

# LSTD204

**STUDENT WARNING:** This course syllabus is from a previous semester archive and serves only as a preparatory reference. Please use this syllabus as a reference only until the professor opens the classroom and you have access to the updated course syllabus. Please do NOT purchase any books or start any work based on this syllabus; this syllabus may NOT be the one that your individual instructor uses for a course that has not yet started. If you need to verify course textbooks, please refer to the online course description through your student portal. This syllabus is proprietary material of APUS.

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## Course Summary

**Course :** LSTD204 **Title :** Introduction to the Courts

**Length of Course :** 8

**Prerequisites :** N/A **Credit Hours :** 3

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## Description

**Course Description:** This course is an introduction to the structure of the American court system. Topics include prosecution, right to counsel, pretrial release, grand jury process, and sentencing concepts. The course will assess the U.S Courts System and how it relates to the criminal justice system in America. Students will become familiar with the chronological events from the arrest process to sentencing and appeals. Students will be able to explain concepts of stop and frisk arrest, searches under warrant, and presentation of the case to the magistrate. Assessments of the criminal trial process and phases of pretrial and trial proceedings will be examined.

### Course Scope:

The goal of this course is to provide an introduction to the U.S. Court System and how it relates to the justice system in America. This course will familiarize you with the legal education system and the various parties in the justice system. You will become familiar with the chronological events from the arrest process to sentencing, and appeals. We will also explore the issues surrounding the use of legal technologies. This course is an introduction to the structure to the American court system.

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## Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to demonstrate and explain the following learning objectives:

- Identify historical events and figures that have contributed to the present-day court system in America.
- Identify the various types of courts.
- Explore legal education and the opportunities available in the legal profession.
- Know the various parties in the legal system: judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, defendants and victims.
- Understand the trial process: arrest, pleas, trial, sentencing and appeals.
- Recognize the problem of wrongful convictions and what can be done about it.
- Explore the expanding use of technology in the legal system.

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# Outline

## Week 1:

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### ASSIGNED READING

**Unless otherwise stated, all chapter reading assignments refer to the *Outline of the U.S. Legal System* text.**

**Introduction:** The U.S. Legal System (p.4-17)

**The Constitution of the United States & Amendments**  
(p.177-203)

**OBJECTIVES:**

- A. Understand the basis for the American legal system.
- B. Discuss the relationships between the three branches of government: Executive, Legislative and Judicial.

### ASSIGNMENT

Introduction Forum

Week 1 Forum

## Week 2:

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### ASSIGNED READING

**Chapter 1:** History & Organization of the Federal Judicial System

**Chapter 2:** History & Organization of the State Judicial Systems

<http://www.uscourts.gov/>

<http://www.supremecourtus.gov/>

<http://www.ojjdp.gov/>

**OBJECTIVES:**

- A. Examine the structure of the federal court system, learning the history of the courts and the administration of the system.
- B. Compare and contrast state courts with federal courts.
- C. Explore the jurisdiction of the various courts.
- D. Define the jurisdiction and treatment of juvenile offenders.
- E. Discover the different types of specialized courts, examining their growth and possibilities for the future.

## ASSIGNMENT

Week 2 Forum

Begin working on Written Assignment (See Assignments tab for details)

### **Week 3:**

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## ASSIGNED READING

**Chapter 3:** Jurisdiction and Policy-Making Boundaries

**Chapter 4:** Lawyers, Litigants, and Interest Groups in the Judicial Process

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- A. Learn about the differences concerning jurisdiction.
- B. Consider how Congress may influence judicial behavior.
- C. Examine the concept of judicial self restraint.
- D. Learn the history of the legal profession.
- E. Understand the licensing process for attorneys.
- F. Examine the stratification of the legal profession.

## ASSIGNMENT

Week 3 Forum

### **Week 4:**

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## ASSIGNED READING

**MIDTERM EXAM**

**(Intro & Chapters 1-4)**

## ASSIGNMENT

MIDTERM EXAM

### **Week 5:**

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## ASSIGNED READING

## **Chapter 5: The Criminal Court Process**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- A. Explore the categories of criminal offenses.
- B. Analyze the elements of a crime.
- C. Examine the legal procedures before, during and after a criminal trial.
- D. Demonstrate knowledge of the role of the jury and attorneys in the criminal justice system.

