Course Logistics

- **Course Title:** Courtroom Testimony
- **Course Number and Section:** CRIJ-4345.060
- **Scheduled Class Days and Times:** Online

Instructor Contact Information

- **Instructor Name:** Michael Ferguson
- **Office Location:** CAS134

- **Phone Number:** 903.730.3927
- **Email:** mferguson@uttyler.edu
- **Best way to contact:** Via email. Please note: always send me e-mail from your official UT-T email account. This assures me that the message is, in fact, coming from you. I am regular in my habit of checking email, so you should never have to wait more than a day or so for a response. You should include your course title and number in the subject line of the email (e.g., "Question regarding CRIJ-4334.060, Homeland Security").
- **Office Hours:** M/W/F: 1:30p - 2:30p T/Th: 10a - 10:45a

  Meetings by appointment at other times via Zoom are available -- send me an email to arrange a date and time.

Census Date

The census date for the Spring, 2025, semester is **<u>January 27</u>**. This is the final date for many enrollment-related actions, including adding new courses, changing sections, or dropping courses without incurring grades of "W" or "Q." The census date is also the second drop for non-payment date each academic session.

Course Catalog Description

This course will discuss the presentation of evidence in the criminal court system. Course topics include the evolution of the law of

evidence and expert testimony admissibility in the United States, defining the different types of evidence and testimony presented during a trial, and comparing state and federal rules of evidence and expert testimony. Students will complete a mock testimony exercise at the end of the semester.

Student Learning Objectives

These SLOs tell you what you will be able to do once you've successfully completed the class. You will be able to:

- Compare/contrast evidence admissibility standards in federal and state courts.
- Relate scientific evidence to other components of the criminal justice system.
- Use key court rulings to discuss admissibility and presentation of scientific evidence.
- Apply concepts and principles of scientific evidence admissibility to real-world cases.
- Explain the role expert testimony plays in criminal and civil cases.
- Demonstrate the process of expert testimony, including qualification, direct- and cross-examination.
- Discuss ethical considerations for expert witnesses.

REQUIRED Textbook

Houck, M. (2019). *Successful expert testimony* (5th ed.). Taylor & Francis.

STRONGLY SUGGESTED Textbook

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association: The official guide to APA style* (7th ed.). American Psychological Association

Grading Policy

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

Course Weighting

- Section Quizzes: 40%
- Unit Exams: 20%
- Written Posts / Assignments: 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. Quizzes may cover multiple chapters, external readings, or other assignments. Quizzes will be given via Canvas. You may take each quiz only once; the quiz will be timed; 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.
- **Written Posts / Assignments**:
  - Some weeks, you will have specific prompts from me based on the section's reading assignment. Your response must be thorough and complete. Simply posting something like "I found this very interesting" will not earn you credit! This is a senior-level university course,

so your grammar, word choice, punctuation, spelling, etc., will all factor into your grade. Your response(s) must demonstrate to me that you've read the material and that you understand it.

  ○ Other weeks, you'll have a written assignment based on something we've covered but which can't be effectively done in a simple post. An example is a case brief in which you tell me about a particular court case we've discussed.

- **Unit Exams**: There are exams at the end of each major unit. The exams will be based on the material from the unit covered. Studying your quizzes will make a HUGE difference in how

  well you do on the exams. You may take each exam only once; the exam will be timed; and exams will not be accepted after the posted due date (11:59p on Sunday night of the day it's due). Questions on the exams will be multiple choice or true/false.

- **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. You may take the final exam only once; the exam will be timed; and the exams will not be accepted after the posted due date of finals week. Questions on the exam will be multiple choice or true/false.

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).

Student Resources

University Policies and Information