Judicial and Legal Systems
CJUS 3210.001
Spring 2026

Instructor Information
Name: Jordan Russell, M.S.
E-mail: Jordan.Russell@unt.edu
Office Hours: Chilton Hall 265 – Wednesday: 11:00am -12:30pm, by appointment
Class Time: MWF – 10am-10:50am
Room: Sage, 354

Teaching Assistant Information
Name: Ashlyn Gierling
Email: Ashlyn.Gierling@unt.edu

***For questions or other concerns regarding this course, please email Ms. Ashlyn Gierling first. She will determine if she can address the question/concern or if she should send it to me for a response. Also, please carefully read the syllabus as it can answer many questions.

Course Description

The course will examine the courts, legal and judicial processes and judicial behavior. The history, philosophy and traditions underlying the American justice system as played out in the criminal courts will also be examined. Special attention will be given to the interaction of judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys and jurors. The impact of significant court decisions on the operation of the justice system will also be addressed.

Course Objectives

After completing the course students will:

- Recognize the functions and responsibilities of the participants in the criminal justice process
- Identify the structure of the criminal justice system, including the various levels of the judiciary and the respective role of each
- Describe the ways in which the judicial process influences, and is influenced by, various components of the larger society
- Explain the basic day-to-day functionality of the criminal justice system

Students will successfully demonstrate the attainment of these objectives through quizzes, exams, and written assignments

Required Text

Neubauer, D.W. and Fradella, H.F. (2025). *America's Courts and the Criminal Justice System* (14th ed.) Cengage Publishing. ISBN: 9780357763285.

Course Notes and Recommendations

Please make sure to have your official UNT email forwarded to your preferred email address (if different) to receive important updates, changes, announcements, class cancellations (if applicable), and generally, so I can reach you if necessary.

The announcement board in Canvas, and email, will be used for primary communication to the class as a whole. I advise you check the announcements section frequently.

Important: It is your responsibility to utilize a computer system that works and is compatible with the UNT online system/Canvas. This is especially critical during examination times. I would recommend that you take your exams on the UNT campus if possible. If that is not possible, avoid waiting until the last minute to take your exam in case problems arise. **Do not take your exams on mobile devices such as smartphones or tablets.**

Grade Breakdown

Grades are based on your earned point totals for the semester.

Assignment	Points Possible
Quizzes (5)	50 points
Discussion Posts (5)	250 points
Exams (3)	300 points
Total Points Possible	600 points

Grading Scale

A= 540-600
B= 480-539
C= 420-479
D= 360-419
F= 359 and below

Please note that grades will be calculated based on points earned in the course, not a percentage. I reserve the right to resolve borderline grades, but only if students have completed *all* the assignments in the course.

Exams: There will be 3 exams given worth 100 points each. Exams will be administered on Canvas on the day listed on the course calendar. You will not come to class in-person on exam days. You will have 60 minutes to complete your exam. You must complete your exam in one sitting, this means you will not be able to save and continue later. The day of the exam, it will open at 6:00am and close at 11:59pm. No late work will be accepted. Your exam may consist of multiple choice or true/false questions or short answer questions. Exams will be in Canvas under the Module labeled "Exams".

Quizzes: There will be 5 online quizzes that will be given throughout the semester. Once the Professor announces to the class that there will be a quiz, you will have until 10:00AM before the next class day to complete the quiz. For example, if the Professor announces that the quiz will open at the end class on a Monday, you will have until Wednesday @ 10:00AM to complete the quiz. You will have 15 minutes to take each quiz. No late work will be accepted. Quizzes will be in Modules under the section labeled "Quizzes". The quizzes will reinforce the fact that you are keeping up with the reading and lecture notes. Quizzes will come in the form of 10 questions potentially consisting of: multiple choices or true/false questions.

