

Santa Rosa Junior College
Administration of Justice 22 - Criminal Law Concepts
Spring 2026 - Online Course (8-week short-term format)

Course Description

Criminal law is a fascinating area of study because it sets out the parameters of human behavior and interaction in our society. This introduction to criminal law focuses on California State law but will include many concepts and ideas that transcend all states. It includes basic legal concepts as well as specific laws relating to crimes and punishments. This course is ideal for students interested in pursuing a career in the criminal justice field including jobs in law enforcement and the legal profession. If you want to be a police officer, prosecutor, defense attorney, or paralegal, this class is a foundational piece of your education. It is intended to present the basic information needed by a student to acquire the knowledge and skills expected by the University of California and the California State University systems.

The course begins with an historical look at the Constitution, philosophy of law, and the administration of justice system. The course includes criminal law definitions, crime classification and elements, legal research and case law, evidence and investigation, criminal liability, and criminal defenses.

View the official [Course Outline of Record](#).

Class Format and Required Meeting Times

This class is completed entirely online and there are no class meetings on campus or via Zoom.

Learning Outcomes

1. Identify the origins and foundational concepts of civil and criminal law.
2. Explain how laws are developed and modified.
3. Identify, classify, and apply the essential elements of offenses against the person, property, and public order.
4. Analyze criminal liability and defenses.

Course Objectives

1. Identify the primary sources on which the law is based, including the concept of social contract, English common law, the United States Constitution, and the California Constitution. (SLO 1 and 2)
2. Distinguish between the letter of the law and the spirit of the law. (SLO 1 and 2)
3. Differentiate between civil law, criminal law, and case law. (SLO 1)
4. Differentiate between substantive law and procedural law. (SLO 1)
5. Recall the statutory definition a crime. (SLO 3)

6. Classify the punishments under California law. (SLO 3)
7. Define and differentiate corpus delicti, mala en se, and mala prohibita. (SLO 3)
8. Identify the essential elements of offenses against person, property, and public order. (SLO 3)
9. Explain the concept of lesser-included offense. (SLO 3)
10. Identify inchoate crimes. (SLO 3)
11. Classify crimes by severity into felony, misdemeanor, and infraction. (SLO 3)
12. Identify parties to a crime per California law and criminal culpability. (SLO 4)
13. Explain the categories of persons considered legally incapable of committing crime. (SLO 4)
14. Explain common criminal defenses and legal justifications. (SLO 4)

Textbooks and Technology

The textbooks for this class are provided at zero cost to students. All text materials are embedded into the course.

I will be using the Canvas Learning Management System to support all aspects of this class. You will be able to submit all assignments, track your grades, and communicate with me directly using Canvas. I highly recommend that you download the Canvas mobile app if you have an Apple or Android device. This app is free and enables you to receive announcements and messages from me immediately when they are sent.

Disabilities Accommodations

The college offers a variety of support services for students and I encourage you to take advantage of all the support and help you can get.

If you have a disability that requires an accommodation, please contact the Disability Resources Department.

[Disability Resources Department website](#)[Links to an external site.](#)[Links to an external site.](#)

Main Campus: Third floor, Bertolini Student Center - 707-527-4278 or TTY: 707-528-2442

Petaluma Campus: Jacobs Hall, Room 101 - 707-778-2491

If you have a medical emergency or require an accommodation for some other reason, please send me a message via the Canvas Inbox or call my office.

My Approach to Teaching and Tips for Success

Teaching is a passion for me and has been part of my life since childhood. I wanted to be a teacher long before ever thinking about a career in law enforcement and I'm fortunate to have been able to enjoy two incredible careers. I love teaching classes

face-to-face and in the online environment. I can honestly say that I look forward to the first day of class each semester as much as I did the very first day I walked into a classroom.

I see the role of a teacher, especially in an online classroom, as a facilitator of learning. I do my best to create content, activities, and experiences that help students learn. I can honestly say that I learn something new about the subjects I teach as well as how to teach from every class. I can't think of a class I've taught exactly the same way from one semester to the next. I appreciate curiosity and full participation of students in all class activities.

This is all to say that you and I are in this together! I hope to share with you this semester some of what I have learned from my experience in law enforcement and at the college.

