

CRIMINAL LAW
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA LEVIN COLLEGE OF LAW

SPRING 2026 COURSE POLICIES & SYLLABUS
LAW 5100-20896, § 3
3 CREDITS

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Class meeting time: M, W 10:30 – 11:55AM

Location: Holland Hall 285C

Office Hours: M, 4-5pm, Holland Hall 305; W, 4-5pm (by zoom!)

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES. This course will cover the basic principles of substantive criminal law, including the elements of a crime, justifications for punishment, and defenses. We will review one crime, homicide, in depth. Along the way, we will focus on the rationales justifying the existence of the criminal justice system and the infliction of punishment.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES. At the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Conduct strong legal analysis: from a given fact pattern, identify a pertinent legal issue, articulate the relevant rules, apply those rules to relevant facts, and reach a well-supported legal conclusion;
- Deduce, from a given fact pattern, strategies to defend a client from a given criminal charge;
- Deduce, from a given fact pattern, a strategy to adduce sufficient evidence on each element of a crime so as to establish that crime beyond a reasonable doubt;
- Articulate and defend the values underlying criminal law;
- List the elements of various common law crimes and defenses; and
- Trace the evolution of fundamental criminal concepts, such as mens rea, from their common law to modern incarnations.

REQUIRED AND SUGGESTED INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS.

Please be sure to register for the Canvas course and have any required materials with you in print or easily accessible electronic form in class. You are responsible for checking your Canvas page and the e-mail connected to the page on a regular basis for any class announcements or adjustments.

Required — JOSHUA DRESSLER & STEPHEN P. GARVEY, CRIMINAL LAW CASES AND MATERIALS (9th ed. 2022) – Casebook Plus (includes the casebook plus a virtual “learning library” of resources)

*****This is not the latest edition of the case book. It is important that you purchase this version and the accompanying electronic library.***

Suggested secondary materials — JOSHUA DRESSLER, UNDERSTANDING CRIMINAL LAW. The suggested treatise complements our case book.

If you want additional explanation, I suggest consulting these treatises:

WAYNE R. LAFAVE, CRIMINAL LAW

PAUL ROBINSON & MICHAEL T. CAHILL, CRIMINAL LAW

Additional practice problems may be found here:

KATHRYN CHRISTOPHER & RUSSELL CHRISTOPHER, CRIMINAL LAW: MODEL PROBLEMS AND OUTSTANDING ANSWERS

GRADING EVALUATION. Your final grade in the course will reflect the following:

- 85% of grade: cumulative final exam
- 15% of grade: completion (in a manner demonstrating good faith effort) of assigned problems, discussion questions, and quizzes on Canvas and by Dressler
 - Due date for assigned **problems** and **discussion questions**: these are due on the same date as the associated assigned reading (see modules)
 - Due date for **quizzes**: must be completed before the exam, unless otherwise specified

Exam. Students will primarily be evaluated through an **in-class**, cumulative, limited-space examination of 3 or 4 hours in length. It may contain multiple choice, short answer, and/or traditional law school essay questions. The exam will focus on material discussed in class, but all material and concepts covered in the course may be tested to some degree. Exams will be graded anonymously by exam number. Past exams and model answers can be found in the “past exams” folder in the files section of Canvas.

Our examination will be a **Limited Open Book Exam**. You may bring **one page of typed or handwritten notes on a 8.5 in x 11 inch sheet of paper** with you to the exam room (and no other materials). You may write on the front and back sides of the paper. Students will not be

permitted to access the internet or any of their computer files during the exam. Please plan accordingly.

Review of Final Exam. How to receive a copy of your exam: **After June 8, 2026**, students who wish to review their exams can do so by requesting a copy of their exams by emailing me your exam number. I will post the exam questions, along with a model answer, on Canvas in the past exams folder.

How to ask questions about your exam: I expect that the model answer and best student answer will address most students' questions. I will be happy to address any remaining questions by email.

CLASS STRUCTURE. Our class time will focus on case explications and discussion of hypotheticals, big-picture questions, and problems. The syllabus and corresponding modules will set forth the topics we will cover in each class, as well as assigned reading, assigned problems and discussion questions, and suggested supplemental materials.

