



Court Systems and Practices (CJSA 1313)

CREDIT

3 Semester Credit Hours (3 hours lecture, 0 hours lab)

MODE OF INSTRUCTION

Face to Face

PREREQUISITE/CO-REQUISITE:

None

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a study of the court system as it applies to the structures, procedures, practices and sources of law in American courts, using federal and Texas statutes and case law.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to

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

Approved: MF 01/08/2026

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor: Mary Franklin

Email: mafranklin@lit.edu

Office Phone: 409-382-1333

Office Location: CTE Rm. 16

Office Hours: 11:31 a.m. – 12:54 p.m. Monday – Friday

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK AND MATERIALS

Criminal Courts a Contemporary Perspective the 6th Edition ISBN 9781071968215.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to attend classes regularly. Regular participation is necessary to pass this course.

DROP POLICY

If you wish to drop a course, you are responsible for initiating and completing the drop process by the specified date as listed in the College Calendar on the [Student Success](#) web page. If you stop coming to class and fail to drop the course, you will earn an “F” in the course.

COURSE CALENDAR

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS (Due on this Date)	ASSIGNMENTS (Due on this Date)
01/20/26 - 01/23/26	Review Syllabus and Course Introduction Module 1: The Purpose and Structure of American Courts	Textbook: Chapter 1 January 20, 2026	Chapter 1 Assignment January 23, 2026
01/26/26 - 01/30/26	Sources of Law Types of Law	Textbook: Chapter 2 January 26, 2026 Textbook: Chapter 3 January 28, 2026	Chapter 2 Assignment January 28, 2026 Chapter 3 Assignment January 30, 2026

02/02/26 - 02/06/26	Organization and Structure	Textbook Chapter 4 February 2, 2026	Chapter 4 Assignment February 5, 2026 Chapter 1-4 Quiz February 6, 2026
02/09/26 - 02/12/26	Module 2: Courtroom Actors and The Courtroom Work Group	Textbook: Chapter 5 February 9, 2026 Textbook: Chapter 6 February 11, 2026	Chapter 5 Assignment February 10, 2026 Chapter 6 Assignment February 12, 2026
02/17/26 - 02/20/26	Judges	Textbook: Chapter 7 February 17, 2026	Chapter 7 Assignment February 19, 2026 Final Project Topic February 20, 2026
02/23/26 - 02/27/26	Criminal Defendants and Crime Victims	Textbook: Chapter 8 February 23, 2026	Chapter 8 Assignment February 27, 2026
03/02/26 - 03/06/26	The Jury	Textbook: Chapter 9 March 2, 2026 Supplemental Videos March 3, 2026	Chapter 9 Assignment March 5, 2026 Chapter 5-9 Quiz March 6, 2026
03/09/26 - 03/13/26	Spring Break	Spring Break	Spring Break

03/16/26 - 03/20/26	Court Process	Textbook: Chapter 10 March 16, 2026	Chapter 10 Assignment March 20, 2026
03/23/26 - 03/27/26	Criminal Trial	Textbook: Chapter 11 The Criminal Trial March 23, 2026	Chapter 11 Assignment March 27, 2026
03/30/26 - 04/02/26		<p>Day 1 Baby Thrown in River and Girlfriend Murdered Brandon Isabelle Trial March 30, 2026</p> <p>Day 2 Baby Thrown in River and Girlfriend Murdered Brandon Isabelle Trial March 31, 2026</p> <p>Day 3 Baby Thrown in River and Girlfriend Murdered Brandon Isabelle Trial April 1, 2026</p> <p>Day 4 Baby Thrown in River and Girlfriend Murdered Brandon Isabelle Trial April 2, 2026</p>	
04/07/26 - 04/10/26		<p>Day 5 Baby Thrown in River and Girlfriend Murdered Brandon Isabelle Trial April 7, 2026</p> <p>Day 6 Baby Thrown in River and Girlfriend Murdered Brandon Isabelle Trial April 8, 2026</p> <p>Day 7 Baby Thrown in River and Girlfriend Murdered Brandon Isabelle Trial</p>	

