

# PLSC 3330          Syllabus

## Basic Information

**Instructor Name: Dr. Craig Emmert**

OFFICE: MB 3232

OFFICE PHONE: 432-552-2344

E-MAIL: [emmert\\_c@utpb.edu](mailto:emmert_c@utpb.edu)

This course is a Web Course and is conducted within Canvas at <http://utpb.instructure.com>

Academic assistants may be used within this course. The academic assistant is responsible to the instructor.

**NOTE: The due dates and times for the activities will adhere to the Central Time Zone.**

## Course Description

### Course Catalog Description:

The purpose of this course is to provide a basic description of the U.S. judicial system. Attention will be given to foundations of law, judicial selection, judges, lawyers, litigants, and interest groups. The course will also focus on criminal and civil procedure. Finally, there will be discussion of judicial decision-making and policy-making.

This course contributes to the political science program's learning objectives by helping students understand the role of the judicial system, by describing the political processes by which cases are brought to court, and the factors that affect the judicial decisions. It is beneficial for those students planning to attend graduate school because of the focus on the political aspects of the judicial processes and judicial decision-making. It is beneficial for those planning on attending law school because it provides a description of the legal system and legal process.

The class requires reading textbook chapters and notes for each topic covered. Participation in class discussions, written assignments, and studying for unit exams are also required. The expected time commitment for the class is about 10 to 12 hours per week.

There are no formal prerequisites for this course. However, one or more introductory American national politics and government and/or state and local politics and government course(s) would certainly be helpful.

## Measurable Learning Outcomes:

Tests, assignments, and discussions provide opportunities for students to:

1. Demonstrate understanding of the concept of law and describe the structures and processes of the legal system (Assignment 1, Discussion 1, Test 1).
2. Analyze the federal and state judicial selection systems, examine the characteristics of state and federal judges, and explain the relationships between judicial selection methods, judges' characteristics, and judicial decisions (Assignment 2, Discussion 2, Test 2).
3. Analyze and describe criminal law and civil law processes and procedures (Assignment 3, Discussion 3, Test 3).
4. Compare explanatory theories and use them to explain judicial decision making, judicial policy making, and implementation of judicial policy (Assignment 4, Discussion 4, Test 4).

## Required Materials:

Textbook: Judicial Process in America (11th edition) by Robert A. Carp, Kenneth L. Manning, Lisa M. Holmes, and Ronald Stidham. ISBN: 9781544316697.

# Important Academic Dates

UTPB [Academic Calendar](#)

## Course Overview

**Modules:** There are four (4) modules for this course. Each module will have:

1. Three (3) or four (4) textbook chapters of reading
2. One (1) assignment (4 total for the class)
3. One (1) discussion (4 total for the class)
4. One (1) test (4 total for the class)

You should read the textbook section first, and then review the lecture notes. The lectures will be summaries, elaborations of the textbook material, and links to related information on the Web. After you have completed reviewing the lecture, you should then log into Discussion and post answers to the discussion question (specific to the module) posted by the instructor. You must also read other students' posts and respond to two other students' responses. Discussion posts must be made by the date on the schedule to receive full credit.

**Readings:** Reading the assigned textbook chapters for each unit is essential for success. You need to read closely and comprehend what you read because test questions. Also you should read the notes for each chapter carefully.

**Assignments:** Each unit's assignment should be single-spaced with double-spaces between paragraphs. Each assignment has its grading rubric attached.

**Discussions:** Discussions are an essential part of this course. To participate in the Discussions, go to the Discussion Board button and post your comments there. You must also read all other students' posts and respond to at least two other students' responses. Each discussion has its own rubric attached. I will play a limited role in the discussions, as necessary. But discussion participation will be a student-led activity.

**Tests:** Tests are non-cumulative, meaning that each exam covers only the material for that section. There is no comprehensive mid-term or final test. Each test is multiple-choice and true/false in format.