Dressler Quizzes. As a review device, I will assign certain quizzes created by the author of our case book. Completion of these quizzes (but not your performance on them) will be reflected in your final grade. These quizzes may be completed at your own pace. Just be sure to complete them before the final exam! To access these quizzes and receive credit for their completion, follow these steps:

- Go to eproducts.westacademic.com
- Sign in or create an account.
- Click to open Criminal Law: Cases and Materials from your bookshelf.
- Click the Enroll in a Course button and enter this course code:
 - **CRSE-4IFI-3PRC-ACIA-HKKK**
- If you don't see a picture of Criminal Law: Cases and Materials on your bookshelf when you log on to eproducts.westacademic.com, perform either of the following:
 - Click the Redeem Code button on the My Bookshelf page and enter the code that came with the casebook. Next, redeem your code.
 - If you did not purchase a new book with a code, you can go to store.westacademic.com and purchase either the eBook/Learning Library or the Learning Library option for your casebook.

Need Help? If you need help, please contact a West representative at 1-877-888-1330 (option 4) or support@westacademic.com.

About the Course Code. By registering the course code, you connect your quiz results to the course I created. I will have the option to view your progress and scores on the quizzes tied to your book. If you have questions about the information that West provides to faculty, please refer to the eProducts user agreement.

CALI lessons. As a supplemental learning device, I suggest lessons developed by the Center for Computer-Assisted Legal Instruction (CALI). You must register and create an account at this website: <https://www.cali.org/>. The CALI student code is FLORUVstu73. In my opinion, these lessons are extremely effective.

CLASS PREPARATION, PARTICIPATION, AND EXPERIENCE. ABA Standard 310 requires that students devote 120 minutes to out-of-class preparation for every “classroom hour” of in-class instruction. Each weekly class is approximately 3 hours in length, requiring at least **6 hours of preparation** outside of class. This requirement will be met through your completing the assigned reading and practice materials.

I have high expectations for the learning environment we create together. I rely heavily on classroom discussion to explicate cases and concepts and apply those frameworks to new problems. I expect each of you to attend class prepared. Preparation includes completing the assigned reading, working through the assigned problems and/or discussion questions prior to class, reviewing notes and/or reading material from the prior class, and watching any assigned videos.

Students are encouraged to employ critical thinking and to rely on data and verifiable sources to interrogate all assigned readings and subject matter in this course as a way of determining whether they agree with their classmates and/or their instructor. No lesson is intended to espouse, promote, advance, inculcate, or compel a particular feeling, perception, viewpoint, or belief.

At the end of this document is a tentative syllabus with topics to be covered in the course. The readings for each topic can be found on Canvas, organized by module. Assignments will be posted on a syllabus on Canvas and also within the “task list” for each module. I will update the syllabus and dates on the modules weekly.

CLASS ATTENDANCE POLICY. Attendance in class is required by both the ABA and the Law School. On the first day of class, I will circulate a seating chart. Your seat that day will be your seat for the semester. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class meeting. Students are allowed **four** absences during the course of the semester. Please plan accordingly

and arrive to class on time. A student who fails to meet the attendance requirement will be dropped from the course. The law school's policy on attendance can be found [here](#).

UF ACADEMIC POLICIES AND RESOURCES. Other information about UF academic policies and resources can be found at [this link](#).

COMPLIANCE WITH UF HONOR CODE. Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Law Honor Code located [here](#). The UF Law Honor Code also prohibits use of artificial intelligence, including, but not limited to, ChatGPT and Harvey, to assist in completing quizzes, exams, papers, or other assessments unless expressly authorized by the professor to do so.

INFORMATION ON UF LAW GRADING POLICIES. The Levin College of Law's mean and mandatory distributions are posted on the College's website and this class adheres to that posted grading policy. The following chart describes the specific letter grade/grade point equivalent in place:

Letter Grade	Point Equivalent	Letter Grade	Point Equivalent
A (Excellent)	4.0	C (Satisfactory)	2.0
A-	3.67	C-	1.67
B+	3.33	D+	1.33
B	3.0	D (Poor)	1.0
B-	2.67	D-	0.67
C+	2.33	E (Failure)	0.0

The law school grading policy is available [here](#).

