Course Syllabus

Accelerated Undergraduate Studies | BA in Criminal Justice

SCJ4013 Criminal Law

3 Units

Spring 2026 Quad 2

March 16 – May 10

Online

Meeting Days: Online

Meeting Times: Online

Meeting Location: Fully Online in Canvas

Final Exam: (Day/Time): N/A

Instructor: Mickey Williams, JD

Email: MickeyWilliams@pointloma.edu

Phone: N/A

Office Location and Hours: Available Upon Request

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 is an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we strive to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

Criminal Justice Adult Degree Completion Purpose

The ADC – Criminal Justice program integrates specialized knowledge and skills with concepts of grace, restorative justice, and cultural competency which support the departmental mission to nurture servant scholars who critically evaluate social and cultural patterns and who constructively engage in society as agents of hope.

The ADC is designed to extend the PLNU mission to a new group of adult learners currently not served within the current traditional program. The focus will be on providing higher education in the context of a Christian worldview where minds are engaged and challenged and service in the criminal justice profession becomes an expression of faith. The curriculum works to enrich career opportunities through the integration of a focused educational program, a faith perspective, and a professional life.

Institutional Learning Outcomes

1. **Learning, Informed by our Faith in Christ**
   Students will acquire knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world while developing skills and habits of the mind that foster lifelong learning.
2. **Growing, In a Christ-Centered Faith Community**
   Students will develop a deeper and more informed understanding of others as they negotiate complex professional, environmental and social contexts.
3. **Serving, In a Context of Christian Faith**
   Students will serve locally and/or globally in vocational and social settings.

Program Learning Outcomes

The Point Loma Nazarene University Bachelor of Arts-Criminal Justice (ADC) graduate is prepared for expanded roles within his or her organization through enhanced abilities to:

1. Demonstrate the ability to apply theoretical and legal foundations of criminal justice.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of each of the components of the criminal justice system: the historical background, structure, function, and purpose.

3. Integrate and apply understanding of the social realities, discrimination, and conflicts in the criminal justice system resulting from racial, socio-economic, and cultural inequities.
4. Apply foundational skills, demonstrate core competencies (such as ethical and professional behavior and critical thinking) in a professional internship setting.
5. Demonstrate written and oral communication skills needed to effectively engage in a career in criminal justice.

Course Description

A study of the role of the state in criminal law; causes, justifications/defenses against criminal liability. Use of case studies to develop and demonstrate understanding the operation of substantive legal rulings, their reliance on statutes and the Penal Code development of statutory analysis/interpretation in the context of real life. Explore underlying theoretical issues and examine crimes against persons, habitation, property and public order, and morals. Review of constitutional limits on criminal law. Prerequisites SCJ3003.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

The following student learning outcomes will be achieved by this course:

1. Analyze the relationship between the elements of crimes, including causation, defenses, criminal liability, statutes, and other legal rules. PLOs 2, 3
2. Evaluate various types of crime and specific examples: such as crimes against persons, property crime, crimes against society, global or moral criminal activity. PLOs 2, 3
3. Examine types of crime, parties involved in the type of crime, and defenses or potential remedies applying criminal law in fact patterns and scenarios. PLOs 2, 3
4. Identify primary sources of criminal law and their limitations. PLOs 1, 2
5. Synthesize components of the criminal justice system demonstrating course competencies. PLOs 2,5

Required Texts

Worrall, J. L., & Moore J. L. (2013). *Criminal Law.* Boston: Pearson.

Justin Brooks. You May Go To Prison Even Though You're Innocent. ISBN-13: 978-0520386839, ISBN-10: 0520386833

NOTE: Students are responsible for having the required textbooks before the first day of class. Students are also encouraged to begin reading the books in preparation for the class as soon as possible.

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. All supplemental materials posted on this course site (including articles, book excerpts, or other documents) are provided for your personal academic use. These materials may be protected by copyright law and should not be duplicated or distributed without the permission of the copyright owner.

