



## Course Syllabus

### SOC 301.71W – Criminal Investigation, Internet based Fall 2014

<b>Instructor:</b>	Gary Dunlap Professor
<b>Class Times:</b>	Internet based
<b>Location:</b>	Internet
<b>Office:</b>	Bain Center; Texas A&M at Commerce at Navarro College in Corsicana
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#### **COURSE INFORMATION**

##### **Materials:**

Required Textbook: Brandl, Steven G., *Criminal Investigation*, 3rd edition, Publisher: SAGE (ISBN # 978-1-4522-7212-2). You may contact the university book store in Commerce at 903/886-5830, or buy it on-line.

##### **Course Description:**

It is an exciting time to study the criminal investigation process. Throughout history technological advances have led to changes in the way we live. With this change, criminal investigations have become more complex. We have seen the advent of DNA analysis, as well as, incredible advances in computer technology. These changes have altered the way we, collect, preserve and transmit information. Today, data bases like AFIS, CODIS, and ViCAP are helping investigators arrest and detain dangerous offenders. At the same time, DNA analysis is providing the proof necessary to secure the release of many who have been wrongfully imprisoned.

Many of the topics covered in this class are themselves the subject of more detailed treatments and can easily be taught as standalone courses. For example, there are text books available on the history of criminal justice, criminal law, criminal procedure, evidence, interview and interrogation tactics, profiling, crime scene investigation, homicide investigation, white collar crime, and organized crime. This course is intended as an introduction to the

subject of criminal investigations. It should provide a foundation, so that interested students can take additional courses in the field.

In short, this is a survey course. It will be taught from the perspective of the criminal investigator, it is intended to introduce the student to the investigative process and how this process works in the real world, as opposed to, the way it is presented in the media. We will discuss the history and evolution of the investigative process, as well as, the techniques that are typically employed by investigators to include; Interviews, Interrogations, Crime Scene Searches, Eyewitness Identifications, Polygraph Examinations, Psychological Profiling, Cooperating Witnesses, Title III Wire Taps and Undercover Operations. We will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of these techniques, as well as, the social and legal issues surrounding them. Occasionally, guest speakers with expertise on various topics will provide their insight into the field of criminal justice and their thoughts about the future.

### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. The students will develop a basic understanding of the investigative process. They will develop insight into the way that professional investigators think and act. They will begin to see the investigative process as it fits into the larger criminal justice system and to understand what this means to a successful prosecution.
2. The students will develop better analytical skills by reading and discussing various case studies. They will develop an understanding of various concepts related to the field and they will learn to apply these concepts to hypothetical situations.
3. The students will develop better written and oral communication skills. They will learn the value of these skills and how they impact the success or failure of a criminal prosecution.
4. The students will develop a better understanding of the various roles that investigators play in society, both on and off duty. They will begin to understand the different career opportunities that exist within the field.
5. The student will become familiar with the physical and psychological dangers that criminal investigators face, as well as, the emotional rewards investigative success can bring.
6. The students will learn to see the investigator who seeks truth as an instrument of justice.
7. The instructor will attempt to convey the importance of common sense and good judgment in criminal investigations.

## **Technology Requirements:**

The following hardware and software are necessary in order to use eCollege:

Our campus is optimized to work in a Microsoft Windows environment. This means our courses work best if you are using a Windows based operating system (XP or newer) and a recent version of Microsoft Internet Explorer (6.0, 7.0, or 8.0).

Your courses will also work with Macintosh OS X along with a recent version of Safari 2.0 or better. Along with Internet Explorer and Safari, eCollege also supports the Firefox browser (3.0) on both Windows and Mac operating systems.

It is strongly recommended that you perform a "Browser Test" prior to the start of your course. To launch a browser test, login to eCollege, click on the 'myCourses' tab, and then select the "Browser Test" link under Support Services.

For those of you who are not familiar with eCollege, I suggest you take the tutorial offered online. Should you have any questions, feel free to contact the folks in Technology Services.

## **Access and Navigation:**

This course will be enhanced using eCollege, the learning Management System used by Texas A&M University – Commerce. To log in to the course, go to: <https://leo.tamuc.edu/login.aspx>

You will need your CWID and password, to log in to the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact Technology Services at 903/468-6000 or [helpdesk@tamuc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu). Once you log in to eCollege, click on "My Courses" and select CJ 301- Criminal Investigation.

Please note that this course is taught as a combination of face-to-face lectures and online instruction; and as such, many aspects of the course (including discussions / comments / exams, etc.) may be turned in or completed through eCollege. Your grades will also be available in eCollege.

After logging in to the course, students will notice that the weekly / unit content area is located on the left navigation bar. These weekly / unit content areas are identified as Week 1, Week 2, etc. (this corresponds to the course schedule located in the syllabus.).

