

Court Systems & Practices (CRIJ 1306)

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.

INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor: Trazarra Stelly

Email: tnstelly@lit.edu

Office Phone: 409.247.5224

Office Location: Technology Center (TC) #212

Office Hours: In Person or Virtual Appointments available by appointment only.

Monday– Friday (Flexible Times). Must schedule via STARFISH.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK AND MATERIALS

Criminal Courts: A Contemporary Perspective, by Hemmens, Brody, and Spohn 6th Edition. Sage Publishing. ISBN 978-1-0719-6821-5

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This is a face-to-face course. Students are **required** to attend classes. Class attendance counts toward your discussion grade. Your discussion grade is worth 25% of your final class average (*see course evaluation below*). **3 unexcused absences will result in automatic failure of the course.**

DROP POLICY

If you wish to drop a course, you are responsible for initiating and completing the drop process. If you stop coming to class and fail to drop the course, you will earn an “F” in the course.

Approved: TS 8/11/2025



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COURSE CALENDAR

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS (Due on this Date)	ASSIGNMENTS (Due on this Date) Submission Deadline is BEFORE 10 p.m. on scheduled date.
1/20-1/24	Introduction/Orientation Week	1/21: Syllabus Review	1/21: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Syllabus Bingo 1/24: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction Assignment Syllabus Quiz
1/25-1/31	Section I: The Purpose and Structure of American Courts	1/26: Chapter 1- Introduction: Law and the Judicial Function	1/31: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 1 Assignment
2/1-2/7		2/2: Chapter 2- Sources of Law & Chapter 3-Types of Law	2/7: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 2 & 3 Assignment
2/8-2/14		2/9: Chapter 4- Court Organization and Structure	2/14: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 4 Assignment Chapter 1-4 Quiz
2/15-2/21	Section II: Courtroom Actors and the Courtroom Work Group	2/16: Chapter 5- Prosecutors Chapter 6- Defense Attorneys	2/21: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 5 & 6 Assignment
2/22-2/28		2/23: Chapter 7- Judges	2/25: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Project Topic Due 2/28: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 7 Assignment
3/1-3/7		3/2: Chapter 8 - Criminal Defendants and Crime Victims	3/7: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 8 Assignment

3/8-3/14	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK
3/15-3/21		3/16: Chapter 9- The Jury	3/21: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 9 Assignment • Chapter 5-9 Quiz
3/22-3/28	Section III: Court Processes	3/23: Chapter 10 - Pretrial Procedure	3/28: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 10 Assignment
3/29-4/4 No Class on 4/3		3/30: Chapter 11- The Criminal Trial	4/4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 11 Assignment
4/5-4/11		4/6: Chapter 12- Sentencing	4/8: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Project Outlines/Drafts Due 4/11: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 12 Assignment
4/12-4/18		4/13: Chapter 13- The Appellate Process	4/18: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 13 Assignment
4/19-4/25		4/20: Chapter 14- Specialized Courts	4/25: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 10-14 Quiz
4/26-5/2	Final Presentations		4/29: Presentation Day 1 5/1: Presentation Day 2
5/3-5/9 Last Class Day is 5/6	Final Presentations		5/4: Presentation Day 3 5/6: Last Class Day (Final Presentation Over flow Day)
5/10-5/14	FINAL GRADES SUBMITTED	FINAL GRADES SUBMITTED	FINAL GRADES SUBMITTED on 5/11

COURSE EVALUATION

Final grades will be calculated according to the following criteria:

- Quizzes 30%
- Assignments 25%
- Discussions 25%
- Course Project 20%

GRADE SCALE

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

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

The latest technical requirements, including hardware, compatible browsers, operating systems, etc. can be online at <https://lit.edu/online-learning/online-learning-minimum-computer-requirements>. 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 \(lit.edu\)](#).

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 courses

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: tnstelly@lit.edu or phone: (409) 247-5224.

Communication Response Time: Expected response time for communication with instructor is 24-48 hours (except weekends).

Grading Response Time: Assignments should be returned with grades within 1 week.