

CRIJ 1306.460 — Summer II 2026

This page provides instructor information, course expectations, policies, and the summer course schedule.

Instructor Information

- **Instructor:** Michael Ferguson, MS
- **UT Tyler Email:** mferguson@uttyler.edu
- **Office Telephone:** 903.730.3927
- **Office Location:** CAS 134
- **Office Hours:** By appointment only. Office visits will be conducted by Zoom.

Course Catalog Description

This course serves as an introductory examination of the structure of the court system and criminal case processing in the American judicial system, at the local, state, and federal levels. There is a strong emphasis on the organizational structure of the courts, and the adjudication, sentencing, and appellate processes. Students will be introduced to case law, the development of legal argument, and the process in which the Supreme Court of the United States hears and rules on cases based on constitutional issues. This course serves as a prerequisite to CRIJ-3327, *Advanced Court Systems and Practices*.

Course Rationale

This course provides you with an overview of the United States judicial system. Students will learn the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the court system and its actors. This course will give you the basic information you need to understand the complexities of our judicial system and why it is the way it is today.

Course Time and Location

- **Dates:** 07/06/2026 - 08/07/2026
- **Meeting Days:** Asynchronous / Online Only
- **Time:** N/A
- **Location:** Canvas LMS

Student Learning Objectives

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

1. Describe the significant Constitutional amendments, doctrines, and other sources of law in the American judicial system.
2. Describe the American judicial systems (civil, criminal, and juvenile), their jurisdiction, development, and structure.
3. Identify judicial processes from pretrial to appeal.
4. Analyze the function and dynamics of the courtroom work group.

Textbooks

Required Textbook

1. Hemmens, C., Brody, D., and Spohn, C. (2023). *Criminal Courts: A Contemporary Perspective*. Sage.

Library access note: There is an e-textbook for this course freely available through the library. Use this link to access the e-textbook: [Access the Criminal Courts e-textbook in ProQuest Ebook Central](#).

Recommended Textbook

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

Note: You can obtain the information from the *Publication Manual* for free online.

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 (for example, MS Word or Apple Pages) and presentation software (for example, 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 must attend and participate in the class to earn credit. You must log into Canvas, participate in class, and submit all work on or before the deadlines indicated.

Note on Course Reading and Assignments

First and foremost, please remember that **this is a reading-intensive course**. Because the summer term is only five weeks, we will be covering a great deal of material in a very short period of time. It is **IMPERATIVE** that you keep up with your reading each week. Failure to do so will make it incredibly difficult -- if not impossible -- for you to catch up. You will be doing yourself a tremendous disservice if you wait until the end of the week to start reading the chapters assigned each week.

It is the student's responsibility to keep track of due dates. Quizzes, assignments, and tests will be available for several days, so missing a due date for any quiz, assignment, or test will result in a score reduction of 50% on the late work.

- **Anti-Plagiarism Certificate (5%):** You must complete the free, online anti-plagiarism course for which the instructor will provide a link. 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.

- **Quizzes (50%):** You will complete short quizzes each week over the assigned reading. Quizzes will consist of multiple-choice and true/false questions.
- **Activities (25%):** You will complete various activities, including class discussion, over the course of the semester.
- **Final exam (20%):** The final will consist of true/false and multiple-choice questions taken from the material covered during the semester. Studying your chapter quizzes will help you **TREMENDOUSLY** to prepare for the final exam!

Assignment Information

- **Quizzes:** Quizzes will be based on the reading and lecture material. You will have quizzes at the end of each section. Quizzes are given in Canvas. You may take each quiz only once, and they are timed. Quizzes submitted after the posted due date of 11:59 p.m. on Sunday will be accepted with a 50% deduction in points. Questions will be multiple-choice or true/false.
- **Assignments:** You will have occasional written assignments based on material from class. One example is a case brief on an important Supreme Court case. Assignments will be submitted in Canvas and checked through Turnitin. Spelling, grammar, and punctuation will be considered as part of the grade. Assignments submitted after the posted due date of 11:59 p.m. on Sunday will receive a 50% deduction in points.
- **Final Exam:** The final exam will cover all material learned during the semester. Questions will be multiple-choice or true/false. The final exam will be given during finals week. There are no makeup dates for a missed final exam.