Course Credit Hour Information

Distribution of Student Learning Hours
It is anticipated that students will spend a minimum of 37.5 participation hours per credit hour on their course work. The time expectations for this course are shown below:

Time Expectations

Category	**Time Expectation in Hours**
Reading/Listening to Lectures	38
Discussions	29
Assignments	34
Quizzes	1.5
Final Project	10
TOTAL	112.5

Assessment and Grading

Weighted Grades

This course uses weighted grades. Each assignment category is worth a certain percentage of the total grade (100%) for the course, as specified in the table below:

Course Description

Assignment	**Description**	**Percentage of Total**
Assignment	Each weekly module contains assignments to be submitted through Canvas. These assignments must reflect college-level writing and critical thinking and include synthesizing reading and analyzing fact patterns (scenarios).	35%
Quiz	There is a quiz due weeks two through four. These quizzes are taken from text reading, online reading/videos, and classroom discussions.	10%
Discussion	Each week students will participate in online discussions with classmates, which are related to the week's readings and content. These discussions replace the interactive dialogue that occurs in the traditional classroom setting.	30%
Final Project - Mock Trial	In Week 8 you will be participating in a Mock Trial. Everything you have learned in this course will help you be successful in this assignment. You will also be reflecting on the Mock Trial performance in an online discussion with your peers.	25%

Student grades for assignments will be posted in the Canvas gradebook no later than midnight on Tuesday of each week beginning in Week Two of this course. It is important to read the comments posted in the gradebook as these comments are intended to help students improve their work. Final grades will be posted by the due date as posted in the Academic Calendar.

Grading Scale

The following grading scale will be used for all exams and final course grades:

- 93-100% = A
- 90 - 92% = A-
- 87 – 89% = B+
- 83 – 86% = B
- 80 – 82% = B-
- 77 – 79% = C+
- 73 – 76% = C
- 70 – 72% = C-
- 67 – 69% = D+
- 63 – 66% = D
- 60 - 62% = D-
- 59% or below = F
- Students must complete the required program hours in the major (program) from Point Loma Nazarene University with an overall 2.00 grade point average.

Late Assignments

All assignments are to be submitted by the due dates. There will be a 10% reduction of possible points for **each day** an assignment is late, and assignments will **not be** accepted for credit four days after the due date. If missing assignments result in the failure to meet learning outcomes, you may receive a letter grade reduction on the final grade in addition to the loss of points for missing work. Assignments will be considered late if posted after the due date and time using Pacific Standard Time. No assignments will be accepted after midnight on Sunday night, the last day of class.

Exceptions for extenuating circumstances must be pre-approved by the instructor and the program director.

PLNU Spiritual Care

PLNU strives to be a place where you grow as a whole person. To this end, we provide resources for our Graduate and Adult Undergraduate students to encounter God and grow in their Christian faith. At the Mission Valley (MV) campus we have an onsite chaplain who is available during class break times across the week. If you have questions or a desire to meet or share any prayer requests with the onsite chaplain, you may email Dr. Sylvia Cortez Masyuk at scortezm@pointloma.edu.

In addition, on the MV campus, there is a prayer chapel on the third floor, which is open for use as a space set apart for quiet reflection and prayer.

State Authorization

State authorization is a formal determination by a state that Point Loma Nazarene University is approved to conduct activities regulated by that state. In certain states outside California, Point Loma Nazarene University is not authorized to enroll online (distance education) students. If a student moves to another state after admission to the program and/or enrollment in an online course, continuation within the program and/or course will depend on whether Point Loma Nazarene University is authorized to offer distance education courses in that state. It is the student's responsibility to notify the institution of any change in his or her physical location. Refer to the map on State Authorization to view which states allow online (distance education) outside of California.

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PLNU Recording Notification

In order to enhance the learning experience, please be advised that this course may be recorded by the professor for educational purposes, and access to these recordings will be limited to enrolled students and authorized personnel.

Note that all recordings are subject to copyright protection. Any unauthorized distribution or publication of these recordings without written approval from the University (refer to the Dean) is strictly prohibited.

PLNU Academic Honesty Policy

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. 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. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course.

For all student appeals, faculty and students should follow the procedures outlined in the University Catalog. See Adult Undergraduate Academic and General PoliciesLinks to an external site. for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

During the first week of class, you will be asked to submit an Academic Honesty Verification Statement. Submitting the statement is a requirement of this course. By submitting the Academic Honesty Verification Statement, you will be verifying all assignments completed in this course were completed by you. Carefully review the Academic Honesty Statement below.

Statement: "In submitting this form, I am verifying all the assignments in this course will be completed by me and will be my own work."

