



CONCENTRATION IN CRIMINAL LAW AND INNOCENCE GUIDANCE DOCUMENT & APPLICATION

Overview

Texas Tech University School of Law is one of the few law schools in the country to offer a Concentration in Criminal Law and Innocence. This innovative program is founded upon experiential learning, innovative coursework, and research and writing in and around criminal justice reform issues, as well as real cases in which the innocence of a convicted defendant is at issue. The Concentration is designed for students enrolled in the School of Law who have an interest in pursuing either a prosecutorial or criminal defense practice upon graduation. The program consists of a curricular concentration, a substantial written project, and an experiential component which provides the student an opportunity to deepen his or her knowledge in the area of criminal law, work with a faculty mentor, and gain invaluable practical experience. The award of the Concentration in Criminal Law and Innocence is noted on the student's final transcript.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this concentration, you will be able to:

- (1) Demonstrate knowledge of the criminal justice system; particularly in Texas.
- (2) Identify and describe key legal concepts of criminal law; particularly protections afforded defendants by the U.S. Constitution.
- (3) Explain the phases of a criminal trial from the arrest and indictment through the appeal process.
- (4) Discuss the flaws, both historical and current, in the criminal justice system.

Concentration Program Requirements

The Concentration in Criminal Law and Innocence Program requires that the student complete the following:

- (1) **Course Requirements:** a planned course of study including specific courses,
- (2) **Experiential Requirement:** a criminal law-related externship or clinical experience, along with participation in law school-sponsored criminal law events, and
- (3) **Writing Requirement:** which may also satisfy the upper-level writing requirement for graduation.

Completion of the program leads to the awarding of a *Concentration in Criminal Law and Innocence*, which will become part of the student's permanent transcript. As detailed below,

admission to the Concentration program is through application only and must be approved by the Director.

Admission to the Program

In order to make the best use of the resources available, admission to the program is at the discretion of the Director. Most students apply for admission at the same time they register for courses at the end of their first year. The student must be in academic good standing in order to apply for admission to the program. **Ideally, students should apply for concentration before the beginning of their last academic year (third year) or before the student has earned 45 credit hours in law.** Second-year students who have taken enough qualifying courses to complete the Concentration can apply if they have already completed one of the core courses with a grade of “C” or better.

How to Apply

1. Please complete the application at the end of this document and include a written statement (250 words) of why you wish to pursue the Concentration in Criminal Law and Innocence, a transcript, and the names of two current faculty references. Include your courses or planned courses that satisfy the course requirement, your paper or plan for submitting the writing requirement and indicate whether you are part of the clinical program.
2. Each student admitted into the Concentration must meet with the Director in order to plan a course of study. Please email Professor Brie Sherwin to set up a meeting to review your application.
3. Bring two (2) copies of the application with you to the meeting. Once the Director approves your admission to the program, she will keep a copy. Please also then submit a copy of your application to Janessa Walls so she can note your acceptance. Keep a copy of your application for your records.
4. Once you are approved, you are responsible for keeping track of your own progress toward meeting the requirements of the program. You must meet with the Director at the end of each year to review his or her progress in the program.

1. Course Requirements

As part of your 90 hours of course work in the School of Law, you will need to complete a minimum of **18 hours** that count toward the Concentration.

The specific courses, which meet the requirements of the Concentration, are listed below. There is no guarantee that every course listed will be available, however once a student is enrolled in the Concentration, the Law School will make every possible effort to make sure that enough courses are available for the student to meet the requirements. For this reason, the

current Director (or his or her designee) (“The Director”) has the discretion to waive any requirement in this brochure and, on adequate notice, to make substitutions.

Students must pass Criminal Law (first-year required course) and Criminal Procedure (advanced required course). These two courses do not count toward the 18-hour requirement in this program. From the list below, we highly recommend that the student make every effort to take Texas Criminal Procedure (if offered). The Director will work with each individual student to identify the group of courses that best match the student’s goals and interests.

Courses that Count Toward the 18 Required Hours for the Criminal Law and Innocence Concentration:

- Advanced Immigration Law (2 credit hours)
- Advanced Legal Research (2 credit hours)
- Appellate Advocacy (1-2 credit hours)
- Capital Punishment Clinic with Support Course (6 credit hours)
- Capital Punishment Seminar (2 credit hours)
- Caprock Reg. Public Defender Clinic I with Support Course (6 credit hours)
- Caprock Reg. Public Defender Clinic II with Support Course (6 credit hours)
- Criminal Defense Clinic I (6 credit hours)
- Criminal Defense Clinic II (6 credit hours)
- First Amendment Seminar (2 or 3 credit hours)
- Global Biosecurity Law (2 or 3 credit hours)
- Immigration Law (3 credit hours)
- Innocence Clinic I with Support Course (6 credit hours)
- Innocence Clinic II with Support Course (6 credit hours)
- International Humanitarian Law (3 credits)
- Law & Science Legal Research (2 credit hours)
- Law Office Management (2 credit hours)
- Law Office Technology (2 credit hours)
- Law Practice Technology (2 credit hours)
- National Security Law (3 credit hours)
- Negotiations Workshop (2 credit hours)
- Non-Profit Organizations (3 credit hours)
- Race & Racism (2 credit hours)

- Texas Criminal Procedure (3 credit hours)
- Texas Legal Research (1 credit hour)
- Trial Advocacy (2 credit hours)
- Any newly offered criminal law-related elective (subject to change each year and approval by program director) _____

GPA Requirement

The student must maintain a 2.8 average in the core and elective courses taken toward credit for the Concentration.