Students should access course materials by clicking on the proper weekly / unit content area. Students should read the weekly overview that contains information about what is to be covered in class.

Students should also click on the Lecture link and take the time to review / read any material / presentations, I have posted.

Students will complete and submit any on-line assignments by clicking on the Assignments link that will be visible if an assignment is scheduled for that week. Students should be sure to submit any assignments according to the established instructions and to submit any assignments into the properly named / numbered drop box. Assignments are answered and grades are calculated within the eCollege system.

Students will complete assigned exams by clicking on the [Exam link](#) that will be visible, if an exam is scheduled for that week. Exams are answered and grades are calculated within the eCollege system.

### **Communication and Support:**

**Interaction with the instructor** – My primary form of communication with the class will be through announcements in class, eCollege, and e-mail. Any changes to the syllabus or other important information critical to the class will be disseminated to students via announcements and your official University e-mail address available to me through MyLeo. It will be your responsibility to check your e-mail regularly.

Students who wish to discuss an issue with me personally should do so through e-mail or after class.

Students who e-mail me can expect a reply (at MY earliest convenience) within 24 hours Monday – Thursday. Students who e-mail me during holidays or over the weekend, i.e. Friday-Sunday, can expect a reply (at MY earliest convenience) on the next regularly scheduled business day.

**eCollege Student Technical Support** – Texas A&M University Commerce provides students technical support in the use of eCollege. The student help desk may be reached by the following means 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

**Chat Support:** Click on ‘Live Support’ on the tool bar within your course to chat with an eCollege Representative.

**Phone:** 1-866-656-5511 (Toll Free) to speak with an eCollege Technical Support Representative.

**Email:** [helpdesk@online.tamuc.org](mailto:helpdesk@online.tamuc.org) to initiate a support request with an eCollege Technical Support Representative.

**Help:** Click on the ‘Help’ button on the toolbar for information regarding working with eCollege (i.e. How to submit to drop box, How to post to discussions, etc...).

**For assistance with the library:** To access the Library databases and Library tutorials you must open a separate browser session. Minimize your eCollege session and open another browser window going to the library’s website directly: <http://www.tamuc.edu/library> not from eCollege.

**Policy for Reporting Problems with eCollege:** Should students encounter eCollege – based problems while submitting assignments / discussions / comments / exams, the following procedure **MUST** be followed.

Students must report the problem to the help desk. You may reach the helpdesk at [helpdesk@online.tamuc.org](mailto:helpdesk@online.tamuc.org) or 1-866-656-5511.

Students **MUST** file their problem with the helpdesk and obtain a helpdesk ticket number.

Once a helpdesk ticket number is in your possession, students should email me to advise me of the problem and provide me with the helpdesk ticket number.

At that time, I will call the helpdesk to confirm your problem and follow up with you.

**PLEASE NOTE: Personal computer / access problems are not a legitimate excuse for filing a ticket with the helpdesk. I strongly suggest you check for compatibility of your browser BEFORE the course begins and take the eCollege tutorial offered for students who may require some extra assistance in navigating the eCollege platform. ONLY eCollege based problems are legitimate.**

## **Course Requirements:**

**Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments** - This course consists of a series of reading assignments. To a limited extent the Socratic Method will be employed. Students will be expected to participate and answer questions via discussion board. Each week you will work on various combinations of assignments, activities, discussions, and readings.

Due to the technical nature of the materials being presented, it is highly recommended that the student take notes over the readings, discussions, videos and assignment activities.

**Grading** – There will be (3) exams during the course of the semester. They will be worth 100 points each. They will contain a combination of multiple choice, true / false, short answer and essay questions. Each will be comprehensive and the student will be responsible for all previously covered material, as well as, for all new material. The course will conclude with a comprehensive final that will also be worth 100 points.

**Extra Credit** – Any student can obtain up to 40 extra credit points by preparing a 7 to 10 page report on Joseph Wambaugh’s book, “The Blooding.” In this work, Wambaugh tells the story of the Narborough Village Enquiry. It was the first time that DNA evidence was used in a Murder investigation. Grading on the extra credit report will be as follows:

- The student may earn up to 10 points for spelling, sentence structure, punctuation, and organization;
- The student may earn another 10 points by providing a succinct summary of the Narborough Village Enquiry;
- Finally, the student may earn up to 20 additional points by relating the incidents and events described in the book to the topics and concepts that have been discussed in class.
- **Note:** Students who wish to submit the extra credit book report will be responsible for obtaining access to their own copy of the referenced book (“The Blooding,” Wambaugh, Joseph, Perigord Press, 1989, ISBN 0-688-08617-9).

