

**CRIJ 1306**  
**COURTS SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES**  
**FALL 2020**  
**MONDAY, 1:30 AM to 2:50 AM, UGLC 106**

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Office Hours: By Appointment  
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**STATEMENT REGARDING COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS**

You must stay at home and report if you (1) have been diagnosed with COVID19, (2) are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or (3) have had recent contact with a person who has received a positive coronavirus test. Reports should be made at [screening.utep.edu](http://screening.utep.edu). If you know anyone who should report any of these three criteria, encourage them to report. If the individual cannot report, you can report on their behalf by sending an email to [COVIDaction@utep.edu](mailto:COVIDaction@utep.edu).

For each day that you attend campus—for any reason—you must complete the questions on the UTEP screening website ([screening.utep.edu](http://screening.utep.edu)) prior to arriving on campus. The website will verify if you are permitted to come to campus. Under no circumstances should anyone come to class when feeling ill or exhibiting any of the known COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, and alternative instruction will be provided. Students are advised to minimize the number of encounters with others to avoid infection.

Wear face coverings when in common areas of campus or when others are present. You must wear a face covering over your nose and mouth at all times in this class. If you choose not to wear a face covering, you may not enter the classroom. If you remove your face covering, you will be asked to put it on or leave the classroom. Students who refuse to wear a face covering and follow preventive COVID-19 guidelines will be dismissed from the class and will be subject to disciplinary action according to Section 1.2.3 Health and Safety and Section 1.2.2.5 Disruptions in the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. Please note that if COVID-19 conditions deteriorate in the City of El Paso, this course may be transitioned to a full remote delivery.

**STATEMENT REGARDING COVID-19 ACCOMMODATIONS**

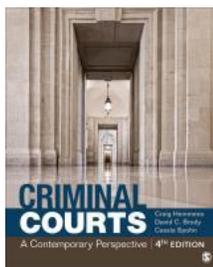
Students are not permitted on campus when they have a positive COVID-19 test, exposure or symptoms. If you are not permitted on campus, you should contact me as soon as possible so we can arrange necessary and appropriate accommodations. Students who are considered high risk according to CDC guidelines and/or those who live with individuals who are considered high risk may contact Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu) to discuss temporary accommodations for on-campus courses and activities.

## OVERVIEW

This course examines the structure of courts and criminal case processing in the American judicial system, at the local, state, and federal levels. Emphasis is placed on case processing, sentencing, and the appellate process, as well as the organizational roles of legal actors. Furthermore, the course focuses on the relationship between courts and justice, and examines some topical and controversial issues associated with local, state, and federal criminal courts. A considerable part of the course is devoted to the study of sentencing research and case law, in particular, decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court.

## REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Hemmens, Craig, David C. Brody, and Cassia C. Spohn. 2019. *Criminal Courts: A Contemporary Perspective*, 4rd Ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.



ISBN: 9781544338958 (book is available online)

\*Additional readings will be made available in Blackboard or through UTEP Library resources.

## COURSE STRUCTURE AND GRADING

**Attendance:** a live class lecture will be held every Monday, from 1:30 PM to 2:50 PM, at UGLC 106. Only half of the class will be scheduled to attend each live lecture at a given time. The other half of the class will participate in the live lecture virtually through Blackboard Collaborate. Thus, each student is scheduled to attend the face-to-face lecture every other Monday. A student may attend a lecture virtually through Blackboard Collaborate if unable to attend the lecture face-to-face during a scheduled time. Attendance at the lecture—whether face-to-face or virtually—is required. Students are expected to participate in these sessions with a webcam and microphone. The sessions will be recorded so they can be reviewed by classmates at a later time. Students should not record the sessions and post them to any sites outside of Blackboard. A student should contact the professor ahead of time if any login or technical issues are experienced.

Students will be placed in the following groups (please see the course schedule):

Group 1: students with last names A through H

Group 2: students with last names I through Z

A maximum of two unexcused absences are permitted. Excused absences require proper medical or official university documentation, and are provided at the discretion of the professor. A one percent grade deduction will be made for each absence beyond the two allowed absences. Attendance is worth 10 percent of the overall course grade.