Discussions: Each student will be responsible for completing 5 Canvas Discussion Assignments throughout the course, with each discussion assignment worth 50 points (for a total of 250 points). These assignments will be completed via Canvas outside of class. This means that we will not have class on these days. **Each discussion assignment will remain open from Friday at 6:00 A.M. until Sunday at**

11:59 P.M. Students' initial discussion post must be a minimum of **250 words**. **Students must reply to at least one other student's post for full point potential** (responding appropriately and meaningfully). *Discussion due dates are listed in the course calendar below.*

Discussions will be graded on depth of explanation, utilization of sources, connection to course materials, specific efforts to back up your arguments with logical points and sources, grammar and spelling, and adhering to the assignment. *A detailed rubric for the discussions is provided at the end of the syllabus and on Canvas.*

In order to receive full credit, you must post an original response and respond to at least one other students' post. *Note that you will NOT be able to see any other students' posts until you have first posted a thread yourself.*

When engaging in an online discussion I ask that you remain civil with each other and operate the same way you would if the person was in the same room as you. Use discussions to develop your skills in intellectual conversations about the various topics that we will cover. In the event that there is any foul language or disrespect in the online environment, these issues will be dealt with by the Professor and if the situation merits meeting with the Department Chair or Dean, action will be taken.

When accessing assignments, be sure you access them through the modules tab. Do not use the grades tab to access assignments.

Extra Credit: There may be extra credit given but this will be at the discretion of the professor. If this opportunity presents itself, this will be for the entire class and not one individual person. Any extra credit that is given will be given to the entire class. I do not give individual extra credit, so it is important for you to do well on all other course work.

Attendance Policy: I expect every student to attend class regularly and promptly. Attendance will be taken at some point throughout each class meeting. Students are allowed a maximum of *two unexcused* absences during the semester. You are allowed two, use them for whatever you deem necessary. Remember, however, if you are absent on the day an assignment or extra credit is given, you forfeit those points as they cannot be made up.

A student who is absent from a class session is responsible for the subject matter discussed during that particular session. **I do not give out my lecture notes.** Notes missed (from lecture, guest speaker, presentations, etc.) will need to be obtained from a fellow classmate. It will be extremely difficult for you to obtain an acceptable grade in this course if you miss class consistently.

I reserve the right to request that a student be dropped from the course with a grade of "WF" upon the accumulation of an excessive number of unexcused absences. An absence may be excused for the following reasons: a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose; active military service, including travel for that purpose; participation in an official university function; illness or other extenuating circumstances; pregnancy and parenting under Title IX; and when the University is officially closed by the President. The student is responsible for requesting an excused absence in writing as early in the semester as possible, and personally delivering to me satisfactory evidence to substantiate the excused absence.

ADA Statement

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may

request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu

Academic Dishonesty/Integrity

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a "0" for that assignment or test. Additionally, the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students, who may impose further penalty. According to the UNT catalog, the term "cheating" includes, but is not limited to: a. use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; b. dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; c. the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty or staff member of the university; d. dual submission of a paper or project, or resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructor(s); or e. any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage. The term "plagiarism" includes but is not limited to a. the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment; and b. the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

Classroom Policy:

It is very important that students show respect and remain orderly while in class. Incivility is prohibited. Conduct that is considered disorderly is: talking while someone else is talking, profanity, sleeping, and any other type of disruptive noise. Cell phones must be put away during class time. *NO TEXTING OR ANY SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY WILL BE TOLERATED DURING*

CLASS TIME. If a student is found guilty of any of the following misconducts, they will be asked to leave the class and will be considered absent for that particular day. If the conduct is persistent, students will be reported to the Dean of Student Services to receive appropriate disciplinary action. *There will be no recording devices unless you have authorization from the University.*

All cell phones and any other electronic devices must be turned off or on a silent mode prior to entering the classroom. You may use your laptop for note taking. However, if you are caught doing anything that is not related to the course or the lecture notes you will not be allowed to use your computer for the duration of the semester.

General Artificial Intelligence Adopted Policy

In this course, GenAI tools may be used only for specific assignments where I have explicitly designated their use. For these assignments, I will provide clear guidelines about which tools are permitted and how they should be incorporated. All other coursework must be completed without the assistance of GenAI.