**The final grade in the course will be calculated as follows:** Each of the exams during the semester will be worth 100 points. The final exam will also be worth 100 points. As a result:

A = 360 to 440 points

B = 320 to 359 points

C = 280 to 319 points

D = 240 to 279 points

F = 239 points and below

**Note:** Extra credit points obtained by completing the book report will be added directly to the cumulative total for the course. Hence the use of the term extra credit, as a result, a student who obtained 320 points over the course of the 4 exams could theoretically improve their grade to an A by obtaining all 40 extra credit points.

## **Course and University Procedures / Policies:**

**Attendance Policy** – This course is internet based, according to the University schedule, it is the student’s responsibility to attend the course meetings and complete any assignments, activities, and exams as outlined in the syllabus.

**Exams, Guest Speakers, Practicals, and Assignments** – There will be guest speaker days and attendance is mandatory! You will be tested over the content covered on guest speaker days. There are NO MAKE-UPS for missing a guest speaker or in class exercises! The extra credit book report will be due by the beginning of class on Monday November 17<sup>th</sup>. The three regular exams are tentatively scheduled to occur at the end of the 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> Weeks. The final exam will be completed according to the university final exam schedule during final exam week. The tentative dates for these activities are listed at the end of the syllabus.

### **Academic Dishonesty:**

The University will strictly enforce policies regarding academic dishonesty. If you are found in violation of these policies, you will be reported to both the Department Head, and the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. These administrators may impose penalties, separate from my actions.

Penalties for academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, receiving a failing grade, failing the course, and/or dismissal from the university.

Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to the following acts:

- Cheating** - Copying another’s work, using unauthorized materials during assignments or exams, Presenting the work of another as your own, etc.
- Plagiarism** - Failure to site the work of another in your own submissions, presenting someone else’s work as your own, etc.

### **Student Behavior:**

As stated in the student handbook: “All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.” (See Student’s Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct, for more information.) **Class rules regarding electronic devices: iPods are not allowed during class meetings. Cell phones, pagers, and any other electronic devices should be set to silent or turned off. No texting during class meetings. If you receive an emergency call, please remove yourself from the class and I will see you at the next class meeting. No cell phones or other electronic devices should be visible or checked during class, without the expressed permission of the instructor. This means you take notes the traditional way ... with paper and pen / pencil.**

Please take care of restroom activities prior to class, however, if you must go during class, please make as little disruption as possible. All efforts should be made to keep any and all class interruptions at a minimum, out of respect for your fellow students. At my discretion, you may be asked to leave for any activities deemed distracting to the class.

### **Make-up Work / Drop Policy:**

**I will not discuss missed work or requests for make-up work in-class.** It is the student's responsibility to drop or withdraw from the course by the appropriate dates, according to the university calendar.

### **University Specific Procedures:**

#### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a Federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protections for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University –Commerce

Gee Library

Room 132

Phone 903/886-5150 or 903/886-5835

Fax 903/468-8148

[StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu)

## **Course Outline/Calendar:**

### **Week #:   Class Date:   Weekly Content Items /Activities:**

Week 1:	Syllabus / Ch. 1 – The Investigation of Crime
Week 2:	Ch. 2 – The History of Criminal Investigations
Week 3:	Ch. 3 – The Role of Evidence in Criminal Investigations
Week 4:	Ch. 4 – The Law and Criminal Investigations 1 <sup>st</sup> Exam
Week 5:	Ch. 5 – Physical Evidence and the Crime Scene
Week 6:	Ch. 6 – Interviews and Eyewitness Identifications
Week 7:	Ch. 7 – Interrogations and Confessions
Week 8:	Ch. 8 – Behavioral Analysis and Other Related Evidence 2 <sup>nd</sup> Exam
Week 9:	Ch. 9 – Information from the Public, the Media, Electronic Networks and Other Sources
Week 10:	Ch. 10 – Death Investigation
Week 11:	Ch. 11 – The Investigation of Sex Crimes, Assault, Child Abuse and Related Offenses
Week 12:	Ch. 12 – The Investigation of Robbery



3<sup>rd</sup> Exam

Week 13: Ch. 14 – Digital Evidence and the Investigation of Fraud  
And Other Computer-Related Crimes  
**Extra credit book report is due!!!**

Week 15: Ch. 16 – Terrorism, Technology, and the Future of  
Criminal Investigations

Week 16: Finals Week (In-class Exam date TBA)

**Every effort will be made to adhere to the course schedule as noted above. However, circumstances may require changes to the schedule. In that case, changes will be announced via university e-mail, in-class, or on eCollege. The professor reserves the right to change the schedule if necessary, depending on the progress of the class, as well as, the availability of guest speakers. Remember the extra credit book report on “The Bloodying” is by due on or before November 17<sup>th</sup>.**