

CRIJ 1306
COURTS SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES
SPRING 2020
MONDAY AND WEDNESDAY, 10:30 AM to 11:50 AM, LART 319

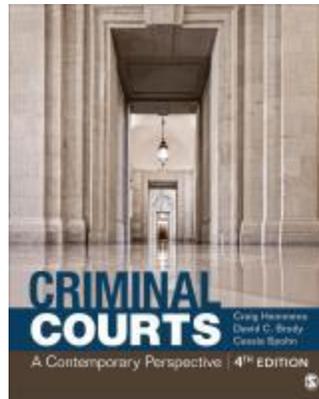
Professor: Dr. Mario V. Cano
Office: 111M Education Building
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 1:30 PM to 2:30 PM, and by Appointment
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COURSE OVERVIEW

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 maximum of two unexcused absences and two excused absences (with proper medical or official university documentation) are permitted. The attendance record will be administered by the Arkaive app. Please use code **K35N** to register at <https://arkaive.com/> before the second week of class. All documentation for excused absences should be uploaded on Arkaive. A one percent grade deduction will be made for each absence beyond the two unexcused and two excused absences. Attendance is worth 10 percent of the overall course grade.

Civics Quiz: An assessment to test knowledge of government is scheduled in class on January 29th. The quiz will cover the current membership and leadership of the U.S. Supreme Court, the executive branch (e.g., presidency and cabinet members), and legislature (particularly, the elected leaders who represent Texas). An overview of the assessment will be provided the first week of class. The quiz 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 as a hard copy (in class or at the Criminal Justice Department, located at Education 111) and electronically on the Blackboard assignment link by the due date, by 4:30 PM. The assignment is due on February 19th. Late papers are not accepted. The case brief is worth 10 percent of the overall course grade.

Pending Court Decision: 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 as a hard copy (in class or at the Criminal Justice Department, located at Education 111) and electronically on the Blackboard assignment link by the due date, by 4:30 PM. The assignment is due on April 29th. Late papers are not accepted. The court assignment is worth 10 percent of the overall course grade.

Exams: There will be three non-comprehensive exams administered in the classroom (see course schedule below). Exams consist of multiple choice and potential short answer questions. Exams cover all assigned readings from the textbook. 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. Each exam is worth 20 percent of the course grade. Thus, exams comprise 60 percent of the course grade. The exam review is conducted in the class scheduled prior to the exam. The professor will not post or email exam study notes from the exam review. Please make arrangements with a classmate if you are unable to attend the exam review session. Students are not permitted to leave the classroom during the exam.

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. Opportunities for extra credit will only be offered in class, and at the

professor's discretion. 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
Civics Quiz	10 percent
Supreme Court Case Brief	10 percent
Pending Court Decision	10 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, 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.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1

01/22 Course Introduction

01/22 Chapter 1: Introduction: Law and the Judicial Function

Week 2

01/27 Chapter 2: Sources of Law

01/29 Civics Quiz

Week 3

02/03 Chapter 3: Types of Law

02/05 Chapter 3: Types of Law

Week 4

02/10 Chapter 4: Court Organization and Structure

02/12 Chapter 4: Court Organization and Structure

Week 5

02/17 Chapter 14: Specialized Courts

02/19 Chapter 14: Specialized Courts

Supreme Court Case Brief Due

Week 6

02/24 Exam 1 Review

02/26 **Exam 1 (Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, and 14)**

Week 7

03/02 Chapter 5: Prosecutors

03/04 Chapter 5: Prosecutors

Week 8

03/09 Chapter 6: Defense Attorneys

03/11 Chapter 6: Defense Attorneys

Week 9

03/16 Spring Break

03/18 Spring Break

Week 10

03/23 Chapter 7: Judges

03/25 Chapter 7: Judges

Week 11

03/30 Chapter 8: Criminal Defendants and Crime Victims

04/01 Chapter 9: The Jury

Week 12

04/06 Chapter 9: The Jury

Exam 2 Review

04/08 **Exam 2 (Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9)**

Week 13

04/13 Chapter 10: Pretrial Procedures

04/15 Chapter 11: The Criminal Trial

Week 14

04/20 Chapter 12: Sentencing

04/22 Chapter 12: Sentencing

Week 15

04/27 Chapter 13: The Appellate Process

04/29 Chapter 13: The Appellate Process

Pending Court Decision Due

Week 16

05/04 Exam 3 Review

05/06 **Exam 3 (Chapters 10, 11, 12, and 13)**