

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY  
Department of Criminal Justice  
CJ 385-01 Court Systems and Practices – Spring, 2019

Instructor: Abby Alaba Oludare, Ph.D.  
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Class meeting: M&W: 3:50pm- 5:05pm: SSB 18

**Office Hours:**

Mondays 10:40 - 3:40pm  
Tuesdays 5:00pm-6:00pm  
Wednesdays 10:40 - 3:40pm  
Thursdays & Fridays: By Appointment

**COURSE CRN 20636**

**Required Text:**

Roberson, C., & BiMarino, F. (2012). American Criminal Courts. Pearson Education Inc. Upper Saddle River, NJ. ISBN: 978-0-135111116

Additional readings will be assigned throughout the Semester.

**Catalog Course Description: (3 Credit hours).**

This course is an extensive review of the federal and state court systems - starting from the history of the court system to staffing. The procedures for the appointment of justices and judges, and the actual operations and practices of the courts will be extensively examined. Other pertinent court related issues, such as plea bargaining, sentence disparities and the future of the courts will be examined.

**Student Learning Outcomes (SLO):**

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- Understand the history of the American legal system
- Understand the primary functions of the courts and their relationship to other components of the criminal justice system
- Discuss the major types of courts found in the United States and their relevance in understanding the adversarial legal system.
- Identify and describe the functions of the most important actors/participants in the courtroom; and
- Understand the underpinning philosophy of the crime control model and the due process model of the American justice system

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME (SLO):

Upon completion of the undergraduate program in criminal justice, the student should demonstrate understanding of the:

- Crime issues, trends, and basic legal principles in America
- The social, economic and political forces that influence the definition and response to crime in America
- The history, development and operations of the criminal justice system

### **Course Evaluation Methods**

A variety of instructional techniques will be utilized in this course. The class will be taught under the philosophy of active learning and student participation. A number of strategies will be utilized to provoke students interest and discussion, including (but not limited to) class discussion, role-playing, roundtables, debates, written assignments and traditional lecture. Students are expected to read the **required textbook**, as well as read the handout materials before the day of discussion. The students must be prepared to ask and respond to questions and participate in class discussion. The student must remember that informed and interested participation will greatly impact their final grade. Thus I cannot emphasize enough the need to have the book early in the course.

### **Assignments:**

Each student is required to turn in weekly and periodic written assignments described below. The purpose of these assignments is simply to ensure that the students have read and understood the lecture material and the content of each chapter. No late assignment will be accepted, which means the student can get a zero for not submitting their assignment on time. Similarly, the instructor will not accept any assignment ahead of time, except in anticipation of a major bed ridden illness or some other reason. In any case, please let the instructor know ahead of time. Not turning in an assignment can be a costly decision as these **assignments comprise 50% of your overall grade**. This course will utilize the following instruments to determine student grades and proficiency of the learning outcomes of the course.

#### **1. Book Chapter Review Assignment– 20%**

Each week students will be required to prepare a review of an assigned chapter from the readings. Each review must comprise of a summary of the chapter, addressing a question of interest, or a specific issue drawn from the readings. These writings are not only opinion papers in which you will respond to a question, but also a way to demonstrate your understanding of the course content. The purpose is twofold: (1) for students to gain knowledge about a topic of interest to them based on the course, and (2) to familiarize them with resources available for criminal justice research. Each chapter review should be a minimum of one full page. Chapter Reviews should demonstrate that students have studied and seriously thought about the questions or issues related to the readings. Filling a page with nonsense or evading the question will not result in the student receiving credit for that review. The instructor will check reviews every week.

