



2025 Higher-Level Felony Defense Training

September 9-11, 2025 / Chapel Hill, NC

*Co-sponsored by the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Government
& Office of Indigent Defense Services*

Tuesday, Sept. 9

12:30-1:00 pm	<i>Check-in</i>
1:00-1:15 pm	Welcome (15 mins.)
1:15-2:15 pm	Mitigation Investigation (60 mins.) Josie Van Dyke, Mitigation Specialist Sentencing Solutions, Inc., Knightdale, NC
2:15-3:15 pm	Defending Eyewitness Identification Cases (60 mins.) Laura Gibson, Assistant Public Defender Beaufort County Office of the Public Defender, Washington, NC
3:15-3:30 pm	<i>Break</i>
3:30-4:15 pm	Preparing to Defend High-Level Felonies (45 mins.) Phil Dixon, Teaching Associate Professor UNC School of Government, Chapel Hill, NC
4:15-5:00 pm	Self-Defense Update (45 mins.) John Rubin, Professor of Public Law and Government UNC School of Government, Chapel Hill, NC
5:00 pm	<i>Adjourn</i>



Wednesday, Sept. 10

9:00-10:15 am	The Law of Sentencing Serious Felonies (75 mins.) Jamie Markham, Thomas Willis Lambeth Distinguished Chair in Public Policy UNC School of Government, Chapel Hill, NC
10:15-10:30 am	<i>Break</i>
10:30-11:15 am	Storytelling and Visual Aides at Sentencing (45 mins.) Sophorn Avitan and Susan Weigand, Assistant Public Defenders Mecklenburg Co. Public Defender's Office, Charlotte, NC
11:15 am-12:00 pm	Preventing Low-Level Felonies from Becoming High Level Habitual Felonies (45 mins.) Jason St. Aubin, Senior Trial Attorney Marcilliat & Mills, PLLC, Charlotte, NC
12:00-1:00 pm	<i>Lunch (provided)</i>
1:00-2:30 pm	Brainstorming, Preparing, and Presenting a Sentencing Argument (90 mins.) Small group workshops
2:30-2:45 pm	<i>Break</i>
2:45-3:45 pm	Preservation Essentials (60 mins.) Glenn Gerding, Appellate Defender Office of the Appellate Defender, Durham, NC
3:45-4:45 pm	Basics of Batson Challenges (60 mins.) Hannah Autry, Ass't. Capital Defender, Office of the Capital Defender, Durham, NC Kailey Morgan, Staff Attorney, Center for Death Penalty Litigation, Durham, NC
4:45 pm	<i>Adjourn</i>
5:30 pm	Optional Social Gathering TBA



Thursday, Sept. 11

9:00-10:00 am	Client Rapport (60 mins.) (ETHICS) Tucker Charns, Regional Defender Indigent Defense Services, Durham, NC
10:00-10:15 am	<i>Break</i>
10:15-11:00 am	Protecting Jurors from Removals for Cause (45 mins.) Emily Coward, Director of the Inclusive Juries Project, Johanna Jennings, Director, The Decarceration Project Duke University School of Law, Durham, NC
11:00 am-12:00 pm	Peremptory and For Cause Challenges (60 mins.) James Davis, Attorney Davis and Davis, Salisbury, NC
12:00 pm	<i>Wrap up and Adjourn</i>

TOTAL CLE HOURS: 12.50 (including 1.0 hours of Ethics credit)