



## **CJ 360-01E CRN 28045 MASS MEDIA AND CRIME**

Course Syllabus: Spring 2024  
Tuesday & Thursday 11:00am-12:15pm  
Ferguson 313

### **INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

**Instructor:** James A. Purdon, Ph.D.

**Office Location:** Ferguson 229

**Office Hours:** Wednesday 10:00am-2:00pm.

**Office Phone:** (903) 886.5332

**University Email Address:** James.Purdon@tamuc.edu

**Communication Response Time:** Emails are answered within 24 hours Monday-Friday during business hours (9am-5pm).

### **COURSE INFORMATION**

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

#### ***Required Text***

Surette, R. (2014). *Media, Crime, and Criminal Justice*. (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Cengage.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course examines the media's effects on perceptions of crime and justice in America. An examination is performed on media-generated crime and criminal justice policies. An example of media-generated crime would be when politicians/media "emphasize" a problem to essentially "create" a crime or crime wave. A discussion of the effect of social constructionism and the ability of the various types of media to create a new type of crime will occur. An investigation of the impact of various types of media (radio, television, motion pictures, records, and printed sources, etc.) on criminals, crime fighters, and the courts will be conducted. An example of criminal topics to be discussed is the drug problem, sex offenders, murders, etc.

*The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

## Student Learning Outcomes

1. Understand and describe the common links between media portraits and criminal justice.
2. Identify how images of crime and justice vary across different forms of media.
3. Become a critical consumer of media related to crime and justice information.
4. Use university and publicly-available resources to locate various media content on key criminal justice issues.
5. Create media content summarizing research results.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Minimal Technical Skills Needed

- **Computer System:** Windows or Macintosh desktop or laptop computer purchased within the last 5 years. Chromebooks and mobile devices may not provide full online access.
- **Operating System:** Windows-based computers must be running Windows 10 or newer. Macintosh computers must be running OS 10.13 (High Sierra) or higher.
- **Required Software:** Microsoft Office 365; Adobe Acrobat Reader DC
- **Web Browser:** Use a recently updated internet browser.
- **Learning Management System (LMS):** See below for requirements.

## INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

This course is designed to be an in-person, lecture, and discussion based class that meets twice a week. While this will incorporate traditional methods, such as lectures based on weekly readings, this class will also emphasize class discussions based on hypotheticals and media, group activities and exercises based on related concepts, and guest speakers. In essence, this course relies on active learning as you will be tasked with developing critical thinking through a variety of metrics. Therefore, your attendance and participation to class is vital for your success in this course.

This course contains a variety of assessments in order to judge your mastery of the material. This includes weekly write-ups, an article review exercise, a medium reflection paper, a policy project, a podcast project, and two (2) exams (see the Assessments section of this syllabus for more details). Importantly, exams are based on lecture slides, class discussion, guest speakers, and relevant media shown in class. I will provide you with my slides after each class.

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## STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES OR TIPS FOR SUCCESS IN THE COURSE

1. **Review** the **Syllabus** and the **Course Schedule** to keep up to date on requirements for the course.
2. **Read announcements and check email!** I will send updates about the courses through D2L, so check regularly.
3. Create a **personal organization system** to keep track of specified due dates.
4. **Communicate regularly** with your instructor and peers.
5. **Create a study and/or assignment schedule** to stay on track.
6. Set aside **regular times** in which you can do your classwork with minimal interruptions or distractions. Avoid multitasking while studying.
7. Learn about and use the student resources available to you! You can get free assistance from the [A&M-Library](#), [IT Support](#), [the Writing Center](#), and more.

## ASSESSMENTS

### ***Attendance and Participation***

Attendance and participation in class activities is an essential part of the learning process; thus, students are expected to attend class regularly. You are expected to have completed all required readings and to be prepared to contribute to class discussions. While some absences are unavoidable, you are responsible for making up missed absences and notifying the professor. Three (3) or more unexcused absences will result in a low grade for this portion of the class.

### ***Article Review***

Students will need to prepare an article review on two preassigned peer-reviewed journal articles. You will read these two articles, reflect on the meaning of these articles, write your thoughts and impressions of these articles in relation to what we have studied, and then we will discuss them in class. I have created a short list of questions per article to help guide student reflection and generate meaningful discussions. This review should be approximately two (2) to three (3) pages in length, double-spaced, 12-point font, Times New Roman, and conform to APA norms.

