Professor P.M. Tobolowsky  
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Office: Chilton Hall, Room 265  
Office Hours: By appointment  

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course focuses on substantive criminal law: the basic crimes and criminal defenses. In this connection, we will explore the traditional and Texas and federal statutory definitions of the crimes and defenses, as well as cases that interpret these definitions.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Through this course, students should gain:  
1) an understanding of the constitutional, legislative, and judicial parameters of federal and Texas basic criminal law and  
2) an awareness of judicial and legislative "outputs."

REQUIRED READING:  

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Final course grades will be based on performance on the following activities: 4 examinations and 4 discussion boards. Each of the exams will be evaluated on a 100-point scale and each exam will represent 20% of your final course grade. Each discussion board will be evaluated on a 25-point scale and each will represent 5% of your final grade.

GRADING SCALE (Maximum of 500 points):  
A= 448 – 500 points  
B= 398 – 447 points  
C= 348 – 397 points  
D= 298 – 347 points  
F= 0 – 297 points

EXAMINATIONS: The 4 exams will consist entirely of multiple choice questions delivered in an online format in the Quizzes section on our Canvas site. These exams will each have 40 multiple choice questions. Each question will be worth 2.5 points. Thus, each exam is worth 100 points. The exam will be available in Canvas beginning at 7:00 am and until 10:00 pm on each exam day, but these are timed exams and each student will only have up to 60 minutes to complete each exam.
Thus, between 7:00 am and 10:00 pm on each exam day, each student will need to set aside up to 60 minutes to take the exam. You are allowed only 1 attempt to take each exam. Once you start the exam, you cannot exit (and return to) the exam or pause the exam time. Once the 60 minutes after you log in expires, Canvas will log you out of the exam and will mark any uncompleted answers as incorrect. Make sure to begin each exam by no later than 9:00 pm to allow yourself the entire maximum 60 minutes to take the exam because at 10:00 pm, the exam will no longer be available in Canvas.

The first exam date is Thursday, February 11. The second exam date is Tuesday, March 9. The third exam date is Thursday, April 1. The fourth exam date is Thursday, April 29. Students who do not submit an exam during the scheduled period will receive a zero for the exam. There will generally be no make-up exams.

As in a classroom environment, I expect this exam to reflect your individual and independent work. Therefore, I expect you to take this exam without assistance from any study materials (on paper or electronically) and/or any other person. I further expect you not to assist any other person in taking this exam in any way. The exams should not be copied or duplicated by you or anyone else for any purpose. The university rules regarding academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced.

DISCUSSION BOARDS: During the course of the semester, there will be 4 Canvas discussion boards. They are attached to this syllabus, along with their due dates and related instructions. Your discussion board materials will be submitted in the Discussions section on our class Canvas site. Students can earn up to 25 points for each discussion board assignment (up to 20 points for your posting and up to 5 points for your response to another student’s posting), for a maximum total of 100 points for these 4 activities. In the discussion board activities, students are expected to thoughtfully address the subject matter and to treat fellow students’ postings with respect in their responses. **No late postings will be accepted.**

CLASS FORMAT AND PANOPTO LECTURE CAPTURE: If offered in person this semester, the class would have been offered on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Due to COVID, the class is being offered remotely. We will nevertheless follow a similar schedule regarding the class materials as if the class had met in person. I will be recording the class presentations and providing the related materials (such as PowerPoint slides) that I would have offered in the in-person class. I will be using the Panopto Lecture Capture system that makes an audio recording of the class presentations and preserves the materials presented on PowerPoint slides. I will generally make these recordings on the Tuesday and Thursday mornings reflected in the course schedule. These recordings will be available to you via the Panopto tab on our class Canvas site following the “captured” session(s). Additional class materials will be available on our class Canvas site, such as the Statutory and Case Supplements (located both in the Files and Pages sections).

REMOTE CLASS CONSIDERATIONS: This class is being offered remotely due to COVID. Remote classes require your personal discipline and motivation to keep up with the pace of the class materials. As stated previously, class presentations and materials will generally be added on
Tuesday and Thursday mornings in the Panopto tab of our Canvas site, and assignment due dates and exam dates are specified in this syllabus. Late assignments will not be accepted and there are generally no make-up exams. A zero will generally be awarded for any work that is not submitted in the time period provided in this syllabus.

