

Course Syllabus for CRIJ-1310, Fundamentals of Criminal Law
The University of Texas at Tyler
Fall, 2025

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

- **Instructor:** Michael Ferguson
- **UTT email:** mferguson@uttyler.edu
- **Office telephone:** 903.730.3927
- **Office location:** CAS 134
- **Office hours:** See [THIS](#) document. For those who wish to meet via Zoom rather than F2F, click [THIS](#) link and use passcode 519250. I will be logged into Zoom during my office hours, so there's no need to arrange an appointment beforehand.

COURSE CATALOG DESCRIPTION

CRIJ-1310, Fundamentals of Criminal Law.

This course serves as an introductory examination of criminal law from a fundamental perspective. While Texas Criminal Law will be partially covered, this course examines the foundations of criminal law as they have evolved from British common law through the development of codified law within American society. Students will be exposed to criminal code, case law and the development of legal arguments from a criminal defense perspective. This course serves as a prerequisite to CRIJ 3326, Advanced Criminal Law.

COURSE RATIONALE

This course provides you with an overview of substantive criminal law in the United States. Students will learn the "who, what, when, where, why, and how" of American criminal law. This course will give you the basic information you need to understand the complexities of our criminal law and why it is the way it is today. This course will include a mixture of basic legal theories and Texas criminal law.

COURSE TIME AND LOCATION

- 08/25/2025 - 12/13/2025
- Monday, Wednesday, and Friday
- 9:05:00AM to 10:00AM
- Stewart Hall #127

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STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

1. *Identify* the elements of crimes and defenses under Texas statutes, Model Penal Code, and case law.
2. *Classify* offenses and articulate penalties for various crimes.
3. *Compare* culpable mental states when assigning criminal responsibility.
4. Assess the impact of history and philosophy on current criminal laws.
5. *Evaluate* the application of criminal law to other areas of criminal justice such as law enforcement and corrections.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

1. Dowling, J.D. 2023. *Texas criminal law - Principles and practices* (4th ed.). Starmont Enterprises. ISBN: 9798218245054

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOK

1. APA. (2019). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. ISBN: 978-1-4338-3217-8

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Students must have access to a computer or tablet with internet access to use UT-Tyler's Canvas LMS. Assignments and quizzes will be handled through Canvas. Additionally, students must have access to, and use of, a word processor (e.g., MS Word or Apple Pages) and presentation software (e.g., MS PowerPoint or Apple Keynote). Lastly, students must have access to a mind-mapping application. Work uploaded to Canvas must be in one of the following file formats:

- Documents: .docx, .doc, .pages, or .pdf (.pdf is the preferred format)
- Presentations / graphs: .docx, .doc, .pptx, .ppt, .key, or .pdf (.pdf is the preferred format)

ATTENDANCE

You can't learn if you're not in class. You must attend and participate in the class to earn credit!

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COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

It is the student's responsibility to keep track of due dates. Please note that quizzes, assignments, and tests will be available for several days, so missing a due date for any given quizzes, assignments, or tests will translate into a score of zero. There will be no extra credit or extensions to complete any missed quizzes, assignments, or tests.

1. **Anti-Plagiarism Certificate:** You must complete the free, online [anti-plagiarism course](#) indicated under the Syllabus Module. Upon completion of the two required modules, you must upload a copy of your completion certificate to Canvas. **This certificate is worth 5% of your grade and is required for successful completion of the course.**
2. **Quizzes:** Reading the assigned chapters puts concepts into action. To help with retention and comprehension of the material, you will complete short quizzes each week. Quizzes will consist of multiple choice and true/false questions. **Quizzes are worth 50% of your grade.**
3. **Assignments:** You will, from time to time, be required to complete various assignments that will help you to master the content we've covered. **Assignments are worth 25% of your grade.**
4. **Final Exam:** The final will consist of true/false and multiple-choice questions taken from the material covered during the semester. **Your final exam is worth 20% of your grade.**

CENSUS DATE

The census date for this summer class is **Monday, September 8, 2025**. Drops/withdrawals after Census Date and before the Last Day to Withdraw will result in a grade of W. Courses dropped prior to Census Date will not appear on the student's record or the transcript.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE POLICY

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course (see

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below) is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy.