This approach helps you develop GenAI literacy and ethical resilience—learning when and how to use these tools appropriately while building strong foundational skills through independent work. Using GenAI on non-designated assignments constitutes academic misconduct under UNT Policy 06.003. If you have questions about whether GenAI is permitted for a particular assignment, please ask before using these tools.

Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (Policy 16.004)

The University of North Texas (UNT) prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate.

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Retention of Student Records

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year.

Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about student's records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and

Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University's policy. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and

electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. Visit UNT's Code of Student Conduct (https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct) to learn more.

Access to Information - Eagle Connect

Students' access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: my.unt.edu. All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student's Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward e-mail Eagle

Connect (https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect).

Student Evaluation Administration Dates

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13, 14 and 15 [insert administration dates] of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (noreply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website (http://spot.unt.edu/) or email spot@unt.edu.

Sexual Assault Prevention

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Federal laws (Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act) and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, and therefore prohibit sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. UNT's Survivor Advocates can assist a student who has been impacted by violence by filing protective orders, completing crime victim's compensation applications, contacting professors for absences related to an assault, working with housing to facilitate a room change where appropriate, and connecting students to other resources available both on and off campus. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565- 2648. Additionally, alleged sexual misconduct can be non-confidentially reported to the Title IX Coordinator at oeo@unt.edu or at (940) 565 2759.

Use of Student Work

A student owns the copyright for all work (e.g. software, photographs, reports, presentations, and email postings) he or she creates within a class and the University is not entitled to use any student work without the student's permission unless all of the following criteria are met:

- The work is used only once.

- The work is not used in its entirety.

- Use of the work does not affect any potential profits from the work.

- The student is not identified.

- The work is identified as student work.

If the use of the work does not meet all of the above criteria, then the University office or

department using the work must obtain the student's written permission. Download the UNT System Permission, Waiver and Release Form Academic **Support & Student Services**

Links to Academic Support Services, such as Office of Disability Accommodation, Counseling

and Testing Services, UNT Libraries, Online Tutoring, UNT Writing Lab and Math Tutor Lab are available on the university website.

UNT Portal: http://my.unt.edu

UNT Library Information for Off-Campus Users: http://www.library.unt.edu/services/facilities- and-systems/campus-access UNT Computing and Information Technology Center: http://citc.unt.edu/services-solutions/students

UNT Academic Resources for Students: http://www.unt.edu/academics.htm

Computer Labs: General access computer lab information (including locations and hours of operation) can be located at: http://www.gacl.unt.edu/

Student Support Services

Mental Health

UNT provides mental health resources to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the nature of an issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:

- Student Health and Wellness Center (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-healthand-wellness-center)

- Counseling and Testing Services (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testingservices)

- UNT Care Team (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care)

- UNT Psychiatric Services (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellnesscenter/services/psychiatry)

- Individual Counseling (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testingservices/services/individual-counseling)

Additional Student Support Services

- Registrar (https://registrar.unt.edu/registration)

- Financial Aid (https://financialaid.unt.edu/)

- Student Legal Services (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services)

- Career Center (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center)

- Multicultural Center (https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center)

- Counseling and Testing Services (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testingservices)

- Pride Alliance (https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance)

- UNT Food Pantry (https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry)

Academic Support Services

- Academic Resource Center (https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources)

- Academic Success Center (https://success.unt.edu/asc)

- [UNT Libraries](https://library.unt.edu/) (https://library.unt.edu/)

- [Writing Lab](http://writingcenter.unt.edu/) (http://writingcenter.unt.edu/)

Children in the Classroom:

Due to the University policy, liability concerns, and the course material, children are not permitted in this class, no exceptions.

Final Points

Please do not hesitate to come to the Professor with any questions, problems, or issues you may have as it pertains to the course. Do not wait to address these issues until it is too late for you to receive an acceptable grade. You will find the Professor to be very approachable and eager to address any problems with you in a professional manner.

