

**THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT
EL PASO
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS**

DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Course #: **CJ 1306:** Courts Systems and Practices (3-0) Focuses on the role of the courts in the administration of criminal justice, with special attention to legal processing of criminal defendants. Topics include the structure of the American courts, due process, right to counsel, pre-trial release, plea-bargaining, trial proceedings, and sentencing.

Course Description: This course examines the federal, state, and juvenile courts within the United States with an emphasis on the criminal courts. Students will also study the courts' place within the criminal justice system as well as the participants within the courts. Topics include the structure of the American courts, due process, right to counsel, pre-trial release, plea bargaining, trial proceedings, and sentencing.

Course Title: **COURT SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES**

Course CRN: 22263

Term: SPRING 2017

Course Meeting Time: Tuesday and Thursday 3:00 pm – 4:20 pm

Location: LART Bldg 319

Instructor: Luis A. Arias, BA, JD

Office Location: LART Room 116

Contact Info: Phone # 915.747.7943
Larias2@utep.edu
Fax # 915.747.5751
Emergency Contact 915.218.8103

Office Hrs: 4:30 pm – 5:30 pm Tuesday and Thursday, by appointment

Textbook(s), Materials: Required: Siegel, Larry J., Schmalleger, Frank, and Worrall, John L., Courts and Criminal Justice in America, Boston, Prentice Hall, 2015, Second Edition. Available at UTEP Bookstore. Suggested: Internet and current news articles

Course Objectives (Learning Outcomes):

During the course of the class, the students will be able to identify, understand, articulate and apply the following concepts and models:

- a. The foundation of the American legal criminal justice system, i.e. the American Constitution, Common Law, and, case law;
- b. The three level court system in the United States federal form of government;
- c. The players and their roles in the courts and criminal justice system, i.e. judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, defendants and victims;
- d. The court process, to include arrest; plea bargaining and guilty pleas; the jury and the trial; sentencing, appeals, and habeas corpus; and,
- e. Current issues and the future of the US court system.

Course Activities/Assignments:

Textbook chapter readings and lectures, outside readings, group discussions, oral presentations with PowerPoint, and analytical papers as required by the Professor.

Assessment of Course Objectives:

Students will be required to read course materials assigned by the Professor and complete all individual and group activities as assigned. The course will be divided into a number a clusters or units together with sub-topics, which collectively comprise the subjects. Upon completion of the clusters or units, the student will be able to complete the objectives with a thorough comprehension, explanation, discussion and application thereof. The students will be administered objective and/or subjective examinations during the course of the class in order to assess the students' understanding of the subject matter/course material.

1. Students will be administered five to six written tests to measure their understanding of the course content. The examinations will be administered and proportionally spaced out throughout the semester. Examinations will be graded on the basis of class lectures, group discussions, assigned readings from the textbook(s), and/or outside readings. Written objective and/or subjective (essay) tests are valued at 100 points each. Blue Books are required for essay tests, and a scantron is required for each objective test. It is the students' responsibility to purchase both items.

2. Any student who has an "A" average going into the final examination will not be required to sit for the final examination and will receive an "A" for the course.

3. At the instructor's discretion, students may be required to submit a research and/or analysis paper(s). The instructor will provide report requirements during the course of the class. Deductions will be made for each error: not following directions, proofreading, formatting, typographical problems including incorrect text, etc. A numeric grade will be assigned.

Writing Center: The University Writing Center (UWC) is located in the Library, Room 227. It is a great place to receive help with editing your written papers and with APA style assistance. The UWC is open Monday – Thursday 9:00 am – 5:00 pm, Friday 9:00 am 2:00 pm, and Sundays 12:00 – 5:00 pm. Appointments are recommended before the deadline, but the UWC will take walk-ins. The UWC telephone number and email address are 747-5112 and uwc@utep.edu.

Grading Policy: All grading is at the professor’s discretion and based on traditional academic guidelines: Grading Breakdown:

90- Above	- A
80- 89	- B
70-79	- C
60 - 69	- D
59 – Below	- F

- All class assignments are due when scheduled
- Late submissions will result in grade reduction.
- All written assignments must be submitted in APA format and/or as directed by the Professor without exception.
- Any approved rewrites must be accompanied with the original document.
- There will be five to six class examinations, see supra.
- Students will be tested over all assigned textbook (s) reading assignments, outside reading assignments, class lectures, and/or group assignments.
- All examinations must be taken on the date and time scheduled. There are no make-up examinations, and the student will receive a score of 0 for any missed examinations.

Attendance and Participation Policy: Class and examination attendance is mandatory. Students are expected to be in class and be on time. Students who miss class are responsible for contacting fellow classmates to obtain notes. I will not allow students to borrow my notes, and I do not give an encore performance of my lectures. This also goes for students arriving late to class or leaving early. **Note:** I do not post my PowerPoints on Blackboard.

Drop Policy: The course drop policy for this course is the same as the official policy for the University of Texas at El Paso. The policy is set out in the University catalog. The instructor also has discretion in this matter and has the right to drop a student from the course if the student has excessive unexcused absences or is continuously late to class. A student will not be allowed more than three (3) unexcused absences during the semester. If a student accumulates more than three (3) unexcused absences, the instructor has the right to drop the student from the course. Please refer to UTEP Drop Policy: http://engineering.utep.edu/plaza/AcademicForms/Course_Drop_Form_aftercensusday.pdf; and http://utepconnect.utep.edu/images/docs/accepted_students/learning_online/Know_University_Policy.pdf.

