

CRJS 2602 - Criminal Courts

Fall 2026 Syllabus, Section 05, CRN 41957,

Credit hours: 3

Instructor

Dr. Christopher Bellas

Distinguished Professor

Email: cmbellas@ysu.edu

Public Instructor Information

Ph.D. Political Science, Kent State University

M.A. Political Science, Kent State University

M.S. Criminal Justice, Youngstown State University

B.A. Political Science, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania

A.S. Business Administration, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania

Post Baccalaureate Certificate Paralegal Studies, Kent State University (Approved by the American Bar Association; 30 semester hours of law courses)

Course Description

2602. Criminal Courts. Structure and function of criminal courts in American society, perceptions of national commissions; organization, administration, and caseload relationships with appropriate social agencies. Prereq.: CRJS 1500 or permission of the Chair. 3 s.h.

Course Readings

Group	Title	Author	ISBN
	America's Courts and the Criminal Justice System (2026)	David W. Neubauer and Henry Fredella	13: 9780357763285

The course readings are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, research developments, current events, and/or to ensure better learning.

Tentative Schedule

Week of	Reading(s)	Proposed Topic	Due/To Prepare for Class
8/24	Chapter 1 Crime, Law and Controversy; Appendix A and B	Introduction to the course; Crime, Law and Controversy	Read textbook and the syllabus carefully; review class notes; study Bill of Rights and U.S. Constitution.
8/31	Chapter 2 Federal Courts	The design and function of the Federal Court System	Come to class and be engaged; read assigned chapters, always take and then review class notes.
9/7	Chapter 3 State Courts	The design and function of the state courts with special attention on Ohio.	Come to class and be engaged; read assigned chapters, always take and then review class notes.
9/14	Chapter 4 Juvenile Courts	The design and function of juvenile courts with special attention on Ohio.	Come to class and be engaged; read assigned chapters, always take and then review class notes.
9/21	Chapter 6 Prosecutors	The structure and function of the Prosecutors' Offices at the state and federal level with special attention on Ohio.	Come to class and be engaged; read assigned chapters, always take and then review class notes.
9/28	Review for Exam # 1	EXAM # 1 will likely be given this week (Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 6)	EXAM # 1 likely given this week



10/5	Chapter 7 Defense Attorneys	The different types of defense attorneys in criminal court.	Come to class and be engaged; read assigned chapters, always take then review class notes.
10/12	Chapter 8 Judges	Discussion of both federal and state court judges with special attention on the Ohio judiciary	Come to class and be engaged; read assigned chapters, always take and then review class notes.
10/19	Chapter 9 Defendants, Victims, and Witnesses.	The characteristics of typical defendants, victims and witnesses in court. Preparing victims and witnesses to testify in court.	Come to class and be engaged; read assigned chapters, always take and then review class notes.
10/26	Chapter 10 Pretrial Case Processing and Attrition: From Arrest and Bail to Charging and Arraignment	The topics covered are Bail, the Initial Appearance and the Arraignment of the defendant in court.	Come to class and be engaged; read assigned chapters, always take then review class notes.
11/2	Review for Exam # 2	Exam # 2 will likely be given this week (Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10)	Exam # 2 likely given this week
11/9	Chapter 11 Disclosing and Suppressing Evidence	Pretrial proceedings and criminal procedural issues	COURTROOM OBSERVATION ASSIGNMENT DUE Sunday 11/15 at 11:30 p.m. EST. Come to class and be engaged; read assigned chapters, always take and then review class notes.
11/16	Chapter 12 Plea Bargaining	How cases get Pled and the factors leading up to it.	Come to class and be engaged; read assigned chapters, always take and then review class notes.
11/23	Chapter 13 Juries and Trials	The jury selection process, with a special focus on how jurors are chosen in Ohio	Come to class and be engaged; read assigned chapters, always take and then review class notes.
11/30	Chapter 13 Juries and Trials continued	The steps in a criminal trial	Come to class and be engaged; read assigned chapters, always take then review class notes.
12/7	FINAL EXAM	Final Exam (Chapters 11, 12, 13)	Final Exam

The course schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances, by mutual agreement, and/or to ensure better learning.