



Syllabus
CRIM 1030
Courts & Judicial Process
2026

Committee Members:

- Michael David, Central Community College
- N/A, Metropolitan Community College
- Sheri Hink-Wagner, Mid-Plains Community College
- Matt McCarthy & Colleen Barnes, Northeast Community College
- Rita Dondlinger, Southeast Community College
- Tiffany Wasserburger, Western Nebraska Community College
- N/A, Little Priest Tribal College
- N/A, Nebraska Indian Community College

Facilitator: Sheri Hink-Wagner

The Institution agrees to the contents in this syllabus including course prefix, number, course description and other contents of this syllabus.

 Chief Academic Officer, Central Community College	02/12/2026	Adopt
 Chief Academic Officer, Little Priest Tribal College	02/13/2026	Not Offered
 Chief Academic Officer, Metropolitan Community College	02/16/2026	Adopt
 Chief Academic Officer, Mid-Plains Community College	02/11/2026	Adopt
 Chief Academic Officer, Nebraska Indian Community College	02/16/2026	Adopt
 Chief Academic Officer, Northeast Community College	02/11/2026	Adopt
 Chief Academic Officer, Southeast Community College	02/20/2026	Adopt
 Chief Academic Officer, Western Nebraska Community College	02/18/2026	Adopt



I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION

Course Number: CRIM1030
Course Title: Courts & Judicial Process
Prerequisite(s): None

Catalog Description: Surveys the United States judicial system. Topics include, but are not limited to, legal and constitutional concepts, institutions, and processes. Coverage includes adult and civil courts.

Credit Hours: 3.0 semester hours/4.5 quarter hours
Contact Hours: 45 hours

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES/COMPETENCIES

A. Course will:

1. Identify the various roles of courts within the judicial system in the United States.
2. Recognize the legal families that form the foundation for the American Judicial System; identify the origins of each.
3. Differentiate between private and public law.
4. Identify the branches of public law and list specific characteristics of each.
5. Compare and contrast substantive and procedural law.
6. Identify common misperceptions about the court process as discussed in class.

III. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. A. Students will be able to: Explain the structure and jurisdiction of the federal, state, and local court systems in the United States.
2. Describe the roles and responsibilities of key courtroom actors, including judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, juries, and court staff.
3. Identify the stages of the judicial process, from pretrial procedures through sentencing and appeals.
4. Explain the impact of constitutional protections (e.g., due process, right to counsel, fair trial) on court operations and decision-making.
5. Analyze contemporary issues and challenges in the judicial system, such as judicial discretion, sentencing disparities, and access to justice.
6. Analyze the influence of politics, public opinion, and media on courts and judicial decision-making.
7. Identify career opportunities within the court system and demonstrate an understanding of the professional and ethical standards required.

IV. COURSE CONTENT / TOPICAL OUTLINE (chronology may vary)

- A. Courts, Crime, and Controversy
- B. Law Crime
- C. Federal Courts
- D. State Courts
- E. The Dynamics of Courthouse Justice
- F. Prosecutors
- G. Defense Attorney
- H. Judges
- I. Defendants and Victims
- J. From Arrest and Bail to Arraignment
- K. Disclosing and Suppressing Evidence
- L. Negotiated Justice and the Plea of Guilty
- M. Trials and Juries
- N. Sentencing Options
- O. Sentencing Decisions
- P. Appellate and Habeas Corpus Review
- Q. Juvenile Courts

V. INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

- A. The following texts are suggested for this course:
 - 1. Courts & Criminal Justice in America, Siegal, Prentice Hall, Latest Edition.
 - 2. America's Courts and the Criminal Justice System, Neubauer & Fradella, Cengage, Latest Edition.
 - 3. Open Educational Resources that meet the listed objectives/competencies and student outcomes, chosen at the instructors' discretion. These resources will be comparable in content to the textbooks listed above.
- B. Supplemental Materials (handouts, articles, videos, website, etc.) to be supplied by the instructor.

VI. METHOD OF PRESENTATION/INSTRUCTION

- A. Lecture/Discussion
- B. Hybrid, Blended, or Virtual
- C. Online
- D. Subject Matter Experts

VII. METHODS OF EVALUATION

- A. Exams
- B. Written Assignments
- C. Oral Assignments
- D. Projects

VIII. INSTITUTIONAL DEFINED SECTION

A. Content and schedule determined by instructor.