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**LLM CRIMINAL LAW – LAW 504**

**Units: 3**

**Term—Day—Time: Fall – Thursdays – 6:00 pm – 8:50 pm**

**Location: ONLINE WITH ZOOM**

**Instructor: NICOLE BERSHON**

**Office Hours: FRIDAYS 12:00 P.M. – 12:30 P.M. (except 11/27) (remote only)**

**Contact Info: nbershon@law.usc.edu**

**Course Description**

Criminal Law LAW 504 studies issues relating to the decision, by legislature or court, to designate behavior as a "crime." Significant attention is given to the moral, psychological and philosophical issues involved in ascribing criminal responsibility.

**Learning Objectives**

Students should be able to critically analyze the mental states and actions required of each crime, additional required elements, and the purposes of punishment. In addition, students will be able to identify and apply various defenses and justifications available to negate and/or reduce criminal liability and will recognize essential elements of the American criminal justice system.

**Required Materials**

Laurie Levenson’s Roadmap: Criminal Law (7th Ed.) will be the required coursebook.

Additional required readings will be assigned in advance of class and posted on Blackboard.

Power point slides will be used during the synchronous sessions.

**Optional Materials**

Suggested readings and podcasts will be posted on Blackboard.

**Class Participation and Attendance**

Attendance during the synchronous sessions is mandatory. Please contact the instructor in advance of class with questions or concerns about complying with this policy or to request an accommodation.

Excused absences will require the student to review the recording of any missed class prior to taking the final examination.

Participation is required and graded as stated below. Students will be given credit for participation beyond simply attending class by ZOOM. Participation includes answering questions or making comments during the live ZOOM class, or in the Chat section, or participation in other exercises outside of the synchronous class sessions.

**Grading Breakdown**

Grading: Standard, as well as, CR/D/F.

The Multiple Choice Final Exam will constitute 90% of the final grade. Participation will constitute the other 10%.

**Course-Specific Policies**

Students are encouraged to contact the instructor by USC email and during office hours. Outside of office hours, the instructor will endeavor to reply to emails within 48 hours (with the exception of holidays), and within 72 hours over a weekend. The instructor does not respond to questions during the 24 hours before the final exam and may not respond to emails sent from non-USC accounts.

Copies of power point lecture slides will be placed on Blackboard after each class.

**Classroom Norms**

Students should be cognizant that class discussion may involve competing viewpoints on sensitive topics and should respect the opinions of others. Students should not interrupt when someone else is speaking. If students wish to challenge something that has been said, students should challenge the idea or practice referred to, not the individual sharing this idea or practice.

**Zoom Etiquette**

Students are required to attend each synchronous class session using a camera-enabled device, and students are encouraged to keep the camera on throughout the class, except during the pre-scheduled break. Students should keep their microphones “muted” unless asking or answering a question or making a comment. Students are encouraged to contact the instructor in advance of class with questions or concerns about complying with this policy or to request an accommodation.

Students are reminded to ensure that any device they will be using to attend class is fully charged and has adequate power prior to the beginning of class.

**Synchronous Session Recording Notice**

Each synchronous session will be recorded and will be provided to all students asynchronously.

**COVID 19-Emergency Assistance Funds for Students**

<https://we-are.usc.edu/faqs/faq-support-funds/>

USC has several resources available for students. Eligible students can apply for assistance from the COVID-19 Emergency Assistance Fund and the USC Student Basic Needs Department.

This webpage answers FAQs for each resource and describes important university resources for low-income students:

1) food insecurity (<https://studentbasicneeds.usc.edu/resources/food-insecurity/>)

2) housing insecurity (<https://studentbasicneeds.usc.edu/resources/housing-insecurity/>)

3) tech assistance (<https://studentbasicneeds.usc.edu/resources/technology-assistance/>)

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| Week 1 8/27/20 | Intro/Overview of Criminal Law and the Criminal Justice System; Theories/Purposes of Punishment | Pages 1-13; 15-29 |
| Week 2 9/3/20 | Elements of a Crime; Burdens of Proof; Actus Reus; Status Crimes | Pages 31-42 |
| Week 3 9/10/20 | Mens Rea; Strict Liability | Pages 42-58; 66-75 |
| Week 4 9/17/20 | Theft Crimes; Other Crimes Against Property (Burglary/Arson) | Pages 411-439 |
| Week 5 9/24/20 | Mistake of Fact; Mistake of Law; Ignorance; Causation | Pages 58-66; 75-84; 177-193 |
| Week 6 10/1/20 | Homicide; First Degree Murder; Manslaughter; Involuntary Manslaughter | Pages 101-118; 119-140 |
| Week 7 10/8/20 | Second-Degree Murder; Felony Murder Doctrine; Misdemeanor Manslaughter | Pages 136-140; 140-154; 155-158 |
| Week 8 10/15/20 | Homicide Review; Death Penalty | Pages 158-159; 161-175 |
| Week 9 10/22/20 | Attempt; Accomplice Liability | Pages 195-225; 227-253 |
| Week 10 10/29/20 | Conspiracy; Defenses to Conspiracy; Corporate Liability | Pages 267-301; 255-266 |
| Week 11 11/5/20 | Intro to Defenses; MPC; Defense of Another; Defense of Property; Necessity | Pages 302-355 |
| Week 12 11/12/20 | Defenses Continued; Excuses; Duress; Intoxication; Insanity; Entrapment | Pages 355-410 |
| Week 13 11/19/20 | Rape; Statutory Rape | Pages 85-99 |
| Week 14 11/26/20 | **Thanksgiving** | **N/A** |
| Week 15 | Review | Review Past Readings; Re/Take practice quizzes at the end of each chapter |

**Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown**

### **Statement on Academic Conduct and Support System**

**Academic Conduct:**

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable.

**Support Systems:**

*Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call*

[studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling](https://studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling/)

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call*

[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/)

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call*

[studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault](https://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault/)

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) - (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298*

[equity.usc.edu](https://equity.usc.edu/), [titleix.usc.edu](http://titleix.usc.edu)

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

*Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298*

[usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care\_report](https://usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report/)

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity |Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776*

[dsp.usc.edu](http://dsp.usc.edu/)

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.