

Skyline College

Official Course Outline

Date: August 2008

1. **TITLE:**

ADMJ 106 – Legal Aspects of Evidence

3.0 units. Three lecture hours per week

Recommended: Eligibility for ENGL 836

2. **COURSE CLASSIFICATION:**

Credit course applicable to the Associate Degree, and to the Criminal Justice Certificate

3. **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS:**

Catalog Description:

Origin, development, philosophy and constitutional basis of evidence; constitutional and procedural considerations affecting arrest, search and seizure; kinds and degrees of evidence and rules governing admissibility; judicial decisions and interpreting individual rights and case studies. *Also listed as LEGL 306.*

Schedule of Classes Description:

Types and degrees of criminal evidence; rules of evidence and admissibility in court; laws of arrest, search and seizure. *Also listed as LEGL 306.*

4. **COURSE JUSTIFICATION:**

This is a transfer course to fulfill General Education requirements of the Associate Degree (F3), and is transferable as follows: CSU. This course is a required course in the Administration of Justice Program curriculum for students seeking a Criminal Justice Certificate.

5. **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLO'S):**

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate a basic knowledge of the statutory, constitutional, and judicial rules which govern the admissibility of evidence in a criminal prosecution, with particular emphasis on the legal aspects of California and federal rules of evidence.
- Compare and contrast various important legal issues concerning legal aspects of criminal evidence, such as direct versus circumstantial evidence, best versus secondary evidence, types of testimony, types of physical evidence, and varying degrees and standards of proof.
- Analyze and assess criminal cases and circumstances, and from the facts appropriately articulate the legal evidentiary issues involved, from the perspectives of both the prosecution and the defense.

6. **SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:**

To assist students in reaching the goals outlined in the course SLO's, this course will include:

- Study of the legal definition, purpose, and sources of evidence and evidence law; and the applicability of the rules of evidence in the administration of justice.
- Exploration of the basic types of evidence, and the ways evidence is presented as proof in court.

- Analysis of the 4th, 5th, and 6th Amendments and their applicability to the legal aspects of evidence, such as in witness testimony, search and seizure, and legal representation issues.
- Discussion of the tests of evidence admissibility, such as relevancy, materiality, competency, and legality.
- Examination of the burden, degree, and standards of proof in various aspects of criminal cases, such as in proving guilt, corpus delicti, legality of a search, capacity, insanity, and other issues.
- Evaluation of such important evidentiary areas as witness privilege, hearsay, search & seizure, self-incrimination, and suspect identification.

7. COURSE CONTENT:

- Introduction to Evidence
- Ways of Presenting Evidence
- Testimony of Witnesses
- Writings
- Material Objects and Physical Evidence
- Relevancy and Materiality
- Competency and Credibility
- Burden of Proof
- Witness Privileges
- Hearsay Evidence
- The Fourth Amendment (Search & Seizure)
- The Fifth Amendment (Miranda and Testimonial Evidence)
- The Sixth Amendment (Counsel and Legal Representation)
- Methods of Identification (Lineups and Showups)

8. REPRESENTATIVE METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

Methods of instruction will include:

- Lectures on course lessons, text readings (25-50 pages assigned per week), and related topics, combined with class discussions to stimulate critical thinking and provide students with opportunities to demonstrate understanding of course material. Students are expected to take notes and engage in class and group discussions to maximize retention of the course material.
- Reviews of course related handouts, articles, illustrations, and current events to enhance the students' experience by exploring and applying material to a contemporary real-world setting.
- Audiovisual presentations which illustrate and enhance the concepts of topics covered in class.
- Tests, quizzes, research papers, and writing assignments to demonstrate comprehension of the course material through hands-on applications and written examinations.

Methods of instruction may also be augmented by:

- Practical demonstrations, displays, and in-class role-playing exercises, as applicable to the topic.
- Student interviews of criminal justice professionals and preparing a written report on the results.
- Guest speakers with expertise in various areas of criminal justice, to provide diverse and unique perspectives on a variety of controversial issues in their field.
- Field trips to law enforcement and other criminal justice agencies, courts, jails, and prisons.

- Individual student consultations, as necessary, to ensure that student learning is taking place.
- Practical work experience such as ride-alongs or other applicable site work to enhance learning.

9. ASSIGNMENTS:

Typical assignments:

- Research and Writing or Oral assignments about course related topics which demonstrate student knowledge, comprehension, and application skills, may include:
 - term papers, short papers, research papers, essay papers, and oral presentation reports.
 - reports on field interviews, site visits, observations, work performed, or film critiques.
- Case Study assignments to develop critical thinking and concept application, may include:
 - reviewing and critiquing Supreme Court, appellate court, and trial court cases.
 - responding to the questions, scenarios, or case studies included in text chapters.
- Tests and Quizzes, consisting of the written, oral, and/or practical application variety to assess comprehension of assigned readings, course content, and other related course activities.

10. EVALUATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE:

Typical methods of evaluation of student performance may include the following:

- Written examinations, such as quizzes, midterm exams, and final exams to demonstrate student understanding and proficiency skills concerning the material presented in the course.
- In-class and out of class assignments to demonstrate student ability to apply course concepts to assigned tasks utilizing comprehension, application, analysis, and critical thinking skills.
- Case study exercises to demonstrate student ability to integrate multiple concepts to solve realistic situations.
- Class discussions of course material to permit the exchange of ideas involving a variety of course related issues and concerns.
- Attendance and promptness, class citizenship and conduct, and participation and cooperation.
- Grading Method: Letter Grade.

11. RECOMMENDED or REQUIRED TEXT(S):

The recommended or required course textbook, selected at the discretion of the course instructor, may include (but is not limited to) the following suggested current editions on the subject matter:

- *California Criminal Evidence Guide*, by Raymond Hill; published by Halleck Creek.
- *Criminal Evidence – An Introduction*, by John L. Worrall and Craig Hemmens; published by Roxbury.
- *Criminal Evidence – Principles and Cases*, by Thomas J. Gardner and Terry M. Anderson; published by Thompson-Wadsworth.
- *Criminal Evidence*, by Norman M. Garland; published by McGraw-Hill.