		<p>April 9, 2026</p> <p>Breaking: Verdict Reached in Brandon Isabella Murder Trial Full Video</p> <p>April 10, 2026</p>	
04/13/26 - 04/17/26	Sentencing	<p>Textbook: Chapter 12</p> <p>April 13, 2026</p>	<p>Chapter 12 Assignment</p> <p>April 16, 2026</p> <p>Final Project Outlines/ Draft</p> <p>April 17, 2026</p>
04/20/26 - 04/24/26	The Appellate Process	<p>Textbook: Chapter 13</p> <p>April 20, 2026</p>	<p>Chapter 13 Assignment</p> <p>April 24, 2026</p>
04/27/26 - 05/01/26	Specialized Courts	<p>Textbook: Chapter 14</p> <p>April 27, 2026</p>	<p>Chapter 14 Assignment</p> <p>April 30, 2026</p> <p>Chapter 10-14 Quiz</p> <p>May 1, 2026</p>
05/04/26 - 05/06/26		<p>Final Course Project</p> <p>May 4, 2026</p>	<p>The Future of Problem Project</p> <p>May 6, 2026</p>

Approved: MF 01/08/2026

COURSE EVALUATION

Final grades will be calculated according to the following criteria:

- Assignments 40%
- Quiz/Exams 40%
- Project 20%

GRADE SCALE

- 90-100 A
- 80-89 B
- 70-79 C
- 60-69 D
- 0-59 F

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

For the latest technical requirements, including hardware, compatible browsers, operating systems, etc., review the Minimum Computer and Equipment Requirements on the [LIT Online Experience](#) page. A functional broadband internet connection, such as DSL, cable, or WiFi is necessary to maximize the use of online technology and resources.

DISABILITIES STATEMENT

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are federal anti-discrimination statutes that provide comprehensive civil rights for persons with disabilities. LIT provides reasonable accommodations as defined in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, to students with a diagnosed disability. The Special Populations Office is located in the Eagles' Nest Room 129 and helps foster a supportive and inclusive educational environment by maintaining partnerships with faculty and staff, as well as promoting awareness among all members of the Lamar Institute of Technology community. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Special Populations Coordinator at (409)-951-5708 or email specialpopulations@lit.edu. You may also visit the online resource at [Special Populations - Lamar Institute of Technology \(lit.edu\)](#).

Approved: MF 01/08/2026

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT STATEMENT

It is the responsibility of all registered Lamar Institute of Technology students to access, read, understand and abide by all published policies, regulations, and procedures listed in the *LIT Catalog and Student Handbook*. The *LIT Catalog and Student Handbook* may be accessed at www.lit.edu. Please note that the online version of the *LIT Catalog and Student Handbook* supersedes all other versions of the same document.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE STATEMENT

Lamar Institute of Technology (LIT) recognizes the recent advances in Artificial Intelligence (AI), such as ChatGPT, have changed the landscape of many career disciplines and will impact many students in and out of the classroom. To prepare students for their selected careers, LIT desires to guide students in the ethical use of these technologies and incorporate AI into classroom instruction and assignments appropriately. Appropriate use of these technologies is at the discretion of the instructor. Students are reminded that all submitted work must be their own original work unless otherwise specified. Students should contact their instructor with any questions as to the acceptable use of AI/ChatGPT in their course.

STARFISH

LIT utilizes an early alert system called Starfish. Throughout the semester, you may receive emails from Starfish regarding your course grades, attendance, or academic performance. Faculty members record student attendance, raise flags and kudos to express concern or give praise, and you can make an appointment with faculty and staff all through the Starfish home page. You can also login to Blackboard or MyLIT and click on the Starfish link to view academic alerts and detailed information. It is the responsibility of the student to pay attention to these emails and information in Starfish and consider taking the recommended actions. Starfish is used to help you be a successful student at LIT.

ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES/INFORMATION

I DO NOT accept late work. All assignments are due as scheduled. There are a few exceptions, but those will be discussed on a case-by-case basis (ex. medical situations such as hospitalization). Preferred means of communication: Email: mafranklin@lit.edu or phone: 409-382-1333. Communication Response Time: Expected response time for communications with instructor is 24- 48 hours (except weekends). Grading Response Time: Assignments should be returned with grades within 1 week. All assignments and tests will be located in Google Classroom.

Approved: MF 01/08/2026

