# Introduction to Criminal Justice (CRIJ 1301)

**Credit:** 3 semester credit hours (3 hours lecture)

**Prerequisite/Co-requisite:** None

## Course Description

This course provides a historical and philosophical overview of the American criminal justice system, including the nature, extent, and impact of crime; criminal law; and justice agencies and processes.

## Required Textbook and Materials

1. *CJ* by Larry K. Gaines and Roger L. Miller, 4th edition, Cengage Learning, ISBN 9781305661196

## Course Objectives

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

1. Describe the history and philosophy of the American criminal justice system.
2. Explain the nature and extent of crime in America.
3. Analyze the impact and consequences of crime.
4. Evaluate the development, concepts, and functions of law in the criminal justice system.
5. Describe the structure of contemporary federal, state, and local justice agencies and processes.

## Course Outline

A. Welcome to College
   1. Introduction of faculty and students
   2. Who am I?
   3. What am I doing here?

B. LIT
   1. Policies
   2. Academic Calendar
   3. Physical facilities

C. Library Resources
   1. Location
   2. Data Searches

D. Criminal Justice Today
   1. What is crime?
   2. What is the Criminal Justice System?
   3. Which is more important – Punishment or Rights?
   3. What is the state of crime in the United States?
      a. The Crime Control and Due Process
      b. The Due Process Model

E. Causes of Crime
   1. What is a Theory?
   2. Which Theories of Crime are most widely accepted?
   3. What is the connection between drug use and crime?
   4. Does Criminology help to prevent crime?

F. Defining and Measuring Crime
   1. What are the different categories of crime?
   2. How does the government measure crime?

G. Inside Criminal Law

1. What are the written sources of American Criminal Law?
    a. Constitutional Law
    b. Statutory Law
    c. Administrative Law
    d. Case Law
2. Why do societies need laws?
3. What are the elements of a crime?
    a. Criminal Act: *Actus Reus*
    b. Mental State: *Mens Rea*
    c. Concurrence
    d. Causation
    e. Attendant Circumstances
    f. Hate Crime Laws
    g. Harm
4. Which defenses are available under criminal law?
5. How do criminal procedures protect our constitutional rights?
    a. The Bill of Rights
    b. Due Process

H. Law Enforcement Today
1. What do the police do?
2. What are the different kinds of law enforcement agencies?
3. How do law enforcement agents use discretion?

I. Challenges to Effective Policing
1. How does someone become a police officer?
2. How do police officers fight crime?
3. How do police prevent crime?
4. What are the challenges of being a police officer?
5. How important is ethics in policing?

J. Police and the Constitution: The Rules of Law Enforcement
1. How does the constitution limit police behavior
2. When can police stop and frisk?
3. What is required to make an arrest?
4. What are the rules for searches and seizures?
5. What are the Miranda rights?

K. Courts and the Quest for Justice
1. What roles do courts play in society?
2. How do American courts operate?
3. How do states organize their courts?
4. How does the federal government organize its courts?
5. How do judges function in the criminal justice system?
6. What is the courtroom work group?

L. Pretrial Procedures: The Adversary System in Action
1. What do prosecutors do?
2. What do defense attorneys do?
3. Which is more important in court: victory or the truth?
4. What happens after arrest?
5. How does a prosecutor link the defendant to the crime?
6. Why do so many defendants plead guilty?

M. The Criminal Trial
1. What are the special features of criminal trials?
2. How is the jury selected?
3. What happens during a criminal trial?
4. What happens at the end of a criminal trial?

N. Punishment and Sentencing
1. Why do we punish criminals?
2. What is the structure of sentencing?
3. What role do judges play in sentencing?
4. What are some problems with sentencing?
5. How have politicians tried to “fix” sentencing?
6. What is the status of capital punishment in the United States?

O. Probation and Community Corrections
1. Why do we need community corrections?
2. How does probation work?
3. What are some types of intermediate sanctions?
4. What is one major concern with community corrections?

P. Prisons and Jails
1. What trends are driving the American prison population?
2. What is the role of prisons in society?

3. What are the different types of prisons?
4. How are prisons managed?
5. What are private prisons?
6. Why are jails so important?
7. What are the consequences of our high rates of incarceration?

Q. Behind Bars: The life of an inmate
1. How do inmates adjust to life in prison?
2. How violent are prisons?
3. Are women's prisons different?
4. How do correctional officers maintain control?
5. When and how are inmates released from prison?
6. What happens to ex-inmates?

R. The Juvenile Justice System
1. Why do we have a separate justice system for juveniles
2. How is delinquency determined?
3. What happens after a juvenile is arrested?
4. How does the juvenile court operate?
5. How are juvenile offenders punished?
6. How much juvenile delinquency is there in the United States?
7. Why do juveniles commit crime?

## Grade Scale

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

## Course Evaluation

Final grades will be calculated according to the following criteria:

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|---|---|---|
| 1. | Assignments | 20% |
| 2. | Tests | 40% |
| 3. | Research Paper | 20% |
| 4. | Course Project | 20% |

## Course Policies

1. No food, drinks, or use of tobacco products in class.
2. Computers, telephones, headphones, and any other electronic devices must be turned off while in class or used only with permission of the instructor.
3. Do not bring children to class.
4. If you wish to drop a course, the student is 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.
5. Additional class policies as defined by the individual course instructor.

## Technical Requirements **(for courses using Blackboard)**

The latest technical requirements, including hardware, compatible browsers, operating systems, software, Java, etc. can be found online at:

https://help.blackboard.com/en-us/Learn/9.1_2014_04/Student/015_Browser_Support/015_Browser_Support_Policy A functional broadband internet connection, such as DSL, cable, or WiFi is necessary to maximize the use of the online technology and resources.

## Disabilities Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are federal anti-discrimination statutes that provide comprehensive civil rights for persons with disabilities. Among other things, these statutes require that all students with documented disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodations for their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Special Populations Coordinator at (409) 880-1737 or visit the office in Student Services, Cecil Beeson Building. You may also visit the online resource at http://www.lit.edu/depts/stuserv/special/defaults.aspx

## 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 or obtained in print upon request at the Student Services Office. Please note that the online version of the *LIT Catalog and Student Handbook* supersedes all other versions of the same document

## 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.

