CRIJ 4312, Criminal Procedure (Online)
Spring 2026; CRN 23537

Professor: Dr. Barbara Sims, Department of Criminal Justice
Preferred contact method: E-mail: basims@utep.edu

Virtual Office Hours: Contact me at basims@utep.edu to arrange an appointment in Zoom. I can be flexible when it comes to days and times that will work for students. Please use these virtual office hours to discuss any problems you may be experiencing in the course when it comes to course materials or assignments.

Class begins March 23, 2026.

Class ends May 11, 2026.

CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course presents an overview of the constitutional rules governing the criminal investigation, detention, prosecution and adjudication of persons in the United States with focus on the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Amendments to the United States Constitution and the Supreme Court decisions that have interpreted the meaning of these amendments.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: At the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Describe the U.S. court system and the sources of constitutional rights.

2. Demonstrate knowledge about the criminal justice process and the procedures in place to ensure fundamental due process for criminal defendants.

3. Explain the role of the U.S. Supreme Court as the arbiter of the application of the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Eighth, and 14th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

4. Demonstrate a mastery of writing and critical thinking skills.

REQUIRED TEXT: Del Carmen, R.V. and Hemmens, C. (2025). *Criminal Procedure: Law and Practice*, 11th edition, Cengage Learning.

ONLINE COURSE OVERVIEW: Online courses provide students with flexibility to work and study at times that fit each person's schedule during the day or night without needing to attend face-to-face (F2F) classes. However, all students must meet weekly course deadlines. In this course, you will see learning modules that open on Monday mornings and close on Sunday nights at midnight (MST).

The course requires that students engage with the course material at least three times EVERY WEEK. Please set aside some time sufficient to complete the assigned readings, review the PPT

slides or any other posted course material, and complete posted assignments. Remember, each learning module will close Sundays at midnight. If you get behind or miss some components, you will NOT be able to go back and complete any missed material or graded assignments.

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS:

Discussions Boards - In the weeks where a discussion board is assigned, that space will open each Monday morning and close the following Sunday at midnight (MST). There is a grading rubric associated with this assignment uploaded in Bb. Please review the rubric carefully and become acquainted with the stated criteria. **You will see that for this abbreviated semester, there is no requirement that students respond to their peers. Thus, a well thought out response to the question prompt is called for, as noted in the rubric.**

Chapter Quizzes: These are brief quizzes over the assigned chapters or other course content and consist of objective questions such as multiple choice and T/F. On some quizzes, however, there could be a short answer question.

Exams: There are two exams associated with this course that count for 100 points each for a total of 200 points. Each exam will consist of both objective test items (multiple choice, true/false, matching) and subjective questions (short answers and/or essays). The exam will take place during the learning module posted on the course syllabus and in Bb. These are open book/notes exams and will be timed. Please pay close attention to the guidelines and expectations about the exam that will be posted during the learning module (see Bb) associated with the exam. Even though you are free to use all course material when taking an exam, **you are still held to an ethical requirement that you will not collaborate with other students in any way about the exam.** This includes in the time after you complete the exam when you might be asked by others who have not yet taken the exam about the questions that were included on the exam. Remember, Bb will scramble the questions and will rotate the possible answers (e.g., for multiple choice answers). If you try to collaborate you risk running out of time and being locked out of the exam space. Thus, it is ethically right and more beneficial to you to complete your own work. If it is found out that any collaboration occurred, I will exercise my right and responsibility to address the matter as outlined below in the discussion about academic integrity.

Critical Reaction Essay: This is a 500-word essay that addresses one of the major constitutional issues covered in this course. Students should peruse the textbook early in the semester and decide on a topic. The assignment calls for an overview of the selected constitutional issue and a discussion of the major U.S. Supreme Court cases associated with that issue. Please review carefully the guidelines for this assignment that are found in Bb on the Start Here page.

Please take advantage of UTEP's resources when it comes to assistance with the identification of articles or other resources that could help with the writing assignment for this course and also with the writing tutors at the Writing Center.

Access to UTEP'S Writing Center can be found at: https://www.utep.edu/uwc/.

Access to UTEP's Library can be found at: https://www.utep.edu/library/.

Class Participation/Attendance Points - Unlike a traditional, instructor-led course, this course does not require students to show up to class at a specific time. Instead, they must make a consistent effort to actively participate in the online learning environment. The Federal Government's Department of Education requires a certain amount of activity on the part of students in the classroom environment. This rule applies to both residential and online courses. Merely signing into Blackboard, for example, does not reach the level of sufficient "class time" for Federal reporting purposes. Here is a list of activities that do count and that will be used when determining how many of the possible points associated with class participation/attendance will be awarded to each student:

- Submitting an assignment (reflection paper; quiz, or some other type of focused assignment);
- Completing a mandated activity (e.g., problem-based exercises, team-building exercises, etc.);
- Taking an exam;
- Participating in online discussion boards; and,
- Initiating contact with an instructor for clarifying any part of the course content.

