

CRIJ 1306 Courts Systems and Practices

CRN: 11924

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Office Hours: Microsoft Teams available via appointment

Course Overview and Objectives

This course will explore all aspects of courts and related areas which are crucial to the criminal justice system. It will examine court structure, courtroom actors, trial and appeal process. This course will explore judicial decision making, specialized courts, and comparative court systems. Finally, some controversial discussion will be explored, such as the death penalty and the legalization of cannabis.

Required Textbook

Hemmens, Craig, Brody, David, and Spohn, Cassia (2022). *Criminal Courts: A contemporary Perspective*. 5th Ed. Thousands Oak, CA: Sage.

Class Format:

This course is NOT self-paced. Instead, this course is based on weekly modules that open each Monday morning at 12:30am and close on Sunday at 11:59PM (Mountain Standard Time). If students fail to submit any required work before the module closes they will receive a grade of zero (0) for that assignment—no exceptions!

As outlined in the syllabus below, each weekly module will focus on two chapters from our textbook. For each of these chapters, I will prepare a chapter outline that is intended to provide guidance and structure to students as they read the chapter. Students should read this outline before reading the chapter. Students are also encouraged to read the conclusions/summary at the end of each chapter and to pay close attention to the “key terms” that are found in the textbook for each chapter.

All exams and written assignments are “open book” and “open notes,” meaning that students can use any class materials they wish when completing these assignments. However, they cannot “collaborate” in any way with any person (whether they are a fellow student or not) when completing the assignments. Doing so constitutes cheating and will be dealt with per the policy on academic dishonesty specified later in the syllabus.

REQUIREMENTS:

Your grade in this class will be based on the following assignments: Week 1 Discussion Board, Syllabus Quiz, 4 exams and 4 written assignments.

Exams: Exams are to be taken on the week stated in the syllabus. Make-up exams may only be acceptable under extreme circumstances, such as a medical or personal emergency. I must warn you, however, that I base these decisions on a very narrow definition of extreme. The student must provide me with proper documentation to qualify for a make-up (documentation does not, unfortunately, guarantee that a make-up will be given). Missed exams will be assigned a grade of zero (0). All makeup exams, if granted, must be completed within one week of the original exam date. Each exam is worth 100 points. Again, a grade of zero (0) will be assigned to each exam not submitted by the time the respective weekly module closes. Students will have 90 minutes (1 hour and 30 minutes) to complete the exam once they begin. Exams will be available on Monday and will close at 11:59PM on Sunday (Mountain Standard Time).

Written Assignments: Students will be given a written assignment on the week stated in the syllabus. These assignments consist of answering a specific question regarding one chapter for that week. Answers are limited to a maximum of 500 words. APA references are required or a grade of a zero (0) will be assigned. There will be 4 written assignments and each is worth 10 points (40 points total). Make-up assignments may only be acceptable under extreme circumstances and all makeup assignments, if granted, must be completed within one week of the original assignment date.

FINAL GRADE CALCULATION:

Your final grade in this class will be determined based on the Week 1 Discussion Board, Syllabus Quiz, exams and written assignments.

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Week 1 Discussion Board | 10 Points |
| Syllabus Quiz | 10 Points |
| Exam 1 | 100 Points |
| Exam 2 | 100 Points |
| Exam 3 | 100 Points |
| Exam 4 | 100 Points |
| Written Assignment 1 | 10 Points |
| Written Assignment 2 | 10 Points |
| Written Assignment 3 | 10 Points |
| Written Assignment 4 | 10 Points |
| Total Points | 460 Points |

Final Grade Distribution:

| | |
|---------|----------|
| 460-414 | Points=A |
| 413-368 | Points=B |
| 367-322 | Points=C |
| 321-0 | Points=F |

Please note:

I have right to make any changes to the course or syllabus and any changes will be announced ahead of time in an announcement and/or email. There will be no curve used in grading, no grades will be dropped. If any extra credit opportunities are available they will be announced on Blackboard via Announcements. Your grade is an accomplishment, not a gift!

Important Reminders:

The exams are timed, meaning that once you begin the exam you will have a limited amount of time to complete and submit your work. The exams will automatically close and submit at the end of the time limit if you haven't already submitted it yourself. Do not wait until the last minute to begin exams. This way, if you do experience any difficulties with submissions, they can be corrected before the module closes.

Technology Issues

Help Desk: Learners experiencing technological challenges (email, Blackboard, software, etc.) can submit a ticket to the UTEP Helpdesk for assistance. Contact the Helpdesk via phone, email, chat, website, or in-person if on campus.

Online Netiquette:

No yelling please. Typing IN ALL CAPS IS INAPPROPRIATE. Sarcasm can (and will) backfire on you. Attempt to find your own answers. Always make an effort to use proper punctuation, spelling and grammar. Don't get cute with text colors. Last and most importantly, be kind. Even though other students cannot see you, your name is attached to that comment and your classmates and instructors will remember it if you've been rude.

Academic Dishonesty:

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another person's as ones' own. And, collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions.

Accommodations and Support Services:

If a student needs an accommodation, then the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) located at UTEP need to be contacted. If you have a condition, which may affect your ability to

perform successfully in this course, you are encouraged to discuss this in confidence with the instructor and/or the director of the Center for Accommodations and Support Services.

A Final Note:

1. I will provide you clear instructions on class expectations.
2. I will check my email and will answer back to you as soon as possible.
3. I will provide graded feedback on your performance in a timely manner.
4. I will keep you informed about your graded progress in the class at all times and will make time to discuss your concerns when needed.
5. I am open to suggestions about improvement of the class and class related activities.
6. I will do all I can to ensure your learning and success in this class
7. If any changes in the course are to be implemented, I will ensure that the class is notified in a timely manner.
8. Read all postings on the bulletin board and all emails from me.
9. I strongly recommend that you check the course at least three times a week at minimum to keep up. Email messages are sent to your UTEP email address, so you will want to check your UTEP email several times a week, preferably each business day.
10. Online learning is not a spectator sport. It is everyone's responsibility to participate as fully as they can so everyone can get the most from the experience.

| Week | Dates | Readings and Topics | Assignments |
|------|----------------------------|--|--|
| 1 | August 28- September 3 | Chapter 1: Introduction: Law and Judicial Function Chapter 2: Sources of Law | <i>Discussion Board #1 Original Post due Sept. 1st at 11:59pm</i> <i>2 Responses due September 3rd at 11:59pm</i> <i>Syllabus Quiz due September 3rd at 11:59pm</i> |
| 2 | September 4-10 | Chapter 3: Types of Law Chapter 4: Court Organization and Structure | <i>Exam 1 due September 10th at 11:59pm</i> |
| 3 | September 11-17 | Chapter 5: Prosecutors Chapter 6: Defense Attorneys | <i>Written Assignment 1 due September 17th at 11:59pm</i> <i>Exam 2 due September 17th at 11:59pm</i> |
| 4 | September 18-24 | Chapter 7: Judges Chapter 8: Criminal Defendants and Crime Victims | <i>Written Assignment 2 due September 24th at 11:59pm</i> |
| 5 | September 25- October 1 | Chapter 9: The Jury Chapter 10: Pretrial Procedures | <i>Written Assignment 3 due October 1st at 11:59pm</i> <i>Exam 3 due October 1st at 11:59pm</i> |
| 6 | October 2-8 | Chapter 11: The Criminal Trial Chapter 12: Sentencing | <i>Exam 4 due August October 8th at 11:59pm</i> |
| 7 | October 9-16 | Chapter 13: The Appellate Process Chapter 14: Specialized Courts | <i>Written Assignment 4 due October 16th at 11:59pm</i> |