The work submitted by students in this course will be generated by themselves. This includes all process work, drafts, brainstorming artifacts, editing, and final products. This extends to group assignments where students must collaboratively create the project. Any instance of the following constitutes a violation of UT Tyler's Honor Code: a student has another person/entity do any portion of a graded assignment, which includes purchasing work from a company, hiring a person or company to complete an assignment or exam, using a previously submitted assignment and/or using AI tools (such as ChatGPT).

STUDENT RESOURCES AND UT-TYLER POLICIES

- [Student Resources](#)
- [University Policies and Information](#)

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: this schedule is subject to change. I will notify you if I make any alterations.

- **Week 1: August 25 - August 31, 2025**
 - Introduction, welcome to class, overview of syllabus
 - Dowling, Chapter 1: Foundations of Criminal Law
 - Chapter 1 Quiz due Sunday night
 - Anti-plagiarism certificate due Sunday night
- **Week 2: September 1 - September 7, 2025**
 - Monday, September 1: Labor Day holiday; no classes
 - Dowling, Chapter Two: Elements of a Crime
 - Chapter Two Quiz due Sunday night
- **Week 3: September 8 - September 14, 2025**
 - Monday, September 8: Census Date
 - Dowling, Chapter Three: The Criminal Law in Daily Practice
 - Chapter Three Quiz due Sunday night
- **Week 4: September 15 - September 21, 2025**
 - Dowling, Chapter Four: Parties to Offenses
 - Dowling, Chapter 15: General Defenses and Justification
 - Chapters Four and 15 Quizzes due Sunday night
- **Week 5: September 22 - September 28, 2025**
 - Dowling, Chapter 14: Preparatory Offenses and Organized Criminal Activity
 - Chapter 14 Quiz due Sunday night
- **Week 6: September 29 - October 5, 2025**
 - Dowling, Chapter Five: Criminal Homicide

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- Assignment: Mindmap of Texas' Criminal Homicide Statutes
- Chapter Five Quiz due Sunday night
- **Week 7: October 6 - October 12, 2025**
 - Dowling, Chapter Six: Assault and Sexual Assault
 - Chapter Six Quiz due Sunday night
- **Week 8: October 13 - October 19, 2025**
 - Dowling, Chapter Seven: Kidnapping and Human Trafficking
 - Chapter Seven Quiz due Sunday night
- **Week 9: October 20 - October 26, 2025**
 - Dowling, Chapter Eight: Property Destruction Offenses
 - Chapter Eight Quiz due Sunday night
- **Week 10: October 27 - November 2, 2025**
 - Dowling, Chapter Nine: Theft, Fraud, and Related Offenses
 - Chapter Nine Quiz due Sunday night
- **Week 11: November 3 - November 9, 2025**
 - Monday, November 3: Last Day to Withdraw from one or more 15-Week courses
 - Dowling, Chapter 10: Robbery, Burglary, and Criminal Trespass
 - Chapter 10 Quiz due Sunday night
- **Week 12: November 10 - November 16, 2025**
 - Dowling, Chapter 11: Offenses Against Government Operations
 - Chapter 11 Quiz due Sunday night
- **Week 13: November 17 - November 23, 2025**
 - Dowling, Chapter 12: Public Disorder, Indecency, Health, and Safety Offenses
 - Chapter 12 Quiz due Sunday night
- **Week 14: November 24 - November 30, 2025**
 - Thanksgiving holidays for faculty and students
- **Week 15: December 1 - December 7, 2025**
 - Dowling, Chapter 13: Intoxication Offenses
 - Chapter 13 Quiz due Sunday night
- **Week 16: December 8 - December 12, 2025**
 - Final Exam