

Criminal Law  
Spring 2026

Professor: Savannah Ocasio, JD  
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**Course Description**

This course provides an examination of the functions of substantive criminal law; its historical foundations and limits. Emphasis is placed on Indiana criminal law.

CJC Prerequisite: **CJC 101** and **CJC 102** or permission from the department chairperson

Forensic Science Prerequisite: **FOR 101** and **CJC 102** or permission from the department chairperson

Credits: 3

**Course Objectives**

Students will learn to:

- Describe the American Criminal legal system and its historical relevance
- Summarize constitutional protections within criminal law.
- Describe the elements of specific crimes and criminal defenses
- Apply statutory law to factual scenarios
- Formulate opinions supported in fact and discuss those opinions with one another respectfully

**Course Rationale**

This course provides a foundational understanding of the American Criminal legal system. Throughout this course, students will learn to read criminal laws and apply statutory elements to factual scenarios, which they may experience in the Criminal Justice field.

**Required Textbook and Readings**

Title: Fundamentals of Criminal Law: Caught in the Act

Author: Daniel E. Hall

ISBN-13: 978-1071811733

**University Resources**

Students can benefit from free tutoring and coaching at the Learning Center, writing practice and feedback at the Writing Center, mental health assistance at the [Counseling Center](#), assistance with basic needs at the [Basic Needs Hub](#), and public speaking assistance at the [Speaking Center](#)

## **Attendance**

Students should spend approximately 2-3 hours of study time for each hour spent in class. Your professionalism grade includes course attendance. You are expected to check in via IClicker during each class meeting. Attendance tracking is your responsibility.

Excused Absences: I do allow excused absences. Absences will be excused for the following: funeral and bereavement leave, jury duty, late course addition, military absences, observance of religious holidays, pregnancy leave, student-athletes participating in University- or department-approved activities, and university advisories.

## **Communication**

Students are required to respect one another. Sometimes criminal law is controversial and can result in heated conversations. Students do not have to agree with one another (in fact, forming your own personal opinion is encouraged) but students must treat each other with respect. Formal class discussions require you to formulate opinions and support them with facts.

Freedom of Expression: In this course, we are committed to fostering a learning environment that values intellectual diversity, encourages free expression, and promotes open inquiry. As members of the Ball State Community, we treat each person in the Ball State community with civility, courtesy, compassion, and dignity and respect and learn from differences in people, ideas, and opinions. Please review Ball State University's [Statement on Freedom of Expression](#), the resources on Ball State's [Freedom of Expression webpage](#), and [Ball State's Beneficence Pledge](#).

## **Title IX**

Ball State University is committed to providing a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students. If you or someone you know has experienced sexual harassment—including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, please know that you are not alone. The University offers support services and resources. For more information or to report an incident, please visit [bsu.edu/titleix](http://bsu.edu/titleix) or contact the Title IX Coordinator at 765-285-1545 or at [titleix@bsu.edu](mailto:titleix@bsu.edu)

**As your instructor, I am a mandatory reporter under the Title IX policy and required to report any information I receive about possible sexual harassment.** This includes information shared in class discussions, assignments, or private conversations.

**What happens after I report?** The Title IX Coordinator will email the person who experienced sexual harassment (complainant) and invite them to schedule a meeting. If the complainant **chooses** to meet with the Title IX Coordinator,

- Title IX Coordinator will offer supportive measures (e.g., counseling, extensions on deadlines, course-related adjustments, changes to work or class schedules, and/or referrals to campus offices), review the policy, and discuss options to move forward.
- If a complaint is filed by the complainant or the University, an investigation will begin following University policy.

## **Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct**

Honesty, trust, and personal responsibility are fundamental attributes of the university community. Academic dishonesty and other forms of academic misconduct threaten the foundation of an institution dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and will not be tolerated. To maintain its credibility and reputation, and to equitably assign evaluations of scholastic and creative performance, Ball State University is committed to maintaining a climate that upholds and values the highest standards of academic integrity. Visit the VPAA's [academic integrity website](#) (Students tab) for resources on understanding academic integrity, citing sources properly, and avoiding inadvertent academic dishonesty. To learn about BSU's academic integrity expectations and students' rights, please read the University [Student Academic Ethics Policy](#).

Academic integrity violations include giving or receiving an unfair academic advantage (cheating), presenting someone else's ideas or work as your own (plagiarism), and falsifying academic records. Unless otherwise indicated, you must work independently by yourself. Check with me if you are unsure whether something constitutes academic dishonesty. Examples of academic integrity violations include but are not limited to:

- Using resources not authorized by the faculty member (including devices, AI tools, hidden notes, and open books)
- Using commercial study websites to find answers to graded assignments (Chegg, Course Hero, StudyPool, OneClass, etc.).
- Without the instructor's written permission, giving away, buying, or selling graded assignments class notes, exams, study guides, or other course materials to other students or to third-party vendors (Course Hero, Chegg, 24HourAnswers, etc.).
- Working with another person on any assignment other than authorized group projects.
- Sharing or allowing others to access your files, whether done with permission or not.
- Reusing your own work from another semester, course, or section.
- Sharing answers with others during exams (passing notes, texting, whispering, gesturing)
- Discussing exam questions and answers with students who have not taken the exam.
- Soliciting others to complete work for you.

