

Criminal Law Midterm Mini Thesis Paper

The midterm mini thesis paper is a research or thesis paper on a topic of the student's choice, so long as it is related to criminal law. We recommend that students complete and submit this assignment during the 6th to 9th month of studies. This will allow time to learn much of the course material before writing the paper, yet still result in submission in plenty of time to establish eligibility to request final exams. Students must spend at least six hours to complete each midterm mini thesis paper. The paper must be no fewer than 3,000 words and no more than 5,000 words. The word count does not include footnote or endnote references.

Students may use the casebook, statutory supplements, material acquired from research at a law library or through LexisNexis, any material provided by the school, commercial outlines, etc. All situations and events described in the paper must be assumed to take place or to have taken place in an English common law jurisdiction in the United States. Any details that are part of an actual lawsuit or legal dispute should not be included in the paper if they are in any way considered confidential.

The paper must be an original product of the student's own scholarly work. The sources of any non-original wording must be accurately disclosed and properly referenced. Evidence of originality will be wording that shows that a student is thinking about the legal issues covered in the course; is sufficiently familiar with legal concepts and doctrines of the subject; and is expressing his or her own thoughts and ideas about the sources cited in the paper.

Midterm mini thesis papers are routinely run through a plagiarism-checking program

Criminal

Topic Ideas for the Midterm Mini Thesis Paper

Students may choose one of the topics below or come up with their own.

1. Discuss the different aspects of the law covered in this course, and how it all comes together to impact the individuals and organizations (e.g., businesses and institutions) in society. This might include an overview of the course, but be careful to make it a thesis paper, not just an expanded version of the definitions assignment.
2. Choose one or more key topics covered in the course, then research and discuss thoroughly. History, application, important cases, etc. may be included. Students may take advantage of this assignment to learn more about a topic of particular interest, or to more fully understand a complex topic.
3. Choose an important case to discuss. Include the history of the law involved, and how the case was significant to the field of law covered in the course. Students should include their own opinions about the case, and may want to include prior cases which affected the case being discussed, as well as subsequent cases which were affected. Be careful to make this a thesis paper, not an expanded case brief.
4. Choose two or three cases and write a paper which compares or contrasts them. As with the prior suggestion, students may cover the history of the legal issues involved; their own opinions about the cases; and prior and subsequent cases dealing with the same issues. Be careful to make this a thesis paper, not a duplication of the case briefs assignment.

5. Write about the impact of this area of law on your own life. Perhaps you work in a related area, or have been involved in a situation or case which involved this subject of law. Be careful not to disclose confidential information if you discuss an actual case. You may want to include ways that the knowledge you have now acquired would have made a difference in handling past events.
6. Choose a "cutting edge" legal issue covered in the course, and discuss recent changes and likely future changes; or choose a current event affected by this area of law, and give a legal analysis of the event based on the laws learned.
7. Write about what you think is the most important, most interesting, or most controversial legal topic covered in the course. Research and present opinions of legal experts and contrast with your own.