**Criminal Law**

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“The Clearest way to show what the rule of law means to us in everyday life if to recall what has happened when there is no rule of law.” –Dwight D. Eisenhower

**Overarching Course Goal:** To strengthen student knowledge, skills, and confidence for survival in our law-saturated society through increasing their legal knowledge in the criminal justice system.

**Course Description:** This one-semester, **dual credit** course in conjunction with Dawson community college, will focus on the court system, lawyers, the criminal justice process (investigation, pre-trial, trial and sentencing), and criminal law. Students will participate in activities designed to expose them to the “real world” of law and government and come away with an understanding of the various areas in which the law applies. Each phase of the class is designed to assist students achieve:

* **Knowledge:** Society is full of rules—laws—that order our civic lives. Without knowledge of these rules, navigating successfully through life is impossible. For example, if a young person does not understand what the text of a lease means, he or she may not be able to avoid violating its provisions or may not know that he is entitled to a safe and secure home.
* **Skills:** Success after high school requires a variety of competencies and foundational skills including the ability to work as a team, negotiate to arrive at a decision, organize and evaluate information, communicate effectively, think creatively, listen to others, teach and help others, identify problems and generate multiple solutions.
* **Community Resources:** Community leaders, including; lawyers, judges, insurance agents, a landlord, a car dealer, , etc. will regularly attend class. Their involvement will provide accurate information about policies as well as additional legal content and procedure that go beyond the theory of the textbook.

**Goals and Objectives:**

(1) to provide a practical understanding of law and the legal system useful to students in their everyday lives;

(2) to improve understanding of the fundamental principles and values of our Constitution, laws and legal system;

(3) to promote awareness of current legal issues and controversies;

(4) to encourage effective citizen participation in our legal system;

(5) to bring about greater justice, tolerance, and fairness;

(6) to develop a willingness and an ability to resolve disputes through informal and, where necessary, formal resolution mechanisms;

(7) to improve basic skills including critical thinking and reasoning, communication, observation, and problem solving;  
(8) to examine and clarify attitudes toward the role that law, lawyers, law enforcement officers and the legal system play in our society; and

(9) to expose students to the many vocational opportunities within the legal system.

**Text:** Street Law: A Course in Practical Law: Glencoe 9th Edition 2016

**“Uncoachable kids become Unemployable Adults; let your kids get used to someone being tough on them. It’s life, get over it.” -Patrick Murphy, Alabama Softball   
  
Class Philosophy:** Like a coach, a teacher’s job is more than teaching the A, B, C’s and 1, 2, 3’s. Consequently, like a coach, I will harass, cajole, compliment, critique, and do whatever is necessary to not just work on improving your content knowledge but to motivate you to become a democratic citizen worthy of calling yourself a Sidney High School graduate. If I am tough on you, it is because I see potential.   
 **Class Expectations:** Can be described as coming to class prepared and ready to be productive. This involves paying attention and taking notes, participating in class discussions, asking and answering questions, and by positively contributing to class on a regular basis. Participation in class discussions will not only help you learn more about the topic being covered but will also makes the class more enjoyable. Take ownership of the class and direct the class towards the type of materials and topics you would like to discuss and find enjoyable. This does not involve misusing your phone, sleeping in class, being disruptive, talking when I am talking, etc. We will try to work bell to bell. Please do not close your book early and anticipate me finishing a lecture, etc. I’ll try not to waste your time if you do not waste mine and your peers.   
 **Makeup Work:** If you are going to be gone, or were gone, it is YOUR responsibility to collect your homework & worksheets and/or plan to make up tests/quizzes. I will not chase you around to get you to fulfill your responsibilities.

**General Class Rules:** Cell Phones, Bathroom, Pop and Drink, packing up early (#1 Pet Peeve), etc.

**Quarter Grading:** Each quarter’s grade will account for one-half of your overall semester grade and will be based on a variety each of the following listed below that will ALL be categorized together.

