



## COURSE SYLLABUS

Please, click on the following link to access A&M-Commerce Covid 19 Information,  
<https://new.tamuc.edu/coronavirus/>

### CJ 2314: Criminal Investigation

Fall (2022)/ 3 Credit Course

Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice

Texas A&M-Commerce

Instructor: Dr. Erik Cruz

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\* (The content of this syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the professor, revised as of 7/31/2022)

Office Hours: By appointment (schedule via email)

#### Why should you care about criminal investigation?

*"Research (investigation) is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose."*

— Zara Neale Hurston,

#### Why you are here

A primary goal of this course is to examine the theories and practices of the investigation process in the criminal justice system. Being exposed to various types of scientific research and analytic techniques will help you understand its role in the field of criminology and criminal justice. If you do not plan to enter a career as a researcher or crime analyst, the work presented throughout the course will help you build a critical foundation for approaching and solving complex problems.

### **Course Description**

Criminal Investigations, is an examination of the theories, practices and procedures, associated with the investigative process, central to the successful operation of the criminal justice system. Specifically, the course explores information theory and various operational techniques, associated with crime scene searches, forensic examinations, interview and interrogation techniques, the rules of evidence and trial techniques. Additionally, issues related to courtroom testimony, due process of law, search and seizure, and other constitutional requirements are considered.

### **Course Objectives**

After successful completion of this course students will be able to:

- Augment their analytical skills and apply them to hypothetical situations.
- Identify the various roles that investigators play in society, both on and off duty.
- Acknowledge the physical and psychological dangers that criminal investigators face.
- Articulate a fundamental understanding of the investigative process.
- Utilize refined written and oral Communication skills.

### **Course Requirements**

#### **Minimal Technical Skills Needed**

Students should be familiar with the D2L software and should be knowledgeable with the basics of Microsoft Office.

#### **Instructional Methods**

Course delivery is completely online. Therefore, students should check their email and the course announcements regularly. All materials will be posted to the course website. It is the responsibility of the students to learn how to access these, and to reach out for help if they experience difficulties.

### **Expectations of this Course**

**My expectations of you:**

- Read the assigned material.
- Turn-in assignments on time.
- Respect your instructor and fellow learning partners.

**What you can expect from me:**

- Respond to your emails within 12-24 hours (business hours Monday-Sunday).
- Grade your work as soon as possible.
- Provide useful and practical feedback on your assignments to enhance your future work.

**Textbook:**

Criminal Investigation (4th ed). ISBN: 9781506391410

By: Steven G. Brandl (2018)

**This course makes use of the following online tools:**

- [myleonline.tamuc.edu](https://myleonline.tamuc.edu)
- [go.playposit.com/](https://go.playposit.com/)

**Course Assignments:****Introductory Post (on Brightspace — 1 discussion post — 4 points total — 2% of grade)**

Due to the nature of online learning, maintaining traditional class comradery is essential. You will be assigned one discussion post the first week of class. This discussion board is meant for students to become acquainted, and hopefully acknowledge similar goals and interests. To receive full credit, you must post your initial introductory post and comment on at least one classmates post. The comment should be at least three sentences. Keep in mind that forum discussions are public, and care should be taken when determining what to post.

- Due 9/4/22 at 11:59 PM CST

**Web Lectures (on Brightspace — 12 lectures— 24 points total — 12% of grade)**

To bolster the course's interactive element and provide supplemental course material, the course contains an interactive component to supplement the student's learning experience. Embedded within each web lecture, there will be short answers, multiple-choice questions, and opportunities to reflect on the course material. When assigned, students must watch the entire video lecture and complete the embedded activities. This portion of the student's grade counts as online attendance/participation. No lecture will surpass 35 minutes in length.

To complete the web lectures, students must make a free account with <https://go.playposit.com>, registering with their complete name and student email. At the commencement of their assigned week, a link will be provided for each web lecture on Brightspace. Students must be logged in to complete each lecture. Please do not attempt to view a web lecture more than

once. After a web lecture due date has passed, the lecture's corresponding YouTube link will be provided on Brightspace, removing the need to view it in playposit. If you have a pre-existing account on playposit, you may use it for this course if the name registered with the account matches your name in the course.

