

Core Criminal Law

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Learning through Multiple-Choice Questions

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Preface

There are many excellent hornbooks on the market to help students with their classroom studies. These materials provide comprehensive coverage, but not in the format that students need to master the subject for the bar exam. At the same time, study aids and bar preparation materials are ill-suited for formative use, as they sample topics instead of presenting a comprehensive review, and sample subtopics students have not yet studied.

This book was written to fill that gap: it provides bar-style multiple-choice questions that can be used formatively, when students are enrolled in a law school Criminal Law class.

The first half of the book is divided into three parts—General Principles, Crimes, and Defenses—and each part has multiple chapters. Each chapter begins with questions addressing basic concepts and definitions, and then presents the variations students can expect to encounter when studying that particular topic, including any crime-specific defenses. The focus is primarily on the common law,¹ but each chapter ends with a few statutory examples, so students can get a sense of how the law has changed over time. Statutory homicide, which is a significant part of any Criminal Law class, has its own chapter. Collectively, the questions in this book track the topics covered in most law school Criminal Law classes.

The questions in this book follow the format used by the National Conference of Bar Examiners on the Multistate Bar Exam. Since these questions were written to present and test one concept at a time, students will find it useful to use this book first and then move on to questions provided by bar review companies and/or released by the bar examiners.

The second half of the book consists of answers for each question. The answers are concise and rule-based, with the intention that students will refer to their casebooks for more detailed information.

In writing this book, I've had the support and advice from some terrific friends: Erika Breitfeld generously answered my questions; Terry Cavanaugh cheered me on; and Marilena David-Martin, Linda Kisabeth, Tonya Krause-Phelan, Stacie Toal, Marinda van Dalen, and Heather Waara provided wonderful friendship. My far-flung siblings and their families also buoyed me through many Sunday-afternoon pandemic Zoom calls; I cannot wait to see them all again in person.

Most importantly, I thank Erik Altmann and Max and Min for being such great stay-at-home companions, and for everything else.

1. Readers should assume the common law applies unless a question directs otherwise.

