



Ranger College

COURSE SYLLABUS

Court Systems and Practices

CRIJ 1301

3 credit hours

INSTRUCTOR:

Dr. Shauna Fitzjarrell

I. Texas Core Curriculum Statement of Purpose

Through the Texas Core Curriculum, students will gain a foundation of knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world, develop principles of personal and social responsibility for living in a diverse world, and advance intellectual and practical skills that are essential for all learning.

II. Course Description

This course is an introduction to the American court system. Topics for online discussion will include the structure, procedures, practices, and sources of law in American courts, using federal and Texas statutes and case law.

III. Required Background or Prerequisite

There are no prerequisites for this course. However, permission is required of the instructor, department, and/or advisor to enroll in this course. It is strongly recommended that students have dedicated internet access, a working knowledge of Blackboard, and a keen interest in the criminal justice system.

IV. Required Textbook and Course Materials

Required Text

Neubauer, D. W. & Fradella, H. F. (2019). *America's courts and the criminal justice system*. (13th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

V. Course Purpose

The purpose of the course is to provide students with a comprehensive explanation as well as a working knowledge of the courts and the criminal justice system.

This course is designed to familiarize students with the basic structure of the courts, the nature of the criminal laws applied, and the procedures followed to dispense justice.

VI. Course Learning Outcomes

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

1. Describe the American judicial system, their jurisdiction, development and structure.
2. Analyze the function and dynamics of the courtroom work group.
3. Identify the judicial processes from pretrial to appeal.

4. Describe the significant Constitutional Amendments, doctrines, and other sources of law in the American judicial system.
5. Compare and contrast organizational structures, policies, strategies and tactics between the adult and juvenile court systems.

VII. Core Objectives

This course meets the following of the six Core Objectives established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board:

- Critical Thinking Skills (CT)** – Creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis; evaluation and synthesis of information
- Communication Skills (COM)** – effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication
- Empirical and Quantitative Skills (EQS)** – The manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions
- Teamwork (TW)** – The ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal
- Social Responsibility (SR)** – Intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities
- Personal Responsibility (PR)** – The ability to connect choices, actions, and consequences to ethical decision-making

VIII. Methods of Instruction

Discussion

Each learner will be responsible for posting 1- an individual response to **one** weekly discussion question and 2- posting **one** response to another student's answer. Participation in the weekly discussion is essential. Discussion questions will be posted on Sunday evenings prior to the work week. The work week runs Monday-Sunday. Discussion questions will be based on the readings requiring you to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the concepts covered each week. You are encouraged to post an initial response to the discussion question no later than **Thursday** each week and post one substantive response to other students' post no later than Sunday. Participation in discussion is expected on **at least two days each week**. Your initial response to the discussion question counts toward the weekly requirement.

Late Policy- All discussion posts must be made during the working week. Students will be penalized 10% for late posts. If you find that you are unable to post during the week, please notify me to avoid late penalties.

All responses must be substantive. Initial discussion question responses must contain at least 200 words and address all parts of the question. Responses to other posts must contain at least 100 words. Your writing mechanics, grammar and referencing must reflect collegiate standards.

IX. Methods of Assessment

This course includes five quizzes, class discussion postings, and a final exam. Quiz format will vary; multiple choice or short critical thinking essay questions will be used.

You can earn up to a total of fifty points each discussion week. Up to forty points are awarded for substantive individual posts, and ten points for a substantive post to another student.

Each quiz will be worth a total of 30 points.

Point Totals:

12 Discussion Questions @ 50 points each= 600

5 Quizzes @ 30 points each = 150

Final Exam = 250

Total = 1000

Grading

90-100	A
80-89.9	B
70-79.9	C
60-69.9	D
Below 60	F

X. Course/Classroom Policies

Attendance Policy

Class attendance is mandatory. Discussion posts and responses will be recorded each week. Do not fall behind in the required number of posts each week.

Students are responsible for reading chapters prior to each class meeting in preparation for class discussions and quizzes. In addition, students are asked to review current news items (newspaper, magazines, online news services, journals) pertaining to policing topics for use in weekly class discussions.

Class Policies

You are expected to read the assigned chapters. I strongly encourage a proactive strategy. Read ahead of the posted due dates on the schedule and post discussion responses on time. This is an online class that requires self-direction and motivation. If you do not keep up with assignment and appear disinterested, you will simply be asked to drop the course. Your preparation for reading assignments, weekly involvement, and examinations should reflect your academic commitment.

