
Course Title: Military Law
Credit Hours: 2
Grading Mode: Letter grade
Meeting Time(s): TUE 8:10-10:10 p.m.
Meeting Mode: ON CAMPUS
Exam Time(s): TAKE HOME
Exam Mode: TAKE HOME
Prerequisite(s): N/A
Corequisite(s): N/A
Instructor(s): VINCENT SALEM
Contact Info: vsalem@gmu.edu

Reading(s) & Supplement(s):

Modern Military Justice Cases and Materials, 4th Edition, Lisa Schenck.

Course Overview

The Military Law course will introduce students to the military justice system in the United States. The domain of “military justice” is a criminal legal system. Sources of military law include the Constitution, the Uniform Code of Military Justice (“UCMJ”), the Rules for Courts-Martial (“RCM”), and the Military Rules of Evidence (“MRE”), among others. This course will provide both an overview of the military justice system’s legal framework and an overview of the system from start to end. It will also cover topics including court-martial jurisdiction, the role of commanders, alternatives to criminal trials, constitutional rights of the accused, pretrial issues, the trial phase of courts-martial, sentencing, appellate review, and substantive military crimes.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Identify the sources of military law.
2. Understand the alternatives to criminal prosecution in the military justice system.
3. Understand the constitutional rights of a criminal defendant (an “accused”) in the military justice system and how they may differ from the rights of criminal defendants within the federal and state criminal justice systems.
4. Understand how court-martial procedures differ from federal criminal trials.

Grading Policies

Exams:

There will be two written take-home exams over the course of the semester. The first will be a midterm exam making up 50% of students' grades. Students will be provided the midterm exam question(s) at the end of a class near the mid-point of the semester (likely week 7). Students will have until the beginning of class on the following week to submit their responses to the instructor.

Similarly, students will be provided the final exam question(s) at the end of the last class of the semester. The final exam will be worth 50% of students' grades. Students will have approximately one week to submit their responses to the instructor. The exam due dates will be made clear as the semester progresses. The exams are "open note," meaning students may refer to any written resources in completing their exams. However, the exams are individual effort, meaning students may not work with any other person while completing them.

Classroom Policies

Attendance:

Per AR 3-1.4, "maintenance of matriculation requires regular class preparation, participation and attendance, registration in the course of study required for the student's program (full-time or part-time), successive registration for each fall and spring term of each academic year until study is completed, and compliance with all other relevant requirements."

Absences:

Per AR 4-1.1, "if a student is absent for any reason for more than 20 percent of the sessions of a course, the student is not eligible for credit in that course. A student who is not present for at least 75 percent of a session of the course is absent from that session."

Participation & Preparation:

Students are expected to attend each class prepared with the reading assignments completed beforehand. Under the Antonin Scalia Law School at George Mason University Academic Regulations for Juris Doctor Students (adopted August 15, 2024) (the "Academic Regulations"), instructors have the discretion to make a single upward or downward adjustment to students' grades (e.g., from B to B+ or from A- to B+) based on their class participation throughout the course.

Use of Technology & AI:

Strict Use Policy: The use of generative AI tools is not permitted for any coursework in this course. Unauthorized use will be treated as a violation of academic standards.

Electronic Devices:

Students are free to take notes via whatever method works best for them. However, students should refrain from using cell phones during class. If a student needs to use their phone during class time, please feel free to step outside the room.

Recording/Livestreaming of Class:

Under the Academic Regulations, students may not record or livestream any part of class.

Course Schedule & Assignments

Week/Date	Topics	Readings/Assignments
Week 1 Aug 19	<p>Introductions, Overview of Course, Review Syllabus</p> <p>PART I: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE MILITARY JUSTICE SYSTEM</p> <p>Ch. 1: Overview of the Military Justice System</p>	Modern Military Justice, pgs. 1-62
Week 2 Aug 26	<p>Ch. 1: Overview of the Military Justice System (continued)</p> <p>Ch. 2: Judge Advocate Professional Responsibility</p>	<p>Modern Military Justice, pgs. 62-76</p> <p>pgs. 77-128</p>
Week 3 Sept 2	Ch. 3: Alternatives to Adversary Criminal Trials by Court- Martial	Modern Military Justice, pgs. 129-170
Week 4 Sept 9	<p>PART II: THE PRETRIAL PHASE OF MILITARY JUSTICE</p> <p>Ch. 4: Pretrial Issues</p>	Modern Military Justice, pgs. 171-234
Week 5 Sept 16	<p>Ch. 5: Pretrial Procedural Requirements</p> <p>Ch. 6: Pretrial Decisions</p>	<p>Modern Military Justice, pgs. 235-261</p> <p>Modern Military Justice, pgs. 262-298</p>
Week 6 Sept 23	<p>PART III: MOTIONS AND TRIAL PHASE</p> <p>Ch. 7: Pretrial Motions and Interlocutory Appeals</p>	Modern Military Justice, pgs. 299-342
Week 7 Sept 30	<p>Ch. 8: Findings</p> <p>Ch. 9: Military Sentencing</p>	<p>Modern Military Justice, pgs. 343-374</p> <p>Modern Military Justice, pgs. 375-415</p> <p>Midterm Exam assigned at end of class</p>

<p>Week 8 Oct 8</p>	<p>PART IV: POST-TRIAL PROCEDURES</p> <p>Ch. 10: Post-Trial Review Procedures</p> <p>Ch. 11: Appellate Review Procedures</p>	<p>Midterm Exam due at start of class</p> <p>Modern Military Justice, pgs. 416-430</p> <p>Modern Military Justice, pgs. 459-485</p>
<p>Week 9 Oct 14</p>	<p>PART V: SUBSTANTIVE MILITARY CRIMINAL LAW</p> <p>Ch. 12: Military Crimes in General</p>	<p>Modern Military Justice, pgs. 486-531</p>
<p>Week 10 Oct 21</p>	<p>Ch. 12: Military Crimes in General (continued)</p>	<p>Modern Military Justice, pgs. 531-577</p>
<p>Week 11 Oct 28</p>	<p>Ch. 13: Inappropriate Conduct Offenses</p>	<p>Modern Military Justice, pgs. 578-626</p>
<p>Nov 4</p>	<p>Election Day (classes do not meet)</p>	

<p>Week 12 Nov 11</p>	<p>Ch. 14: Rape and Other Sex Crimes</p>	<p>Modern Military Justice, pgs. 627-672</p>
<p>Week 13 Nov 18</p> <p>*Last day of class</p>	<p>Ch. 15: Military Defenses</p>	<p>Modern Military Justice, pgs. 673-741</p> <p>Final Exam assigned at end of class. The Final Exam will be due on December 1 at 11:59 p.m.</p>

[Student Resources](#)

[Antonin Scalia Law School Academic Regulations](#)

[GMU Common Course Policies Addendum](#)

[Mason Square Services](#)

[Mason Square Police](#)

Van Metre Hall, Room 110

Emergency - Dial 911

Escort Services - 703-993-8070

Dispatch – 703-993-2810

[Student Support and Advocacy Center \(SSAC\)](#)

Mason Square Sexual Assault Services:

Van Metre Hall, Room 222D

703-993-8186

[Notice of Mandatory Reporting of Sexual Assault, Sexual Harassment, Interpersonal Violence, and Stalking:](#)

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Non-Confidential Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If a student wishes to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703 -380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703 -993-2380. Students may also seek assistance or support measures from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703 -993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

[Mason Square Clinic](#)

Van Metre Hall, Room B102

703-991-2831

[Counseling and Psychological Services](#)

[Student Health Services](#)

[Student Disability Services](#)

[Student Conduct](#)

[University Life](#)