Tips for Success

- *Attend the optional course orientation on Zoom. This is a great opportunity for us to meet and for you to get a tour of the course in Canvas.*
- *Set your Canvas notifications to forward course announcements and messages to forward to our mobile device and email.*
- *Always submit every assignment. The most common reason students fail my class is because they simply don't submit the work.*
- *Turn your work in early. Set a personal deadline at least 12 hours before a deadline to reduce stress and to ensure you don't run into technical problems at the last minute.*
- *Ask questions about anything you are unsure about before submitting an activity or assignment.*
- *Always use the modules to access course content. Do not rely on the Canvas "To Do" list - it's never complete.*
- *If you ever score less than 80% on an open-book quiz, go back and review the material and take the quiz again. I always count the highest score you achieve.*

Expected Work Ethic

Whether you are taking this class on your way to a 4-year college or as preparation for a career within the criminal justice system, an important part of your education is learning what is expected of a professional working in the criminal justice profession. The rationale for many of the course policies relates directly to preparing you for successful work in the criminal justice system or any other professional career.

Here are some of the essential attributes of a successful criminal justice professional and how they relate to this class.

- **Honesty and trustworthy:** This is especially important in an online class. Doing your own work, not engaging in plagiarism, and not every cheating on a test or

assignment demonstrates honesty and that you are trustworthy. Trust is at the heart of the relationship between the public and the criminal justice system. Demonstrating honesty in your actions makes your trustworthy.

- **Punctual, exercise time management, and the ability to meet deadlines:** Time management is a critical skill. You can submit your work at any time during the week before the due date and time. Plan ahead and submit your work well before it is due. This will ensure you meet every deadline. In the criminal justice system, missing a deadline can jeopardize public safety when criminals are released because a report or other legal paperwork isn't completed on time.
- **Ability to communicate effectively and accurately orally and in writing:** Take the time to proofread your writing for grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Every writing assignment is a chance to practice and improve. Use the writing center if you need help. Report writing is an essential skill in every criminal justice job including law enforcement officer, probation officer, 9-1-1 dispatcher, correctional officer, prosecutor, or defense attorney.

Participation and Standards Of Conduct

An important part of learning is being open-minded to new ideas or ones that challenge your own beliefs. To get the most out of this class, I hope you will participate fully in discussions and all class activities. I encourage discussion and acknowledge we won't always agree on points of view. Disagreement is OK, but it must always be expressed in a respectful and professional way. Use of derogatory, condescending, or offensive language including profanity is not acceptable or helpful for anyone. For example, words such as "stupid" and "dumb" have no place in describing another person's statement. I want you to express disagreement by always including an explanation of your reasoning and, whenever possible, use evidence to support your position.

Your participation in class is valued and will be included in your final grade.

In accordance with Santa Rosa Junior College Board Policies, the Student Code of Conduct, and applicable state and federal laws, discrimination based on gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or disability is prohibited in any form.

Academic Honesty

Please do not share your Canvas username and password with anyone. You are not allowed to share access to the course content in Canvas with anyone not enrolled in the class. Allowing anyone else to access your Canvas account is considered cheating and grounds for failing the course.

I expect that you will complete your own work and that all written work you submit will be original. Work cited from other sources must be cited properly using quotations marks and references as appropriate. Plagiarism in any form, including self-plagiarism, will not

be tolerated and will result in no credit for the assignment or removal from the class. Self-plagiarism includes submitting work, in whole or in part, used in another class for this class.

Do not use artificial intelligence applications or programs (AI), chatbots, or any other form of electronically generated content, paraphrasing or synonym software or tools. They result in unintelligible English which brings originality into question. Passages that appear to be from AI or sources of automated paraphrasing will be considered plagiarism and result in no credit for the assignment. Paraphrasing in any way from an un-cited source is plagiarism. If you ever have questions about how to properly cite a source, please ask me; I'm more than willing to help you.

I expect you to take all course exams individually. Cheating includes accessing test information in any way that is not approved by me or sharing test information with another student in any way not approved by me. Cheating on a test shall result in a failing grade.

How this relates: Criminal justice professionals are expected to be honest, trustworthy and to be able to communicate effectively and accurately orally and in writing.

Writing Guidelines and Due Dates

All assignments, tests, and class activities are typically due by 11:59PM on the date due unless otherwise noted. You will find the due dates for all assignments in Canvas and they will appear on the Canvas calendar. Time management and meeting deadlines is important for everyone. I do not accept late work.

I highly recommend that you set a personal deadline for submitting assignments at least 12 hours before the deadline. This is a good practice to avoid any last-minute problems with technology that could prevent you from submitting work on time. A technology failure is not an excuse to submit late work. Assignments sent by email will not be accepted unless specifically directed by me.

In the case of an illness requiring hospitalization or that is so severe that you cannot participate online or in class, you may submit a note signed by a doctor to support an extension or incomplete grade in the class (see college catalog for incomplete grade policy).

