

# **POLS 3315: JUDICIAL PROCESS**

Quinn Hall 203

Tues. & Thurs., 1:30pm to 2:50pm

Brent McCune

Office: Miners Hall 108

Phone: 915.747.8842

E-mail: [bgmccune@utep.edu](mailto:bgmccune@utep.edu)

CRN: 26027

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Office Hours: By Appointment

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This class introduces students to the judicial system and the judicial process in the United States. We will examine judicial organization and administrative processes at the state and federal levels. The structure, influence, and processes of the American legal system will be reviewed. Topics covered include: classical theories of jurisprudence, judicial decision making, criminal and civil litigation, trial and appellate courts, and the scope and limits of judicial power.

## **UTEP EDGE**

This course will help you develop the following UTEP Edge skills: (1) *critical thinking* through the analysis of difficult readings and complex arguments; (2) *communication* through the completion of the case study assignment; (3) *problem-solving* through an understanding of how judges frame and resolve legal issues; and (4) *social responsibility* through an appreciation of how the law influences controversial social policies.

## **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

This course has two primary objectives: (1) to provide an understanding of the American judicial system, and (2) to help increase your critical reading and problem-solving skills.

At the end of this course you will be able to:

- *Understand* the American judicial system;
- *Recognize* the legal issues and developments found in the common law;
- *Explain* the scope and limits of judicial power;
- *Construct, Deconstruct, and Reconstruct* complex arguments; and
- *Appreciate* the multi-faceted legal and social complexities that come before the courts.

## **REQUIRED MATERIALS**

Banks, C. P., & O'Brien, D. M. (2016). *Judicial Process: Law, Courts, and Judicial Politics*. Los Angeles, CA: CQ Press. (ISBN: 978-1-4833-1701-4).

Additional required readings will be made available on the Blackboard course site, which may be accessed at <https://my.utep.edu/>.

## ASSESSMENTS AND GRADING

Your grade will be based upon the following assignments:

Assessment	Percent of Grade	Total Points
Case Briefs (4 in total)	25%	125
Midterm Exam	25%	125
Case Study	25%	125
Final Exam	25%	125
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>500</b>

### CASE BRIEFS

There will be four case briefs in this course. The Course Schedule section below includes the cases you need to brief and when the case briefs are due. For purposes of this class, a “case brief” is an analytical summary of a judicial opinion. It contains the key components of the decision. The purpose of briefing a case is to help you better understand the case. Through the process of case briefing, you develop analytical and legal reasoning skills. A handout outlining what needs to be included in a case brief will be made available on Blackboard. A sample case brief will also be provided for your reference. You should refer to this sample case brief when you work on your case briefs. You will submit your case studies on Blackboard.

### MIDTERM EXAM

The midterm exam will take place on **Thursday, March 10th and must be completed by 5:00 pm**. The midterm exam is closed book and will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions. Specific information regarding the midterm exam will be provided as we progress through the course.

The midterm exam will be available on Blackboard and must be completed on Blackboard. Note: once you start the midterm exam, you must finish it within 1 ½ hours. Also note that we will not hold class on Thursday, March 10th, the day of the midterm.

### CASE STUDY

A case study is due at **5:00 pm on Thursday, April 21st**. The case study will be available on Blackboard one week before, at the start of class on Thursday, April 14th. Barring exigent circumstances, late submissions will not be accepted. The case study will include a hypothetical scenario with accompanying cases for the supporting law. You will be the judge that decides the case, and you will write a short legal opinion supporting your decision. A sample case study on another hypothetical scenario in another area of the common law will be provided. You should refer to this sample case study when you work on your assignment. More information regarding the case study, including the grading rubric, will be provided as we progress through the course.

You will submit your case study on Blackboard. Your case study will also be submitted to SafeAssign, a plagiarism detecting software. SafeAssign is used to review assignment submissions for originality.

### FINAL EXAM

The final exam will take place on **Thursday, May 12th and must be completed by 5:00 pm**. The final exam is closed book and will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions. The final exam will not be comprehensive. Specific information regarding the final exam will be provided as we progress through the course.

The final exam will be available on Blackboard and must be completed on Blackboard. Note: once you start the final exam, you must finish it within 1 ½ hours. Also note that we will not meet in person on Thursday, May 12th, the day of the final.

#### QUALITY OF WORK

You are expected to produce quality work, which requires being prepared and encompasses both substance and presentation (style, organization, grammar, etc.). Poor presentation distracts from what it is you are trying to communicate. Producing quality work requires more than a minimum effort. In all cases, quality trumps quantity.