* **Daily Work/Book Problems/Chapter Worksheets:** We will regularly go over chapter problems and worksheets that give actual and made up legal scenarios to test your knowledge of the material covered in class and through the textbook. These scenarios are designed to reinforce information from the chapter and provide an opportunity to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Often, these will be completed with a group or a partner with whole class discussion of the problems afterwards. At the conclusion of those discussions in which students will grade their own assignments, the graded assignment will be turned in to be added into the infinite campus gradebook. Please make sure to keep these graded assignments in case I accidentally input the wrong grade.
* **Guest Speakers:** For each chapter that we cover, we will try and bring at least one expert that is currently working in the arena we are discussing. You will have a worksheet to fill out while the speaker presents and it is requested that you ask questions and participate during the presentation. If you are absent during the presentation, you will complete an alternative worksheet as a replacement assignment that covers the material discussed in the presentation.
* **iCivics Games/Podcasts/Annenberg Videos/OJ Mini Series/Other:** These media additions to the curriculum are designed to enhance understanding of material that we are learning in class. For the iCivics games, we will print of certificates of completion for a grade and there will be worksheets to complete for the videos,or podcasts.
* **Law and Motion/Trials/Justice Center Visits**: Each week, throughout the calendar year there are law and motion days at the justice center. These are open to the public and include initial appearance for people accused of crimes as well as scheduling for trial. Luckily, we have a district court judge who often schedule earlier starts so that we can come observe what actual happens at the beginning of the criminal process. Additionally, the sheriff’s department has historically given the class a tour of the justice center while Judge Bidegaray has given a tour of the Courtroom, Jury Room, and her chambers. These class trips will require you to find a way to and from the justice center.
* **Tests:** These exams will evaluate how well you know the information from the unit(s)/chapter(s) and will be a combination of objective (identification) and subjective (short answer) questions. These exams will reflect the unit completed which will include the textbook material, guest speaker information, and any other enrichments (videos, podcasts, etc.) Commonly, notes and worksheets will be allowed to be used on the tests, so make sure you take notes, ensure you get the class notes when absent, and save your papers that are handed out to study from and use on the tests. **Test grades will be put in the gradebook at double the value (usually the % grade)**.

**Semester Grading:** Each quarter’s grade will account for one-half of the semester grade. There will be no semester exam but instead a final unit test that will be the last grade of the second quarter. The two quarters averaged together will comprise the final grade for the semester.

**Class Expectations**

* **Class Participation**: Active participation will be required of students. Interaction during class discussions and with guest speakers will not only help you learn more about the topic being covered but will also make the class more enjoyable. Take ownership of the class, challenge yourself to become a better public speaker. Lastly, while participating in discussions please follow the class rules especially in regards to respecting your fellow classmates and instructors
* **Class Preparation:** If you forget your notes, assignment, etc. in your locker, car or anywhere else, you can either take a tardy and retrieve the item or either not use the material or receive a zero.
* **Collaborative Learning:** Most assignments can be worked on individually, with a partner, or in a small group. Unless otherwise stated, the group will need to only fill out one response to be graded. Working with others is strongly encouraged as it benefits in the learning process and gives a more well-rounded view of often controversial or “no correct answer” issues. Stay on task and keep idle chit chat to a minimum.
* **Homework:** The expectation is we will use the class time effectively and stay on task mitigating homework to as little as necessary since much of our classwork will be collaborative. **NOTE: LATE WORK IS NOT ACCEPTED**

**Questions/Comments/Concerns:** We will have many difficult discussions in class in which many classmates and guest speakers will say things you will disagree with or find uncomfortable. Understand that although I will work to make sure the conversations are civil and promote learning, I will not treat you as a fragile teacup. I like to refer to these conversations a “productive disagreements”. Please let me know if you find any issues with these conversations or if you have any questions, comments, or concerns throughout the course of the semester. I will be more than willing to discuss any problems that you might have concerning the class and my door is always open to discuss any problem before or after class/school. I cannot help you if you choose not to make the effort to visit with me! I appreciate any and all feedback that I can receive and I hope you enjoy the class and school year.