### **Writing Assignment (on Brightspace – 4 submissions — 50 points total— 25% of grade)**

You will have a total of **4** writing assignments to be completed individually. These assignments consist of various questions designed for you to apply the conceptual knowledge you gain throughout the course.

#### **General Instructions:**

- Go to the corresponding assignment of Brightspace.
- Open the document which contains the corresponding assignment.
- Type your answers on a separate document. Please make sure to use Microsoft Word only.

### **Writing Assignment Schedule**

#### **Writing Assignment 1 (12.5 points)**

- Due 10/9 11:59PM

#### **Writing Assignment 2 (12.5 points)**

- Due 10/23 11:59PM

#### **Writing Assignment 3 (12.5 points)**

- Due 11/6 11:59PM

#### **Writing Assignment 4 (12.5 points)**

- Due 11/20 11:59PM

### **Research Critiques (on Brightspace – 3 critiques — 16.7 points each – 25% of grade)**

You will be provided with three sources of information to critique. These pieces will not always be dense academic articles; but rather, they will also take the form of infographics, short news articles, applied research findings, tables, charts, maps, podcasts, or even interactive web pages. When an academic article is assigned, it will be significantly narrowed down to the methodology section and the subsequent pages I want you to review. Every research critique must be

completed using the form posted on Brightspace. In brief, the form is composed of several questions that require you to analyze the research item assigned for the week critically.

### **Research Critique Schedule**

#### **Research Critique 1**

- Due on 9/4/22 at 11:59 PM

#### **Research Critique 2**

- Due on 9/25/22 at 11:55 PM

#### **Research Critique 3**

- Due on 11/13/22 at 11:59 PM

### **Exams (on Brightspace – 3 exams — 72 points total— 36% of grade)**

Each exam will consist of 24 questions (combination of multiple choice and T/F questions)

Each question is worth 1 point for a total of 24 points.

Instructions:

- You will be shown one question at a time
- You will not be able to go back (backtrack)

### **Exam Schedule**

#### **Exam 1 (Chapters 1-4) (24 points)**

- Due 10/2 11:59PM

#### **Exam 2 (Chapters 5-7) (24 points)**

- Due 10/30 11:59PM

#### **Exam 3 (Chapters 8-10, 16) (24 points)**

- Due 12/4 11:59PM

## Policies

### TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

#### LMS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

[https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser\\_support.htm](https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm)

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

### ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or [helpdesk@tamuc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu).

**Note:** Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

### COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

## Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

Interaction with Instructor Statement

## COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

### Course Specific Procedures/Policies

#### Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

### University Specific Procedures

#### Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

#### TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

## Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateschool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyFormold.pdf>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

## Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection 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

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: [studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu](mailto:studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu)

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>



### Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

### Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

### Counseling Center Services

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit [www.tamuc.edu/counsel](http://www.tamuc.edu/counsel)

### Incomplete Grade:

An incomplete grade (IN) is a temporary symbol given at the discretion of the instructor for work not completed due to serious interruption, not caused by the student's own negligence.

Students receiving an incomplete grade must complete the appropriate coursework within two semesters (including summer). If coursework is not completed in this time frame, the incomplete grade (IN) will automatically default to a failing grade (F). Students should not re-enroll in the same course to make up the incomplete grade. To change an incomplete grade, the student should speak directly to the course instructor to have the appropriate documentation submitted.

- Written documentation must be provided.
- The student must have successfully completed half of the coursework with a passing grade.

