



CHELMSFORD HIGH SCHOOL

Introduction to Criminal Justice SYLLABUS 2023-2024

COURSE DESCRIPTION

INTRODUCTION TO CRIMINAL JUSTICE CP 5 Credits (#36224), Grade 10, 11, 12 Introduction to Criminal Justice is a one semester course where students will study the legal, judicial, and correctional systems of the United States. The class will focus on the foundation of the U.S. Constitution, fundamental legal principles, court procedures, civil and criminal laws, and the laws which impact our daily lives. The goal of the course is to provide students with practical and problem-solving skills that will develop in the students understanding of key legal concepts and their ability to be civic and legal minded citizens in a law-saturated society. The course will implement the use of case studies, mock trials, guest speakers, small group exercises, and hands-on activities.

This course may be offered for Dual Enrollment Credit with Middlesex Community College.

Prerequisite(s): None

REQUIRED TEXTS

Criminal Justice in Action – The Core 9th edition. ISBN 9781337500876

Arbetman, Lee P. and O'Brien, Edward L. *Street Law: A Course in Practical Law: Eighth Edition*. The McGraw-Hill Companies. 2010. ISBN 978-0-07-879983-9

COURSE GOALS: At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Describe the three major components of the Criminal Justice System: police, courts and corrections, and explain the role, functions, and responsibilities of each area.
2. Compare and contrast criminal and civil law and the due process and crime control models of criminal justice and identify the major crime causation theories and explain their impact on criminal justice policy.
3. Discuss the impact of bias, discrimination, prejudice, and ethics on the CJ system and society.
4. Form a research topic, pose research questions, evaluate potential research sources and use technology as a research and information gathering tool.
5. Develop and produce writings on criminal justice topics that demonstrate knowledge of content and ability to support individual opinions.

Students will be expected to think and communicate effectively. Throughout this course, students should: read information critically to develop understanding of concepts, topics and issues. write clearly, factually, persuasively and creatively, speak clearly, factually, persuasively and creatively using a variety of technology/media to obtain, organize and communicate information and solve problems, conduct research to interpret issues or solve complex problems using a variety of data and information sources.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

COURSE STANDARDS

Unit I: Crime in America

Unit 2: Introduction to Criminal Law

Unit 3: Crimes Against the Person

Unit 4: Crimes Against Property

Unit 5: Overview of Law Enforcement Careers

Unit 6: The Court System

Unit 7: Criminal Defense

Unit 8: Criminal Justice Process – The Investigation

Unit 9: Criminal Justice Process – Proceedings Before the Trial

Unit 10: Criminal Justice Process – The Trial

Unit 11: Criminal Justice Process – Sentencing and Corrections

Unit 12: Juvenile Justice

Unit 13: Law and Terrorism

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Chelmsford High School is committed to supporting the success and well-being of all students, regardless of varying abilities and levels of adaptive skills. The Special Education office provides services and resources to empower each student to attain their highest level of academic success and learning independence.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

At Chelmsford High School, students are expected to maintain high moral and ethical standards, as exemplified by the final sentence of our mission statement: *“A spirit of respect is fostered, as members take responsibility for their actions and acknowledge the rights and differences of others.”* (CHS Mission Statement)

Students should respect themselves, other students, staff members and the school. The acts of cheating and plagiarism violate expectations that students will exhibit respectful, ethical behavior.

[The Academic Honor Code](#) exists to address the issues of cheating and plagiarism.

GRADING POLICIES

Please connect with individual teachers for specific information regarding grading. Students will be able to monitor academic progress biweekly through X2/ASPEN.

Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the academic support programs and services (such as PRIDE Block, after-school help, etc.) available to them to help ensure and support success. Information about these services can be found by accessing Clever and speaking with your classroom teacher.

COURSE SKILLS

The following skills are addressed in this course:

1. Developing questions that guide inquiry and research
2. Analysis of effective argument and critical thinking from the historic record
3. Expressing oneself clearly and effectively through writing and speaking
4. Critical analysis of documents, maps, graphs, and other graphic data

COURSE OUTLINE

Unit I: Crime in America

- A crime as a serious violation of a law established to protect people and maintain an orderly society.
- Factors such as age, gender and location increase the likelihood of becoming a victim of crime.
- Causes of crime: poverty, lack of education, unemployment, gang activity, substance abuse, and inadequate police protection, personal decisions.
- Authorities believe that working to end these problems would lead to a decrease in crime rates.

Unit 2: Introduction to Criminal Law

- Crimes are characterized by three distinct elements: the act itself; a guilty state of mind, meaning the act was intentionally, knowingly, or willfully, and a motive, or the reason for performing the act.
- Each of these three elements must be proven at trial to obtain a conviction.
- Criminal laws at both the federal and state levels cover different classes of crimes.
- Felonies are serious crimes punishable by more than one year in prison.
- Misdemeanors are less serious and can result in one year or less in prison.

