University of Arkansas – Fort Smith 5210 Grand Avenue
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General Syllabus

CRJU 10203 Introduction to the Criminal Justice System

Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Laboratory Hours: 0

Effective Catalog: 2026-2027

I. Course Information

A. Catalog Description

An overview of the issues and trends in the criminal justice system including ethics, law enforcement, courts and trial processes, corrections, jail and prison systems, juvenile justice systems, and the future of the criminal justice system. (ACTS: CRJU 1023)

B. Additional Information - None

II. Student Learning Outcomes

A. Subject Matter

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Define crime and explain the basic nature of criminal behavior and why individuals may engage in criminal acts.
2. Describe the purpose, structure, and key functions of the criminal justice system, including the police, courts, and corrections
3. Explain the steps in the criminal justice process from investigation through corrections
4. Identify the sources and basic principles of criminal law in the United States
5. Summarize the key features of the juvenile justice system and how it differs from the adult system
6. Exhibit critical thinking skills through research, writing assignments, and discussions

B. University Learning Outcomes

This course enhances student abilities in the following areas:

Analytical Skills
Critical Thinking Skills: Students will identify problems/issues and develop solutions/analysis.

Communication Skills (written and oral)
Students will communicate proficiently. Students will use essay format for written assignments and discuss particular aspects of various topics.

Ethical Decision Making
Students will model ethical decision-making processes. Students will examine ethical dilemmas within the criminal justice field and develop ethical frameworks to resolve specific ethical issues.

Global and Cultural Perspectives
Students will reflect upon cultural differences and their implications for interacting with people from cultures other than their own.

III. Major Course Topics

A. Overview of police, courts, and corrections
B. Crime and the causes of crime
C. Issues and challenges facing the Criminal Justice System