### ***Exams***

There will be two (2) exams over the course of the semester. These exams include a variety of objective questions, such as true/false and multiple choice, as well as written components, such as short-answer and/or full-length essay questions. Exams will be administered in-person on an assigned day according to the course schedule. Students

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will only be allowed to use a writing instrument and will have the full class time to complete the exam.

### ***Medium Reflection***

Students will choose any medium of their choice (i.e., magazine, book, comic book, crime-drama episode, movie, podcast, videogame, etc.) related to crime, criminology, or criminal justice and reflect on the accuracy of that medium's portrayal of the topic. The contents of this paper should include a brief summary of the topic, a short summary of the medium's portrayal, and your analysis on the topic. The analysis portion should be supported by research (i.e., two (2) scholarly sources) on that topic. This assignment should be two (2) to three (3) pages in length, double-spaced, 12-point font, Times New Roman, and conform to APA to norms.

### ***Podcast Project***

As a final project, students will record their own podcast episode on a topic of their choice related to crime, criminology, and criminal justice. The podcast project will require students to conduct research on the topic, write a script, and record a professional grade podcast. The purpose of this assignment is to allow students to investigate a topic of interest while practicing critical skills, such as writing, research, collaboration, and communication. Importantly, students may opt to work in small groups (no more than 3), as long as everyone contributes to the project equally (i.e., everyone must research, write, record, and edit the podcast to receive full credit). The podcast project should be approximately 15 minutes in recorded length.

### ***Policy Project***

Students will need to assess the issues and merits of a criminal justice policy. This is a two part assignment.

First, there is the paper portion. This paper should explain what the issue is, how the policy is attempting to address the issue, and conclude whether the policy has any support or validity. Students will need to use official governmental statistics and/or primary sources (i.e., peer-reviewed journal articles) to accurately assess the validity of the policy. The purpose of this project is to introduce students to a variety of criminal justice related issues while also exposing students to critical research practices. The final paper should be between two (2) and three (3) pages in length, double-spaced, 12-point font, Times New Roman, and conform to APA norms.

Second, students will prepare and deliver a 10 minute professional presentation on their policy project. This presentation should cover relevant items such as the purpose of the policy, the effects of the policy, and whether the policy has any support or validity. Students are encouraged to use any relevant aids to facilitate the presentation, such as visuals (i.e., PowerPoints, GoogleSlides, or Prezi), brief segments or video clips (i.e., no more than a minute in length), and pictures. Presentations are tentatively scheduled for week 15 and students will sign up accordingly.

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### **Weekly Reflection Write-ups**

Each week of new material there will be one (1) short writing assignment to be completed in class. These writing assignments will probe students on their analysis of the topic(s) covered in that week. The purpose of this type of assignment is to make sure students are keeping up with the assigned readings and understanding critical concepts covered. You must be in attendance to complete this writing assignment as they will be based on activities completed during class time. Missed write-ups will be counted as a zero (0) for unexcused absences. If the absence is for good cause (see the late assignment policy below) then you will be given an alternative assignment. Importantly, I will drop the lowest two (2) reflection write-ups.

### **GRADING**

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale (see Table 1):

<b>Table 1: Grade Cut-Offs</b>		
<b>Grade</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>A</b>	450-500	90.00% – 100%
<b>B</b>	400-449	80.00% – 89.99%
<b>C</b>	350-399	70.00% – 79.99%
<b>D</b>	300-349	60.00% – 69.99%
<b>F</b>	Below 300	Below 60.00%

Total points corresponding to the final letter grades (see Table 2):

<b>Table 2: Assessments and Their Values</b>		
<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Attendance and Participation	50	10%
Medium Reflection	50	10%
Podcast Project	75	15%
Policy Project	75	15%
Response Paper	50	10%
Weekly Reaction Write-ups	50	10% (1% each)
Exams (x2)	150 (75 each)	30% (15% each)

Grades can be accessed on D2L.

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## 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)

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

[https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom\\_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu](https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu)

## 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>

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## **Interaction with Instructor Statement**

**Communication** will be held either in-person, email, or through D2L.

**What to call me** – Please refer to me as Professor or Dr. Purdon.

**Look for the answer first.** When questions arise during the course of this class, please remember to check these two sources for an answer *before* you contact me:

- Course Syllabus
- Announcements in D2L

## **COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES**

### **Course Specific Procedures/Policies**

#### ***Attendance and Participation***

Class attendance is a vital part of class participation, and ensuring your success in this course. Come prepared to participate and attend regularly.