Students with absences that are authorized pursuant to University Policy 06.039 (Student Attendance and Authorized Absences) and that impact the timeliness of their work (for example, by covering the entire time period during which an exam or assignment could be done) should contact me and provide documentation prior to any due date in order for any absence to receive any consideration.

Because the class is being offered remotely, you will, of course, need to use a personal computer, laptop, or other device that is compatible with the UNT Canvas system. Individual technical or technological difficulties in completing an exam or assignment in a timely manner (e.g., computer crashes or viruses or interrupted internet connections) do not constitute a basis to request a make-up exam or the submission of a late assignment. To avoid such issues, I encourage you not to wait until the final available hours or minutes to complete exams or assigned work.

Because we will be relying exclusively on our Canvas site for class content delivery, assignment submission, and exam delivery and completion, I encourage you to use the most reliable computer or laptop with the most reliable internet connection that you are able to access for your class work, including your exam completion and assignment submissions. The university also recommends that you submit exams and assigned work through a supported web browser on a computer or laptop rather than an iPad or other electronic device. In the event that you are not able to access a computer or laptop with internet connection, as you know, an alternative option is to access Canvas through your phones. If you do not have computer or laptop/internet access and need to use your phone to complete the semester's work, and have not accessed Canvas through your phone previously, I strongly encourage you to make sure that you are able to access Canvas on your phone via the Canvas app.

Finally, remote classes also require some basic technological skills to access course materials and complete exams and assignments. UNT has a variety of resources to assist you with the technological aspects of navigating this and other remote classes. One of the most important of these resources is the help desk. It can be reached by email at helpdesk@unt.edu and via phone at 940-565-2324. Personnel at the help desk can assist you with issues concerning access to Canvas and other technological issues. Obtain a “ticket number” reflecting your attempt to resolve your issue with the help desk staff member. Please also let me know about these issues and provide the “ticket number” reflecting your conversation with the help desk. Online student resources are also available in the Help tab on the left side of the screen of our course Canvas site.

COMMUNICATION: Because most of the communication in this course will occur online, you will need to make sure that you keep up with the class communications. I will use the Announcement page to communicate with the class as a whole. You should check this page
frequently. These announcements will also be sent to your UNT email address or the alternative email address that you have indicated in Canvas. Make sure to check this email address frequently throughout the semester for class announcements.

The best way for you to initiate communication with me this semester with any questions about the course content or otherwise is via email. If you wish to send me an email, you can use the Inbox communication function in Canvas or send me an email via my unt.edu email address: peggy.tobolowsky@unt.edu. If you email me directly at my unt.edu email, you should use your UNT email account. Include in your email a phone number where I can reach you. Depending on the subject of your email, I will respond by return email or phone call within 48 hours. If you do not receive a response from me during that period, assume that I did not receive your communication and contact me again. You are, of course, also welcome to schedule an appointment to talk with me via phone or Zoom. Although there won’t be scheduled office hours in this remote delivery format, I encourage you to contact me with any questions about the course content or otherwise in the manner described above.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY:** The university rules and policies regarding cheating and plagiarism will be strictly enforced.

**SPOT:** As part of the university-wide assessment of teaching, students are strongly encouraged to anonymously complete the Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) online surveys for this and all of their classes. Your input is valued. This semester’s SPOT will be open near the end of the semester.

**ADA STATEMENT:** The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet (by phone or email this semester) with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information, refer to the Office of Disability Access website at [http://www.unt.edu/oda](http://www.unt.edu/oda). You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.
COURSE SCHEDULE