**Grading:**

<i>Course Activity</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Percentage of Total Grade</i>
Assignment 1	100	10%
Assignment 2	100	10%
Assignment 3	100	10%
Assignment 4	100	10%
Discussion 1	100	5%
Discussion 2	100	5%
Discussion 3	100	5%
Discussion 4	100	5%
Test 1	100	10%
Test 2	100	10%
Test 3	100	10%
Test 4	100	10%
<b>Total</b>		100%

**Grading Scale:**

<b>Grade Range</b>	<b>Letter Grade</b>
90 and above	A
80 to 89	B
70 to 79	C
60 to 69	D
Less than 59	F

*\*Unless otherwise stated, all materials, activities, and assessments are required and are not optional.*

## Communication, Grading & Feedback:

**Class messages:** Owing to this being an online course, the best way to contact me is through the Canvas messages link. I will strive to respond to all messages (and emails) within 48 hours, excepting holidays and weekends. If you have a questions concerning an upcoming test or assignment, do not wait until the due date, and then expect an immediate response.

**Feedback on Assignments/Exams:** I will strive to grade all assignments within one week of the due date; I will provide individual feedback. You can check your grades by going to Grades. If there is any discrepancy in the grade, you must contact me immediately. I will provide individual feedback or a general feedback in the performance of the course activity.

## Policies

### 1. Discussion Board:

Discussion Board will primarily be used for discussing course content related topics and issues. There will be four discussion topics for the semester. Each discussion topic is worth 100 points, five percent (5%) of the grade.

For each graded discussion question, first, you must respond to the question directly and second, you must read the other students posts and reply to at least two other students responses. You must ensure that the responses to the questions are meaningful, reflective, refer to personal experience and support your course readings. Avoid postings that are limited to 'I agree' or 'great idea', etc. If you agree (or disagree) with a posting then say why you agree by supporting your statement with concepts from the readings or by bringing in a related example or experience.

Use a person's name in the body of your message when you reply to their message. It helps to keep all of us oriented. It helps us maintain a clearer sense of who is speaking and who is being spoken to. As we begin to associate names with tone and ideas, we come to know each other better.

Change the subject line when you introduce a new topic. The value of this tip will become apparent as the number of messages grows.

I will play a limited role in the discussions, as necessary. But discussion participation will be a student-led activity.

### 2. Submission of Course Assessment Activities:

All the course assessment activities will be submitted via submission box. Keep in mind the following standards/practices for submission of assignments:

1. All course assessment activity files that will be submitted to the instructor should be in MS Word.
2. Be sure to put your name at the top of each page header
3. Always keep a copy of all the work you submit so that you won't need to re-do it if it should get lost in cyberspace.

3. **Rules of Behavior:** Discussion areas are public to every student in this class (including your instructor) who will see what you write. Please adhere to the following guidelines:
  1. Do not post anything too personal.
  2. Do not use language that is inappropriate for a classroom setting or prejudicial in regard to gender, race, or ethnicity.
  3. Do not use all caps in the message box unless you are emphasizing (it is considered shouting).
  4. Be courteous and respectful to other people on the list
  5. Do not overuse acronyms like you would use in text messaging. Some of the list participants may not be familiar with acronyms.
  6. Use line breaks and paragraphs in long responses.
  7. Write your full name at the end of the posting.
  8. Be careful with sarcasm and subtle humor; one person's joke is another person's insult.

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2. Be sure to put your name at the top of each page header
3. Always keep a copy of all the work you submit so that you won't need to re-do it if it should get lost in cyberspace.

5. **Make-Up/Late Submission Policy:**

All course activities must be submitted before or on set due dates and times. If the student is unable to abide by the due dates and times, it is her/his responsibility to contact the instructor immediately. There will be a deduction for each day of late submission of the assignment.

NOTE: The due dates and times for the activities will adhere to the Central Time Zone.

6. **Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism/Cheating:** The academic community regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. Any suspicion of academic dishonesty will be reported and investigated. A student who engages in scholastic dishonesty that includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, and collusion will receive an "F" for the course.

All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. For complete information on UTPB student conduct and discipline procedures consult the [University's Handbook: Scholastic Dishonesty](#).

**Academic dishonesty** includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, misrepresenting facts, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an

examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor, or the attempt to commit such acts.

**Plagiarism** includes, but is not limited to the appropriation of, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, other expression and media, and presenting that material as one's own academic work being offered for credit.