2. Experiential Requirement

Since the goal of the Concentration in Criminal Law and Innocence is to prepare students for practice in a criminal law setting, no student may receive the Concentration without practical work experience. This experience may be either through the Law School's Externship Program (note specifications below), one of the criminal law-related clinical programs, or another work experience approved in advance by the Director.

Given that externships in criminal law are subject to the real world time constraints of working attorneys and the right of other law students to participate in the Externship program, there is no guarantee that any student will be able to receive any particular placement through the Law School's Externship Program, including the full semester out-of-town externships. Therefore, a student pursuing the Concentration who wishes to satisfy his or her practicum requirement through the Law School's Externship Program should enroll in the program at the earliest opportunity with the understanding that he or she may not be able to receive an externship placement in any specific semester. No more than 14 hours from the externship program or criminal law-related clinical programs will count toward the 18-hour minimum requirement.

3. Writing Requirement

Students seeking the Concentration in Criminal Law and Innocence must complete a scholarly research paper on a subject related to criminal law in (1) any course listed above as long as the paper is criminal law-related, (2) a directed research project with a member of the program's faculty.

In order to be certified by one of the Directors as complete, this paper must:

1. Be a minimum of 5,000 words in length.
2. Be thoroughly edited for grammar, contain a substantial number of footnotes, (which do not change the page length requirements) and be formatted according to Blue Book specifications.
3. Include citation to at least one criminal law journal.

4. Contain a thesis or problem in the law, which is addressed by the paper. It may not merely be a “book report” style paper about the law.
5. An initial draft of the paper must have been reviewed and commented on by the professor and the final draft must receive a passing score from the professor (according to the individual professor’s standards set forth in class or the project).

With the permission of the professor under whose supervision the paper is written, it may also be used to satisfy the requirements of the Law School’s Upper Level Writing Requirement, if consistent with these requirements, or any individual course. However, just because a paper satisfies the requirements of a particular course or the Law School’s Writing Requirement does not mean that it will automatically satisfy the requirements of the Concentration in Criminal Law and Innocence Program.

Completion of the Concentration/Final Meeting

In order to be designated as having “completed” the Concentration in Criminal Law and Innocence, a student must do the following during his or her graduating semester before submitting an intent to graduate:

- 1) Meet with the Director to review his or her completion of each aspect of the Concentration;
- 2) Bring the following documents to the meeting:
 - Previously completed application
 - A current unofficial transcript
 - A copy of the completed and faculty-approved student writing project, and
 - Evidence of successful completion of the experiential component of the Concentration.

The Director will then certify the completion of the program, and the student will be awarded a notation on his or her transcript upon graduation.

No student may receive the Concentration without the approval of the Director, and the Director retains the discretion to drop a student from the Concentration program for failure to comply with any of the requirements or for other good cause. Students should consult with one of the Directors early in the process if they have any questions.

The Director shall also have authority to modify, waive or reconfigure the Program Requirements where necessary to promote equity and fairness in the event of unforeseen complications or exigent circumstances.

Brie Sherwin, J.D., Ph.D.
Professor of Law
Director, Criminal Law & Innocence Program
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Application to the Criminal Law and Innocence Concentration Program

Admission to the Innocence and Criminal Law Program is limited to no more than eight students at a time. Admission is at the discretion of the Director and includes consideration of the student's statement of interest, references and academic performance.

Student Identification Number: _____ Date submitted: _____

Name: _____ 1L 2L 3L
(Circle status as of today)

Mailing address: _____
Street City State Zip

E-mail address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Have you ever been on academic probation at TTU School of Law? yes no

Current GPA? _____

List the name of your legal practice professor and at least one other professor at the law school who can recommend you.

Please fill out the Plan of Study below and then attach a Statement of Interest, detailing in 250 words or less why you are interested in pursuing this Concentration.



Concentration Plan of Study

Please list the classes you propose to take that meet the Concentration’s requirements. Please also list when you plan to take them based on currently available information. We understand that this may be an estimation given the timing of registration and the information available and that your courses may change.

Please complete a projected schedule for completing the program:

(This projected schedule is to assist you in designing your program of study and to assist in planning for course scheduling. This is only a projection. You may change this schedule.)

Summer: _____
(Course work or intern/extern/clerk)

Second Year

First Semester: _____

Second Semester: _____

Course	Hours
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
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_____	_____

Course	Hours
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Summer: _____
(Course work or intern/extern/clerk)

Third Year

First Semester: _____

Second Semester: _____

Course

Hours

Course

Hours

Once you have completed this form, please email Professor Brie Sherwin to schedule an appointment for admission to the Concentration in Criminal Law and Innocence before the deadline to enroll in the program.

Bring **two** hard copies of this completed form with you to the interview. Please keep a hard copy of this application with you until you graduate.

ENROLLMENT

Signature of Director

Date: _____

Signature of Law School Registrar

Date: _____

COMPLETION
OF
CONCENTRATION IN CRIMINAL LAW AND INNOCENCE

- Transcript indicates that student has completed the Course Requirements while maintaining the required GPA in those courses.
- Student has satisfactorily completed the Experiential Requirement.
- Student has satisfactorily completed the Written Requirement.

Signature of Director

Date: _____

Signature of Law School Registrar

Date: _____