



Criminal Justice 1306.031|1
Court Systems and Practices
Fall 2025 (1st 8-weeks) 8/18/25-10/9/25 Online

Instructor Information: Mike Bell, mbell15@com.edu, Ofc (409) 933-8683, Cell (713) 591-5957

Student hours and location: Student hours are Mon-Thurs 8:30-11am and 1:00-2:30pm. However, I am in the office from 8:00am – 5:00pm so please feel free to stop by during those hours also. If necessary, we can set an appointment for Friday mornings. Another option is setting up a face-to-face call or a meeting through Teams. My office is in the Public Service Careers Building across the street from the main campus, next door to DPS. (Turn in the fire station driveway for our parking lot.)

Required Textbook: America's Courts and the Criminal Justice System (13th edition) ISBN-978-1-337-55789-4. Authors: David Neubauer and Henry Fradella; Publisher: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

Texas Code of Criminal Procedure (free access online)
<https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/?link=CR>

Texas Penal Code (free access online)
<https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/?link=PE>

Supplementary materials may post online in the course.

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 requirements: This is an 8-week course (9/18/25 – 10/9/25). You are required to read the chapters as listed on the course outline and any related lecture notes or outlines located in the modules. Viewing the respective power point presentations will reinforce your reading. I will post supplemental material in the chapter resources section of each module that is considered course material. You are responsible for this material for exam purposes (unless otherwise stated).

You are required to take 3 exams (200 points each), submit 3 assignments (50 points each) and a power point project (50 points), and post to 5 discussions (10 points each). Although quizzes are optional and have no point value for your grade, I highly recommend that you take them for self-

assessment value. Exams will be taken online and will be open between 4-5 days, including a weekend, to accommodate various schedules. Do not use Wi-Fi when taking an exam, if possible. Please contact me if you have computer problems while taking an exam. Exams may be accessed through the “Assessments” link on the menu. Review the course outline to determine your exam weeks (Week 3 - Exam 1, Week 5 - Exam 2, Weeks 7, 8 - Exam 3. All exams are timed.

Discussions: For consideration of full credit, postings to a discussion topic should consist of a short paragraph containing a minimum of 200 words. Each discussion topic is worth up to 10 points each. I encourage you to respond to a fellow student for each posting. You are expected to read at least 75% of the postings. Our discussion board takes the place of a live classroom discussion and as such, you may be exposed to many different concepts and beliefs concerning various criminal justice issues. Be respectful of your classmates when posting or responding to a discussion. Your comments and thoughts are part of the learning process. Do not use “text” spelling. Please use correct grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. Maximum points will not be given for informal, incomplete, very brief, or not in compliance postings. A post may be deleted from view if it is disrespectful, crude, or contains offensive language.

Written Assignments: Detailed instructions for assignments are contained within the individual assignments located in the menu link “Assignments”. All written assignments must be typed and submitted in either Microsoft Word file format (.docx or .doc) or in a rich-text format (.rtf) using a font no smaller than 10 points and no larger than 12 points. Please take advantage of the COM Tutoring Center if you need assistance with your written assignments. You submit your written assignments by attaching your document into the respective assignment box. I will attempt to grade and return your assignments within 4 days of the due date. Please feel free to contact me if you have not received a grade. You are responsible for keeping copies of all your assignments turned in for grades.

Power point project: The power point project requires that you prepare a minimum 25-slide presentation on an issue related to the criminal justice system. This is due 10/8/25. Detailed instructions are contained within the Power Point project assignment located in Assignments. Do not wait until the last week to start your power point project. Many electronic resources available to you through the COM Library. Use academic search engines such as ProQuest which may be found in LibGuides located on the COM Library website. Wikipedia is not an academic resource and will not be counted as such. If cited, you will receive no credit.

Determination of Course Grade/Detailed Grading Formula:

1st exam	200 points
2nd exam	200 points
3rd exam	200 points
Assignments (3 at 50 pts. ea.)	150 points
Power point project	50 points
Discussions (5 at 10 pts. ea.)	50 points
TOTAL	850 POINTS

A= 850-765 B= 764-680 C= 679-595 D= 594-510 F= 509 and below

Late Work, Make-Up, and Extra-Credit Policy: I accept late work only for Assignments 1 and 2. Five (5) points will be subtracted from the grade for each day that it is late past the due date. After five (5) days late work will not be accepted. There is no make-up work. I offer extra credit at the beginning of the course, so please take advantage of that opportunity.