7. **Attendance and Class Participation:** Regular and active participation is an essential, unmistakably important aspect of this online. The expectation of the instructor is that students will log on a minimum of three times every seven days. It is critical that you read all of the lecture and assignment materials as well as all of the public discussion materials. Your full participation ON A WEEKLY BASIS is not only a requirement; it is also an essential aspect of the online course process. All students are expected to do the work assigned, notify the instructor when emergencies arise, and make up assignments no later than the due dates.
8. **Tracking:** The learning management systems have a tracking features. Statistics are collected that quantifies how often and when students are active in the course and provides information if the student has accessed different pages of the course.
9. **Absenteeism:** All the course activities have set dates to be completed and submitted. After the due dates the activities will not be available for the students. Not logging into an online course is considered absenteeism. Contact instructor immediately in case of emergency medical situation.
10. **Course Incomplete/Withdrawal/Grade Appeal:**  
All students are required to complete the course within the semester they are signed up. Incomplete grades for the course are rarely given and will only be granted at the instructor's discretion. The student must have a grade of 'C' or better and provide a valid, documented excuse for not being able to complete the course on time and has contacted prior to the scheduled last class to request an extension. The student will sign a contract that includes the incomplete course activities and the new due dates.

Find information and dates regarding drops and withdrawals consult the University Handbook: [Drops and Withdrawals](#) and [Appeal Process](#).

**NOTE: The due dates and times for the activities will adhere to the Central Time Zone.**

11. **Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:** Students with Disabilities: The University of Texas Permian Basin in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act provides “reasonable accommodations” to students with disabilities. Only those students, who an Instructor has received an official

Letter of Accommodation (LOA) sent by the Office of ADA for Students, will be provided ADA academic accommodations.

**ADA Officer for Students:** Mr. Paul Leverington

**Address:** Mesa Building 4242 /4901 E. University, Odessa, TX 79762

**Voice Telephone:** 432-552-4696

**Email:** [ada@utpb.edu](mailto:ada@utpb.edu)

For the accessibility and privacy statements of external tools used within courses, go to [Accessibility and Privacy Statements](#).

## Computer Skills, Technical & Software Requirements

To effectively complete the requirements of the course, you must have the following:

- An e-mail address linked to Canvas
- Daily access to your UTPB Canvas account.
- A working computer and Internet connection, which will allow you to receive all course materials.
- A copy of Microsoft Word, and knowledge of how to use Word.
- Be able to attach files to emails, etc.

Students can use cloud version of Word, PowerPoint and other Microsoft products through use of their UTPB Outlook 365 and UTPB email address. For more information, refer to [UTPB Office 365 Page](#).

**Computer Technical Requirements:** See [Technical Requirements](#).

## Online Student Authentication

UTPB requires that each student who registers for an online course is the same student who participates in, completes, and receives credit for the course. Complete this requirement early. Although there are no points for fulfilling this requirement, you will not be allowed to begin Module 1 until you do this.

- Student Authentication

**–Students must satisfy a secondary authentication method as required by University of Texas of the Permian Basin policy:**

\* UTPB requires that each student who registers for an online course is the same student who participates in, completes, and receives credit for the course. UTPB's Distance Education Policy requires faculty members to employ at least two methods of verification to ensure student identities. To access online courses students must login to the UTPB learning management system using their unique personal identifying username and secure password. UTPB's Distance Education Policy requires at least one additional student identification method within the course that has been determined and approved by the faculty or academic program. This course requires the second method of student verification by requiring the following (non-graded but mandatory):

\*Approved up to date photo identifications are: passports, government issued identification, driver's licenses, military ID from DoD. Dual credit and early college high school students use school district identifications.

Submitting a clear image of yourself

- In color
- Well lit, and no shadows on your face or your ID that can obscure your image
- Must be taken on the day you submit the photo to reflect your current appearance
- Taken in full-face view directly facing the camera
  
- With a neutral facial expression and both eyes open
- Then a picture of your ID with only your name and picture showing (Picture ID card in which the ID number has been covered (tape over any numbers). Make sure to attach both image files in either JPEG or PNG format to the assignment BEFORE you submit it.

## Preparation for Computer Emergencies

**Computer Crash:** Not having a working computer or a crashed computer during the semester will NOT be considered as an acceptable reason for not completing course activities at a scheduled time. NOTE: Identify a second computer before the semester begins, that you can use when/if your personal computer crashes.

**Complete Loss of Contact:** If you lose contact with course connectivity completely (i.e. you cannot contact me via Canvas or email), you need to call instructor, and leave message regarding connectivity loss and contact information.