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

You are allowed to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini Pro 1.5, GrammarlyGo, Perplexity, etc) to generate ideas, but you are not allowed to use AI tools to generate content (text, video, audio, images) that will end up in any work submitted to be graded for this course. If you have any doubts about using AI, please gain permission from the instructor.

PLNU Academic Accommodations Policy

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center (EAC@pointloma.edu or 619-849-2486). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will work with the student to create an Accommodation Plan (AP) that outlines allowed accommodations. The EAC makes accommodations available to professors at the student's request.

PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course. Accommodations are not retroactive, so clarifying with the professor at the outset is one of the best ways to promote positive academic outcomes.

Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to ensure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student's responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC. Students cannot assume that because they had accommodations in the past, their eligibility at PLNU is automatic. All determinations at PLNU must go through the EAC process. This is to protect the privacy of students with disabilities who may not want to disclose this information and are not asking for any special accommodations.

Language and Belonging

Point Loma Nazarene University faculty are committed to helping create a safe and hospitable learning environment for all students. As Christian scholars, we are keenly aware of the power of language and believe in treating others with dignity. As such, it is important that our language be equitable, inclusive, and prejudice-free. Inclusive/Bias-free language is the standard outlined by all major academic style guides, including MLA, APA, and Chicago, and it is the expected norm in university-level work. Good writing and speaking do not use unsubstantiated or irrelevant generalizations about personal qualities such as age, disability, economic class, ethnicity, marital status, parentage, political or religious beliefs, race, gender, sex, or sexual orientation. Inclusive language also avoids using stereotypes or terminology that demeans persons or groups based on age, disability, class, ethnicity, gender, race, language, or national origin. Respectful use of language is particularly important when referring to those outside of the religious and lifestyle commitments of those in the PLNU community. By working toward precision and clarity of

language, we mark ourselves as serious and respectful scholars, and we model the Christ-like quality of hospitality.

If you (or someone you know) have experienced a bias incident regarding language, you can find more information on reporting and resources at www.pointloma.edu/bias.

Sexual Misconduct and Discrimination

Point Loma Nazarene University faculty are committed to helping create a safe learning environment for all students. If you (or someone you know) have experienced any form of sexual discrimination or misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available through the Title IX Office. Please be aware that under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, it is required to disclose information about such misconduct to the Title IX Office.

If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact Counseling Services at counselingservices@pointloma.edu or find a list of campus pastors at pointloma.edu/title-ix.

If you (or someone you know) have experienced other forms of discrimination or bias, you can find more information on reporting and resources at www.pointloma.edu/bias

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Course Modality Definitions

1. Online Courses: These are courses with class meetings where all instruction and interaction are fully online.
    1. Synchronous Courses: At least one class meeting takes place at a designated time.
    2. Asynchronous Courses: All class meetings are asynchronous.
2. Hybrid Courses: These are courses with class meetings that take place both in the classroom and online synchronously and/or asynchronously.
3. In-Person Courses: These are courses that meet in person with the instructor and students in a physical classroom setting. With approval by the area dean, this may include up to 25% of qualified class interactions through a Learning Management System (such as Canvas).

PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. Therefore, regular attendance and participation in each course are minimal requirements.

If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions, the faculty member will issue a written warning of de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university withdrawal date or, after that date, receive an "F" grade.

Students who anticipate being absent for an entire week of a course should contact the instructor in advance for approval and make arrangements to complete the required coursework and/or alternative assignments assigned at the discretion of the instructor. Acceptance of late work is at the discretion of the instructor and does not waive attendance requirements.

Refer to Academic PoliciesLinks to an external site. for additional details.

Synchronous Attendance/Participation Definition

For synchronous courses that have specific scheduled meeting times (including in-person, hybrid, and synchronous online courses), absences are counted from the first official meeting of the class regardless of the date of the student's enrollment. For courses with specific attendance requirements, those requirements are outlined in the course syllabus.

Note: For synchronous courses with an online asynchronous week, refer to the Online Asynchronous Class Attendance policy listed below.

Use of Technology

In order to be successful in the online or hybrid environment, you'll need to meet the minimum technology and system requirements; please refer to the *Technology and System Requirements* information. Additionally, students are required to have headphone speakers, microphone, or webcams compatible with their computer available to use. Please note that any course with online proctored exams requires a computer with a camera (tablets are not compatible nor allowable) to complete exams online.

