

Texas A&M University – Texarkana
Course Syllabus

CJ 340
Criminal Law & Procedure
Jeffery C. Sams, Instructor
Fall 2025

Instructor: Jeffery C. Sams
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Course Description: This course covers the history and philosophy of modern substantive criminal law with an emphasis on the Texas Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure, with material from relevant Supreme Court case opinions. The course provides definitions and elements of principle crimes, criminal liability, and defenses to criminal penalties. (3 credit hours)

Course Delivery Method: Online course

Required Textbooks/Resources:

- Daniel E. Hall (2023). *Criminal Law and Procedure: 8th Ed.*. Cengage. ISBN: 978-0-357-61933-9
- Books, articles, and internet sites as needed by individual students or as assigned in class
- Computer and internet access. MS-Word, email software, internet browser, that are compatible with Canvas.
- Dictionary

Student Learning Outcomes:

At the end of the term, the successful student will:

- Become familiar with the purpose and creative process of Criminal Law
- Understand the common elements of all criminal offenses
- Identify criminal offenses and the impact offenses have on society
- Understand the penalties imposed for violating specific offenses **Course Outline:**

- Ch. 1 Introduction to the Legal System of the United States
- Ch. 2 Introduction to Criminal Law
- Ch. 3 The Ingredients of Crime: Thinking and Acting
- Ch. 4 Crimes Against the Person
- Ch. 5 Crimes Involving Property
- Ch. 6 Crimes Against the Public
- Ch. 7 Parties and Incomplete Crimes
- Ch. 8 Factual and Legal Defenses
- Ch. 9 Constitutional Defenses
- Ch. 10 The Criminal Justice System
- Ch. 11 The Constitution and Criminal Procedure
- Ch. 12 Searches and Seizures: Fundamentals
- Ch. 13 Searches and Seizures: Exceptions
- Ch. 14 Interrogation, Surveillance, and Forensic Practices
- Ch. 15 The Pretrial Process

- Ch. 16 Trial

- CN. 17 Sentencing and Appeal

Methods of Evaluation:

Student course grades shall be calculated based on:

Quizzes	20%
Assignments	20%
Exam #1	20%
Exam #2	20%
Final Exam	<u>20%</u>
Total	100%

<u>Grading Scale</u>
A ≥ 90
B ≥ 80
C ≥ 70
D ≥ 60
F < 60

Quizzes – there will a quiz each week over each chapter. A quiz may cover more than one chapter or you may have more than one quiz a week.

Examination (x3) may be a combination of multi-choice, true/false, short answer, fill in the blank and short essay.

Written Assignments (6 total) – (1) There will be three essay assignments to specific questions over the course of the semester. (2) There will be three case briefs due over the course of the semester. Note the Sidebar on page 6 of your textbook. Assignments should be no more than 2 pages in length, double spaced, 12 font.

NOTE: Students are responsible for all the information included in each chapter whether covered by the instructor or not. If it is in the book, you need to know it.

Library/Media Resources Assessment:

Students are responsible for using the John F. Moss Library databases to find additional materials required for this course. For additional information on using library resources, please use <http://www.tamut.edu/library-services/Locate/index.html>

Class Participation:

Students are responsible for beginning their participation on the FIRST CLASS DAY by logging onto Canvas, and completing assignments according to the COURSE CALENDAR. Failure to submit online assignments between the first day of classes and the University census date (according to the University schedule) will result in an ADMINISTRATIVE DROP from the course. **Students are expected to log onto Canvas frequently during the semester for assignments, announcements, and messages.** Students are also expected to frequently check their TAMUT email. If an assignment or extra credit is missed because the student did not check their email, they will NOT be allowed to make it up.

Attendance in class is mandatory and attendance will be taken as per university policy. In order to do well in this class a student will need to attend each session. Class assignments/quizzes may be given without notice. If a student is late (unexcused) three times, it will equal one unexcused absence (when a student comes in late, it disrupts the class and the instructor). If a student is absent, he or she will not have the opportunity to receive credit for work/quizzes that day. Additionally, the number of absences will be considered if a student's final course grade is within one point of the next highest letter grade. The instructor reserves the right to take attendance at any point during the class.