#### CLASSROOM RESPONSE SYSTEM

We will use a cloud-based student response software by iClicker to administer polls during class. There is no extra cost for using this software application. You are required to “check-in” to participate in the iClicker Cloud polls. You can participate with a smartphone, tablet, laptop, or desktop computer. It is your responsibility to set up your iClicker Student account in a timely fashion and to make sure your device is working properly. You will need to create an iClicker Student account if you do not already have one. You will also need to connect to the internet or to your mobile data plan while using iClicker Student.

#### COURSE COMMUNICATION

Important course information will primarily be communicated in class and through email. Note: your “miners.utep.edu” email address is the only email address I will use when communicating important information via email. Students who are absent from class are responsible for obtaining any important information they may have missed. Students are responsible for regularly checking their official UTEP email. It is not a valid excuse to say, “I did not receive the email.”

#### COURSE POLICIES

##### CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

I will strive to provide a classroom environment appropriate for academic instruction and discussion. For this to occur, make sure you read the assignments, as scheduled; silence cell phones; and arrive on time. We will welcome and encourage different ideas and viewpoints. Some topics are controversial and students should feel comfortable expressing their thoughts. We will respect what others have to say – we do not have to agree with them – and avoid personal insult, interrupting, and rudeness. We will avoid becoming politically charged when discussing sensitive topics. We will be civil.

##### ACCOMMODATIONS

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students 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 requesting accommodations based on a disability must register with the [UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services](#) (CASS). Contact CASS at 915-747-5148 or email them at [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu). Students can also apply for accommodations online via the [CASS portal](#).

## COVID-19 ACCOMMODATIONS

Students are not permitted on campus when they have a positive COVID-19 test, exposure or symptoms. If you are not permitted on campus, you should contact me as soon as possible so we can arrange necessary and appropriate accommodations. We can further discuss what accommodations are needed should you miss assessment deadlines because you are sick with COVID-19. Your health takes priority.

## WITHDRAWAL POLICY

To be withdrawn from the class, students must take appropriate actions on or before UTEP's deadlines. Automatic withdrawals will not be made by the instructor. A student may officially withdraw from this class with an automatic 'W' at any time **before April 1st**. According to UTEP policy, no withdrawals will be allowed after this date. You will receive a failing grade if you simply stop coming to class and do not take appropriate actions to withdraw from the course.

## COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

Please stay home if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations. If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you are encouraged to report your results to [covidaction@utep.edu](mailto:covidaction@utep.edu), so that the Dean of Students Office can provide you with support and help with communication with your professors. The Student Health Center is equipped to provide COVID-19 testing.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people in areas of substantial or high COVID-19 transmission wear face masks when indoors in groups of people. The best way that Miners can take care of Miners is to get the vaccine. If you still need the vaccine, it is widely available in the El Paso area, and will be available at no charge on campus during the first week of classes. For more information about the current rates, testing, and vaccinations, please visit [epstrong.org](http://epstrong.org).

## SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY

### **Scholastic Dishonesty will not be tolerated.**

I am required by the Handbook of Operating Procedures for The University of Texas at El Paso to report "all alleged acts of scholastic dishonesty...to the Dean of Students for disposition." (See Section III of the Handbook of Operating Procedures for UTEP (*Academic Policies and Faculty Personnel Matters* 4.14a.))

As stated in Section II of the Handbook of Operating Procedures for UTEP (*Student Conduct and Discipline* 1.2.3(a)): "Any student who commits an act of academic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person without giving sufficient credit, taking an examination for another person, or any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts."

Please refer to UTEP's Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution at <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/osccr/student-conduct/academic-integrity.html>. You should read the *Avoiding Plagiarism* handout available on their site, which is also available on Blackboard.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

The schedule below outlines what will be covered in this course. It will be followed to the extent possible in meeting the instructional goals and needs of the course, but I reserve the right to alter this schedule as needed. In addition to the required textbook, other readings will be made available on Blackboard. You are required to complete the assigned readings for each week. Pay particular attention to when the case briefs are due.

