

CRIJ 1306
COURT SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES
Fall 2017

Professor: Mario V. Cano, Ph.D.
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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 adjudication, sentencing, and the appellate process, as well as 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 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. 2016. *Criminal Courts: A Contemporary Perspective*, 3rd Ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

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

COURSE STRUCTURE AND GRADING

Chapter Quizzes: A total of ten online chapter quizzes will be administered (see course schedule). Each quiz is comprised of ten multiple choice questions of the readings that will be discussed the upcoming week. The scheduled quizzes will open in Blackboard on Fridays at 8:00 am and will close on Mondays at 11:59 pm. The quizzes last an hour once opened, and may only be taken once. Please notify the UTEP Technology Center first if you experience technical issues during any quiz and be certain that a ticket number is produced. **No makeup quizzes are offered.** Each quiz is worth one point. The lowest quiz grade of the ten quiz grades will be dropped. The quiz assignment is worth ten points or ten percent of the overall course grade.

U.S. Supreme Court Case Brief: To familiarize students with the appellate process and the reasoning that guides legal decision making, each student is required to write a case brief. Cases will be assigned by the professor, and in-depth information on briefing a High Court decision, including a sample case brief, will be posted in Blackboard. Be cautious that case briefs that strongly resemble briefs posted online (e.g., quotes or exact statements) may be suspect of academic misconduct. Have fun reading the High Court majority opinions. **The case brief assignment should be submitted on the Blackboard assignment link by the due date.** The

assignment is due on **September 21st** and is worth ten points or ten percent of the overall grade. Late case brief assignments are not accepted.

Research Paper: Students will be required to write a short research paper. The paper should discuss one topic in the courts and sentencing empirical literature. At least 5 academic references should be used in the paper. Academic references for this paper comprise peer-reviewed journal articles, not including the course textbook. Papers should be double-spaced, use Times New Roman twelve-inch font with one-inch margins, be four pages in length (not including the title and reference pages), and use APA, MLA, or Chicago format. In-depth details of the assignment, including information on the article search process, the paper's structure, and plagiarism issues, will be posted in Blackboard by the professor. Please contact the professor if you have questions on any steps of the paper. It is strongly recommended that preparation for the assignment begin early in the semester, as the paper is due during the third week of November. A hard copy, complete list of at least five paper references (APA, MLA, or Chicago format), including copies of the first two pages of each reference, is due on **November 2nd**. This is part of the overall paper grade. The final research paper is due on **November 21st** and is worth twenty points or twenty percent of the course grade. **To receive credit, the final research paper should be submitted as a hard copy and electronically on the Blackboard assignment link by the due date.** Late research papers will only be accepted one day after their due date and will receive a ten percent grade deduction.

Exams: There will be three non-comprehensive exams administered in the classroom (see schedule). Exams consist of multiple choice and potential short answer questions. Exams cover all assigned readings from the textbook and supplemental readings assigned during Week 4. 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 twenty-four 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 twenty points or twenty percent of the course grade.

Class attendance is not mandatory but is highly encouraged. Opportunities for extra credit will only be offered in class, and are at the professor's discretion. The professor does not post slide presentations online or share lecture notes. 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 course requirements or deadlines.

Point values and percentages for the course requirements are as follows:

Quizzes	10 points	10 percent
Case Brief Assignment	10 points	10 percent
Research Paper	20 points	20 percent
Exam 1	20 points	20 percent
Exam 2	20 points	20 percent
Exam 3	<u>20 points</u>	<u>20 percent</u>
	100 points	100 percent

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 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. 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.

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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

Professor Cano 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

08/29 Course Introduction

08/31 Chapter 1: Introduction to Law and the Judicial Function

Week 2

09/05 Chapter 2: Sources of Law

09/07 Chapter 2: Sources of Law

Online Chapter Quiz

Week 3

09/12 Chapter 3: Types of Law

09/14 Chapter 3: Types of Law

Online Chapter Quiz

Week 4

09/19 Chapter 4: Court Organization and Structure

09/21 Chapter 4: Court Organization and Structure

Case Brief Assignment Due

Online Chapter Quiz

Week 5

09/26 Chapter 5: Special Courts and Exam 1 Review

09/28 **Exam 1**

Week 6

10/03 Chapter 6: Prosecutors

10/05 Chapter 6: Prosecutors

Online Chapter Quiz

Week 7

10/10 Chapter 7: Defense Attorneys

10/12 Chapter 7: Defense Attorneys

Online Chapter Quiz

Week 8

10/17 Chapter 8: Judges

10/19 Chapter 8: Judges

Online Chapter Quiz

Week 9

10/24 Chapter 9: Defendants and Victims

10/26 Chapter 9: Defendants and Victims

Online Chapter Quiz

Week 10

10/31 Chapter 10: The Jury

11/02 Chapter 10: The Jury

Online Chapter Quiz

Week 11

11/07 Chapter 11: Pretrial Procedures

11/09 Chapter 11: Pretrial Procedures

Week 12

11/14 Exam 2 Review

11/16 **Exam 2**

Online Chapter Quiz

Week 13

11/21 Chapter 12: The Criminal Trial

11/23 No Class: University Holiday

Week 14

11/28 Chapter 13: Sentencing

11/30 Chapter 13: Sentencing

Online Chapter Quiz

Week 15

12/05 Chapter 14: The Appellate Process

12/07 Exam 3 Review

12/12 **Exam 3**, 1:00 pm to 3:45 pm