Attendance Policy: Pursuant to college policy attendance is required. Your attendance in this online class will consist of participating in discussions and submitting the required assignments and exams. There may be suggested weekly readings in addition to the assigned chapters. It is expected that you log into the course website twice a week (or more) to view updated announcements, participate in ongoing discussions, take quizzes, and submit the required work. You are expected to commit at least 3-4 hours a week or more in this class for attendance purposes.

Communicating with your instructor: ALL electronic communication with the instructor must be through your COM email. Due to FERPA restrictions, faculty cannot share any information about performance in the class through other electronic means. Please use course messages for course related communications.

Student Learner Outcomes:

Student Learner Outcome	Maps to Core Objective	Assessed via this Assignment
1. Describe the American judicial systems (civil, criminal, and juvenile), their jurisdiction, development, and structure.	Critical thinking skills (CT)	Assignment 1
2. Analyze the function and dynamics of the courtroom workgroup.	Critical thinking skills (CT)	Exam 2
3. Identify judicial processes from pretrial to appeal.	Critical thinking skills (CT)	Exam 1
4. Describe the significant Constitutional Amendments, doctrines, and other sources of law in the American judicial system.	Critical thinking skills (CT)	Assignment 3
5. Develop, interpret, and express ideas on a Courts (CRIJ 1306) topic through written communication	Communication Skills (CS1)	Assignment 2
6. Develop, interpret, and express ideas on a Courts (CRIJ 1306) topic through visual communication	Communication Skills (CS3)	Power point project

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI): Any assignment containing material generated by Artificial Intelligence (AI) will receive a **grade of zero** and the student will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for appropriate disciplinary action.

Academic Dishonesty: Any incident of academic dishonesty will be dealt with in accordance with college policy and the Student Handbook. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and is prohibited. Integrity is very important in your academic and professional career, especially in the criminal justice field. If there is evidence which indicates dishonesty regarding submitted assignments or exams, you will receive a zero (-0-) for that assignment or exam. In addition, you may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for the appropriate disciplinary action.

Course outline: (Subject to change)

Spring 2023 CRIJ 1306 Court Systems & Practices
8/18/25 – 10/9/25 (1st 8-weeks)

Date	Week	Readings	Discussions	Assignments	Quizzes/Exams
8/18	1	Ch 1 Law, Crime, Courts & Controversy Ch 2 Federal Courts; Supplementary Material provided	Introduction Post due 8/25 (Tues)	Optional extra credit assignment due 8/24 (Sun)	Syllabus quiz (3 pts) closes 8/24 (Sun)
8/25	2	Ch 3 State Courts Ch 4 Juvenile Courts Supplementary Material provided	Disc 1 due 8/27	Assignment (Assi) 1 due 8/28	Exam 1 covers Chs 1-4 Opens 8/29 (Fri) - Closes 9/2 (Tue)
9/1	3	Review Chs 1-4 for Exam 1	Disc 2 due 9/12		Exam 1 closes 9/2 (Tues)
9/8	4	Ch 5 The Dynamics of Courthouse Justice Ch6 Prosecutors	Disc 3 due 9/10		
9/15	5	Ch7 Defense Attorneys Ch 8 Judges Supplementary Material provided Review Chs 5-8		Assignment 2 due 9/18	Exam 2 covers Chs 5,6,7,8 Opens 9/19 (Fri) Closes 9/23 (Tues)
9/22	6	Ch 10 From Arrest and Bail Through Arraignment Ch 11 Disclosing & Suppressing Evidence	Disc 4 due 9/24		
9/29	7	Ch 13 Trials & Juries Ch 15 Appellate & Habeas Corpus Review	Disc 5 due 10/1	Assignment 3 due 10/2	Exam 3 covers Chs. 10-11, 13, and 15 Open 10/3 (Fri) - 10/7 (Tues)
10/6	8	Review Chs 10, 11, 13 and 15 for Exam 3		Power point project due on Wednesday, 10/8	Exam 3 closes on Tuesday, 10/7 <i>Last day of class 10/9/25</i>

Student Concerns: If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of this course, please contact me using the contact information previously provided. If, after discussing your concern with me, you continue to have questions, please contact Dr. Victor Vega, Dean of Instruction at (409) 933-8179, vvega2@com.edu.