## **2. Articles/Activities/Projects– 100 points (10%)**

As indicated, this is a discussion-oriented class. A typical class session will involve a brief mini-lecture by the instructor, followed by a class participation activity. The instructor will call upon the student to assist in these activities. By the 2nd day of class the instructor will circulate a sign-up sheet. Each student will sign up to lead the class participation activity on a specific day. On the assigned day, (working with one or two other students) the students will be responsible for making a brief (i.e. 20 – 25 minutes) presentation, role-playing, debate, and so on, on the topic/issue to be discussed. Students will have plenty of advanced notice for their activity, so will have plenty of time to prepare. Each activity is worth 100 points. *Mere completion of the activity will not earn you 100 “automatic” points – these assignments will be graded on quality!*

## **3. Term Paper Assignment – 200 points (20%)**

Please note that the Term Paper should be double spaced, 12 point font, and Times New Roman type. The paper should be between 5 -10 pages long and will include a minimum of five references taken from scholarly journals located in the MVSU Library and no more than five references from the internet. The format and style of the paper will follow the American Psychological Association (APA) Manual. The instructor will grade the paper on content, organization, and English usage.

## **Exams – 400 points (40%)**

There will be at least two exams: including a midterm exam and a final exam. The test might take the following format/combination; multiple-choice, true and false, short answer discussion/essay question, and definition. Exams will be announced in advance and will consist of materials discussed and assigned during lectures. It is important that students come to class and take good notes to successfully pass this class. Each exam will be worth 200 points (20%). Also, the exams are not open notes/open book; so students need to study the material and remember the important concepts.

If a student must miss a test, exam or quiz (due to an emergency), the instructor must be informed before the test is administered, via telephone or e-mail. These cases will be handled on an individual basis. Students can only miss ONE test due to an emergency. In such an event the new test administered will be ALL essay/discussion questions.

## **Attendance, Leadership and Class participation – 100 points (10%)**

Class participation is key!!! The instructor is interested in creating a dialogue – in which the students actively participate – as they examine key topics. Expect to be called on to answer questions. These questions will not be “picky” (i.e. what did the author say in paragraph one on page 10?) Instead, the question may ask you to broadly summarize a reading or to offer your opinions/insights about it. The instructor will also ask “Why” frequently. In addition the instructor expects the students to participate actively in class. (I will keep track! If you don’t participate, you should not expect to do well). Attendance, completion of assignments, quizzes and examinations also constitute class participation.

## **Grading Matrix**

<b>Instrument</b>	<b>Value (points or percentages)</b>		<b>Total</b>
Mid-term Exam.	200 points	20%	200
Final Exam.	200 points	20%	200
Term Paper/Presentation	200 points	20%	200

Projects/Attendance/ Participation	200 points	20%	200
Weekly Review Assignments	200 points	20%	200
<b>Total:</b>		<b>100%</b>	<b>1000</b>

**Grading Scale:**

- A = 100 – 90%
- B = 89 – 80%
- C = 79 – 70%
- D = 69 – 60%
- F = 59 – 0%

**Grade Appeals:**

Any student who believes that s/he has been graded unfairly, even after talking with me about the grade, may appeal that grade by following University procedures as explained in the Student Handbook. Please keep records of all graded assignments and make all appeals in writing with the proper documentation. It is the student’s responsibility to prove that s/he has been graded unfairly.

**Attendance and Participation Policy:**

You earn grades for class attendance and participation in all class activities and discussions. To earn grades for participation, you must do your readings and show you understand what was presented in the class readings. You are required to attend every class meeting to receive full credit for attendance and participation..

**Special Needs and Accommodations:**

Students with special needs/disabilities of any type who require special accommodation in the classroom and during instruction and/or testing should notify the instructor during their first full week of class. Students should also have written confirmation by qualified experts of the disability on file with the Office of Academic Affairs and the ADA office on MVSU campus. For help with papers, please use your University Writing Center often.

**Academic Integrity:**

All acts of academic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating on exams, plagiarism, internet papers, paraphrasing internet papers, presenting someone else’s work as your own, failing to meet academic and professional requirements, will result in an automatic “F”. The University’s academic honesty and plagiarism policies are enforced in this course.