**Lost/Corrupt/Missing Files:** You must keep/save a copy of every project/assignment on an external drive, UTPB Outlook 365 OneDrive, or personal computer. In the event of any kind of failure (e.g. virus infection, student's own computer crashes, loss of files in cyberspace, etc) or any contradictions/problems, you may be required to resubmit the files.



# End-of-Course Evaluation & Instructor Evaluation

Every student is encouraged to complete an end of course evaluation survey provided by UTPB. During the last two weeks of class, there will be an announcement in Canvas, an email, and a button in your course navigation that will take you to any available surveys.

The survey is anonymous and your responses are confidential. Your feedback is critical to us and to your instructor as we strive to improve our offerings, and our support of you, the students.

## Student Support Services

SERVICE	CONTACT
<b>ADA Accommodation/Support</b>	<a href="#">Services for Students with Disabilities</a> (432) 552-4696
<b>Testing Services</b>	<a href="#">Testing Services &amp; Academic Accommodations Department</a> (432) 552-2630
<b>Advising</b>	(432) 552-2661 <a href="#">UTPB Academic Advising Center</a>
<b>Bookstore</b>	<a href="#">UTPB Campus Bookstore</a> (432) 552-0220
<b>Email, Office 365, my.utpb.edu</b>	<a href="#">Information Technology</a>
<b>Financial Aid and Scholarship</b>	<a href="#">UTPB Financial Aid</a> (432) 552-2620
<b>Library</b>	The <a href="#">J. Conrad Dunagan Library</a> Online at (432) 552-2370
<b>Registrar</b>	<a href="#">UTPB Registrar</a> (432) 552-2635
<b>Student Services</b>	<a href="#">Student Services</a> (432) 552-2600
<b>Technical Support</b>	<a href="#">Canvas</a> 1-866-437-0867
<b>Tutoring &amp; Learning Resources</b>	If you are taking courses through UTPB the following links provide services: <a href="#">Smarthinking Online Tutoring</a> (provides tutoring services), <a href="#">SmarterMeasure</a> (measures learner readiness for online

SERVICE	CONTACT
	course).

## Disclaimer & Rights

Information contained in this syllabus was to the best knowledge of the instructor considered correct and complete when distributed for use in the beginning of the semester. However, the instructor reserves the right, acting within the policies and procedures of UTPB to make changes in the course content or instructional techniques without notice or obligation. The students will be informed about the changes, if any.

## Copyright Statement

Many of the materials that are posted within UTPB courses are protected by copyright law. These materials are only for the use of students enrolled in the course and only for the purpose of the course. They may not be further retained or disseminated.

# Schedule

DATES	DISCUSSIONS, ASSIGNMENTS, AND TESTS	READINGS
<p><b>Module 1</b></p> <p><b>August 24 - September 6</b></p>	<p>Introduce yourself through the Discussion Board</p> <p>Complete Online Student Authentication Assignment</p> <p>Discussion 1</p> <p>Assignment 1</p> <p>Test 1</p>	<p>Chapters &amp; Lectures 1, 2, 3, 4</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Foundations of Law</li> <li>2. Federal Judicial System</li> <li>3. State Judicial Systems</li> <li>4. Jurisdiction &amp; Policy Boundaries</li> </ol>
<p><b>Module 2</b></p> <p><b>September 7 - September 20</b></p>	<p>Discussion 2</p> <p>Assignment 2</p> <p>Test 2</p>	<p>Chapters &amp; Lectures 5,6,7, 8</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. State Judges</li> <li>6. Federal Judges</li> <li>7. Policy Links</li> <li>8. Lawyers, Litigants, &amp; Interest Groups</li> </ol>
<p><b>Module 3</b></p> <p><b>September 21 - October 4</b></p>	<p>Discussion 3</p> <p>Assignment 3</p> <p>Test 3</p>	<p>Chapters &amp; Lectures 9,10,11</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Criminal Procedure</li> <li>10. Criminal Trials &amp; Aftermath</li> <li>11. Civil Court Process</li> </ol>
<p><b>Module 4</b></p> <p><b>October 5 - October 16</b></p>	<p>Discussion 4</p> <p>Assignment 4</p> <p>Test 4</p>	<p>Chapters &amp; Lectures 12,13,14,15</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Trial Court Decision-making</li> <li>13. Collegial Court Decision-making</li> <li>14. Implementation &amp; Impact</li> <li>15. Judicial Policymaking</li> </ol>

Sample Syllabus