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 may affect financial aid. **Students are limited to dropping no more than 6 courses over their entire academic career of all courses taken at any public college or University in Texas.**

- a) Students who drop a course within the first 2 weeks *before the "official census date,"* the course will not appear on the transcript, and doesn't count toward the 6-course drop limit. **Note:** The Census date is February 1, 2017.
- b) 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, this type of drop counts against your 6 drop limit. **Note:** The course stop deadline is March 30, 2017.
- c) If the course is dropped *after the "course drop date"* or if the student just stops coming/taking tests, etc., UTEP requires the instructor to issue an "F" in the course that permanently remains on the transcript. This type of drop counts against the 6 drop limit.
- d) UTEP also allows instructors to administratively drop any student because of excessive absences, lack of effort, or disciplinary reasons. In this case, the student will be notified of the course drop through their UTEP email account. A "W" will be issued if the drop occurs before the course drop date, and an "F" will be issued if a student is administratively dropped for disciplinary reasons or after the course drop date. This type of drop counts against the 6 drop limit.
- e) If circumstances occur where a student must miss an excessive number of classes and/or is unable to submit multiple assignments (e.g., student medical reasons, medical conditions of a family member, death of a family member, active military service), they should first discuss the possibility of withdrawal from all classes with their academic advisor. If a student withdraws completely from all classes, kindly notify Professor Arias at: larias2@utep.edu. Complete withdrawals from all classes in the same semester do not count against the 6 drop limit.

Academic Integrity Policy: Academic dishonesty includes cheating on an exam, turning in someone else's assignment from a previous class or plagiarism: "(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."

The Professor takes cases of alleged academic dishonesty seriously. For students who are found to have engaged in any form of academic dishonesty, 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. See <http://www.utep.edu/dos>

Violations will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for possible disciplinary action. For students who are found to have engaged in any form of academic dishonesty, sanctions may include a failing grade on the assignment or examination in question, a failing grade in the course, suspension, or dismissal from the University.

Civility Statement:

The Professor will endeavor to provide a classroom environment appropriate for academic knowledge, discourse, and debate. The classroom will be an environment conducive to educational attainment. For this to occur, each and every student must be prepared with all the reading assignments and participate actively in class. We will respect what others have to say and avoid insults, interruptions and disrespect. We will avoid becoming politically charged when discussing sensitive topics. Accordingly, both the instructor and students must engage in the course with mutual respect; disruptive behavior will not be tolerated and will result in the students(s) being removed from class. Please do not disrupt other students during class.

Cell Phones will be turned off or set to vibrate during class. As a matter of courtesy and classroom policy, students must leave the classroom when accepting incoming calls.

Laptop and recording devices are permitted in classroom to facilitate note taking. No other computer use is approved during class time, to include, emailing and game playing. Using a laptop in the classroom is a privilege, which can be revoked by the instructor. The use of the aforementioned (cell phones and laptops) is NOT permitted during examinations. Students will not be allowed to leave the classroom during examinations.

Disability Statement:

If a student has or suspects he/she has a disability and needs an accommodation, he/she should contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148 or at cass@utep.edu or go to Room 106 Union East Building. The student is responsible for presenting to the instructor any DSS accommodation letters and instructions.

Military Statement: If you are a military student with the potential of being called to military service and/or training during the course of the semester, you are encouraged to contact Professor Arias immediately.

Blackboard Requirement: We will be using Blackboard during the semester. Make certain you become familiar with the program. Outside textbook reading assignments will be placed on Blackboard. You can access Blackboard from any campus computer or from your home. Please consult the UTEP system or see me if you need instructions on how to use Blackboard. Each student is required to have a working email address.

Course Calendar/Assignments/Spring 2017. Please Note: The Professor has the right to make any changes to the course or syllabus. Students should attend class to stay informed of any changes.

Week One:	Jan 17	Course Introduction
	Jan 19	Chapter 1: Legal Foundations; The Journey
Week Two:	Jan 24	Chapter 1: Legal Foundations; Nosey the Neighbor Exercise
	Jan 26	Chapter 2: Who Controls the Courts
Week Three:	Jan 31	Chapter 2: Who Controls the Courts
	Feb 2	Unit I Test
Week Four:	Feb 7	Chapter 3: Federal Courts
	Feb 9	Chapter 4: State Courts
Week Five:	Feb 14	Chapter 5: Juvenile Courts
	Feb 16	Chapter 6: Specialized Courts
Week Six:	Feb 21	Review;
	Feb 23	Unit II Test
Week Seven:	Feb 28	Chapter 7: Judges; Presenter
	Mar 2	Chapter 7: Judges
Week Eight	Mar 7	Chapter 8: Prosecutors; Presenter
	Mar 9	Chapter 8: Prosecutors; Presenter
	Mar 13 – 17	SPRING BREAK
Week Nine:	Mar 21	Chapter 9: Defense Attorney
	Mar 23	Unit III Test Chapters 7 -9

Week Ten:	Mar 28	Chapter 10: Defendants & Victims
	Mar 30	Unit IIIB Test
Week Eleven :	Apr 4	Chapter 11: Pre-Trial Procedures
	Apr 6	Chapter 11: Pre-Trial Procedures
Week Twelve:	Apr 11	Chapter 12: Plea Bargaining/Guilty Pleas
	Apr 13	Unit IV Test (Chapters 11 -12)
Week Thirteen:	Apr 18	Chapter 13: The Jury and Trial
	Apr 20	Chapter 14: Sentencing, Appeals, Habeas Corpus: an Overview
Week Fourteen:	Apr 25	Chapter 14: Discussion on Probation/Intermediate Sanctions
	Apr 27	Chapter 14: Discussion on Death Penalty
Week Fifteen:	May 2 Guillotine	Roundtable Discussion: Reflections on the Guillotine
	May 4	Review for Final Exam
Week Sixteen:	May 11 6:45pm	Final Exam: May 11, 2017 4:00 pm - 6:45pm