

UNIVERSITY of
HOUSTON

LAW CENTER

CRIMINAL LAW
COURSE EVALUATION – SUMMARY

Summer 2022

Course Number: Law 5303

Professor: Zachary D. Kaufman, J.D., Ph.D.

Below are ratings and illustrative quotations from student evaluations of this course, which was taught online in 3-hour evening sessions over the course of 4 weeks.

Instructor Evaluation: This rating combined prompts about whether the instructor was well prepared, demonstrated respect for all students, effectively communicated information, and was available for individual assistance. The students' average rating of the overall teaching effectiveness of this instructor—on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 meaning “Outstanding”—was 4.84.

Course Evaluation: This rating combined prompts about how much the student learned relative to other law courses, whether the course will make the student a better lawyer, whether the student would recommend the course to other students, the amount of reading and preparation the course required, and the difficulty of the course's subject matter. The students' average rating of the overall quality of this course—on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 meaning “Outstanding”—was 4.75.

Illustrative quotations: The following are overall quotations about the class or instructor and more detailed quotations about the course or instructor.

Overall quotations about the course or instructor:

- “This was definitely my favorite class in law school thus far. I highly suggest EVERY student take his class.”
- “By far my favorite class and professor. It is a difficult course, but Professor Kaufman truly cares about the topic and his students. It shows.”
- “Criminal Law with Professor Kaufman was my favorite class in law school thus far.”
- “This course has been my favorite 1L course, and because of it I am considering what a future focus on criminal law may look like for me professionally I would love to enroll in another course taught by Professor Kaufman.”
- “This was the most challenging yet rewarding class I’ve had in law school thus far. Professor Kaufman was truly a remarkable professor. He handled difficult topics in the course material with the utmost respect. Because of this class, I am a better law student and I now feel more confident than ever with both handling cold calls and how to interpret cases. Professor Kaufman is a huge asset to UH!”
- “Professor Kaufman is outstanding. He has an unmatched level of professionalism that imbues his classroom. This tacit respect flows both from the seriousness of his subject matter and his attentiveness for individual students. It is quite unlike anything I’ve seen throughout the course of my studies at three different universities and now across 4 different degree programs. It would be easy for him to feel superior to students or at least imply that sentiment through words or actions given his astonishing career track. However, he has NEVER given a hint of that sentiment. On the contrary he takes all opinions seriously and wrestles with them live in class. His expectations are high but always fair. As a former educator, I’m convinced that is exactly the respect for student capacity needed at UHLC. He is a boon for this university in myriad ways and I certainly look forward to working with him in the future.”
- “Professor Kaufman’s course was outstanding. His level of professionalism, preparation, organization, and efficiency is second to none. He prepared us for reasoned argument, challenged us to think, acknowledged

sensitive topics, and inspired us to feel. He cares. It's obvious in the way he teaches his students . . . and his desire for justice in this world. He is a role model."

- "Professor Kaufman is an exemplary professor. He is knowledgeable, extremely well-prepared, and respectful."
- "Professor Kaufman is an impeccable instructor. The course was difficult, but the high standards to which Kaufman held us were impactful in learning and engaging with the material. Truly a superior instructor."
- "Professor Kaufman is a credit to this law school. His approach to criminal law, a subject matter fraught with social and political landmines, was a perfect balance of rigor mixed with sensitivity. Every class session generated a huge amount of student interest and comment. I learned so much from the material and the way he presented it. Coming into this class, I wasn't sure what to expect. I've worked around criminal law a long time, so I knew there was a possibility I wouldn't be interested or excited about the material. I was wrong. I wasn't just piqued by the material, but Professor Kaufman's approach added a certain flavor that made me look forward to every class."
- "I really enjoyed this class . . . He was always willing to listen to students. He came prepared for every class. His lectures were engaging and the overall course was amazing. He's a really great professor. I'd love to take his other courses."
- "Professor Kaufman is an absolutely wonderful instructor. He is bright, generous, and committed. He takes the time to work through problems with the class, and he makes himself widely available through office hours and by arrangement. He went above and beyond and found opportunities for the class to bond outside of our class hours by hosting forums on our future careers, white collar crime, and an end of year party."
- "Professor Kaufman was a great instructor."
- "Thank you, Professor Kaufman, for a wonderful course."
- "Professor Kaufman is an amazing professor and is very passionate about criminal law. I was so glad to take such an important class with a professor who deeply cares about the topic and values the opinion of all the students . . . Professor Kaufman really cares for his students."
- "Professor Kaufman is a very passionate teacher who cares personally, professionally, and academically about his students. His approach to teaching is balanced and engaging."
- "Professor Kaufman's class was great. He was well prepared and offered many examples that helped me better understand the material. The class was interesting and I wish I could have taken it earlier in my law school career."
- "Professor Kaufman did an incredible job teaching this course."
- "I have learned more in this class than any other class thus far."
- "I think this course will provide me long-term benefit and I believe I learned more in this course than in others."
- "I have learned so much in this course and hope very much to take more classes with Professor Kaufman."
- "This has been one of the most enjoyable courses I've taken so far at the law center."
- "I really enjoyed the class and would recommend the class and Professor to any other student."
- "I would recommend this course and professor to any incoming 1L student."

