

University of Arkansas – Fort Smith
5210 Grand Avenue
P.O. Box 3649
Fort Smith, AR 72913

General Syllabus

CJ 3023/CRJU 30103 The Laws of Criminal Evidence

Credit Hours: 3

Lecture Hours: 3

Laboratory Hours: 0

Prerequisite or corequisite: ENGL 1213/ENGL 10203 Composition II or RHET 2863/ENGL 24103 Advanced Composition
Effective Catalog: 2025-2026

I. Course Information

A. Catalog Description:

This course analyzes evidentiary rules and legal processes, focusing on witnesses, statements, confessions, and the distinction between direct and circumstantial evidence. Students will explore physical evidence, the exclusionary rule, crime scene documentation, and the role of scientific evidence in criminal investigations, assessing its impact on case outcomes and justice.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

A. Subject Matter

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

1. **Critically evaluate** the history and evolution of evidentiary law in the United States, assessing its impact on contemporary legal practices and the justice system.
2. **Articulate** common legal terms and methods used in criminal proceedings, demonstrating their significance within the broader context of evidentiary law.
3. **Analyze** the roles of testimonial, physical, circumstantial, scientific, and demonstrative evidence in criminal trials, evaluating their strengths and limitations in influencing case outcomes.
4. **Conceptualize** the hearsay rule, articulating the public policy rationale behind it and examining the various exceptions that exist within the legal framework.
5. **Examine** the exclusionary rule and its exceptions, discussing their implications for law enforcement practices and the rights of the accused.

B. University Learning Outcomes

This course enhances student abilities in the following areas:

Analytical Skills: Students will identify problems/issues and develop solutions/analysis.

Communication Skills (written and oral)

Students will communicate proficiently. Students will use essay format for written presentation of research projects and discuss particular aspects of various topics.

Ethical Decision Making

Students will model ethical decision-making processes. Students will examine ethical dilemmas within the law enforcement investigation and arrests and develop ethical frameworks to resolve specific ethical issues.

Global and Cultural Perspectives

Students will reflect upon cultural differences and their implications for interacting with people from cultures other than their own

III. Major Course Topics

- A. Types of evidence and their use in demonstrating guilt or innocence
- B. Witnesses and their testimony
- C. Hearsay and the exceptions to hearsay
- D. Statements and Confessions
- E. Legal standards governing the admissibility of evidence Crime scenes evidence