Technology Outage Policy: There may be times when D2L may be serviced and therefore unavailable. You will see a notice on the D2L website when this will occur. Plan accordingly. If you are taking an exam and have technology issues, take a screen shot and email me immediately. In addition, text me your problems taking the exam at (409) 771-2219 with your name, course, and exam numbers. Contact me before submitting an online request to our Distance Education staff, which is also available to you as an option.

Other times the College may experience emergency campus-wide technology outages. If this occurs and you are taking an exam or quiz, or submitting an assignment, you will need to notify me. The exam or quiz will need to be reset or I will extend the assignment due date after the campus-wide outage is confirmed by Informational Technology. An Announcement will be sent to all students relaying the information about the new due date for the assignment or exam.

Institutional Policies and Guidelines

Grade Appeal Process: Concerns about the accuracy of grades should first be discussed with the instructor. A request for a change of grade is a formal request and must be made within six months of the grade assignment. Directions for filing an appeal can be found in the student handbook <https://www.com.edu/student-services/student-handbook.html>. *An appeal will not be considered because of general dissatisfaction with a grade, penalty, or outcome of a course. Disagreement with the instructor's professional judgment of the quality of the student's work and performance is also not an admissible basis for a grade appeal.*

Academic Success & Support Services: College of the Mainland is committed to providing students the necessary support and tools for success in their college careers. Support is offered through our Tutoring Services, Library, Counseling, and through Student Services. Please discuss any concerns with your faculty or an advisor.

ADA Statement: Any student with a documented disability needing academic accommodation is requested to contact:

Kimberly Lachney, Student Accessibility Services Coordinator

Phone: 409-933-8919

Email: AccessibilityServices@com.edu

Location: COM Doyle Family Administration Building, Student Success Center

Textbook Purchasing Statement: A student attending College of the Mainland is not under any obligation to purchase a textbook from the college-affiliated bookstore. The same textbook may also be available from an independent retailer, including an online retailer.

Withdrawal Policy: Students may withdraw from this course for any reason prior to the last eligible day for a "W" grade. Before withdrawing students should speak with the instructor and consult an advisor. Students are permitted to withdraw only six times during their college career by state law. The last date to withdraw from the 1st 8-week session is October 1. The last date to withdraw from the 16-week session is November 14. The last date to withdraw for the 2nd 8-week session is November 25.

FN Grading: The FN grade is issued in cases of *failure due to a lack of attendance*, as determined by the instructor. The FN grade may be issued for cases in which the student ceases or fails to attend class, submit assignments, or participate in required capacities, and for which the student has failed to withdraw. The issuing of the FN grade is at the discretion of the instructor. The last date of attendance should be documented for submission of an FN grade.

Early Alert Program: The Student Success Center at College of the Mainland has implemented an Early Alert Program because student success and retention are very important to us. I have been asked to refer students to the program throughout the semester if they are having difficulty completing assignments or have poor attendance. If you are referred to the Early Alert Program you will be contacted by someone in the Student Success Center who will schedule a meeting with you to see what assistance they can offer in order for you to meet your academic goals.

Resources to Help with Stress:

If you are experiencing stress or anxiety about your daily living needs including food, housing or just feel you could benefit from free resources to help you through a difficult time, please click here <https://www.com.edu/community-resource-center/>. College of the Mainland has partnered with free community resources to help you stay on track with your schoolwork, by addressing life issues that get in the way of doing your best in school. All services are private and confidential. You may also contact the Dean of Students office at deanofstudents@com.edu or communityresources@com.edu.

Nondiscrimination Statement:

The College District prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, age, veteran status, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), or any other basis prohibited by law. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of College District policy.