

CRIJ 1306 – Court Systems & Practices

Spring 2024

University of Texas at Tyler

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CAS 123

Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 11:00am-12:00pm by appointment (in person or Zoom)

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Course Description

This course is an overview of the criminal justice court system and the processes associated with it. It covers the workings of the courts, the different forms of law and their origins, as well as the courtroom workgroup and their role. Additionally, this course looks further into specialized courts, and their importance within the court system.

Course Objectives: At the end of the semester, you will be able to:

- Describe the processes utilized by courtrooms.
- Describe the various forms of law, as well as where these laws come from.
- Understand the various roles in the courtroom workgroup, and how these roles together form our courtroom.
- Discuss the important role of courts in our criminal justice system.

Course Materials:

- Hemmens, C., Brody, D. C., & Spohn, C. C. (2016). *Criminal Courts: A Contemporary Perspective*, 4th Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. (Required).
- A reliable Internet connection so you can access the class content and materials at the course website found at www.uttyler.edu/canvas.

Course Policies

COVID Policies: It is important to take the necessary precautions to ensure a healthy and successful year. UT Tyler continues to urge you to protect yourselves against the flu, COVID and any new threats that may be developing. Be diligent about preventive measures such as washing hands, covering sneezes/coughs, social distancing and vaccinations, which have proven to be successful in slowing the spread of viruses. Encourage those who don't feel well to stay home,

and if they show symptoms, ask them to get tested for the flu or COVID. Self-isolation is important to reduce exposure ([CDC quarantine/isolation guidelines](#)). Please work with your faculty members to maintain coursework and please consult [existing campus resources](#) for support.

Class Conduct: Students are expected to conduct themselves in a courteous manner, both in their interactions with other students and with the professor. This class is an exercise in professionalism in the workplace. As you are preparing to enter into the workforce (you may even be there already), it is important that you treat this class as though it were your job. Late work and poor attitudes are not acceptable in this class or any other. Please be respectful of others' opinions and experiences, and do not be aggressive or combative over the topics being discussed in the course.

Course Grade: Your course grade for the semester is dependent on the work that you put into the class. I do not give grades, you earn grades. Also, I do not provide a curve or offer extra credit at the end of the semester. **Please do not ask for extra points at the end of the semester that would boost you to the next letter grade – they will not be given.**

This semester will be broken up into five units. You will be responsible for the assigned readings. I wouldn't recommend missing class as there is always some information you will only receive during lecture.

Course Exams and Assignments

Final Exam: This semester you will have a final exam that will test your knowledge and ability to apply the concepts learned in class. The final exam will be held the week of finals. The exam will be worth 50 points toward your final grade. Be sure to read the book and learn to apply in-class concepts to various scenarios. This includes learning key words and ideas and being able to apply them. You will be eligible for an exemption on the final exam if you hold an A (90% and above) in the class by the 13th week of class.

Online Reading Quizzes: Each reading quiz will consist of 10 multiple choice/true-false questions derived from the text. This will assess how well you are reading the chapters and digesting the information. Reading quizzes will be worth 10 points per quiz and cannot be made up unless there are extenuating circumstances. There is one reading quiz for every chapter covered this semester, and will occur on a weekly basis. There will be 3 attempts for each quiz, and the highest score will be recorded in the gradebook.

In-Class Discussion Questions: Each week, on either Wednesday or Friday, we will watch a video related to the topic of the week. After each video, I will provide 2-3 questions based on the

video which you must answer before the end of class. You can work with one another on these questions. You will be graded on the length (3-5 sentences per question) and quality of your answer. On the weeks where lecture runs longer, this will count as the in-class activity for the week. Each discussion will be worth 10 points each.

In-Class Activities: Each week, you will be required to complete an in-class activity that corresponds with the materials presented in lecture for the module. You will be provided with instructions for each activity on the day of the activity. Each in-class activity will be worth 10 points each.

Grading Scale:

Your grade will consist of points awarded to the successful completion of the following components:

- Syllabus quiz 20 points
 - Plagiarism tutorial 25 points
 - Final Exam 50 points
 - Online reading quizzes (10 points each) 130 points
 - In Class activities (110 points each) 120 points
 - In Class discussion questions (10 points each) 130 points
- 475 total points**

Letter Grades will be assigned as follows:

Total Points	Grade Percentage	Letter Grade	Grade Points
475 - 427.5	100 – 90%	A	4.0
427.4 - 380	89.9 – 80%	B	3.0
379 - 332.5	79.9 – 70%	C	2.0
332.4 - 285	69.9 – 60%	D	1.0
284 and below	59.9% and below	F	0.0

Additional Policies

Late Assignment Policy

As a general rule, I do not accept late assignments. I never spring any last-minute assignments on you – from the first day of class, you will know what is due and when it is due to me. It is up to you to plan accordingly as you have ample time to complete these assignments. If you do not turn in your assignments on time, it is a zero in the gradebook and I will not grade the assignment. If you have a documented excuse (death in the family, illness, car accident, etc...), you must inform me of your situation within 2 days of the missed assignment and it is mandatory for you to provide documentation to me in order to be eligible for a make-up. Please note that

having to work is not an excused absence. While I am sympathetic and understanding to your work schedule, you have made a choice to enroll in this class and it must be considered a priority. First responders and military personnel will receive exemptions from the work policy in this class on an individual basis.

