CRJ 320 Rules of Evidence

Spring 2014 Term (March 19 – May 19)

Course Number and Title: CRJ 320 Rules of Evidence

Instructor: Thomas A. Duden, MA Management, BA Public Administration
HR Director Design Data-Software Piracy Investigator, Retired Lincoln Police Department

Credit Hours: 3 hrs  Meets Wednesday Night 6PM

Course Description: This course is a study of the rules of evidence, including the statutory and common-law foundations governing the admissibility of evidence in state and federal courts. Upon completion of this course, students will know and understand the types and forms of evidence; know and understand the rules governing the examination and cross-examination of witnesses; know and understand the distinctions among real evidence, circumstantial evidence, hearsay evidence, opinion evidence, and scientific/demonstrative evidence. Students will also be introduced to the law governing confidential communications (attorney-client, physician-patient, psychotherapist patient, priest-penitent, and marital privilege.)


http://www.legislature.ne.gov/laws/laws-index/chap27-full.html
http://www.supremecourt.ne.gov/index.shtml
http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/cases/historic.htm

Course Learning Outcomes: By reading the assigned material, engaging the written assignments, analyzing, researching and preparing a comprehensive report on the application of the rules of evidence in actual cases the students will be able to:

• Distinguish between testimony, documentary evidence, real evidence, expert, and lay opinion evidence, and understand how to utilize scientific test results in court.

• Properly define hearsay evidence and know the exceptions to the hearsay rule.

• Understand the effects that the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Fourteenth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution have on the admissibility or inadmissibility of evidence.

• Brief cases and prepare a case summary including the recitation of the facts, legal issues, legal analysis, and holding of the court.

• Describe concepts such as the doctrine of presumed innocence, the requirement of proof beyond a reasonable doubt, and the adversary system of justice.

The outcomes will be measured by assessing the student’s written weekly assignments and final project. The weekly assignments, midterm exam, mock trial exercise and final project will measure the student’s understanding of the evidence-based principals that are derived from the Rules of Evidence.

Content and Instructional Methods: This course is comprised of reading material, electronic media files and state and federal court cases. Reinforcement of learning is accomplished through the course objectives, readings, discussions and the submission of written assignments.
Instructor Expectations: Participation and professionalism are part of each student’s grade. As an educational institution designed to help students acquire and maintain viable employment, we strive to teach professionalism to our students.

Each student is expected to: complete the assigned work on time.

Grading:
Participation (22%) 220 points
Assignments (30%) 300 points
Case Problems – Mock Trial (18%), 180 points
Mid Term & Final Project (30%) 300 points

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Reading Assignments: Week 1- Read Chapter 1 - Prior to First Class Meeting, Week 2- Read Chap 2, & 3, Week 3- Read Chap 4, Week 4- Read Chap 5&6, Week 5- Read Chap 7, Week 6- Read Chap 8&9, Week 7- Chap 10,11 and Week 8- Chap 12-13

Assignment Questions – (see Assignment List) Respond to the assigned questions which coincide with the reading material and submit to the instructor as per instructions. There will be a 10% reduction in grade points for every late assignment and zero credit for any assignment overdue two weeks.

Case Problems – Mock Trial – Student(s) will develop a written response to evidentiary issues posed from assigned cases. Each student will participate in a mock trial with assigned roles as part of a field trip to the Hall of Justice at 575 South 10th while utilizing an actual courtroom.

Mid Term Exam – Take home essay questions to be submitted week 5.

Final Research Project - Topic: Students will choose a research topic related to the application or development of the Rules of Evidence such as; legal issues, discovery, hearsay or new evidence issues or advancements in science/technology as it applies to evidentiary issues, etc. Topic must meet instructor’s approval.
Research Project: 6 typed pages, using Times Roman, Courier of Arial Font, Size 12, double-spaced, to include thesis statement, synopsis, narrative, bibliography/sources while utilizing APA guidelines. Students will give a short 5-10 minute presentation on their findings, topic and analysis. PPT or handouts can be used.

Late Work Policy
Students are expected to submit assignments and projects on the due date. At times extenuating circumstances occur, so late work or alternative assignments will be accepted with instructor approval on a limited…case by case basis.