CJS 305
Rules of Evidence

Course Description

This course entails the study of statutes, constitutional provisions, and case decisions affecting the admissibility of evidence in criminal trials. The course is introductory in the sense that it is intended for students who have no legal background. Students will acquire experience in reading and construing state criminal statutes and will analyze decisions of state and/or federal courts. Students will acquire a working knowledge of the Federal Rules of Evidence because they are in use in the federal courts as well as in the courts of many states. Students will be assigned four case briefs which will be utilized during class discussions where the instructor will teach via the Socratic method, and hand in for a writing assignment grade as well.

Course Objectives

1. The development of critical thinking and various analytical skills;
2. To make the student knowledgeable in the history and philosophy of the rules of evidence in American jurisprudence;
3. Upon completion of this course you should be familiar with the following concepts:
   - 4th, 5th & 6th Amendments applications to the rules of evidence
   - Hearsay and its exceptions
   - Direct/Circumstantial Evidence
   - Presumptions/Inferences
   - Physical Evidence
   - Scientific Evidence
   - Judicial Notice and Privileges
   - Chain of Custody
   - Witness Testimony
   - Identification Evidence
4. The ability to properly brief a case opinion
5. The development of a significant legal vocabulary