Summary of Graded Assignments:

Discussion board/quizzes	10 @ 20 points each	200 points
Exams	2 @ 100 points each	200 points
Critical Reaction Essay		70 points
Class participation/attendance		30 points
	Total points	500 points

Grading Scale:

A = 450 – 500 points

B = 400 - 449 points

C = 350 - 399 points

D = 300 – 349 points

F = 299 or less

Please note that grades are assigned according to the total points earned. There is no rounding or curving or moving a student to the next letter grade if they are one point away, for example. The cutoff points are predetermined as noted above.

Extra credit work: There is one opportunity for extra credit points and that is for completing the end-of-the-semester online course evaluation. If at least 70% of the students in the class complete the Course Evaluation which becomes available near the end of the semester, then all students will receive five extra credit points. To let you know how this works, you will receive email reminders about evaluating the course at least twice from UTEP in your miners.utep.edu email account. If you don't receive these emails, then contact UTEP's HelpDesk. After the course evaluation period is over, I will receive an email from UTEP stating what percentage of students in the class completed the course evaluation. If this figure is at or above 70% then all students in the class will receive the extra credit points.

Make-Up Policy: No missed assignment can be accepted unless due to some unforeseen and dire circumstance as determined by me. If a student is allowed to turn in an assignment beyond the due date, he/she could see a grade reduction for that assignment. Please contact me immediately if you know in advance that you will not be able to meet a deadline or reach out as soon as you can following a missed deadline, preferably within a 24- to 48-hour window.

UTEP COURSE DROP POLICY: If unforeseen circumstances happen where a drop is necessary, students are responsible for initiating any course drop. It is the student's responsibility to determine how dropping courses might affect financial aid. Students are limited to dropping no more than six courses over their entire academic career of all courses taken at any public college or University in Texas. Here is some additional information about UTEP's policy:

1. For students who drop a course before the official census date, the course will not appear on the transcript, and doesn't count toward the 6-course drop limit.
2. Dropping a course after the official census date, but before the course drop date will generate a "W" in the course. Although the drop shows on your transcript, a "W" does not lower your GPA. However, a "W" counts against your 6-course drop limit.
3. If the course is dropped after the course drop date, or if the student just stops participating, taking texts, etc., UTEP requires the instructor to issue an "F" in the course that permanently remains on the transcript.
4. UTEP also allows instructors to administratively drop any student because of too many times the student fails to submit assignments, discussion questions, or because of disciplinary reasons. In this case, the student will be notified of the course drop through their UTEP student email. A "W" or an "F" will be issued. A "W" for these reasons counts against the 6-course drop limit.

TECHNOLOGICAL PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS: For all technological, hardware, software problems, lost files, and/or questions with Blackboard, as well as difficulties you are having during an exam, contact **Technology Support Help Desk 24 hours a day, 7 days a week**. Tech support is set up to specifically address technical questions and problems about Blackboard. Professors are not technical support staff.

Phone: 915.747.4357 or toll free: 1-877-382-0491
Email: helpdesk@utep.edu http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=74092
In person meeting: UTEP Library, Room 300

Check Your Technology

1. Computer with a reliable internet connection. Mobile devices are not reliable to access exams and use the discussion board.

2. Blackboard (BB) Learning Management System. The entire course is run through UTEP's BB system, so students must activate and use their BB accounts regularly. Always log in using your UTEP name and password, and never as a "guest". (The guest option will kick you out after 15-20 minutes, which is problematic when taking a test because you will not be able to finish your test). All students are responsible for regularly logging in and checking for posted announcements, submitting assignments, participating in discussion boards, and taking tests through BB. Contact UTEP tech support for any questions or concerns regarding navigating in BB or learning how to do something in BB.

3. Browser Information (*See the left side of the menu on the main BB page for hardware, software, and browser checks)* **Firefox** seems to consistently work the best, but other supported Browsers include Chrome, Safari, and Internet Explorer.

Be sure to "Allow pop-ups" for Blackboard Clear your browser cache.

4. Verify that you have the most updated version of "Java" http://java.com.

5. Additional Software you may be Using All word documents should be saved with a "docx" extension identifying it as a Microsoft Word file or compatible with MS Word, Windows Media Player, Quick Time, Adobe Reader, Adobe Flash Player.

Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS): The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Students who become pregnant or have parenting responsibilities may also request reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. The UTEP Center for Accommodations and

Support Services (CASS) will process requests for accommodations based on a disability, pregnancy, or parenting. Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-747-5148, email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: Academic dishonesty includes cheating on an exam/not taking the test yourself, turning in someone else's assignment from a previous class, and/or plagiarism. Plagiarism is defined as one or more of the following: "(1) use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without fully and properly crediting the author with citations or biographical reference; (2) unacknowledged use of work/materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials; (3) unacknowledged use of original work/material that has been produced through collaboration with others without release in writing from collaborators."

I take cases of alleged academic dishonesty seriously. Students who are found to have engaged in any form of academic dishonesty can expect to see their case referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR). While the case is being investigated by OSCCR, an "I" (Incomplete) will be assigned until the case is resolved. If the student is found by OSCCR to have engaged in misconduct, sanctions may include a failing grade on the assignment or exam in question, a failing grade in the course, suspension, or dismissal from the University.

> **Copy/paste plagiarism**: One of the more widespread problems we see when it comes to breeches in academic integrity is copy/paste plagiarism. Often referred to as Mosaic plagiarism, this occurs when a student borrows phrases from a source without using quotation marks or finds synonyms for the author's language while keeping to the same general structure and meaning of the original. Paraphrasing the work of another person (i.e., scholarly sources) is an art form and must be approached with caution. Please refer to a document on Bb that illustrates what is, and what is not, appropriate paraphrasing. In my estimation, based on about 30 years of classroom teaching, students get themselves in trouble when they procrastinate and find themselves in a crunch for time. Or they question their own writing ability and are tempted to just type verbatim lines from a source. Even if the source is cited, that is still plagiarism as the student did not "write" anything; rather, he/she merely lifted the writing of another person. Struggle with your writing; flex that muscle and it will get stronger. Seek me out for advance reviews of any assignment that requires the use of source material. Read again the document on Bb and learn to appropriately paraphrase your sources.

COMMUNICATION: I will make every attempt to grade student work within one week's time and to respond to student emails within 24 hours. Please stay in contact with me if you find that you are failing to make progress in this course or do not understand guidelines for any graded assignment. We can set up a Zoom meeting to discuss the matter. When you email me, you MUST use your UTEP email account or risk not receiving a response from me.

Please review the "How to Write a Professional Email" document that is posted in Bb. Although this is an upper-level course and it is expected that you do, in fact, write professional emails, it never hurts to make sure we are all on the same page about the matter. I get busy sometimes and

it is tempting to write an email in a more relaxed fashion. This is especially true when I am away from a computer and attempting to respond via my cell phone. I will, however, make every effort to ensure that all email communications I send out adhere to professional standards.

Course Calendar*

Module 1: Week of 3/23 – 3/29

- Watch the "Welcome, Introduction to CRIJ4312 video in Bb.
- Review the course syllabus and all other posted material in Bb (see the Start Here page.)
- Read Chapter 1, The Court System, Sources of Rights, and Fundamental Principles and Chapter 2, Overview of the Criminal Justice Process.
- Review PPT slides for both chapters.
- Complete the weekly quiz.
- Post to the discussion board.

Module 2: Week of 3/30 – 4/5

- Read Chapter 3, Probable Cause and Reasonable Suspicion and Chapter 4, The Exclusionary Rule.
- Review PPT slides for both chapters.
- Watch the YouTube video on *Mapp vs. Ohio*: The Exclusionary Rule
- Complete the weekly quiz.
- Post to the discussion board.

Module 3: Week of 4/6 – 4/12

- Read Chapter 5, Stop and Frisk and Stationhouse Detention, and Chapter 6, Arrests and Use of Force.
- Review PPT slides for both chapters.
- Complete the weekly quiz.
- Post to the discussion board.

Module 4: Week of 4/13 – 4/19

- Complete Exam 1 no later than Thursday, 4/16 at midnight (MST). This exam covers Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.
- After completion of Exam 1, please read Chapter 7, Searches and Seizures of Things.
- Post to the discussion board.

Module 5: Week of 4/20 – 4/26

- Read Chapter 9, Plain View, Open Fields, Abandonment, and Border Searches and Chapter 11, Confessions and Admissions: *Miranda v. Arizona*.
- Review PPT slides for both chapters.
- Complete the weekly quiz.
- Post to the discussion board.

Module 6: Week of 4/27 – 5/3

- Read Chapter 12, Basic Constitutional Rights of the Accused During Trial and Chapter 13, Sentencing, The Death Penalty, and Other Forms of Punishment
- Review PPT slides for both chapters.
- Complete the weekly quiz.
- **Submit the Critical Reaction Essay in the space provided in Bb no later than Sunday, midnight (5/3).**

Module 7: Week of 5/4– 5/11

Please complete Exam 2 no later than Monday, 5/11 at midnight (MST).

***I reserve the right to make changes to this course calendar in the event of unforeseen circumstances.**