More detailed quotations about the course or instructor:

- "The way our esteemed professor challenged us to build our argumentation skills was very valuable and critical towards our development into successful lawyers. The sensitivity of our professor towards the difficult material demonstrated his noteworthy wisdom and respect. Professor Kaufman brings great value to the University of Houston Law Center and accounts for what sets our law school apart. Professor Kaufman was always very approachable and down to earth despite his prestigious character and impressive accomplishments. Every class was very well organized and full of enrichment given his brilliant scholarly contributions that address issues of major relevance in our society."
- "Professor Kaufman represents a true asset to UH and the greater Houston community. I felt inspired and enlightened to participate in a course taught by an exceptional scholar of distinguished caliber. The Criminal Law course taught by Professor Kaufman was unparalleled in its practical applications and general value from all the courses I took throughout my life. I want to thank UHLC for its decision and ability to provide

us with access to a prominent legal scholar engaged in advocacy in critical debates in our country. His method of education and instruction prepares us to think for ourselves which constitutes an essential trait in effective legal advocacy.”

- “Having begun this course with little interest in criminal law, I was pleasantly surprised to find that the more the course went on, the more my mind changed. Connecting legal concepts with practical applications and policy issues made the course more interesting, and also easier to follow (without having to dilute the complexity of the material therein). I especially appreciated that the professor dedicated time to asking for students’ opinions on aspects of criminal law and pushing us to formulate arguments in defense of our positions—and also consider those against them. This was the first course I’ve had where I had such opportunities to argue a point, and I especially appreciate that as someone who doesn’t have the time available to participate in mock trial, moot court, etc.”
- “He came to class prepared each day and did a great job using multiple methods to ensure students understood the material (e.g., in-class polls, small group discussions, role-playing, debates, PowerPoints). It is quite evident that Professor Kaufman is very informed on the latest criminal law topics and passionate about teaching / engaging with students . . . Professor Kaufman was also very respectful of potential sensitivity that students may have to the course material, which I think is important for the subject matter we were discussing.”
- “Very well done. Thorough, in-depth, yet concise and thought-provoking. The material was clearly laid out, the facilitation of discussion was controlled and the class questions were widely adaptable for students to grasp. The morale is hopeful and confidence-boosting.”
- “Prof. Kaufman showed in depth knowledge of the material and a true caring to impart that knowledge on his students. He is a rare combination of an intellect and empathy for his students that I wish all professor embodied. Above all, I felt Prof. Kaufman truly cared about his students and making sure they had all the opportunities to learn.”
- “I felt like everyone was encouraged to speak but it did not feel as stressful as it had in previous classes. Additionally, Professor Kaufman was very understanding of some health issues that I had while taking the course and I felt comfortable emailing him about those issues.”
- “I really like how Professor Kaufman encourages engagement with the class by running class polls and putting us into breakout rooms to discuss difficult problems. For every case we go over, he always has us consider the policy and legal implications of the law, and asks interesting hypotheticals to help us figure out to apply the law and understand the court’s holding. Professor Kaufman is extremely knowledgeable and passionate about the course material, and I like how he takes his time to look up more details about the case to give us more context.”
- “Having us think about policy implications is very important, especially with criminal law, and he always made sure that we were thinking critically about that as well as whether or not we agreed with the outcomes of the cases we read.”
- “I truly appreciate the way Professor Kaufman structured this class. During this course, students were asked to think deeply related to policy questions and issues, while also gaining a deeper understanding of the law. The class was engaging, informative, and challenging.”