## **AI Statement**

As you work on and submit assignments this semester, know that using generative AI tools to complete your assignments is a violation of Ball State's [Academic Ethics Policy](#) unless the AI use is explicitly approved by the faculty member. During this class, we may use ChatGPT or other generative AI applications. You will be informed as to when, where, and how these tools are permitted to be used, along with guidance for attribution. In general, students may not submit any work generated by an AI program as their own. Doing so is plagiarism

## University Statement

We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact the instructor of record as soon as possible. Ball State's [Disability Services](#) office coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or [dsd@bsu.edu](mailto:dsd@bsu.edu)

## Course Assignment Overview

Professionalism	70 pts
Introductory Assignment	10 pts
Syllabus Quiz	10 pts
Discussion Board(s)	60 pts
Case Reference Assignment	10 pts
Drafted Case Brief	10 pts
Finalized Case Brief	30 pts
Midterm Exam	50 pts
Final Exam	100 pts
<b>TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE:</b>	<b>350 pts</b>

## Grading Policies

**Without any university excused absence, doctor's note, communication from a commanding officer, or any other appropriate documentation for an absence, the following applies:**

Late Work: Late submissions result in a **10% late penalty per day**. Late work will not be accepted after 8 days.

Exams: The midterm exam and final exam cannot be turned in late or made up. Both exams are closed note and closed book and must be taken via Respondus Lockdown Browser. The midterm exam and final exam will be virtually proctored through screen recording

Extensions: May be granted at the instructor's discretion as long students reach out beforehand to arrange an extension. Extensions are not granted because a student has assignments due in other classes. If an extension is granted, a late penalty will not be imposed.

Course Grading Scale:

Letter Grade	Range
A	100% - 94%
A-	<94% - 90%
B+	<90% - 87%
B	<87% - 84%
B-	<84% - 80%
C+	<80% - 77%
C	<77% - 74%
C-	<74% - 70%
D+	<70% - 67%
D	<67% - 64%
D-	<64% - 61%
F	<61% - 0%

**University Grade Appeal Policy**

If you believe you received a final course grade that does not reflect your performance due to fairness or a procedural issue, you have the right to file an appeal within 5 school days after final grades are posted by the Office of the Registrar. Review the [University Grade Appeal Policy and Process](#)

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE**

*This instructor reserves the right to revoke, alter, or amend any portion of the syllabus in order to maintain flexibility and to present relevant instruction.*

WEEK	DATES	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTION	DUE DATE
1	January 5 - January 11	Syllabus Review & Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Review Course Syllabus</li> <li>➤ Introduction Assignment</li> </ul>	<b><u>January 11</u></b> <b><u>11:59 PM</u></b>
2	January 12- January 18	Overview of Criminal Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Read Chapter 1 (pgs. 1-36)</li> </ul>	
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY	January 19th		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Syllabus Quiz</li> </ul>	<b><u>January 19</u></b> <b><u>11:59 PM</u></b>
3	January 20 - January 25	The Constitution and Criminal Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Read Chapter 2 (pgs. 37-70)</li> </ul>	
4	January 26 - February 1	The Elements of a Crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Read Chapter 3 (pgs. 71-106)</li> <li>➤ Submit Case Reference Assignment</li> </ul>	<b><u>February 1</u></b> <b><u>11:59 PM</u></b>
5	February 2 - February 8	Criminal Defenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Read Chapter 5 (pgs. 141-172)</li> </ul>	
6	February 9 - February 15	Criminal Defenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Read Chapter 6 (pgs. 173-198)</li> </ul>	
7	February 16 - February 22	Parties to Crime & Inchoate Offenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Read Chapter 4 (pgs. 107-140)</li> </ul>	
8	February 23 - February 28		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Submit Case Brief (First Draft)</li> </ul>	<b><u>February 28</u></b> <b><u>11:59 PM</u></b>
SPRING BREAK	March 1 - March 8	MIDTERM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Midterm Exam (Chapters 1-6)</li> </ul>	<b><u>March 8</u></b> <b><u>11:59 PM</u></b>
9	March 9 - March 15	Criminal Homicide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Read Chapter 8 (pgs. 243-272)</li> <li>➤ Submit Discussion Board</li> </ul>	<b><u>March 15</u></b> <b><u>11:59 PM</u></b>
10	March 16 - March 22	Criminal Homicide (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Chapter 8 (pgs. 243-272)</li> <li>➤ Submit Discussion Board</li> </ul>	<b><u>March 22</u></b> <b><u>11:59 PM</u></b>
11	March 23 - March 29	Crimes Against the Person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Chapter 7 (pgs. 199-241)</li> </ul>	
12	March 30 - April 5	Crimes Against Property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Chapter 9 (pgs. 273-304)</li> </ul>	

<b>13</b>	<b>April 6 - April 12</b>	Crimes Against the Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Chapter 11 (pgs. 335-372)</li> <li>➤ <b>Submit Discussion Board</b></li> </ul>	<b><u>April 12 11:59 PM</u></b>
<b>14</b>	<b>April 13 - April 19</b>	Crimes Against the Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Chapter 12 (pgs. 373-410)</li> </ul>	<b><u>April 19 11:59 PM</u></b>
<b>15</b>	<b>April 20 - April 26</b>	In-Class Review		
<b>FINAL EXAM</b>	<b>April 27 - May 1</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Submit Final Exam (Chapters 1-9 &amp; 11-12)</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Submit Finalized Case Brief</b></li> </ul>	<b><u>May 1 4:59 PM</u></b>