#### How will you and I evaluate your progress?

Course Requirements	Frequencies	Points Per Submission	Total Weight
Discussion Board	1	4	2%
Web Lectures	12	2	12%
Writing Assignment	4	12.5	25%
Research Critiques	3	16.7	25%
Exams	3	24	36%
Total			100%

Grade	Range	Point Total
A	100-90	200-180
B	89-80	179-160
C	79-70	159-140
D	69-60	139-120
F	<60	<120

#### Course Calendar

##### \*Weekly Tentative Schedule

Date	Topics Covered in Class	Readings & Assignments
<b>Week 1</b> 8/29-9/4	Introductions & General Overview of Course	Online:

	<p>Topics covered in web lecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A general overview of the course and a brief discussion on the value of taking a criminal investigation class</li> <li>• The Investigation of Crime.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Familiarize yourself with the Brightspace platform and the syllabus</li> <li>• Discussion Board: Introduce yourself (<b>due 9/4/22 at 11:59 PM</b>)</li> <li>• Complete Research Critique 1 (<b>due 9/4/22 at 11:59PM</b>)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 2</b> 9/5-9/11</p>	<p>Research Process &amp; Crime Investigation</p> <p>Topics covered in web lecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steps of the research process.</li> <li>• The cyclical nature of the research process.</li> <li>• Discuss Research Critique 1.</li> <li>• Outlining criminal investigation, criminal evidence, and forensic science.</li> <li>• Identifying the goals of the investigative process.</li> </ul>	<p>Online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch web Lecture 1 (<b>due 9/11/22 at 11:55 PM</b>)</li> <li>• Read Chapter 1 “The Investigation of Crime”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 3</b> 9/12-18</p> <p><i><b>Important date: Last day to drop with 100% refund – 9/14/22.</b></i></p>	<p>The History of Criminal Investigations</p> <p>Topics covered in web lecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The creation and development of the FBI and its role in advancing the methods of investigation.</li> <li>• Investigate strategies that coincide with values of community policing</li> <li>• The role of informers, thief-takers, and thief-makers</li> </ul>	<p>Online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch web Lecture 2 (<b>due on 9/18/22 at 11:59 PM</b>)</li> <li>• Read Chapter 2 “The History of Criminal Investigations”</li> </ul>

<p><b>Week 4</b> 9/19-25</p>	<p>The Role of Evidence in Criminal Investigations</p> <p>Topics covered in web lecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Various standards of proof.</li> <li>• Differences between judicial and extrajudicial evidence.</li> <li>• Exculpatory and inculpatory evidence.</li> <li>• Outlining testimonial, real, documentary, and demonstrative evidence.</li> </ul>	<p>Online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch web Lecture 3 (<b>due 9/25/22 at 11:59 PM</b>)</li> <li>• Complete Research Critique 2 (<b>due on 9/25/22 at 11:59PM</b>)</li> <li>• Read Chapter 3 “The Role of Evidence in Criminal Investigations”</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 5</b> 9/26-10/2</p>	<p>The Law and Criminal Investigations</p> <p>Topics covered in web lecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What qualities evidence must possess to be admissible in court.</li> <li>• Chain of custody (evidence).</li> <li>• Arrest and search warrants.</li> <li>• Miranda warnings.</li> </ul>	<p>Online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch web Lecture 4 (<b>due 10/2/22 at 11:59 PM</b>)</li> <li>• Read Chapter 4 “The Law and Criminal Investigations”</li> <li>• Complete exam 1 (chapters 1-4) (<b>due 10/2/22 at 11:59 PM</b>)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 6</b> 10/3-9</p>	<p>Physical Evidence and the Crime Scene</p> <p>Topics covered in web lecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The three functions of physical evidence in the criminal investigation process.</li> <li>• Limitations of physical evidence.</li> <li>• Seminal rules for managing major crime scenes.</li> <li>• Evidentiary value of different types of physical evidence.</li> </ul>	<p>Online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch web Lecture 5 (<b>due 10/9/22 at 11:59 PM</b>)</li> <li>• Read Chapter 5 “Physical Evidence and the Crime Scene”</li> <li>• Complete writing assignment 1 (<b>due 10/9/22 at 11:59 PM</b>)</li> </ul>