OBSERVANCE OF RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS. UF Law respects students' [observance of religious holidays](#).

- Students, upon prior notification to their instructors, shall be excused from class or other scheduled academic activity to observe a religious holy day of their faith.
- Students shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up the material or activities covered in their absence.
- Students shall not be penalized due to absence from class or other scheduled academic activity because of religious observances.

EXAM DELAYS AND ACCOMMODATIONS. The law school policy on exam delays and accommodations can be found [here](#).

STATEMENT RELATED TO ACCOMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES. Students requesting accommodations for disabilities must first register with the Disability Resource Center (<https://disability.ufl.edu/>). Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter, which must be presented to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs (Assistant Dean Brian Mitchell). Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester. Students may access information about various resources on the UF Law Student Resources Canvas page, available at <https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/427635>.

STUDENT COURSE EVALUATIONS. Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Click [here](#) for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and may complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluer.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students [here](#).

RECORDINGS OF CLASS. Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session. Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to,

in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor and Student Conduct Code.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS RESOURCES. Your mental and emotional health are important. Here are some important resources of which you should be aware.

- *U Matter, We Care:* If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- *Counseling and Wellness Center:* [Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- *Student Health Care Center:* Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or [visit the Student Health Care Center website](#).
- *University Police Department:* [Visit UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- *UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center:* For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; [Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).

Basic Needs Assistance. Any student who has difficulty accessing sufficient food or lacks a safe place to live is encouraged to contact the Office of Student Affairs.

That's it! I look forward to having each of you in class this semester.

SPRING 2026 TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

This tentative outline sets forth the topics I hope to cover this semester, although we may not cover all listed items. **The readings for each topic – and daily assignments – can be found on Canvas within each module.** For the first week of class, please see the assignments below, which may be found in Modules 1 and 2 on Canvas. On Canvas, I will update the syllabus and dates within the modules weekly.

Note: the case book below is JOSHUA DRESSLER & STEPHEN P. GARVEY, CRIMINAL LAW CASES AND MATERIALS (9th ed. 2022) – Casebook Plus

***This is not the latest edition of the case book. It is important that you purchase this version and the accompanying electronic library.*

<u>Week</u>	<u>Topic</u>
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Week 1	
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<u>Wednesday</u>	
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<u>Module 1: INTRODUCTION & PRINCIPLES OF PUNISHMENT</u>	
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Criminal Justice Process	
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Case book: read pp. 1-13 and note 6 on page 14 | |
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Theories of Punishment	
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Case book: read pp. 31-45• On Canvas: submit the assignment, Theories of Punishment | |
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Week 2	
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<u>Monday</u>	
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Theories of Punishment, cont'd	
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<u>Module 2: ACTUS REUS</u>	
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Voluntary Acts	
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Casebook: read pp.133-45• On Canvas: submit the assignment, Sleepwalking Shoplifting (*No longer than 1 page! I will provide feedback!) | |
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<u>Wednesday</u>	
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Voluntary Act, cont'd	
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Week 3

Omissions

Module 3: MENS REA

Nature of “Mens Rea”

Common Law: Mens Rea

Week 4

Model Penal Code: Mens Rea

Mistake of Fact

Mistake of Law

Strict Liability Offenses

Week 5

Strict Liability Offenses, cont’d

Module 4: CAUSATION

Actual Cause

Week 6

Proximate Cause

Module 5: CRIMINAL HOMICIDE

Overview

First Degree Murder: Deliberation-Premeditation

Week 7

Voluntary Manslaughter: Heat of Passion (Common Law)

Reckless Murder

Involuntary Manslaughter

Felony Murder

Week 8

Felony Murder, cont’d

Week 9

Module 6: AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSES

Categories of Defenses

Principles of Justification

Self-Defense

Defense of Others

Defense of Habitation/Property and Law Enforcement

Week 10

Necessity

Principles of Excuse

Duress

Insanity

Week 11

Module 7: INCHOATE OFFENSES

Attempt

Week 12

Attempt, cont'd

Accomplice Liability

Week 13

Accomplice Liability