Course Calendar and Topics

Although we will attempt to adhere to the schedule of topics listed and described below, the course schedule should be viewed as highly flexible. Consequently, it is your responsibility to come to class, know where we are in the listing of assigned readings irrespective of this schedule, and know the material that we have covered prior to any reading assessment, examination, and/or presentation. Further, there may be additional items added to the calendar throughout the course of the semester.

DATE: WEEK	TOPIC, READING ASSIGNMENTS, AND DUE DATES
1/12: 1	Topic: Course Intro and Syllabus Review Reading: None
1/14: 1	Topic: Structure: Law, Crime, Courts, and Controversy Reading: Chapter 1
1/16: 1	Topic: Law, Crime, Courts, and Controversy Reading: Chapter 1
1/19: 2	**MLK Day – No Class**
1/21: 2	Topic: Structure: Federal Courts Reading: Chapter 2
1/23: 2	**Discussion 1**
1/26: 3	Topic: Structure: Federal Courts Reading: Chapter 2
1/28: 3	Topic: Structure: State Courts Reading: Chapter 3
1/30: 3	Topic: Structure: State Courts Reading: Chapter 3
2/2: 4	Topic: Structure: State Courts Reading: Chapter 3
2/4: 4	Topic: Structure: State Courts Reading: Chapter 3

2/6: 4	**Discussion 2**
2/9: 5	Topic: Structure: Juvenile Courts Reading: Chapter 4
2/11: 5	Topic: Structure: Juvenile Courts Reading: Chapter 4
2/13: 5	Topic: Structure: Juvenile Courts Reading: Chapter 4
2/16: 6	**Exam 1**
2/18: 6	Topic: People in the Courts: The Dynamics of Courthouse Justice Reading: Chapter 5
2/20: 6	Topic: People in the Courts: The Dynamics of Courthouse Justice Reading: Chapter 5
2/23: 7	Topic: People in the Courts: Prosecutors Reading: Chapter 6
2/25: 7	Topic: People in the Courts: Prosecutors Reading: Chapter 6
2/27: 7	Topic: People in the Courts: Defense Attorneys Reading: Chapter 7
3/2: 8	Topic: People in the Courts: Defense Attorneys Reading: Chapter 7
3/4: 8	Topic: People in the Courts: Judges Reading: Chapter 8
3/6: 8	**Discussion 3**
Spring Break – No Class	
3/16: 10	Topic: People in the Courts: Judges Reading: Chapter 8
3/18: 10	Topic: People in the Courts: Defendants, Victims, and Witnesses Reading: Chapter 9
3/20: 10	Topic: People in the Courts: Defendants, Victims, and Witnesses Reading: Chapter 9
3/23: 11	**Exam 2**
3/25: 11	Topic: Processing in the Courts: From Arrest and Bail Through Arraignment Reading: Chapter 10
3/27: 11	Topic: Processing in the Courts: From Arrest and Bail Through Arraignment Reading: Chapter 10
3/30: 12	Topic: Processing in the Courts: Disclosing and Suppressing Evidence Reading: Chapter 11

4/1: 12	Topic: Processing in the Courts: Disclosing and Suppressing Evidence Reading: Chapter 11
4/3: 12	Topic: Processing in the Courts: Negotiated Justice and the Plea of Guilty Reading: Chapter 12
4/6: 13	Topic: Processing in the Courts: Negotiated Justice and the Plea of Guilty Reading: Chapter 12
4/8: 13	Topic: Processing in the Courts: Trials and Juries Reading: Chapter 13
4/10: 13	**Discussion 4**
4/13: 14	Topic: Processing in the Courts: Trials and Juries Reading: Chapter 13
4/15: 14	Topic: Processing in the Courts: Sentencing Reading: Chapter 14
4/17: 14	Topic: Processing in the Courts: Sentencing Reading: Chapter 14
4/20: 15	Topic: Processing in the Courts: Appellate and Habeas Corpus Review Reading: Chapter 15
4/22: 15	Topic: Processing in the Courts: Appellate and Habeas Corpus Review Reading: Chapter 15
4/24: 15	**Discussion 5**
4/27: 16	Course Wrap-up
4/29: 16	**Exam 3**
5/1: 16	**Reading Day – No Class**
5/4 – 5/8	**Finals Week**

Last day to drop the course with a W is April 10th.