- **Every out of class assignment includes the requirement to make and keep a copy of your written work in case the original is lost or misplaced.**
- Students are encouraged to make an appointment to review and discuss graded material and their progress in the course.
- No Grade of "incomplete" will be given except in the most unusual circumstances that reasonably preclude completion of the course. Poor grades or late work are not acceptable reasons; however.
- You are strongly encouraged to complete your written assignments early when possible to avoid missed deadlines due to technology or other circumstances.
- **Late work will not be accepted or graded.**
- No additional extra credit assignments beyond opportunities offered to the entire class will be given; please do not ask.
- Tardiness and Absence can negatively affect your experience and your grade.

Students with Federal Loans and/or Grants:

Students who have federal loans and grants must be aware that participation is monitored in online courses. In the event a student withdraws from a course the student will be required to refund all federal funds prorated from the last date of participation. A student's last access to Canvas would not suffice as participation. The required weekly activity could include a comment to a blog, a discussion board posting, a journal entry, a quiz or exam, a submitted assignment, or other measurable and tracked activity.

Course Etiquette:

Interaction with other students and the professor are expected to be open, respectful of others, and welcoming of all ideas and discussions. ANY VIOLATION OF COURSE ETIQUETTE MAY RESULT IN A STUDENT BEING REMOVED FROM THE CLASS PERMANENTLY WITHOUT REFUND! Students are expected to turn in assignments by the due date. **No late assignments will be accepted.**

In communications with me, I expect for you to use appropriate writing skills. I will not accept emails written in "textese." This class is intended to prepare you for your future career. Get into the habit of writing everything you post/email as if it were going to be published on the front page of *The Dallas Morning News*. One day, it might be...and you do not want to be embarrassed.

Electronic devices such as cell phones, tablets, laptops, and other distracting technologies are not permitted. The instructor will make the final determination on what is distracting. If a student is found to be using any of these devices during the class, they will be asked to leave and points taken from their participation and attendance grade.

Students are expected to pay attention and take notes.

Make-up Work and Exam Policy:

Make-up work and exams shall only be allowed if a student has contacted the professor prior to the exam **and** the absence is for valid and verifiable reasons such as illness, death in the immediate family, legal proceedings, or participation in University-sponsored activities. Official documentation must be provided. With a University-sponsored activity, documentation must be provided from the faculty/staff member who is responsible for the activity. Make-up exams will be in essay format and will be given the week before final exam week.

Military Personnel and Veterans:

Thank you for serving our country. I recognize the complexities that may occur when you are an active military student or student veteran. If you want to self-disclose your prior or current military status with me, please feel comfortable doing so. Know that I will never discuss nor ask you to disclose this information with others (including your fellow students). If you have temporary or permanent physical, cognitive, or mental health concerns that may warrant accommodation, please speak with Dr. Flunder in the Student Life office. You may also discuss these concerns with me privately – although you are not obligated to do so. Drill schedules, activation or recall, complications with education benefits disbursements, VA appointments, and other unforeseen military or veteran-related developments can complicate your academic life. If you make me aware of any complications, I will do everything I can to assist you in resolving the matter and/or putting you in touch with the official university personnel who can help. Two potential resources include the Manager of our Veterans Services Center, Mr. Robert Hernandez (UC 258, 903.223.3167, RHernandez@TAMUT.edu) and your Student Veterans Association chapter officers (TAMUT.SVA@gmail.com)

Disability Accommodations:

Students with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations through the A&M-Texarkana Disability Services Office by calling 903-223-3062.

Academic Integrity:

Academic honesty is expected of students enrolled in this course. Cheating on examinations, unauthorized collaboration, falsification of research data, plagiarism, and undocumented use of materials from any source constitute academic dishonesty and may be grounds for a grade of ‘F’ in the course and/or disciplinary actions. Unless specifically directed, use of any AI tools (such as Grammerly, ChatGPT, etc.) is forbidden and is cheating. Any writing that you turn in to me must be your personal composition. For additional information, see the university catalog.

Your Texas A&M University – Texarkana Email Address:

Upon application to Texas A&M University-Texarkana an individual will be assigned an A&M - Texarkana email account. This email account will be used to deliver official university correspondence. Each individual is responsible for information sent and received via the university email account and is expected to check the official A&M-Texarkana email account on a frequent and consistent basis. Faculty and students are required to utilize the university email account when communicating about coursework.

