

## LEG 420 – U.S. Courts

### Course Description

This course examines the American judicial system to include federal, state, and local courts. The professional courtroom work group, non-professional courtroom participants, the trial process, and challenges to the trial process are described. The activities of lawyers, judges, and related occupations and professions are reviewed. An overview of the juvenile court system is included.

### Instructional Materials

Champion, D. J., Hartley, R. D., & Rabe, G. A. (2012). *Criminal courts: Structure, process, and issues* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

### Course Learning Outcomes

1. Analyze the functions of law and identify various types of law.
2. Describe the structure of American courts, including federal and state courts, and explain court jurisdiction.
3. Illustrate the workings of the adversary system.
4. Analyze the ethical role of prosecutors and illustrate prosecutorial misconduct.
5. Analyze the role of the defense attorney, and illustrate the importance of legal ethics and professional responsibility as they impact that role.
6. Analyze the role of the judge, and review judicial qualifications, training, and misconduct.
7. Determine the functions of juries, and include grand juries, petit juries, jury selection, and jury verdicts.
8. Examine pretrial procedures, including initial appearance, bail decision making, alternative dispute resolution, and plea bargaining.
9. Trace the steps in the trial process, and explain trial procedures—including speedy trial, bench trial, and jury trials.
10. Analyze the sentencing process and examine the role of the appellate court.
11. Appraise today's juvenile justice process, including the jurisdiction of juvenile courts, the rights of juveniles facing court processing, the nature of delinquency, status offenses, and blended sentences.
12. Use technology and information resources to research issues in U.S. Courts.
13. Write clearly and concisely about U.S. Courts using proper writing mechanics and APA style conventions.