You can prepare your papers MLA or APA format. Be sure to always include citations in a bibliography or footnote. All written work shall be typed using a 12-pitch font and submitted electronically through the course website unless otherwise instructed by me. When a page length is specified, one page is equivalent to 300 words.

How this relates: Criminal justice professionals are expected to be punctual, exercise effective time management, and to meet deadlines. There are many deadlines contained within the law that if missed public the public safety at risk.

Assignments and Exams

You will find all of the assigned reading, writing, and activities described in detail in Canvas. This typically includes the rubrics I will use for grading your work and the due dates. Please do not rely on the Canvas “To Do” list. You should always access class work using the Modules link. This will ensure you have access to all of the course material including important instructions.

Exams are typically timed and do not permit use of notes, websites, or any other resources while taking the exam. I provide all students with time and a half when an exam has a time limit.

Be sure to read the instructions for each exam carefully to ensure you allow enough time to take the exam. Exams are typically scheduled to be open for a 48-hour period unless otherwise noted. You must complete the exam during that time period as make-up exams are not available.

Quizzes are typically not timed and are “open book” unless otherwise noted. These quizzes are designed to allow you to apply what you have learned in the class. Take your time and look up the answers you don’t know. If you score less than 80% on one of these quizzes and a second attempt is provided, take advantage of the opportunity to improve your score. Go back and review the applicable course content and take the quiz again.

Attendance

A key to your success is to attend class. For fully online classes, this means logging in to Canvas at least twice a week and submitting course work by the due date. When classes meet online via Zoom or in person on campus, attending every scheduled class meeting is critical for your success.

We are all faced with scheduling conflicts and it is up to you to make decisions about missing class. Every scheduled class meeting contains important information and activities related to your learning and success. You don’t need to ever ask me if you will be missing something important because every class meeting contributes to your success. Every class meeting you miss puts you in jeopardy.

In all cases, if you miss submitting work for two or more weeks and or miss attending any scheduled class meetings for two or more weeks, I am drop you from the class. If you decide on your own to stop participating in the class, be sure to drop it so you don’t end up with an F on your transcript. That is never good for anyone.

Grading and Evaluation

Every assignment, activity, exam or quiz you complete is worth a certain number of points. You can see the point value for every assignment in Canvas.

I use a basic percentage system to calculate your final grade. There is no competition and I never base a grading decision on any sort of curve. Everyone can earn an A!

Evaluation and grading of class participation in face-to-face, hybrid, or fully online classes includes active involvement in class and submission of assignments, activities, projects, group activities, and discussions (online and face-to-face). I will deduct points for every assignment, discussion, activity, quiz or exam not submitted.

I may offer extra credit, but it's not guaranteed, so I always encourage you to focus on the required work first.

Your final course grade will be determined based on a percentage of points earned from the total possible using the scale below. This includes all writing assignments, papers, exams, graded activities, and class participation.

A = 90% to 100%

B = 80% to 89%

C = 70% to 79%

D = 60% to 69%

F = 59% and Below

The most common reason students don't earn a passing grade is because they simply don't submit the work assigned. Always do your best and submit something even if it is not complete. Earning some points is always better than earning no points.

Emergency Plan for This Class

In the event of an emergency that prevents our class from meeting in person or continuing online, I will post instructions and information in an Announcement in Canvas. If Canvas is not operational, I will send information using your college email address. Be sure you check your student email daily or have it forwarded to an email account that you see daily.

Should the college have to close for any reason, I will, whenever possible, continue class online using Canvas and Zoom for class meetings. It is your responsibility to monitor Announcements in Canvas and your student email and to prepare ahead of time for an alternative way to access your education. I recommend downloading the free Zoom app for your computer and mobile device.

Changes to Course Schedule, Assignments, and Syllabus

The course schedule, assignments, and syllabus are subject to change. I will notify you of changes in advance by Canvas Announcement and or the Canvas Inbox. It is your responsibility to check the Canvas Inbox and Canvas Announcements daily.

How To Get Questions Answered

The best way to contact me with a question is by sending a note using the Canvas Inbox. I typically respond to Canvas messages within 24 hours. You can use my college email address as a back-up and expect the same timely response.

We can also arrange a time to meet face to face. Send me a request for a meeting via the Canvas Inbox and provide a few options that work with your schedule.

Best Ways To Contact Me

Email: gmiraglia@santarosa.edu

Phone: 707-256-7710

Office Hours: Online By Appointment via Zoom

<https://cccconfer.zoom.us/j/3323881089>Links to an external site. Password: 6544528

Websites: www.gregmiraglia.com