### ASSIGNMENT

Week 5 Forum

Continue working on Written Assignment (See Assignments tab for details)

### **Week 6:**

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### ASSIGNED READING

#### **Chapter 6: The Civil Court Process**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- A. Demonstrate knowledge of the types of civil law categories.
- B. Explore the various types of legal actions available, beyond litigation.
- C. Analyze the civil trial process, including discovery and motion practice.
- D. Understand the importance of the jury trial.

### ASSIGNMENT

Week 6 Forum

### **Week 7:**

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### ASSIGNED READING

#### **Chapter 7: Federal Judges**

#### **Chapter 8: Implementation and Impact of Judicial Policies**

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- A. Explain the qualifications and selection of federal judges.
- B. Investigate the changes within the judicial system.
- C. Explore how judicial precedent affects the U.S. Justice system.
- D. Analyze how law is implemented and changed.

### ASSIGNMENT

Week 7 Forum

Written Assignment Due (See Assignments tab for details.)

**Week 8:**

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ASSIGNED READING

**FINAL EXAM**

**(Chapters 5-8)**

ASSIGNMENT

FINAL EXAM

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## Evaluation

### FORUM PARTICIPATION:

There will be seven required forum discussions found in the Forums tab. Forums are an important part of your overall grade and should not be taken lightly. Initial posts must be submitted by Thursday each week. Classmate responses are due by Sunday each week. All posts must meet the grading standards discussed below. Your initial postings should be 500 words in length, and your two responses to classmates must be 250 words each in length.

Replies should be substantive. Comments like "I agree," or "Good job," are not substantive. Some things you could do to meet this requirement are: read a little of their research and comment on it; compare their research to yours; give examples if you agree with them, or counter examples if you don't; or share some of your experiences or issues you have seen locally that the rest of us probably won't be familiar with.

### ASSIGNMENTS

There will be a written assignment found in the Assignments tab. Students are expected to complete the assignment by the due date. Please make sure to fully review the assignment and rubric before beginning your paper.

### MIDTERM AND FINAL EXAMINATIONS:

The class contains a Midterm and Final examination. Both exams will be open book and available in the electronic classroom in the Tests & Quizzes tab, during the week they are due.

### **Grading:**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Grade %</b>
Exams	50.00 %
Final Exam	25.00 %
Midterm Exam	25.00 %
Introduction	1.00 %
Forum Introduction	1.00 %
Forums	39.00 %
Forum Week 1	6.50 %
Forum Week 2	6.50 %

Forum Week 3	6.50 %
Forum Week 5	6.50 %
Forum Week 6	6.50 %
Forum Week 7	6.50 %
Research Paper	10.00 %
Access to Justice Paper	10.00 %

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## Materials

**Book Title:** Outline of the U.S. Legal System - e-book available online, link provided in the classroom.

**Author:**

**Publication Info:**

**ISBN:** N/A

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### Required Resource:

U.S. Department of State, *Outline of the U.S. Legal System* (2004).

Available at: [https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uf12.aa00011695\\_00001;view=1up;seq=4](https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uf12.aa00011695_00001;view=1up;seq=4)

All required chapter readings may also be found inside the Lessons tab. Please visit <http://apus.campusguides.com/bookstore> for help with e-textbooks or contact the Electronic Course Materials team at [ecm@apus.edu](mailto:ecm@apus.edu).

### Additional Resources:

*The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* (Columbia Law Review Ass'n et. al. eds., 20th ed. 2015).

This is available in the APUS Library for free here: [https://apus.libguides.com/APUS\\_ePress/bluebook](https://apus.libguides.com/APUS_ePress/bluebook) or may be purchased at your own expense in hard copy/online at: <http://www.legalbluebook.com/Purchase/Products.aspx> If you are a Legal Studies major, you should be implementing Bluebook citations in all work.

For those of you in majors outside the Legal Studies Department (such as Criminal Justice), you may implement APA Citations. You may find information on how to create APA Citations here: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/02/> or here: [APA Style Guide](#)

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## Course Guidelines

### WRITING EXPECTATIONS

Writing must be well organized and presented in a way that clearly conveys your thoughts, using full sentences, correct spelling, and proper grammar. I prefer that you use the active voice, and ask that you avoid military jargon, slang, abbreviations, and text-speak. All written submissions should be typewritten in Times New Roman 12-point font and submitted inside the electronic classroom (unless classroom access is not possible and other arrangements have been approved by the professor). Top, Bottom, Left Side and Right Side margins should be one inch, with reasonable accommodation being made for special situations and online submission variances.

### LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Students are expected to submit classroom assignments by the posted due date and to complete the course according to the published class schedule. As adults, students, and working professionals I understand you must manage competing demands on your time. Should you need additional time to complete an assignment please contact me before the due date so we can discuss the situation and determine an acceptable resolution. Routine submission of late assignments is unacceptable and may result in points deducted from your final course grade.

#### Deductions:

Late forum posts can be penalized up to 5 points per day

Late assignments can be penalized up to 5 points per day

## NETIQUETTE

Online universities promote the advance of knowledge through positive and constructive debate--both inside and outside the classroom. Discussions on the Internet, however, can occasionally degenerate into needless insults and "flaming." Such activity and the loss of good manners are not acceptable in a university setting--basic academic rules of good behavior and proper "Netiquette" must persist. Remember that you are in a place for the fun and excitement of learning that does not include descent to personal attacks, or student attempts to stifle the discussion of others.

- **Technology Limitations:** While you should feel free to explore the full-range of creative composition in your formal papers, keep e-mail layouts simple. The Educator classroom may not fully support MIME or HTML encoded messages, which means that bold face, italics, underlining, and a variety of color-coding or other visual effects will not translate in your e-mail messages.
- **Humor Note:** Despite the best of intentions, jokes and--especially--satire can easily get lost or taken seriously. If you feel the need for humor, you may wish to add "emoticons" to help alert your readers: ;-), :)

## DISCLAIMER STATEMENT

Course content may vary from the outline to meet the needs of this particular group.

## ACADEMIC SERVICES

The Online Library is available to enrolled students and faculty from inside the electronic campus. It provides access to subscription article databases, periodicals, books, video and more to support your research and studies. In addition, the Online Library provides access to special learning resources like tutoring services and Turnitin.com, which the University has contracted to boost your academic success.

### Academic Service

- **Library Course Guides:** APUS librarians have created guides for each degree program and many courses. Each guide compiles the most relevant research tools (subscription article databases, journals and ebooks), as well as authoritative websites, multimedia and more. Explore the guides at <http://apus.campusguides.com/>.
- **Ask a Librarian:** Librarians are on duty approximately 18 hours per day, 365 days per year. At <http://apus.libanswers.com/>, you can search for answers to library questions, or use the "Ask" button to submit a question of your own.
- **Speak with a Librarian:** Librarians are now available on Adobe Connect, so that you may speak live and ask questions. You can speak with a Librarian by logging in here: <https://apus.adobeconnect.com/speakwithalibrarian>
- **Electronic Books and Journals:** You can use the online library to access over 150,000 ebooks and 40,000 journals, which are licensed for use by APUS students and faculty only. Visit the [Licensed Library Databases](#) guide to explore search options.
- **Research and Writing Help:** Librarians have created tutorials for college-level research and writing. [Click here to explore them all.](#)
- **Online Tutoring:** AMU and APU students are eligible for up to 10 free hours of online tutoring provided

by APUS. Some military students are eligible for additional hours through their Armed Forces education offices. For more information, visit <http://apus.campusguides.com/tutor>.

- **Interlibrary Loan and other services:** when you need a book or article not held in the APUS Online Library, you may request it via interlibrary loan (ILL). [Read more about ILL and other library services.](#)
  - **Turnitin.com:** [Turnitin.com](#) is a tool to improve student research skills that also detect plagiarism. Turnitin.com provides resources on developing topics and assignments that encourage and guide students in producing papers that are intellectually honest, original in thought, and clear in expression. This tool helps ensure a culture of adherence to the University's standards for intellectual honesty. Turnitin.com also reviews students' papers for matches with Internet materials and with thousands of student papers in its database, and returns an Originality Report to instructors and/or students.
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## University Policies

### [Student Handbook](#)

- [Drop/Withdrawal policy](#)
- [Extension Requests](#)
- [Academic Probation](#)
- [Appeals](#)
- [Disability Accommodations](#)

The mission of American Public University System is to provide high quality higher education with emphasis on educating the nation's military and public service communities by offering respected, relevant, accessible, affordable, and student-focused online programs that prepare students for service and leadership in a diverse, global society.

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