INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

- Instructor: Michael Ferguson
- UTT email: mferguson@uttyler.edu
- Office telephone: 903.730.3927
- Office location: CAS 134
- Office hours: MWF 9:20a-10:00a; T/Th 1p-1:45p; or by appointment

COURSE CATALOG DESCRIPTION

CRIJ-1306, Court Systems & Practices. This course serves as an introductory examination of the structure of the court system and criminal case processing in the American judicial system, at the local, state and federal levels. There is a strong emphasis on the organizational structure of the courts, and the adjudication, sentencing and appellate processes. Students will be introduced to case law, the development of legal argument, and the process in which the Supreme Court of the United States hears and rules on cases based on constitutional issues. ***This course serves as a prerequisite to CRIJ 3327, Advanced Court Systems and Practices***.

COURSE TIME AND LOCATION

- Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 11:15AM - 12:10 PM
- 01/13/2025 - 05/03/2025
- WT Brookshire Hall, Room 136

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Describe the American judicial systems (civil, criminal, and juvenile), their jurisdiction, development and structure.
- Analyze the function and dynamics of the courtroom work group.
- Identify judicial processes from pretrial to appeal.
- Describe the significant Constitutional Amendments, doctrines, and other sources of law in the American judicial system.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Hemmens, C., Brody, D., and Spohn, C. (2023). *Criminal courts: A contemporary perspective*. Sage.

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOK

American Psychological Association. (2019). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). American Psychological Association.

ISBN: 978-1-4338-3217-8

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Students must have access to a computer or tablet with internet access to use UT-Tyler's Canvas LMS. Your grades and some assignments will be handled through Canvas. Students are also required to bring with them to class a #2 pencil for use on SCANTRON forms.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

You can't learn if you're not in class. Attendance in this class is mandatory. University courses are about learning a wealth of material in a short period of time - with the goal of being able to think critically about the topics at hand. As such, attendance at lecture will greatly increase your ability to understand the field of criminal justice. Additionally, attendance will improve your grades. You will be allowed three unexcused absences. Each unexcused absence above the three "freebies" permitted will lower your final course grade by one point. Because this is a traditional, face-to-face course, you may not attend via Zoom. You must by physically present in order to get credit.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Due Dates and Work Due: It is the student's responsibility to keep track of due dates. Please note that quizzes, assignments, and tests must be completed on the listed due date; missing quizzes, assignments, or tests will translate into a score of zero for that particular assignment.

Grading Policy

- A: ≥90%
- B: 80%-89%
- C: 70%-79%
- D: 60%-69%
- F: <60%

Course Weighting

- Quizzes: 40%
- Assignments: 20%
- Unit Exams: 20%
- Final Exam: 20%

Grading Criteria

- **Quizzes**: Quizzes will be based on the reading and lecture material. You will have quizzes at the end of each section as well as "pop quizzes" during the week. You are required to bring a #2 pencil with you to each class session so that you are prepared to take any pop quizzes that may be given. Regular, online quizzes may cover multiple chapters, external readings, or other assignments. Chapter quizzes will be given via Canvas. You may take each quiz only once, and quizzes will not be accepted after the posted due date (11:59p on Sunday night of the day it's due). Questions on the quizzes will be multiple choice or true/false.
- **Assignments**: You will have occasional written assignments based on material from class. An example is a case brief on an important SCOTUS case. These assignments will be submitted via Canvas and will be checked via Turnitin. Spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc, will all be considered as part of the grade.
- **Unit Exams**: There are exams at the end of each major unit. The exams will be based on the material from the unit covered. Questions on the exam will be multiple choice or true/false. Studying your quizzes will make a HUGE difference in how well you do on the exams. Exams will be given using SCANTRON forms and will be taken during class. There are no makeup dates for missed exams.
- **Final Exam**: The final exam will cover all of the material you've learned over the course of the semester. Studying your quizzes and unit exams will make a HUGE difference in how well you do on the final. Questions on the exam will be multiple choice or true/false. The final exam will be given using SCANTRON forms and will be taken during class. There are no makeup dates for a missed exam.

Policy on Artificial Intelligence

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course (see below) is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy.

The work submitted by students in this course will be generated by themselves. This includes all process work, drafts, brainstorming artifacts, editing, and final products. This extends to group assignments where students must collaboratively create the project. Any instance of the following constitutes a violation of UT Tyler's Honor Code: a student has another person/entity do any portion of a graded assignment, which includes purchasing work from a company, hiring a person or company to complete an assignment or exam, using a previously submitted assignment and/or using AI tools (such as ChatGPT).

COURSE ORGANIZATION

- SECTION I THE PURPOSE AND STRUCTURE OF AMERICAN COURTS
  - CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION: LAW AND THE JUDICIAL FUNCTION
  - CHAPTER 2 SOURCES OF LAW
  - CHAPTER 3 TYPES OF LAW
  - CHAPTER 4 COURT ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE
  - **EXAM ONE**
- SECTION II COURTROOM ACTORS AND THE COURTROOM WORK GROUP
  - CHAPTER 5: PROSECUTORS
  - CHAPTER 6: DEFENSE ATTORNEYS
  - CHAPTER 7: JUDGES
  - CHAPTER 8: CRIMINAL DEFENDANTS AND CRIME VICTIMS
  - CHAPTER 9: THE JURY
  - **EXAM TWO**
- SECTION III COURT PROCESSES
  - CHAPTER 10: PRETRIAL PROCEDURES
  - CHAPTER 11: THE CRIMINAL TRIAL
  - CHAPTER 12: SENTENCING
  - CHAPTER 13: THE APPELLATE PROCESS
  - **EXAM THREE**
- SECTION IV SEARCH & SEIZURE LAW
  - **FINAL EXAM**

Student Resources

University Policies and Information