<b>Week 7</b> 10/10-16	Interviews and Eyewitness Identifications  Topics covered in web lecture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difference between primary and secondary witnesses.</li> <li>• Methods of eyewitness identification.</li> <li>• Advantages and disadvantages of using facial identification software and forensic sketches.</li> <li>• Value of eyewitness identifications in establishing proof.</li> </ul>	Online: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch web Lecture 6 (<b>due on 10/16/22 at 11:59 PM</b>)</li> <li>• Read Chapter 6 “Interviews and Eyewitness Identifications”</li> </ul>
<b>Week 8</b> 10/17-23	Interrogations and Confessions  Topics covered in web lecture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interrogations versus interviews.</li> <li>• Interrogation methods.</li> <li>• Reid Technique versus PEACE Model of interrogation.</li> <li>• Pros and Cons of deception by investigators.</li> </ul>	Online: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Web Lecture 7 (<b>due 10/23/23 11:59 PM</b>)</li> <li>• Read Chapter 7 “Interrogations and Confessions”</li> <li>• Complete writing assignment 2 (<b>due 10/23/22 at 11:59 PM</b>)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 9</b> 10/24-30	<b>No Lecture.</b>	Online: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete exam 2 (chapters 5-7) (<b>due 10/30/22 at 11:59 PM</b>)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 10</b> 10/31-11/6	Behavioral Evidence and Crime Analysis  Topics covered in web lecture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crime scene and geographical profiling.</li> <li>• Organized and disorganized crime scenes.</li> </ul>	Online: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Web Lecture 8 (<b>due 11/6/22 11:59PM</b>)</li> <li>• Complete writing assignment 3 (<b>due 11/6/22 at 11:59</b>)</li> <li>• Read Chapter 8 “Behavioral Evidence and Crime Analysis”</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How victims can reveal characteristics about offenders.</li> </ul>	
<b>Week 11</b> 11/7-13	Information from the Public, Social Media, Information Networks, Digital Devices, and Other Sources  Topics covered in web lecture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtaining crime information from the public</li> <li>Social Media and criminal investigations</li> <li>Confidential informants</li> </ul>	Online: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Web Lecture 9 (<b>due 11/13/22 at 11:59PM</b>)</li> <li>Complete Research Critique 3 (<b>due 11/13/22 at 11:59PM</b>)</li> <li>Read Chapter 9 "Information from the Public, Social Media, Information Networks, Digital Devices, and Other Sources"</li> </ul>
<b>Week 12</b> 11/14-20	Death Investigations  Topics covered in web lecture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determining manner of death.</li> <li>Patterns of homicide.</li> <li>Importance of motive.</li> <li>Typical decomposition pattern.</li> </ul>	Online: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Web Lecture 10 (<b>due 11/20/22 at 11:59PM</b>)</li> <li>Complete writing assignment 4 (<b>due 11/20/22 at 11:59</b>)</li> <li>Read Chapter 10 "Death Investigations"</li> </ul>
<b>Week 13</b> 11/21-27  Happy Thanksgiving	Terrorism, Technology, and the Future of Criminal Investigation  Topics covered in web lecture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Varieties and variations of terrorism.</li> <li>Technology and terrorist investigations.</li> <li>The role of DNA evidence in terrorist investigations.</li> </ul>	Online: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Web Lecture 11 (<b>due 11/27/22 at 11:59PM</b>)</li> <li>Read Chapter 16 "Terrorism, Technology, and the Future of Criminal Investigation"</li> </ul>
<b>Week 14</b> 11/28-12/4	No lecture.	Online:

<p><i>Important date: Last day to withdraw—12/2/22.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete exam 3 (chapters (8-10, 16) (<b>due 12/4/22 at 11:59PM</b>)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Week 15</b> 12/5-9</p>	<p>Microsoft PowerPoint, Library Database, and APA Format Workshop.</p> <p>Topics covered in web lecture: Summarizing research - The literature review (second half of class).</p>	<p>Online:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch web Lecture 12 (<b>due 12/9/22 at 11:59 PM</b>)</li> </ul>