**Supreme Court Case Brief:** to familiarize students with legal precedent and the reasoning that guides decision-making, students will be expected to brief a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision. Each student will be assigned a case (i.e., majority opinion). In-depth information on briefing a High

Court decision (including a sample case brief) is provided in the *Supreme Court Case Brief* folder in Blackboard. With respect to mechanics, papers should be single-spaced, use Times New Roman twelve-inch font with one-inch margins, and be exactly one page in length (not including the title page). Please contact the professor if you have questions on the paper. To receive full credit, the assignment should be submitted electronically on the Blackboard assignment link by the due date. The assignment is due on September 28th. Late papers are not accepted. The case brief is worth 15 percent of the overall course grade.

**Pending Court Decision Paper:** students are expected to examine a pending case before the U.S. Supreme Court, that is, cases that will be argued and decided during the Court's upcoming session (2019 to 2020). A list of instructions, questions, and pending High Court decisions to choose from will be provided in the *Pending Court Decision* folder in Blackboard. With respect to mechanics, papers should be double-spaced, use Times New Roman twelve-inch font with one-inch margins, be exactly two and a half pages in length (not including the title page). Please contact the professor if you have questions on the paper. To receive full credit, the assignment should be submitted electronically on the Blackboard assignment link by the due date. The assignment is due on November 9th. Late papers are not accepted. The court assignment is worth 15 percent of the overall course grade.

**Exams:** there will be three non-comprehensive exams administered on Blackboard (see course schedule below). Exams consist of multiple choice questions. Exams cover all assigned readings from the textbook. The professor will post exam review in Blackboard two days before the exam. No makeup exams are offered unless the student can provide documentation for a medical emergency or a university-sponsored activity. With the exception of documented medical emergencies, arrangements for a makeup exam must be made at least 24 hours before the regularly scheduled exam. Makeup exams may be administered in a different format from the original exam. Makeup exams are given at the discretion of the professor.

Exams will open at 8:00 am and close at 11:59 pm on the assigned date. The exam will be open for only one day. Students will have one hour and 20 minutes to complete the exam once opened. Exams may only be taken once. Please see the course schedule for exam dates. **Please notify the professor and UTEP technical support services if you experience technical issues during the exam, including obtaining a case number from technical services.** Each exam is worth 20 percent of the course grade. Thus, exams comprise 60 percent of the overall course grade.

**Important Notes:** the class works best when students are present and engaged. Do not be afraid to talk or to share ideas—you are just as likely (if not more likely) to gain insights and learn from each other as you are from me. The professor does not post slide presentations online, share lecture notes, or discuss missed lectures through email. Arrangements for obtaining missed class notes should be made with classmates. Please make sure that you have immediate access to the personal email linked to your Blackboard account, as all course emails and notifications will be sent through Blackboard. Professor Cano reserves the right to make any changes to the course requirements and deadlines.

**Percentage Values for Course Requirements:**

Attendance	10 percent
Supreme Court Case Brief	15 percent
Pending Court Decision Paper	15 percent
Exam 1	20 percent
Exam 2	20 percent
Exam 3	<u>20 percent</u>
	100 percent

**Grade Percentage Distribution:**

A = 89.5 or more percent	B = 79.5 to 89.4 percent	C = 69.5 to 79.4 percent
D = 59.5 to 69.4 percent	F = 59.4 percent or less	

**A GRADE OF D OR HIGHER (59.5 POINTS OR MORE) IS REQUIRED TO PASS THE COURSE.**

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND HONESTY**

The University of Texas at El Paso has a system of Academic Integrity and Scholastic Integrity based on personal integrity of all scholastic work undertaken at the University. Academic dishonesty comprises, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, or submitting work for credit that is fully or partially completed by someone else. In addition to other guidelines of academic integrity, submitting work (e.g., annotated bibliography or book paper) that is identical or relatively similar to work submitted in a different course is considered plagiarism. At a minimum, students who engage in academic misconduct will receive a failing grade on the assignment or in the course. Please become familiar with the University policy on academic integrity and honesty outlined in Student Conduct and Discipline, Section II, Chapter I of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures in the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. Information can be found on the website of the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution: <http://sa.utep.edu/osccr/student-conduct/>.