Statement on plagiarism and academic irregularities

The following shall constitute academic irregularities:

- 1) The use of materials and devices such as notes, books, calculators, etc., while taking an examination unless specifically authorized by the instructor or assistance from or to other persons while taking an examination unless specifically authorized by the instructor -- acts defined as cheating.
- 2) The presentation of words or ideas from any other source as one's own -- an act defined as plagiarism.
- 3) Unauthorized obtaining, distributions or receiving material which is purported to be an examination, or part of an examination, without the consent of the instructor.
- 4) Taking of an examination for another person or having another person take an examination and presenting or having same presented as one's own exam.
- 5) Other activities which interfere with the educational mission within the classroom.
- 6) Submission of the same or essentially the same paper, project, assignment or finished product to an instructor which has been submitted to another instructor unless specifically authorized and consented to by both instructors.

Important:

It is important that you distinguish clearly between your own words and ideas and the words and ideas of other authors. Failure to do so may not only cause confusion for the reader, but may also result in PLAGIARISM - a serious violation of academic ethics. IMPORTANT: To copy material (word-for-word) from a source without using quotation marks or using quotation marks without indicating exactly the source of your material is UNACCEPTABLE.

To paraphrase another author's material - namely, putting it in your own words - without indicating exactly the source of this paraphrased material is also UNACCEPTABLE. Using another author's words or ideas and not giving that author credit is PLAGIARISM.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating. Getting help from a fellow student to solve a problem or to complete an assignment is not cheating. However, copying a major portion of an assignment from someone else (to get it done on time) or using someone else's work in any way is cheating in the form of plagiarism.

If two or more students each turn in an assignment that is essentially a copy of another's work, this will be considered cheating. Instances of outright copying will result in no credit for the assignment for both the individual(s) who copied and the individual who was copied from (if known about).

XI. Course Outline/Schedule

Tentative Schedule

Week	Details/Core Objectives	Points
1-	Course Introduction; Post brief introductions in courseroom; SR,COM	
2-	Chapter 1- Courts, Crime and Controversy; Respond to Discussion Questions and post one response to others; CT,COM,SR	50
3	Chapter 2- Law and Crime and Chapter 3- Federal Courts; Respond to Discussion Questions and post one response to others; CT,COM,SR	50
4	Chapter 4, State Courts; Discussion Questions and post one response to others; Quiz Part 1 (Chapters 1-4) ; CT,COM,PR,SR	50/30
5	Chapter 5- The Dynamics of Courthouse Justice and Chapter 6 Prosecutors; Discussion Questions and post one response to others; CT,COM,SR	50
6	Chapter 7- Defense Attorneys and Chapter 8 -Judges: Discussion Questions and post one response to others; CT,COM,SR	50
7	Chapter 9 -Defendants, Victims, and Witnesses; Discussion Questions and post one response to others; Quiz Part 2 (Chapters 5-9) ; CT,COM,PR,SR	50/30
8	Chapter 10- From Arrest and Bail through Arraignment; Discussion Questions and post one response to others; CT,COM,SR	50
9	Chapter 11- Disclosing and Suppressing Evidence and Chapter 12- Negotiated Justice and the Plea of Guilty; Discussion Questions and post one response to others; CT,COM,SR	
10	Chapter 13- Trials and Juries; Discussion Questions and post one response to others; Quiz Part 3 (Chapters 10-13) ; CT,COM,PR,SR	50/30
11	Chapter 14- Sentencing Options; Discussion Questions and post one response to others; CT,COM,SR	50
12	Chapter 15- Sentencing Decisions; Discussion Questions and post one response to others; Quiz Part 4 (Chapters 14 & 15) ; CT,COM,PR,SR	50/30

13	Thanksgiving Week No Class	
14	Chapter 16- Appellate and <i>Habeas Corpus</i> Review; Discussion Questions and post one response to others; Chapter 17 -Juvenile Courts; Discussion Questions and post one response to others; Quiz Part 5 (Chapters 16-17) ; CT,COM,PR,SR	50/30
15	No discussion questions; possible make-up week	
16	Final Exam Week; CT,COM,PR,SR	250

XII. Non-Discrimination Statement

Admission, employment, and program policies of Ranger College are nondiscriminatory in regard to race, creed, color, sex, age, disability and national origin.

XIII. ADA Statement

Statement of Reasonable Accommodation for Disabled Students

It is the policy of Ranger College to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (<http://www.ada.gov/>) and other applicable laws. If you are a student with a disability seeking accommodations for this course, please contact the Ranger College Counselor. ADA Statement: Ranger College provides a variety of services for students with learning and/or physical disabilities. The student is responsible for making the initial contact with the Ranger College Counselor. It is advisable to make this contact before or immediately after the semester begins.