Unit 3: Crimes Against the Person

- Crimes against the person are crimes directed at people.
- Such crimes include homicide, kidnapping, assault, battery and rape.
- All of these are serious crimes and a defendant found guilty of any one of them could receive a harsh sentence.
- State laws define the elements of these crimes quite specifically.

Unit 4: Crimes Against Property

- Crimes against property are defined if property is destroyed, such as arson and vandalism, and crimes in which property is taken against the will of the owner, such as larceny.
- Cybercrimes such as identity theft and cyberstalking are also included, along with laws and strategies that are used to prevent and address computer crimes.

Unit 5: Overview of Law Enforcement Careers

- Lawyers and enforcement personnel are essential in helping citizens navigate the legal system.

- When does someone need a lawyer, how to find the right one, how to work most effectively with a lawyer
- The professional and ethical rules lawyers must follow, and how people become lawyers.

Unit 6: The Court System

- The United States judiciary consists of parallel systems of federal, tribal and state courts.
- Each of the 50 states has its own system of courts whose powers are derived from its state constitutions and laws.
- The federal court system consists of the Supreme Court and lower federal courts established by Congress.
- Federal courts derive their powers from the U.S. Constitution and federal laws.

Unit 7: Criminal Defense

- For a conviction to occur in a criminal case, two requirements must be met.
 - The prosecutor must establish beyond a reasonable doubt that a defendant committed the act in question and the defendant committed the act with the required intent.
 - The defendant does not have to be present at the defense.
 - He or she can simply force the government to prove its case.
 - Several defenses are available to defendants in criminal cases.

Unit 8: Criminal Justice Process – The Investigation

- The criminal justice process includes everything that happens to a person from arrest through prosecution and conviction to release from control by the state.
- This chapter deals with the investigation phase, which includes arrest, search and seizure, interrogation and conviction.
- To build a case against the accused, the police gather information about the crime, and collect evidence against the suspected criminals.
- This chapter also outlines the constitutional rights of suspects during the investigation phase, including how the U.S. Constitution limits what the police can do.

Unit 9: Criminal Justice Process – Proceedings Before the Trial

- After the arrest of a criminal suspect, but before the criminal case reaches the courtroom, several preliminary proceedings take place.
- Most of these proceedings are standard for every case.
- Depending on the specific circumstances and the result of these preliminary proceedings, the charges may be dropped or the defendant may plead guilty.
- If either of these two things occurs, there will be no trial.

Unit 10: Criminal Justice Process – The Trial

- Many of the basic rights set forth in the U.S. Constitution apply to people who have been accused of a crime.
- Accused people are entitled to a public jury trial without undue delay.

- They are entitled to be informed of their rights and of the charges against them, to confront and cross-examine witnesses, to require witnesses to testify on their behalf, to refuse to testify against themselves, and to be represented by an attorney.
- These rights together constitute the overall right to a fair trial.

Unit 11: Criminal Justice Process – Sentencing and Corrections

- Sentencing and corrections are the final phase of the criminal investigation process.
- If found guilty, a defendant will be sentenced by a judge or a jury, depending on individual state law.
- The sentence is the most critical decision in the process, as it can determine a defendant's fate for years or even life.
- Several sentencing options exist, ranging from a suspended sentence and probation to imprisonment or even death.
- Criminal sentences serve a number of purposes, including retribution, deterrence, rehabilitation and incapacitation.

Unit 12: Juvenile Justice

- Juveniles who break the law are treated differently than adults.
- Today, there is a separate justice system for juvenile offenders, although in some cases juveniles can still be tried as adults.
- Sentencing options for juvenile offenders range from counseling and probation to time spent in juvenile correctional facilities.

Unit 13: Law and Terrorism

- The terrorist attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001, and concerns about future attacks led President George W. Bush, Congress, state legislators, and mayors of U.S. cities to institute new laws and policies to protect Americans.
- The “war on terror” is a source of continuing debate and controversy.
- Civil liberties groups and others claim that many provisions of these new laws are not justified in terms of security and therefore go too far in restricting individual rights when the United States is not officially at war.
- Supporters of the new laws state the danger from terrorism is even worse than a declared war because the enemy is hidden.

This syllabus and course outline are subject to change as Chelmsford High School seeks to continually improve the learning experiences for all students.

“We foster PRIDE* in our pursuit of excellence.”

PRIDE refers to our five core values – Perseverance, Respect, Integrity, Dedication, and Empathy. These five pillars represent our points of emphasis in supporting the development of quality students and quality citizens.