

CRIMINAL LAW CLINIC

SPRING SEMESTER, 2026 SYLLABUS

Instructor information

Instructor

Prof. Chuck Hasse

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Office location & hours

Seminar Room,
Tuesday, 4:00-5:50 p.m.

General information

Description

This two-component course is a two-unit live-client/courtroom clinic, and a two-unit seminar. The live-client clinic is conducted in collaboration with the offices under the Orange County Public Defender, and will take place at their offices and in the courtroom. Students who enroll in the course can practice law under faculty supervision pursuant to the State Bar's Rules Governing the Practical Training of Law Students. Students in the clinic will participate in representing clients on a range of matters such as interviewing, case development, issue spotting, motion writing, and courtroom advocacy. Students who appear in court will be under the direct supervision of the clinic faculty. Weekly seminars are a mix of lectures, exercises, and discussions related to criminal defense advocacy. Performance in the clinic component can improve the grade for the seminar component. **It is estimated that, on average, the assigned reading and other classroom preparation should require four or more hours outside of class for each class session.**

Required text

- CEB (on-line Secondary Sources - Criminal Law):
 - California Criminal Law Procedure and Practice
 - Defending Your Client in a Misdemeanor Case
- CALCRIM (will be provided)
- California Penal and Evidence Code (will be provided)
- Real case files (will be provided)

Course schedule

Note: Working on criminal cases is a fluid process, depending on our interactions with judges, prosecutors, clients, or all of the above. Therefore, a topic on this syllabus might be rescheduled if an issue becomes more salient to one of our cases. If this happens, I will provide the class with as much advance notice as possible.

Week	Topic	Reading	Exercises
January 13	What it means to be a public defender. Duties and ethical obligations	Arraignment outline (provided by Prof. Hasse CEB Criminal Law: §§ 6.1- 6.5, 6.7-6.8, 6.12-6.15, 6.17-6.24, 6.27-6.29	<i>Arraigning your client.</i>
January 20	Guest Speaker: <i>Director of the Alternate Public Defenders, Derek Bercher</i> Common defense themes Jury Instructions that form the foundation of your defense	CALCRIMS: 220, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 315, 332, 333, 350, 351, 355, 358, 370, 372, 3470, 3471, 3472.	<i>Round table discussion on jury instructions.</i>
January 27	Jury Instructions Deep Dive	Read the penal code section and then find the matching CALCRIM instruction for the following offenses: Penal Code §§ 422, 314, 273.5, 148(a), 240-243, Health and Safety Code §§ 11550, 11377 Vehicle Code § 23152(a) and (b)	<i>Breathing life into the jury instructions.</i>

Week	Topic	Reading	Exercises
February 3	<p>Guest Speaker: Member of the Orange County Public Defender's.</p> <p>Gathering information: Discovery from the DA (Brady, Pitchess);</p> <p>Gathering information from the client</p>	<p>CEB Criminal Law §§: 11.1, 11.3-11.11, 11.19-11.22.</p>	<p><i>The attorney-client interview and how to gain trust.</i></p>
February 10	<p>Negotiations, Diversion, Documenting your file</p> <p>Misdemeanors vs Felonies Upgrades Wobblers</p>	<p>CEB Defending Your Client in a Misdemeanor Case: Step 15 - Obtaining Discovery Step 35 - Diversion Step 36 - Civil Compromise Step 32 - Pre-trial Conference Step 33 - Negotiations and Dispositions</p> <p>Re-read Penal Code §§ 422, 273.5, 245 (a) and (b) and matching CALCRIM's. Prof. Hasse's preliminary hearing cheat sheet</p>	<p><i>Real case round table.</i></p> <p><i>Exercise: Reading the Penal Code - spotting the language that tells you that a charge is a felony/misdemeanor.</i></p>
February 17	No class - Holiday		

Week	Topic	Reading	Exercises
February 24	Voir Dire - Part 1	CEB Defending Your Client in a Misdemeanor Case: Steps 44-45 - Voir Dire Real case file review	<i>Mock Jury Selection - Part 1</i>
March 3	Voir Dire - Part 2	Real case file review	<i>Mock Jury Selection - Part 2</i>
March 10	No class - Spring Break		
March 17	Opening Statements	CEB Defending Your Client in a Misdemeanor Case: Step 46 - Opening Statement Real case file review	<i>Developing an opening.</i>
March 24	Direct-Examinations	CEB Defending Your Client in a Misdemeanor Case: Step 50- Direct Examination Real case file review	<i>Real case round table.</i>
March 31	Cross-Examinations	CEB Defending Your Client in a Misdemeanor Case: Step 48 - Cross Examination Real case file review	<i>Real case round table.</i>

Week	Topic	Reading	Exercises
April 7	Objections	CEB Defending Your Client in a Misdemeanor Case: Step 47 - Making Evidentiary Objections Prof. Hasse's Objections Cheat Sheet	<i>Objecting in real time: Matching your gut with your brain</i>
April 14	Closing Arguments - Part 1	CEB Defending Your Client in a Misdemeanor Case: Step 52 - Final Argument	<i>Mock closing on a real case - Part 1</i>
April 21	Closing Arguments - Part 2		<i>Mock closing on a real case - Part 2</i>
April 28	Mock Trial Exercises.		