Writing Assignments

Below are the basic information for each online writing activity. More detailed instructions are provided on the respective assignment page in Canvas.

Case Brief

- You will review a Supreme Court case and complete a case brief.

Reaction Paper

- You will provide a one- to two-page reaction paper based on a film shown in class.

Census Date

Census Date: 07/09/2026. Drops or withdrawals after the census date and before the last day to withdraw will result in a grade of W. Courses dropped prior to the census date will not appear on the student's record or 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 discussion of 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 incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, 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 in ways that violate the guidelines specified for this course 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 the students themselves. This includes all process work, drafts, brainstorming artifacts, editing, and final products. This also extends to group assignments where students must collaboratively create the project. Any instance of having another person or entity do any portion of a graded assignment, including purchasing work, hiring a person or company to complete an assignment or exam, using a previously submitted assignment, or using AI tools such as ChatGPT, constitutes a violation of UT Tyler's Honor Code.

Student Resources and UT Tyler Policies

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

Course Schedule

Week 1: 07/06/2026 - 07/12/2026

Chapter 1: Introduction, Law and the Judicial Function

- Read Chapter 1.
- Complete the Chapter 1 quiz.
- Complete the Anti-Plagiarism Certificate.

Chapter 2: Sources of Law

- Read Chapter 2.
- Complete the Case Brief assignment.
- Complete the Chapter 2 quiz.

Chapter 3: Types of Law

- Read Chapter 3.
- Complete the Chapter 3 quiz.

Important Date

- Census Date: 07/09/2026.

All assignments and quizzes due by:

Sunday, 07/12/2026 at 11:59 p.m.

Week 2: 07/13/2026 - 07/19/2026

Chapter 4: Court Organization and Structure, Federal Courts

- Read assigned material on federal courts.
- Complete the federal courts quiz.

Chapter 4: Court Organization and Structure, State Courts

- Read assigned material on state courts.
- Complete the state courts quiz.

Chapter 5: Prosecutors

- Read Chapter 5.
- Complete the Chapter 5 quiz.

All assignments and quizzes due by:

Sunday, 07/19/2026 at 11:59 p.m.

Week 3: 07/20/2026 - 07/26/2026

Chapter 6: Defense Attorneys

- Read Chapter 6.
- Complete the Chapter 6 quiz.

Chapter 7: Judges

- Read Chapter 7.
- Complete the Chapter 7 quiz.

Chapter 8: Criminal Defendants and Crime Victims

- Read Chapter 8.
- Complete the Chapter 8 quiz.

All assignments and quizzes due by:

Sunday, 07/26/2026 at 11:59 p.m.

Week 4: 07/27/2026 - 08/02/2026

Chapter 9: The Jury

- Read Chapter 9.
- Complete the Chapter 9 quiz.

Chapter 10: Pretrial Procedures

- Read Chapter 10.
- Complete the Chapter 10 quiz.

Chapter 11: The Criminal Trial

- Read Chapter 11.
- Complete the reaction paper for *Trial by Jury*.

All assignments and quizzes due by:

Sunday, 08/02/2026 at 11:59 p.m.

Week 5: 08/03/2026 - 08/07/2026

Chapter 12: Sentencing

- Read Chapter 12.

Chapter 13: The Appellate Process

- Read Chapter 13.

Final Exam

- Complete the final exam.

All assignments, quizzes, and the final exam due by:
Friday, 08/07/2026 at 11:59 p.m.

Source: Canvas Syllabus page, course 53634 (<https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/53634/assignments/syllabus>). Retrieved 2026-09-21.