

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

**Criminal Justice Division
CRJ 175**

**THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF THE AMERICAN COURTS
Spring 2009**

Professor Julie Mumma

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Office Hours: MWF from 8:30-9:00 a.m. and Noon-12:30 p.m. (or by appointment)

Office Location: Alpine 107

Class: MWF 10-10:50 a.m.

REQUIRED TEXTS

1. America's Courts and the Criminal Justice System, 8th ed., by David W. Neubauer, Thompson Wadsworth Publishing.
2. Contempt of Court, 1999, by Mark Curriden and Leroy Phillips, Jr., Anchor Press

Course Description:

This course is an overview of the American court system. The material includes a study of the court procedures, the structure and function of the courts, and the various roles people play in the administration of the courts. Important constitutional issues involving preventative detention, right to counsel, bail, speedy trial, indigents' rights, discovery, competence, pleas, evidence suppression, double jeopardy, and judicial discretion will also be addressed.

Prerequisite: CRJ001 and CRJ 002.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the course, the student will be able to do the following:

1. Demonstrate a thorough understanding of the structures and functions of the American Court System(s).
2. Describe our common law heritage together with state-federal sources of law, jurisdiction, venue, civil law and civil liability concepts in criminal justice, state and federal court organization, judicial administration, the hierarchy of the courts.
3. Express an understanding of the courthouse workgroup, roles of the prosecutor, defense attorney, judge, probation officials, victims, and witnesses.
4. Conduct and report observations of criminal court proceedings in order to garner an understanding of the courtroom, arraignments, preliminary hearings, trials, motions, jury selection, bail and pre-trial release, discovery, pleas, negotiated justice, sentencing decisions, appeals as a right and a matter of judicial discretion.

5. Identify the usage of the Grand Jury at federal and state levels together with its advantages and disadvantages.
6. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of Constitutional Rights associated with criminal legal process including juvenile courts i.e. those engendered by the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Eighth, and Fourteenth Amendments.
7. Demonstrate analysis of complex law cases together with logical reasoning requisite to their application to legal contextual situations.

Grades:

A- to A.....90-100% of accumulated class points

B- to B+.....80- 89%

C- to C+.....70- 79%

D- to D+..... 60- 69%

F..... Below 60%

Your course grade will be determined by your performance in the following activities:

1. COURT VISITATION PROJECT (25 points)

This assignment is due in class on Friday, March 20th. Your typed/word-processed paper should be no less than five (5) pages but may be longer and you must submit one blog post on SacCT. You are required to attend and report on three half-day court proceedings. A detailed handout for the court visitation project will be provided in class.

2. ASSIGNED NOVEL PAPER (25 points)

This assignment is due in class on Friday, May 1st. You will analyze the assigned book in the context of the Writ of Habeas Corpus and of a major concept presented in the textbook. Your typed/word-processed paper should be no less than seven (7) pages but may be longer. A detailed handout for the assigned novel report will be provided in class.

3. FINAL EXAM (50 points)

This examination is in class per the final examination schedule. The final exam is comprehensive and will be a combination of essay, multiple choice and true or false.

Recommendations

In order to achieve success in this class, class preparation, attendance and participation are essential. Learning the legal concepts presented and developing the skills necessary to accurately apply these concepts requires the discussion and illustration of concepts only available in the classroom. Students should definitely utilize the self assessments on **WebCT (SacCT)** throughout the semester. There will be a review session at the end of the semester. **It is critical for success on the final examination that students actively participate in class, take the practice assessments and complete any study material handouts in advance of the review.**

WebCT (SacCT)

You must have a Saclink account in order to utilize WebCT (SacCT). There will be practice quizzes posted in the assessment section after each section is completed. These quizzes will provide valuable personal feedback on your comprehension of the material and prepare you for the objective portion of the final examination. These quizzes are NOT graded. If you miss class, access the calendar section to view whether there were any handouts. All materials and handouts are accessible within the course materials icon. The power point lecture slides will not be posted. However, feel free to post a request for any missed notes in the student chat section. You are encouraged to form discussion groups to help each other analyze the course material or make court visitation arrangements.

Writing Assistance

The College of Health and Human Services Writing Center, located in Solano Hall 5000, is a program designed to assist students with all stages of writing from pre-writing through editing a text utilizing a peer-tutoring environment. The Center is staffed by graduate students from the English Department. You may contact the Center at (916) 278-7255.

Accommodations for students with disabilities

If you have a disability and require accommodations, you need to provide disability documentation to SSWD, Lassen Hall 1008, (916) 278-6955. Please discuss your accommodation needs with me after class or schedule an office appointment early in the semester.

Academic Dishonesty and matters of makeup exams and late assignments

One would hope that the following admonitions would be unnecessary for any students enrolled in a course in the Division of Criminal Justice. Any student who engages in any form of **cheating, plagiarism, or other acts of dishonesty SHALL receive ZERO points** for the assignment or test and **be referred to the Office of Student Affairs** for the appropriate discipline. A student tutorial on how not to plagiarize may be found at <http://library.csus.edu/content2.asp?pageID=353>.

Missed Examinations or Assignment Deadlines

The general rule is there will be no makeup exams provided OR late assignments accepted.

Weekly Class Topics and Assignments

WEEK TOPIC & ASSIGNMENT

Week 1	Courts, Crime and Controversy (Chapter 1) Law and Crime (Chapter 2)
Week 2	Arrest to Arraignment (Chapter 10)
Weeks 3-4	Prosecutors, Defense Attorneys & Judges (Chapters 6-8)
Week 5	Dynamics of the Courthouse (Chapter 5)
Week 6	Jury Trial & Appellate Courts (Chapters 14&17)
Week 7	Plea Bargaining (Chapter 13) Defendants & Victim (Chapter 9)
Week 8	Federal Courts (Chapter 3) COURT VISITATION PROJECT
Week 9	State Courts (Chapter 4)
Week 10	SPRING BREAK
Weeks 11-13	Writ of Habeas Corpus Sentencing & Death Penalty (Chapters 15 & 16)
Week 14	Evidence & Suppression Hearings (Chapters 12&16) ASSIGNED NOVEL PAPER
Week 15	Bail (Chapter 11)
Week 16	REVIEW FINAL PER EXAMINATION SCHEDULE