Note: The syllabus is a tentative calendar and I reserve the right to make any changes throughout the semester. I will try my best to ensure that the schedule remains intact, however, if changes are made, they will be announced in class, and it is the responsibility of the student to make sure they make the appropriate changes. Failure to obtain syllabus changes because of missing class does not constitute a defense against missed assignments and other applicable changes.

Discussion Post Rubric

Criteria	Inadequate 4 pts	Developing 6 pts	Accomplished 8 pts	Exemplary 10 pts
Ideas & Argument	Ideas expressed lack an understanding of the discussion topic. Comments are irrelevant, off-topic, and/or confusing to follow. Viewpoint, if given, is not supported with evidence or examples.	Ideas expressed in discussion posts show a minimal understanding of the discussion topic. Comments are general in nature and/or occasionally may not be relevant. Rehashes or summarizes ideas with limited analysis, original thought, and/or supported viewpoints.	Ideas expressed in discussion posts are mostly substantive and relevant to topic; some original thought. Demonstrates logical thinking, reasoning, and/or analysis for most part. Viewpoint is supported with evidence and/or examples.	Ideas expressed in discussion posts exceed expectations in original thought, substantial depth, and are relevant to topic. Viewpoint shows strong logical thinking, reasoning, and analysis with evidence and examples. Construction of new meaning and insights are evident.
Connection to Course Materials	No connections are made to readings or other course materials (lectures, media, resources, etc.), and/or if made, are not clearly stated and are largely personal opinions.	Minimal direct connections are made to readings and/or other course materials (lectures, media, resources, etc.). Connections are largely inferred and somewhat unclear at times.	Some direct connections are made to readings and/or other course materials (lectures, media, resources, etc.) and are clearly stated for the most part.	Strong, direct connections are made to readings and/or other course materials (lectures, media, resources, etc.) and are clearly stated.
Contribution to Learning Community	Negligible contribution to the learning community. Rarely engages with students and generally ignores others' posts and/or has a negative effect through misrepresenting content in other posts, inappropriate comments made, and/or attempts to dominate the discussion.	Somewhat contributes to the learning community but the focus is generally on own posts. Occasionally interacts with others' postings but little attempt to involve other students in the discussion. Short statements such as "I agree with…".	Contributes to the learning community. Often attempts to direct group discussion to present relevant viewpoints and meaningful reflection by others. Interacts respectfully with students.	Effectively contributes to the learning community. Frequently initiates dialogue and motivates group discussion by providing feedback to students' postings, asking follow-up questions, and through thoughtful, reflective comments. Respectfully encourages a variety of viewpoints and

				invites contributions from others.
Adherence to Instructions and Clarity	Does not provide any citations. Initial post does not meet minimum 250-word count.	Some significant errors in APA citations. Initial post does not meet minimum 250-word count.	Some minor errors in APA citations. Initial post meets minimum 250-word count.	Proper use of APA citations. Initial post meets minimum 250-word count.
Writing Quality	Posts show a below average/poor writing style that lacks standard English, and/or is difficult for readers to follow Contains frequent errors in grammar, punctuation, usage, and spelling. Does not provide any citations. Initial post does not meet minimum 250-word count.	Posts show an average and/or casual writing style using standard English that is generally clear but contains some errors in grammar, punctuation, usage, and spelling.	Discussion posts show above average writing style that is clear using standard English with minor errors in grammar, punctuation, usage, and/or spelling.	Discussion posts are well written and clearly articulated using standard English, characterized by elements of a strong writing style with correct grammar, punctuation, usage, and spelling.
Required Response	**Deduct 10 points**	**Deduct 3 points**	**No points deducted**	**No points deducted**
	Required response post is missing/inadequate.	All required postings completed; however, response post only agrees/disagrees and does not provide additional insight.	All required postings by deadline; an adequate response post is given that provides some additional insight.	All required postings by deadline; response is extremely thoughtful and provides additional insight.