DISABILITY SERVICES STATEMENT:

Western State College of Law provides accommodations to qualified students with disabilities. The Disabilities Services Office assists qualified students with disabilities in acquiring reasonable and appropriate accommodations and in supporting equal access to services, programs, and activities at Western State College of Law.

To seek reasonable accommodations, a student must contact Senior Assistant Dean Donna Espinoza, Student Services Director and Disabilities Services Coordinator. Dean Espinoza's phone number and email address are: (714) 459-1117; despinoza@wsulaw.edu. When seeking accommodations, a student should notify Dean Espinoza of her or his specific limitations and, if known, her or his specific requested accommodations. Students who seek accommodations will be asked to supply medical documentation of the need for accommodation. Classroom accommodations are not retroactive, but are effective only upon the student sharing approved accommodations with the instructor or professor. Therefore, students are encouraged to request accommodations as early as feasible with Dean Espinoza to allow for time to gather necessary documentation. If you have a concern or complaint in this regard, please notify Dean Espinoza; or please notify Dean Marisa Cianciarulo at mcianciarulo@wsulaw.edu or (714) 459-1168. Complaints will be handled in accordance with the College of Law's "Policy against Discrimination and Harassment."

Western State College of Law - Programmatic Learning Outcomes

Western State College of Law's curriculum is designed so that every student achieves a level of competency prior to graduation in each of the eight Programmatic Learning Outcomes listed below:

(1) Doctrinal Knowledge

Students will demonstrate knowledge of substantive and procedural law in the core curriculum subjects, including Contracts, Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure, Torts, Real Property, Business Association, Evidence, Civil Procedures, Constitutional Law, Estates, Community Property, Remedies, and Professional Responsibility.

(2) Practice Skills

Students will demonstrate the development of other law practice skills. Each student's chosen outcomes within this category will be varied based on the student's particular interests, coursework and work experiences. They may include, but are not limited to, the following topics: oral presentation and advocacy; interviewing; counseling; client service and business development; negotiations, mediation, arbitration, or other alternate dispute resolution methods; advanced legal research and writing (excluding purely academic papers and the first four units earned in introductory first-year legal research and writing class); applied legal writing such as drafting contracts, pleadings, other legal instruments; law practice management or the use of technology in law practice; cultural competency; collaboration or project management; financial analysis, such as accounting, budgeting project management, and valuation; cost benefit analysis in administrative agencies; use of technology, data analyses, or predictive coding; business strategy and behavior; pre-trial preparation, fact investigation, such as discovery, e-discovery, motion practice, assessing evidence, or utilizing experts; trial practice; professional civility and applied ethics; a law clinic that includes a classroom component; or a legal externship that includes a classroom component.

(3) Legal Analysis

Students will demonstrate the ability to identify the factual and legal issues implicated by a fact pattern and to appropriately use cases (including identifying the salient features of an appropriate precedent case, identifying legally significant similarities or differences between the precedent case and a fact pattern and explaining why those are legally significant) and rules (including the ability to connect legally significant facts in a fact pattern to the rule) to predict how a court would decide the issue. Students will also demonstrate the ability to identify and evaluate the public policies of a precedent case or rule, and be able to evaluate how public policy can impact the application of a rule to the legal issue.

(4) Legal Research

Students will demonstrate the ability to locate relevant legal authority using a variety of book and electronic resources, and to properly cite to such legal authority.

(5) Communication

Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate both orally and in writing in a manner appropriate to a particular task to effectively convey the author or speaker's ideas. This includes audience sensitivity in written and oral communication (the ability to adopt a tone, style and level of detail appropriate to the needs, knowledge and expertise of the audience); and written communication basic proficiency (the ability to use the conventions of grammar, spelling, punctuation, diction and usage appropriate to the task and sufficient to convey effectively the author's ideas).

(6) Advocacy of Legal Argument

Students will demonstrate the ability, in both oral and written formats, to evaluate the legal, economic and social strengths and weaknesses of a case and use case and statutory authority as well as public policy to persuade others. Making policy-based arguments includes the ability to identify and evaluate the public policies of a precedent case or rule and their implications, and be able to assert such appropriate arguments to support a particular application or distinction of a precedent case to a legal controversy or a particular resolution of the application of a rule to the legal controversy.

(7) Client Sensitivity and Cultural Competency

Students will demonstrate an awareness of clients' needs and goals, including a sensitivity to clients' background and circumstances (including, but not limited to, socio-economic, gender, race, ethnicity, educational, disability and/or religious background(s)), the ability to make decisions that reflect an appropriate focus on those needs and goals, and awareness that cultural issues may affect the relevance of facts and application of the law.

(8) Legal Ethics

Students will demonstrate the ability to identify ethical issues in law practice contexts and make appropriate decisions to resolve such issues.