Email Policy

I like to keep open lanes of communication between students and myself. If you need to ask any questions or discuss anything class related, please do not hesitate to email through Canvas. Please include CRIJ 1306 in the subject line so I know that it is class related. While you may email me through Canvas, please do not leave comments in the assignments themselves. I do not go back and check for those. My preferred method of contact is through Canvas, please try that first.

You are responsible for checking your email daily. I frequently email students individually or as a group – if I send you an email, I assume that you have read it and are informed with the message. It is a pet peeve of mine when students do not check their email – I will not hound you trying to get you to reply to my emails. At most, I will send you two emails and if I do not have a response in a reasonable amount of time then I will assume you have chosen not to reply to me, and I will act accordingly.

Instructor Expectations

Just as I have certain expectations of you, you should have certain expectations of me. I will be available by appointment and if I am unavailable, you will be notified. If you email me, you will receive a response within 48 hours during the business week and business hours. Email responses during late hours and the weekend are not a guarantee, so last-minute questions for assignments may not receive answers if they are sent during those times. As for grading, you will receive feedback on all assignments. Please do not email within a day or two of the assignment submission looking for a graded assignment. If there is a technological issue, please get in touch with the university IT department. I am unable to fix Canvas issues that are system based.

UT Tyler Honor Code

Every member of the UT Tyler community joins together to embrace: Honor and integrity that will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do.

University Policies and Information

Please see the section on **University Policies and Information** in Canvas for all relevant university policies, information, and student rights and responsibilities.

Spring 2024 Semester Schedule

	Date	Topic	Due
Module 1	1/16 – 1/21	Syllabus Chapter 1 - Introduction: Law & The Judicial Function	Online Syllabus Quiz Online Plagiarism Tutorial Chapter 1 Online Reading Quiz In-Class Discussion Questions
Module 2	1/22– 1/28	Chapter 2 - Sources of Law	Chapter 2 Online Reading Quiz In-Class Discussion Questions In-Class Activity #1
Module 3	1/29 – 2/4	Chapter 3 - Types of Law	Chapter 3 Online Reading Quiz In-Class Discussion Questions In-Class Activity #2
Module 4	2/5 – 2/11	Chapter 4 - Court Organizations & Structure	Chapter 4 Online Reading Quiz In-Class Discussion Questions In-Class Activity #3
Module 5	2/12 – 2/18	Chapter 5 - Prosecutors	Chapter 5 Online Reading Quiz In-Class Discussion Questions In-Class Activity #4
Module 6	2/19 – 2/25	Chapter 6 - Defense Attorneys	Chapter 6 Online Reading Quiz In-Class Discussion Questions In-Class Activity #5
Module 7	2/26 – 3/3	Chapter 7 - Judges	Chapter 7 Online Reading Quiz In-Class Discussion Questions In- Class Activity # 6

Module 8	3/4 – 3/10	Chapter 8 - Criminal Defendants & Crime Victims	Chapter 8 Online Reading Quiz In-Class Discussion Questions In-Class Activity #7
Module 9	3/18 – 3/24	Chapter 9 - The Jury	Chapter 9 Online Reading Quiz In-Class Discussion Questions In-Class Activity #8
Module 10	3/25 – 3/31	Chapter 10 - Pretrial Procedures	Chapter 10 Online Reading Quiz
Module 11	4/1 – 4/7	Chapter 11 - The Criminal Trial	Chapter 11 Online Reading Quiz In-Class Discussion Questions In-Class Activity #9
Module 12	4/8 – 4/14	Chapter 12 - Sentencing	Chapter 12 Online Reading Quiz In-Class Discussion Questions In-Class Activity #10
Module 13	4/15 – 4/21	Chapter 13 - The Appellate Process	Chapter 13 Online Reading Quiz In-Class Discussion Questions In-Class Activity #11
Module 14	4/22 – 4/28	Chapter 14 - Specialized Courts	Chapter 14 Online Reading Quiz In-Class Discussion Questions In-Class Activity #12
Module 15	4/29 – 5/3	Finals Week!	Final Exam

* Please note that this course schedule is tentative and could change at the discretion of the professor. If changes do occur, you will be notified and an updated version of the syllabus will be uploaded to Canvas.