

CRIJ-3326.001, Advanced Criminal Law
Course Syllabus – Fall 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

- **Instructor:** Michael Ferguson
- **UTT email:** mferguson@uttyler.edu
- **Office telephone:** 903.730.3927
- **Office location:** CAS 134
- **Office hours:** MWF 9:05a - 10:00 and 11:15a - Noon; T/Th 9:30a - 10:50a. For those who wish to meet via Zoom rather than F2F, click this [Zoom office hours link](#). I will be logged into Zoom during my office hours, so there's no need to arrange an appointment beforehand on those days.

COURSE CATALOG DESCRIPTION

An examination of the general doctrines of substantive criminal law and their application in the Texas Penal Code. Subjects considered include history and development of criminal law, definitions and elements of principal crimes, criminal liability, defenses to criminal prosecution, and criminal penalties.

Prerequisite: CRIJ 1301

COURSE RATIONALE

This course provides you with an in-depth dive into Texas' Penal Code. Students will learn the "who, what, when, where, why, and how" of Texas criminal law and will give you the detailed information you need to understand the complexities of Texas' criminal statutes. This course will include a mixture of basic legal theories and Texas law.

COURSE TIME AND LOCATION

- August 24, 2026 - December 12, 2026
- Monday, Wednesday, and Friday
- 12:20p - 1:15p
- RBS 1031

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

1. *Identify* the various types of crimes found in the Texas Penal Code.
2. *Recognize* the elements of the offense for selected statutes in the Texas Penal Code.
3. *Apply* the various selected defenses and affirmative defenses to prosecution found in the Texas Penal Code.
4. *Demonstrate* the proper use of criminal statutes when given a scenario.
5. *Critique* the choice of criminal charge when given a scenario.

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REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

1. None - all materials will be provided online. Students will access the Texas Penal Code via the Texas government's [online version](#) of that code.

STRONGLY RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOK

1. Dowling, J.D. (2026). *Texas criminal law: Principles and practices* (5th ed.). Starmont Enterprises. ISBN: 979-8-234-00419-2

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 participate in the class to earn credit. I understand that life happens, but you need to be in class to learn the material we're covering. I will take attendance each class session. Your attendance grade counts as a major exam grade!

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.**

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3. **Assignments:** You will, from time to time, be required to complete various assignments (e.g., mindmapping a statute) 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 attendance grade counts as a major exam grade. **Your exam/attendance average is worth 20% of your grade.**

CENSUS DATE

The census date for this summer class is **09/08/2026**. 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 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.

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- **WEEK 1 (08/24 - 08/28)**
 - Welcome to class, review syllabus, course overview
 - Foundations of Criminal Law
 - Criminal vs Civil Law
 - Sources of Law
 - Classification of Crimes
 - Purposes of Criminal Law, Objectives of the Texas Penal Code
 - Week One Quiz
 - Anti-Plagiarism Certificate
- **WEEK 2 (08/31 - 09/04)**
 - Elements of Crime
 - Burden of Proof
 - General Principles of Criminal Responsibility
 - General Defenses to Criminal Responsibility
 - Week Two Quiz
- **WEEK 3 (09/07 - 09/11)**
 - NOTE: Monday, 09/07/2026, is Labor Day holiday: all offices closed; no classes held.
 - The Texas Criminal Justice System
 - Who are peace officers
 - Who are magistrates
 - Which courts have criminal jurisdiction
 - The process of a criminal case from arrest to court
 - Week Three Quiz
- **WEEK 4 (09/14 - 09/18)**
 - Defenses to Prosecution and Texas' Use of Force law
 - Culpability Generally
 - General Defenses to Criminal Responsibility
 - Justification Excluding Criminal Responsibility
 - Week Four Quiz
- **WEEK 5 (09/21 - 09/25)**
 - Punishment
 - General provisions
 - Ordinary misdemeanor punishments
 - Ordinary felony punishments
 - Exceptional sentences
 - Week Five Quiz
- **WEEK 6 (09/28 - 10/02)**
 - Inchoate Offenses, Criminal Instruments, Weapons Offenses, and Criminal Trespass
 - Preparatory offenses
 - Criminal instruments, interception of wire or oral communication, and installation of tracking device

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- Criminal trespass
 - Weapons offenses
 - Week Six Quiz
- **WEEK 7 (10/05 - 10/09)**
 - Criminal Homicide
 - Criminal homicide generally
 - Murder
 - Capital Murder
 - Manslaughter
 - Intoxication Manslaughter
 - Criminally Negligent Homicide
 - Week Seven Quiz
 - FIVE-POINT EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITY: ATTEND [NATIONAL NIGHT OUT BLOCK PARTY](#) (the first Tuesday in October)
- **WEEK 8 (10/12 - 10/16)**
 - Sexual Offenses and Assaultive Offenses
 - Sexual offenses
 - Assaultive offenses
 - Week Eight Quiz
- **WEEK 09 (10/19 - 10/23)**
 - Kidnapping, Unlawful Restraint, Human Smuggling, and Human Trafficking
 - Human trafficking
 - Human smuggling
 - Unlawful restraint
 - Kidnapping and Aggravated kidnapping
 - Week Nine Quiz
- **WEEK 10 (10/26 - 10/30)**
 - Property Crimes (part one)
 - Arson
 - Criminal mischief
 - Reckless damage or destruction
 - Graffiti
 - Week 10 Quiz
- **WEEK 11 (11/02 - 11/06)**
 - Property Crimes (part two)
 - Burglary
 - Criminal trespass
 - Criminal trespass (with firearm)
 - Week 11 Quiz
- **WEEK 12 (11/09 - 11/13)**
 - Property Crimes (part three)
 - Theft
 - Theft of service

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- Unauthorized use of a vehicle
 - Tampering with identification numbers
 - Retail theft
 - Cargo theft
 - Mail theft
 - Credit card / debit card abuse
- Week 12 Quiz
- **WEEK 13 (11/16 - 11/20)**
 - Robbery and Offenses Against Government Operations
 - Robbery
 - Aggravated robbery
 - Obstructing governmental operations
 - Week 13 Quiz
- **THANKSGIVING (11/23 - 11/27)**
 - Campus closed - no classes
- **WEEK 14 (11/30 - 12/04)**
 - Intoxication Offenses and Organized Crime
 - DWI
 - DWI w/Child Passenger
 - BWI
 - FWI
 - AOMARWI
 - Engaging in organized criminal activity
 - Week 14 Quiz
- **WEEK 15 (12/07 - 12/11)**
 - Comprehensive Final Exam