

Common Course Outline
PALG 202
Criminal Law for Paralegals
3 Semester Hours

The Community College of Baltimore County

Description

PALG 202 – 3 credits - Criminal Law for Paralegals focuses on both substantive and procedural criminal law. This course covers the purposes and goals of criminal law and the elements and defenses of basic crimes. It also prepares students to assist an attorney with preliminary advisements, interviews, trial hearings, and case preparation.

Prerequisite: PALG 103

Overall Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. analyze the rationale of criminal law and the purposes of punishment;
2. distinguish between *mens rea* and *actus reus*;
3. examine the elements of various crimes, including: homicide, assault, battery, aggravated crimes of violence, sex crimes, and hate crimes;
4. examine the elements of arson and burglary, and apply the Maryland theft statute to various hypothetical fact scenarios;
5. examine the history and elements of common law as it pertains to criminal law;
6. identify factual and statutory defenses to crimes and their applicability;
7. discuss constitutional defenses to crimes;
8. examine the concept of vicarious liability in the criminal law context;
9. differentiate between complete and incomplete crimes; and
10. illustrate the criminal procedure from arrest to trial, including pre-trial, sentencing and post-trial/appeal.

Major Topics

- I. Nature and Purpose of Criminal Law
- II. *Mens Rea* and *Actus Reus*
- III. Defenses
 - A. Justifications
 - B. Excuses
- IV. Crimes Against Persons
- V. Sex Offenses
- VI. Crimes Against Habitation
- VII. Crimes Against Property

- VIII. Crimes Against Public Order
- IX. Vicarious Liability
- X. Incomplete Crimes
- XI. Criminal Procedure – Participants and Constitutional Aspects
- XII. Interrogation and Law Enforcement Practices
- XIII. Pretrial Process
- XIV. Trial
- XV. Sentencing and aAppeal

Course Requirements

Grading procedures will be determined by the individual faculty member and specific assignments and procedures for evaluating student performance will be described in the individual class syllabus, but will include the following:

Grading/exams: A minimum of two exams: a mid-term and a final (the final does not have to be cumulative) OR two major written projects combining objective and analytical/critical thinking components such as researching and analyzing a fictional client's case and a preparing a written memorandum detailing the law on point and the student's application and analysis of the law to the client's situation.

Writing: A minimum of two written assignments to allow for both objective and analytical review of primary legal sources, such as case briefs or a written comparison/analysis of cases and/or statutes.

Other Course Information

This course is a Paralegal Studies elective. It is taught in the classroom using a variety of instructional techniques, which are intended to meet the varied learning styles of our diverse population.