**Excused absences** for classes will be given without penalty to the grade in the case of any of the following reasons: (1) Participation in a required/authorized University activity; (2) Verified illness; (3) Death in a student's immediate family; (4) Obligation of a student at a legal proceedings in fulfilling responsibility as a citizen; and (5) Others determined by individual faculty to be excused (e.g., elective University activities, etc.).

#### ***Citation Style***

Students are required to use the citation style and format of the American Psychological Association (APA). Review the *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.) or similar APA Citation Style online resource. It is acceptable to cite legal materials (cases, statutes, regulations, etc.) in accordance with the style specified in *The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation* (21st ed.) in all papers.

#### ***Extra credit***

Please do not ask for extra credit. Although an extra credit assignment may be offered to the whole class for attending a talk or participating in a learning experience beyond those anticipated in this syllabus, no individualized extra credit work will be permitted. Why? Extra credit is unfair to the students who do their work diligently all semester long.

#### ***Late or Missed Assignments***

Written assignments are to be submitted on the due date by the times specified (Central Time). Late submissions can be accepted for good cause if: (1) an extension was granted by the professor in advance of the due date; or (2) documentation of an unforeseeable excused absence (as assessed in the professor's sole discretion) is

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provided (see excused absences above). Late submissions without good cause will be reduced by a full letter grade (i.e., 10%) for each calendar day the assignment is late.

### **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).  
<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>

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<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>

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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.

### **A&M-COMMERCE SUPPORTS STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH**

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)

### **AI Use IN COURSES**

Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty  
13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

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## COURSE SCHEDULE

ACTIVITIES/ASSIGNMENTS	PERCENTAGE	DUE DATE
WEEK 1: Introduction to the class		
Readings: Syllabus and Introduction	--	11-Jan.
WEEK 2: Crime, Justice, and Media		
Readings: Chapter 1	--	16-Jan.
Readings: Chapter 1	--	18-Jan.
WEEK 3: New Media & Social Constructionism; Moral Panics		
Readings: Chapter 2	--	23-Jan.
Readings: Chapter 2	--	25-Jan.
WEEK 4: Images of Crime and Criminality		
Readings: Chapter 3	--	30-Jan.
Readings: Chapter 3	--	1-Feb.
Week 5: Criminogenic Media		
Readings: Chapter 4	--	6-Feb.
Readings: Chapter 4	--	8-Feb.
<b>Assignment 1: Response Paper</b>	10%	<b>8-Feb.</b>
WEEK 6: Crime Fighters		
Readings: Chapter 5	--	13-Feb.
Readings: Chapter 5	10%	<b>15-Feb.</b>
WEEK 6: The Courts		
Readings: Chapter 6	--	20-Feb.
Readings: Chapter 6	--	22-Feb.
WEEK 7: Midterm		
<b>Review</b>	--	27-Feb.
<b>Midterm Exam</b>	15%	29-Feb.
WEEK 8: Corrections		
Readings: Chapter 7	--	5-Mar.
Readings: Chapter 7	--	7-Mar.
Week 9: <b>SPRING BREAK March 11-15</b>		
Week 10: Crime Control		
Readings: Chapter 8	--	19-Mar.
Readings: Chapter 8	--	21-Mar.
<b>Assignment 2: Medium Reflection Due</b>	10%	<b>7-Mar.</b>

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<b>WEEK 11: The Media and Criminal Justice Policy</b>		
Readings: Chapter 9	--	26-Mar.
Readings: Chapter 9	--	28-Mar.
<b>WEEK 12: News Media, Crime, and Justice</b>		
Readings: Chapter 10	--	2-Apr.
Readings: Chapter 10	--	4-Apr.
<b>WEEK 13: Policy Presentation</b>		
<b>Assignment 3: Policy Project Presentation Day 1</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>9-Apr.</b>
<b>Assignment 3: Policy Project Presentation Day 1</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>11-Apr.</b>
<b>WEEK 14: News Media, Crime, and Justice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century</b>		
Readings: Chapter 11	--	16-Apr.
Readings: Chapter 11	--	18-Apr.
<b>WEEK 15: Special Topics</b>		
Special Topics	--	23-Apr.
Special Topics	--	25-Apr.
<b>WEEK 16: Extra Material and Final Review</b>		
<b>Final Review Session</b>	--	30-Apr.
<b>Assignment 4: Podcast Project Due</b>	10%	<b>30-Apr.</b>
<b>Reading Days – No Class</b>	--	1-May
<b>WEEK 17: FINAL EXAM</b>		
<b>Final Exam</b>	15%	<b>7-May</b>

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