Date	Readings and Assignments
Week 1 1/18, 1/20	Jan.17th: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday - University Closed  <i>Law and Courts in Society</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Ch. 1, pp. 2-25</li> <li>✓ U.S. Constitution</li> <li>✓ <i>Federalist</i> #78</li> <li>✓ <i>U.S. v. Jones</i>, 565 U.S. 400 (2012) <b>[Sample Case Brief]</b></li> </ul>
Week 2 1/25, 1/27	<i>Law and Jurisprudence I</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Ch. 2, pp. 30-48</li> <li>✓ H.L.A. Hart, <i>Positivism &amp; the Separation of Law &amp; Morals</i>, 71 HARV. L. REV. 593 (1957)</li> <li>✓ Ronald M. Dworkin, <i>The Model of Rules</i>, 35 U. CHI. L. REV. 14 (1967)</li> </ul>
Week 3 2/1, 2/3	Feb. 2nd: Spring Census Day  <i>Law and Jurisprudence II</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Continuation of H.L.A. Hart and Ronald Dworkin articles (if needed)</li> <li>✓ Lon L. Fuller, <i>The Case of the Speluncean Explorers</i>, 62 HARV. L. REV. 616 (1949)</li> </ul>
Week 4 2/8, 2/10	<i>Judicial Organization and Administration</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Ch. 3, pp. 56-89</li> <li>✓ Mitchell, Jonathan F., <i>Judicial Review and the Future of Federalism</i>, 49 ARIZ. ST. L.J. 1091 (Fall 2017)</li> </ul>
Week 5 2/15, 1/17	<i>Judicial Selection and Removal</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Ch. 4, pp. 99-130</li> <li>✓ <i>Republican Party of Minnesota v. White</i>, 536 U.S. 765 (2002) <b>[Case Brief #1]</b></li> <li>✓ Congressional Research Service. <i>Supreme Court Appointment Process: President's Selection of a Nominee</i> (R44235), Prepared by Barry J. McMillion. Washington: Library of Congress, September 28, 2020.</li> </ul>
Week 6 2/22, 2/24	<i>The Practice of Law I</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Ch. 5, pp. 142-167</li> <li>✓ <i>Faretta v. California</i>, 442 U.S. 806 (1975) <b>[Case Brief #2]</b></li> </ul>
Week 7 3/1, 3/3	<i>The Practice of Law II</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>Grutter v. Bollinger</i>, 539 U.S. 306 (2003)</li> </ul>
Week 8 3/8, 3/10	Catch Up & Midterm Exam Review - March 3rd No Class - March 8th [Tentative]  <b>Midterm Exam - March 10th [No Class]</b>

<b>Date</b>	<b>Readings and Assignments</b>
Week 9 3/15, 3/17	<b>Spring Break</b>
Week 10 3/22, 3/24	March 25th: Cesar Chavez Holiday - No Classes  <i>Access to Courts and Justice I</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Ch. 6, pp. 177-190</li> <li>✓ <i>Gratz v. Bollinger</i>, 539 U.S. 244 (2003)</li> </ul>
Week 11 3/29, 3/31	April 1st: Spring Drop/Withdrawal Deadline  <i>Access to Courts and Justice II</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <i>Lujan v. Defenders of Wildlife</i>, 504 U.S. 555 (1992) <b>[Case Brief #3]</b></li> <li>✓ <i>DaimlerChrysler Corp. v. Cuno</i>, 547 U.S. 332 (2006)</li> <li>✓ <i>Hollingsworth v. Perry</i>, 570 U.S. 693 (2013)</li> </ul>
Week 12 4/5, 4/7	<i>The Adversarial Process and Criminal Cases</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Ch. 7, pp. 196-223</li> <li>✓ <i>Roper v. Simmons</i>, 543 U.S. 551 (2005) <b>[Case Brief #4, majority opinion only]</b></li> </ul>
Week 13 4/12, 4/14	April 15th: Spring Study Day  <i>Civil Cases and Litigation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Ch. 8, pp. 232-256</li> <li>✓ <i>Katko v. Briney</i>, 183 N.W.2nd 657 (Iowa 1971)</li> <li>✓ <i>Minns v. United States</i>, 155 F.3d 445 (4th Cir. 1998)</li> <li>✓ <i>Tenet v. Doe</i>, 544 U.S. 1 (2005)</li> </ul>
Week 14 4/19, 4/21	<b>Case Study - April 21st</b>  <i>Appellate Courts and Decision Making</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Ch. 9, pp. 264-292</li> <li>✓ Justice Breyer and Justice Scalia</li> </ul>
Week 15 4/26, 4/28	<i>The Scope and Limits of Judicial Power I</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Ch. 10, pp. 301-314</li> <li>✓ Global War on Terrorism and Habeas Corpus</li> </ul>
Week 16 5/3, 5/5	May 6th: Dead Day  <i>The Scope and Limits of Judicial Power II</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Ch. 10, pp. 315-328</li> <li>✓ <i>Obergefell v. Hodges</i>, 576 U.S. ____ (2015)</li> </ul>
<b>Finals Week</b> 5/9 - 5/13	<b>Final Exam - May 12th</b>