**Course Schedule:** *subject to some changes depending on the needs and level of the class*

WEEKS	
Week 1 01/07-13	Course Orientation and Syllabus Discussion & Introductions Chapter 1: Our Criminal Courts Discussion/Activity 1 Journal Entries 1 Review of Chapter 1
Week 2 01/14-20	Chapter 2: Judicial Power Discussion/ Activity Quiz/Review of Chapter 2 Journal Entries 2
Week 3 01/21-27	Chapter 3: The Judicial Process Discussion/Activity 3 Journal Entries 3 Quiz/Review of Chapter 3
Week 4 01/28-02/03	Chapter 4: Federal Courts Discussion/Activity 4 Journal Entries 4 Quiz / Review of Chapter 4
Week 5 02/04-10	Chapter 5: State and Commonwealth courts Discussion/Activity 5 Journal Entries 5 Quiz / Review of Chapter 5
Week 6 02/11-17	Chapter 6: courtroom workgroup Discussion/Activity 6 Journal Entries 6 Quiz / Review of Chapter 6
Week 7 02/18-24	Chapter 7: Extraordinary writs Discussion/Activity Journal Entries Quiz / Review of Chapter 7 <b>1<sup>st</sup> Draft of Term/Research Paper (title, 4 text, and reference pages)</b>

Week 8 02/25-03/03	Chapter 8: International Courts and Tribunals Discussion/Activity Journal Entries <b>Project/Quiz</b> Quiz / Review of Chapter 8
Week 9 03//04-10	MIDTERM EXAM March 05-09
Week 10 03/11-17	SPRING BREAK March 12-16 Case Review
Week 11 03/18-24	Chapter 9: Controlling courtroom conduct Discussion/Activity 9 Journal Entries 9 Quiz / Review of Chapter 9
Week 12 03/25-03/31	Chapter 10: Drug and DWI Courts <b>Project/Quiz 4</b> <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Draft of Term/Research Paper (title, abstract, 8 to 10 text, and reference pages)</b> Quiz / Review of Chapter 10 <b>Final Term Paper Assignment Due (Student are to submit Term Paper via turnitin.com and bring a Hardcopy to class)</b>
Week 13 04/01-04/07	Chapter 11: Trends and Directions in the Courts <b>Assignment 1 (Peer Review Project) Due</b> Quiz / Review of Chapter 11
Week 14 04/08-14	<b>Discussion of research and presentations</b>
Week 15 04/15-21	<b>Discussion of research and presentations</b>
Week 16 04/22-28	<b>Final Exam</b>
May 4	<b>Commencement</b>

### Course Procedures

Students are expected to be civil – respect for themselves, other students, and the instructor at all times. Talking while the class is in session, without being called on by the instructor, is very disruptive. Students who are disruptive will be asked to vacate the classroom and have a conference

**with the instructor prior to returning to the classroom.** Please note that cell phones should be turned off and no children, or persons not registered for the course are allowed in the classroom. **Continued disruption in this regard can result in a deduction of 10 points from your grade.**

**THIS CLASS REQUIRES REGULAR ATTENDANCE.**

Attendance will be taken each lecture. Absences, tardiness and leaving the classroom before class is dismissed are hereby discouraged, since both can have a negative effect on your grades. In signing up the honor system will be used. Students will legibly sign their names on the roll sheet. You are not allowed to sign up a friend, even when asked by that friend. In cases where the honor system is not observed, the situation will be brought up to the Program Coordinator and Department Chair, and if necessary to the attention of Judicial Services (in writing). This letter will be kept in the files of all students involved until they graduate (Note: employers do check school records!)

**Submission of Assignments:**

All assignments should be submitted to the Professor in class on the due dates.

***Disclaimer!!!!***

***I reserve the right to change anything in this syllabus. All changes will be announced in class or via Blackboard mail, if necessary. Be aware that if I feel readings are not being completed, I will give unannounced quizzes. If I feel class participation is lackluster, I may grade it more heavily. Any changes will count towards your grade in addition to the grading structure described above. Realistically, these options create more work for both you and I. So, let's not have to resort to them.***