



**Dept. of Sociology and Social Work**  
**SOC 409, Criminal Law**  
**3 Units**

**Fall 2017**

<b>Meeting days:</b> Mondays	<b>Instructor title and name:</b> Karen L. Alexander
<b>Meeting times:</b> 6:30pm to 9:00pm	<b>E-mail:</b> kalexand@pointloma.edu
<b>Meeting location:</b> Rohr Hall 108	<b>Office hours:</b> by appointment
<b>Final Exam:</b> Dec. 11, 2017 @ 6:30pm	<b>Additional info:</b> please review course webpage on Canvas

**PLNU Mission**

**To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send**

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service becomes an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we aspire to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

**Department Mission**

As followers of Christ, our mission is to nurture servant scholars who critically evaluate social and cultural patterns, and constructively engage as agents of hope.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Criminal Law is the building block of every profession in the criminal justice system. Our state and federal criminal laws regulate when and how our government may deprive an individual the most precious human right: physical liberty. Concepts such as the presumption of innocence, the elements of criminal liability, and proof beyond a reasonable doubt rarely receive more than a passing mention in TV courtroom dramas or the media’s coverage of high-profile trials, but every police officer, lawyer, and probation officer must have a practical, working knowledge of these concepts to succeed. Even if you never come closer to a courtroom than jury duty, this course will make you a more active and engaged civic participant.

Criminal Law explores the basic tenets of criminal law through lecture, discussion, case studies and hypotheticals. Part One examines the general tenets of contemporary criminal law: the sources of the law, the Constitutional limits of the law, the elements of criminal liability, and specific defenses. Part Two focuses on specific crimes: accomplice and incompleting crimes, homicide, crimes against the person, property crimes, and crimes against society.

## **COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

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1. To understand the way the criminal laws are created, how to interpret the laws, and how to apply them to true-to-life fact patterns, as demonstrated by your ability to:
  - a.) Evaluate a case in writing, through an essay exam question
  - b.) Argue a case orally and defend a legal position, in a mock trial setting
  - c.) Plan and execute a mock criminal investigation in light of what evidence you need to prove your case
2. To critically compare our existing criminal justice system with the media's misconceptions of our system, as demonstrated by your ability to:
  - a.) Watch a live criminal trial or court proceeding and identify how the themes of this course play out in an actual courtroom, through a 3-5 page reflection paper
3. To connect the Gospel and Criminal Law, as demonstrated by your ability to:
  - a.) Engage with guest speakers about how different professions in the criminal justice system can be guided by Biblical principles
  - b.) Articulate how you could do justice and show mercy in your chosen profession if you were a \_\_\_\_\_ (sheriff/lawyer/probation officer/prison guard)

Course Credit Hour Information: In the interest of providing sufficient time to accomplish the stated Course Learning Outcomes, this class meets the PLNU credit hour policy for a 3 unit class delivered over 16 weeks. Specific details about how the class meets the credit hour requirement can be provided upon request.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS AND RECOMMENDED STUDY RESOURCES**

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- Worrall & Moore, Criminal Law (Pearson, 2013)
- Payton & Guffy, Concepts of California Criminal Law (13<sup>th</sup> Edition), Chapters 1 and 2 (available by special order as a PDF from the publisher; see Canvas for details on how to order). Note: this text is only required for students who have *not* taken the prerequisite courses.

Older or newer editions of the textbooks will be fine; you should just make sure you know in advance what you are assigned to read, since page numbers or chapters may vary. In addition, students will be responsible for reading supplemental materials handed out in class and/or assigned by the instructor.

## ASSESSMENT AND GRADING

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There are five equally-weighted categories of assignments in this course.

- **Class Participation and Online Canvas Discussions – 20%**
  - Per PLNU policy, must attend all classes but one
  - Each week, participate in an online Canvas discussion before class
- **Weekly In-Class Quizzes on the Reading – 20%**
  - Multiple choice and short answer – 10 points
  - Based on the reading: closed book but open notes
- **Two Papers – 20%**
  - Court observation paper – due Oct. 2 (2-3 pages)
  - Mid-term paper applying core course concepts (3-5 pages)
- **Mock Trial – 20%**
  - We will do a mock trial this semester. Each of you will play a role as a lawyer, a judge, or a witness, and will be graded on your command of the facts and legal arguments and presentation skills.
- **In-Class Final Exam (Dec. 11) – 20%**
  - A multiple choice, “matching” vocabulary quiz
  - Real-world hypothetical essay problems based on course content
  - An open-ended essay question that allows you to apply the themes of the course

**Grading Scale: A = 94; A- = 90; B+ = 87; B = 84; B- = 80; C+ = 77; C = 74; C- = 70; D = 60; F = below**

## ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

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Regular and punctual attendance at all classes is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent from more than 10 percent of class meetings, the faculty member has the option of filing a written report which may result in de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice. If the date of de-enrollment is past the last date to withdraw from a class, the student will be assigned a grade of W or WF consistent with university policy in the grading section of the catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) in the undergrad academic catalog.

## INCOMPLETES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS

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All assignments are to be submitted/turned in by the beginning of the class session when they are due—including assignments posted on Canvas.

## ACADEMIC HONESTY

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Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. As explained in the university catalog, academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one’s own when in reality they are the results of another person’s

creativity and effort. Violations of university academic honesty include cheating, plagiarism, falsification, aiding the academic dishonesty of others, or malicious misuse of university resources. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for a) that particular assignment or examination, and/or b) the course following the procedure in the university catalog. Students may appeal also using the procedure in the university catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for further information.

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## **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS**

While all students are expected to meet the minimum academic standards for completion of this course as established by the instructor, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations. At Point Loma Nazarene University, students must request that academic accommodations by filing documentation with the [Disability Resource Center](#) (DRC), located in the Bond Academic Center. Once the student files documentation, the Disability Resource Center will contact the student's instructors and provide written recommendations for reasonable and appropriate accommodations to meet the individual needs of the student. See [Academic Policies](#) in the (undergrad/graduate as appropriate) academic catalog.

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## **FERPA POLICY**

In compliance with federal law, neither PLNU student ID nor social security number should be used in publicly posted grades or returned sets of assignments without student written permission. This class will meet the federal requirements by (Note: each faculty member should choose one strategy to use: distributing all grades and papers individually; requesting and filing written student permission; or assigning each student a unique class ID number not identifiable on the alphabetic roster.). Also in compliance with FERPA, you will be the only person given information about your progress in this class unless you have designated others to receive it in the "Information Release" section of the student portal. See [Policy Statements](#) in the (undergrad/ graduate as appropriate) academic catalog.

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## **FINAL EXAMINATION POLICY**

Successful completion of this class requires taking the final examination **on its scheduled day**. The final examination schedule is posted on the [Class Schedules](#) site. No requests for early examinations or alternative days will be approved.

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## **COPYRIGHT POLICY**

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

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