**EXPECTATIONS FOR CLASSROOM CONDUCT**

No texting is permitted, as it is a great distraction to other students and the professor. Use of a cellular phone in case of an emergency should be discussed with the professor before class. Electronic devices are only permitted for taking notes. Students who engage in behavior that disrupts the learning environment may be asked to leave the class. **Students who consistently text during lectures will be asked to leave the class.** All student activities in the University, including this course, are governed by the provisions of the policy on Student Conduct and Discipline, Section II, Chapter I of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures.

Copyright 2020 (Mario Cano) as to this syllabus and all lectures. During this course, students are prohibited from selling notes, lectures, and presentations or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the express written permission of the professor teaching this course.

**EMAIL POLICY**

The professor will answer emails in a timely manner. As most of you are currently or will be professionals (criminal justice or otherwise), a certain amount of professionalism is expected in your communications. As such, all emails will be expected to contain proper grammar. They must be formatted in a professional manner as well (salutation and closing, etc.). If your emails are not well-articulated and professional, there is a high likelihood that there will be no response. In particular,

this means no “text speak” or “Internet lingo,” use of all caps, and no swearing. **The email should indicate the course in which you are enrolled.**

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

The professor is committed to assisting students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email at [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu), or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at [www.sa.utep.edu/cass](http://www.sa.utep.edu/cass).

### **COURSE SCHEDULE**

<b>Week 1</b> <b>08/24</b>	<b>Group 1: face-to-face lecture</b> <b>Group 2: virtual live lecture</b>
	Chapter 1: Introduction: Law and the Judicial Function
<b>Week 2</b> <b>08/31</b>	<b>Group 1: virtual live lecture</b> <b>Group 2: face-to-face lecture</b>
	Chapter 2: Sources of Law
<b>Week 3</b> <b>09/07</b>	<b>Labor Day: No Class</b>
<b>Week 4</b> <b>09/14</b>	<b>Group 1: face-to-face lecture</b> <b>Group 2: virtual live lecture</b>
	Chapter 3: Types of Law
<b>Week 5</b> <b>09/21</b>	<b>Group 1: virtual live lecture</b> <b>Group 2: face-to-face lecture</b>
	Chapter 4: Court Organization and Structure
<b>Week 6</b> <b>09/28</b>	<b>Group 1: face-to-face lecture</b> <b>Group 2: virtual live lecture</b>
	Chapter 14: Specialized Courts <b>Supreme Court Case Brief Due</b>
<b>Week 7</b> <b>10/05</b>	<b>Exam 1 (Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, and 14)</b>

**Week 8**  
**10/12**      **Group 1: virtual live lecture**  
**Group 2: face-to-face lecture**

Chapter 5: Prosecutors

**Week 9**  
**10/19**      **Group 1: face-to-face lecture**  
**Group 2: virtual live lecture**

Chapter 6: Defense Attorneys

**Week 10**  
**10/26**      **Group 1: virtual live lecture**  
**Group 2: face-to-face lecture**

Chapter 7: Judges

**Week 11**  
**11/02**      **Group 1: face-to-face lecture**  
**Group 2: virtual live lecture**

Chapter 8: Criminal Defendants and Crime Victims

**Week 12**  
**11/09**      **Group 1: virtual live lecture**  
**Group 2: face-to-face lecture**

Chapter 9: The Jury

**Pending Court Decision Paper Due**

**Week 13**  
**11/16**      **Exam 2 (Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9)**

**Week 14**  
**11/23**      **Groups 1 and 2, virtual live lecture**

Chapter 10: Pretrial Procedures

Chapter 11: The Criminal Trial

**Week 15**  
**11/30**      **Groups 1 and 2, virtual live lecture**

Chapter 12: Sentencing

Chapter 13: The Appellate Process

**Exam 3 (Chapters 10, 11, 12, and 13)**