Problems with technology do not relieve you of the responsibility of participating, turning in your assignments, or completing your class work.

GPS Academic Resources

PLNU offers the following free academic resources virtually for Graduate Professional Studies (GPS) Students. Visit myPLNU through the links below for more information.

- **The GPS Writing Center offers:**
    - **Zoom Writers Workshops** offered each quad on a variety of helpful topics
    - **One-to-one appointments** with the Writing Coach
    - **Microlearning YouTube Video Library** for helpful tips anytime
- **Research Help Guide** to help you start your research
    - The physical office is located on the third floor of the **Mission Valley Regional Center**Links to an external site. off the student lounge
- **Academic Writing Resources Course:** Found on your Canvas Dashboard, this course is non-credit with 24/7 access, no time limits, and self-paced content. **Watch a quick video run-through**Links to an external site. and take time now to explore!
- **Grammarly**Links to an external site.: Students have unlimited FREE access to Grammarly for Education, a trusted tool designed to help enhance writing skills by providing real-time feedback, identifying areas for improvement, and providing suggestions. Grammarly's Generative AI is NOT available with our student accounts.
- **Tutoring**: Students have access to 24/7 live or scheduled subject tutoring through Tutor.com, including a Paper Drop-Off Service with feedback within 12 hours.

Assignments-at-a-Glance

The course summary below lists our assignments and their due dates. Click on any assignment to review it.

Course Summary:

Course Summary

Date	Details
Mon Jul 7, 2025	Page WK1 | Course Intro & Overview
	Quiz Academic Honesty Verification Statement
Thu Jul 10, 2025	Discussion Topic WK1 Video Discussion | Getting to Know You
Mon Jul 14, 2025	Page WK2 | Overview & Looking Ahead at Final Project
Wed Jul 16, 2025	Discussion Topic WK2 | Mens Rea Discussion
Thu Jul 17, 2025	Discussion Topic WK2 Discussion | Death Penalty: Justice or Morally Wrong?
Fri Jul 18, 2025	Quiz WK2 | Quiz
Sun Jul 20, 2025	Assignment WK2 | Choose a Crime Assignment
Mon Jul 21, 2025	Page WK3 | Overview
Wed Jul 23, 2025	Discussion Topic WK3 Small Group Discussion | Synthesis of Reading
Thu Jul 24, 2025	Discussion Topic WK3 | Choose your Defense Discussion
Fri Jul 25, 2025	Quiz WK3 | Quiz

Course Summary

Date	Details
Sun Jul 27, 2025	Assignment WK3 | Defenses to Crimes Assignment
Mon Jul 28, 2025	Page WK4 | Overview
Wed Jul 30, 2025	Discussion Topic WK4 | Felony Murder Rule Discussion
Thu Jul 31, 2025	Discussion Topic WK4 | Murder or Manslaughter Discussion
Fri Aug 1, 2025	Quiz WK4 | Quiz
Sun Aug 3, 2025	Assignment WK4 | Physician-Assisted Suicide Assignment
Mon Aug 4, 2025	Page WK5 | Overview
	Assignment WK5 | Mock Trial Observation Assignment
Thu Aug 7, 2025	Quiz Mid-Course Survey
	Discussion Topic WK5 | Crimes Against Property & People Discussion
Sat Aug 9, 2025	Assignment Extra Credit (3 Questions - Youtube Video) Due by Saturday
Mon Aug 11, 2025	Page WK6 | Overview

Course Summary

Date	Details
	Page Mock Trial Additional Guidance
Wed Aug 13, 2025	Discussion Topic WK6 | Small Group | Synthesis of Reading Discussion
Thu Aug 14, 2025	Discussion Topic WK6 | Public Order and Morality Discussion
Sun Aug 17, 2025	Quiz Midterm
Mon Aug 18, 2025	Page WK7 | Overview
Wed Aug 20, 2025	Discussion Topic WK7 | Trial Components Discussion
Mon Aug 25, 2025	Page WK8 | Overview
Wed Aug 27, 2025	Assignment WK8 | Mock Trial Simulation (VIDEO-ONLY)
Fri Aug 29, 2025	Assignment Course Evaluation