

Course Objectives/Course Outline

Spokane Community College

Course Title: Criminal Courts

Prefix and Course Number: CJ 102

Learning/Performance Expectations (e.g., outcomes, performance objectives, competencies, etc.)

By the end of this course, a student should:

1. Discuss the evolution and structure of the local, state and federal court systems.
2. Identify the roles of officers of the court to include judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys and jurors.
3. Identify and discuss the steps to process an offender from arrest to final adjudication to include bail, Grand Jury, pre-trial motions, plea, and trial.
4. Identify and discuss sentencing guidelines, pre-sentencing investigation, and appeals process to include special processes triggered by a death sentence.
5. Discuss and identify the post-adjudication criminal justice processes to include prison, alternative correctional programs, probation and parole programs.
6. Identify and discuss landmark cases effecting pre-trial processes, criminal trials and the juvenile justice system
7. Discuss the evolution, purpose and structure of the juvenile court systems, and specialized alternatives to the traditional juvenile justice system.

OUTLINE:

- I. The structure of the United States Criminal Courts
 - A. Law, crime, courts, and controversy
 - B. Federal Courts
 - C. State Courts
 - D. Juvenile Courts
- II. People in the Courts.
 - A. The Dynamics of the Courthouse Justice
 - B. Prosecutors
 - C. Defense Attorneys
 - D. Judges
 - E. Defendants, Victims, and Witnesses
- III. Processing Criminal Cases in the Courts
 - A. Arrest and bail through Arraignment

- B. Disclosing and Suppressing Evidence
- C. Negotiated Justice and the Plea of Guilty

IV. Trials and Juries

- A. Selecting a fair and unbiased jury.
- B. Law in Action
- C. Educating jurors
- D. Scientific jury selection
- E. Presumptions and the burden of proof

V. Overview of basic evidence

- A. Direct and Circumstantial evidence
- B. Types of evidence
- C. Basic Rules of Evidence

VI. Sentencing

- A. Why do we punish
- B. The courtroom work group and sentencing decisions
- C. Structured Sentencing schemes
- D. What sentence should be imposed
- E. Imprisonment, Probation, Fines, and restitution
- F. Intermediate sanctions

VII. Death Penalty

- A. Eighth Amendment Standards
- B. Method of decision making
- C. Method of execution
- D. Death-Qualified Juries

VIII. Appellate and Habeas Corpus Review

- A. The Appellate process
- B. Appellate Court Procedures
- C. Criminal Appeals
- D. Post-conviction Review

IX. Court controversy and the Administration of Justice.

- A. Wrongful Convictions
- B. DNA exonerations
- C. How wrongful convictions can occur
- D. State Courts of last resort
- E. The U.S. Supreme Court and Criminal Justice Policy