The following reflects the approximate schedule for required readings in the Lippman text; you should also read the cases and Texas Penal Code (TPC) provisions in the Statutory and Case Supplements that relate to each chapter in the text. Due to COVID, there will not be a Spring Break recess during the semester. This class will proceed continuously for 15 weeks followed by the fourth exam during the following exam week. Dates for examinations and other assignments are also included.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>January</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Texas/Federal Court Systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>19*, 21</td>
<td>Crime Statistics</td>
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<td>19*</td>
<td>* Discussion Board #1; opens at 7:00 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>26*, 28</td>
<td>Chs. 1, 2 (The Nature of Criminal Law and Constitutional Limitations);</td>
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<td>Winship; TPC 2.01, 2.03, 2.04, 12.01-12.35</td>
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<td>26*</td>
<td>* Discussion Board #1; closes at 10:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>February</td>
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<tr>
<td>2, 4, 9</td>
<td>Chs. 4, 3 (Parties to and Elements of a Crime); Sutton, Chadwell, Acosta;</td>
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<td>TPC chs. 6, 7</td>
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<td>11**</td>
<td>** First Exam</td>
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<td>16, 18*, 23</td>
<td>Ch. 7 (Homicide); Bingham, Thornton; TPC ch. 19, 22.08</td>
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<td>18*</td>
<td>* Discussion Board #2; opens at 7:00 a.m.</td>
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<td>25*</td>
<td>Ch. 8 (Assault, Battery, and Kidnapping); Mihas, Girdy; TPC 22.01, 22.02, ch.</td>
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<td>25*</td>
<td>* Discussion Board #2; closes at 10:00 p.m.</td>
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March 2, 4 Ch. 8 (Sex-Related Offenses); Liberta, Bixler; TPC 22.011, 22.021, 21.01-21.08; Texas Rule of Evidence 412

9** ** Second Exam

11*, 16 Ch. 9 (Arson, Malicious Mischief, Burglary, Trespass); Reeves, Bruce; TPC 28.01-28.03, ch. 30
11* * Discussion Board #3; opens at 7:00 a.m.

18*, 23 Ch. 9 (Theft, Robbery, and Remaining Property Crimes); Olivo, Robinson, Lattimore; TPC 31.01-31.03, ch. 29
18* * Discussion Board #3; closes at 10:00 p.m.

25, 30 Ch. 11 (Public Order and Morality Offenses); Harwell; TPC ch. 43.01-43.05; TPC 42.01, 42.03

April 1*** ** Third Exam
1* * Discussion Board #4; opens at 7:00 a.m.

6, 8* Ch. 12 (Alcohol and Drug Crimes); Wynn; TPC ch. 49; Texas Alcoholic Beverage Code 106.01-106.071
8* * Discussion Board #4; closes at 10:00 p.m.

13, 15, 20 Pp. 83 - 87 (Attempt); TPC 15.01; Ch. 6 (Defenses); Graham, Jacobson, Ferrell; TPC chs. 8, 9; Texas Code of Criminal Procedure ch. 12

22 Conclude/Review

29** ** Fourth Exam
Discussion Boards

General Instructions: Each discussion board assignment includes a posting of at least 500 words and a response to another student’s posting of at least 200 words. Each assignment also requires reference to at least 2 sources in each posting, with the types of sources further described in each assignment. Although not all sources must be governmental or scholarly sources, Wikipedia is not an acceptable source for these assignments. Your class text will not count as one of your required sources. Students should generally summarize or paraphrase any referenced material, with exact quotations indicated by quotation marks. Students should identify their source material in the text of their postings and list their sources at the conclusion of their postings. Examples of reference formats for your internal references and List of Works Cited are included on the attached document.

Discussion Board #1: Opens January 19 at 7:00 a.m. and closes January 26 at 10:00 p.m.

The criminal law evolves slowly over time. Some acts, like murder, have generally always been and will always be considered criminal acts. Other conduct has been considered criminal – or non-criminal – in different societies at different times. Choose 1 of the following categories of conduct and describe, in at least 500 words, why you think this conduct should be considered a crime and be subject to criminal punishment. Include in your posting 1) how this conduct harms the individual engaging in it or others (include specific types of harm) and 2) what kind of punishment is appropriate for the conduct (include specific types/amounts of punishment). Include in your posting a reference to at least 2 sources, at least 1 of which is a federal or state governmental source. In addition, respond to 1 other person’s posting that has suggested criminalizing a category of conduct (other than the conduct that you addressed in your post) and describe, in at least 200 words, why you think that category of conduct should not be criminalized and how society should address the conduct other than through the criminal law.