Drop Policy:

To drop this course after the census date, a student must complete a [Drop/Withdrawal Request Form](#), located on the University Registrar’s webpage or obtained in the Registrar’s Office. The student must submit the signed and completed form to the instructor of each course indicated on the form to be dropped for his/her signature. The signature is not an “approval” to drop, but rather confirmation that the student has discussed the drop/withdrawal with the faculty member. The form must be submitted to the Registrar’s office for processing in person, email Registrar@tamut.edu, mail (7101 University Ave., Texarkana, TX 75503) or fax (903-2233140). Drop/withdraw forms missing any of the required information will not be accepted by the Registrar’s Office for processing. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that the form is completed properly before submission. If a student stops participating in class (attending and submitting assignments) but does not complete and submit the drop/withdrawal form, a final grade based on work completed as outlined in the syllabus will be assigned.

Student Technical Assistance:

Solutions to common problems and FAQ’s for your web-enhanced and online courses are found on the [Online Student Training](#) page on our website.

If you cannot find your resolution there, you can submit a support request by contacting the IT HelpDesk:

Email: helpdesk@tamut.edu
Phone: 903-334-6603
Submit a [Support Request Ticket](#)

Additional student help for Canvas can be found here:

<https://www.tamut.edu/tide/index.html>

Technical Requirements:

The following are the minimum computer requirements for online learning:

- *A computer capable of handling streaming video. A mid-range multi-core CPU should be adequate. *A sound card.
- *A high speed internet connection preferably directly connected to the computer via a hard-wired Ethernet connection rather than wirelessly connected.
- *Virus and adware protection software.
- *Microsoft Word, minimum version 2007 or above.
- *[Mozilla Firefox](#) browser available free.

The most recent versions of Java, Flash, QuickTime, Adobe Reader, and Shockwave. You can check this in the Firefox browser by visiting: [Firefox Plugin Check Tool](#)

Please note: some instructors may require the use of a headset with microphone and/or a webcam. If so, the cost of these items is not included in your course fees and will need to be acquired at your own expense.

Learning Management System (Canvas) Support

This course utilizes Canvas, the university's Learning Management System (LMS), for all course materials, announcements, assignments, and communication. You can access Canvas through the university's website or by navigating to [link to university's Canvas portal] using your student credentials. For questions on *all web-enhanced and online courses*, please refer to [Technology Innovation and Digital Education \(TIDE\)](#).

NOTE—The below schedule is for planning purposes, and the professor reserves the right to alter it in any fashion.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week beginning:	Topic	Reading to Complete	Assignment Due
August 18	• Introduction to the Legal System, Introduction to Criminal Law	Chapters 1 & 2	Quiz #1
August 25	• The Ingredients of Crime: Thinking and Acting	Chapter 3	Quiz #2
September 1	• Crimes Against the Person	Chapter 4	Quiz #3 Assignment #1
September 8	• Crimes Involving Property	Chapter 5	Quiz #4 Case Brief #1
September 15	• Crimes Against the Public	Chapter 6	Quiz #5
September 22	• Parties and Incomplete Crimes; Factual and Legal Defenses	Chapters 7 & 8	EXAM #1 (Ch. 1-5) Quiz #6
September 29	• Constitutional Defenses	Chapter 9	Quiz #7 Assignment #2
October 6	• The Criminal Justice System	Chapter 10	Quiz #8 Case Brief #2
October 13	FALL BREAK		
October 20	• The Constitution and Criminal Procedure	Chapter 11	Quiz #9 Assignment #3

Week beginning:	Topic	Reading to Complete	Assignment Due
October 27	• Searches and Seizures: Fundamentals and Exceptions	Chapters 12 & 13	Quiz #10
November 3	• Interrogation, Surveillance, and Forensic Practices	Chapter 14	EXAM #2 (Ch. 6-10) Quiz #11
November 10	• The Pretrial Process	Chapter 15	Quiz #12 Case Brief #3
November 17	• Trial	Chapter 16	Quiz #13
November 24	• Sentencing and Appeal	Chapter 17	Quiz #14
December 1-3	FINAL EXAM (CUMULATIVE)		

December 8 – Final Grades Due (8 A.M.)