Categories of Conduct:
Gambling
Prostitution
Bigamy
Public Intoxication
Obscenity/Pornography
Texting while Driving
Graffiti
Discussion Board #2: Opens February 18 at 7:00 a.m. and closes February 25 at 10:00 p.m.

Domestic violence continues to be a problem in this country. Look at some of the web sites that address this topic, such as the National Center for Victims of Crime, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, and the Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime, or other sources. Discuss the following: 1) How widespread is the problem of domestic violence (include data/statistics regarding the extent of domestic violence)? 2) What is the criminal justice system doing about it (include specific actions or activities)? 3) What could the criminal justice system do more effectively to reduce domestic violence (include specific actions or activities)? Your posting should be at least 500 words and should include a reference to at least 2 sources, at least 1 of which is a federal or state governmental source or crime victim organization source. In addition, respond, in at least 200 words, to at least 1 other person’s posting that has suggested a response to reduce domestic violence and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of that person’s suggestions to reduce domestic violence.

Discussion Board #3: Opens March 11 at 7:00 a.m. and closes March 18 at 10:00 p.m.

Identity theft has become an increasingly significant crime problem in this country. Look at some of the web sites that address this topic, such as those of the FBI and the Federal Trade Commission, or other sources. Discuss the following: 1) How widespread is the problem of identity theft (include data/statistics regarding the extent of identity theft)? 2) What is the criminal justice system doing about it (include specific actions or activities)? 3) What could the criminal justice system do more effectively to reduce identity theft (include specific actions or activities)? Your posting should be at least 500 words and should include a reference to at least 2 sources, at least 1 of which is a federal or state governmental source. In addition, respond, in at least 200 words, to at least 1 other person’s posting that has suggested a response to reduce identity theft and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of that person’s suggestions to reduce identity theft.

Discussion Board #4: Opens April 1 at 7:00 a.m. and closes April 8 at 10:00 p.m.

As of November 2020, Colorado, Washington, Alaska, Oregon, the District of Columbia, California, Nevada, Massachusetts, Maine, Vermont, Michigan, Illinois, Arizona, New Jersey, South Dakota, and Montana have passed ballot initiatives and/or laws that legalize possession of small amounts of marijuana for non-medical purposes under certain circumstances, and provide for its regulation and taxation. Look at the governmental web sites or other sources that address these laws. In a posting of at least 500 words, and with a reference to at least 2 sources including at least 1 federal or state governmental source, 1) describe the laws of one of these states (including what specific activities are permitted and what are not) and 2) discuss the laws’ advantages and disadvantages, as well as 3) implementation problems you envision regarding the laws. In addition, respond, in at least 200 words, to at least 1 other person’s posting discussing one of the law’s advantages/disadvantages or implementation issues.
Documenting Sources

DOCUMENT ALL WORDS, IDEAS, INFORMATION OR ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIALS TAKEN FROM A SOURCE!!!!!!


All paraphrased or quoted material that requires documentation of its source should be followed by a parenthetical including the source’s author’s last name(s) and the page(s) on which the referenced information appears (Lakoff 123). If the author’s name appears in the text, only the page number(s) on which the referenced information appears goes in the parenthetical: Lakoff emphasizes the role of language in the socialization process (123-24). If you are using 2 or more works by the same author, include a shortened version of the title in the parenthetical (Lakoff, *Language* 24). For internet references, use the author, title, or site information that begins your entry in the List of Works Cited. If you are referencing multiple sources, list them in alphabetical order in your parenthetical.

Quotations

Short quotations should be enclosed in quotation marks in the text of your paper. Long quotations (generally over 4 lines of text in length) should be indented from the left margin of your text.

List of Works Cited

List entries alphabetically by author’s last name/initial information in entry. Indent the second line of any entry.

Books by a single author:


Books by 2 or 3 authors:


Books by more than 3 authors:

Later edition of a book:


Parts of book by a single author:


Parts of collections of works by different authors:


Signed article in journal with continuous pagination:


Signed article in journal with separate pagination:


Signed article in monthly or weekly magazine:


Government Documents:


Internet Sources that have no print version:

Provide as much of the following information that is available: author/editor/compiler. “Article Name.” *Name of Site*. Version Number. Name of institution/organization affiliated with site (sponsor or publisher), Date of last update. Web. Date of access. url (required by instructor)
