



East Texas A&M University
CJ 595.01W - Research Literature and Techniques

COURSE SYLLABUS Spring 2025

January 13, 2025 – March 7, 2025

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor:	Dr. Willie Edwards, Professor
Office Location:	Ferguson Hall, SS Bldg., Rm 217
Office Hours:	Virtual office .
Office Phone:	(903) 886-5331
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Preferred Form of Communication:	(email)
Communication Response Time:	(within twenty-four hours during the weekday)

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

There is no assigned text for this course. Other materials/readings may be assigned and posted in the Resource area of D2L.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Course Description/Explanation:

Students will write a formal research paper designed to broaden students' perspectives and to provide an opportunity for the integration of course concepts. Emphasis will be placed on methods of interpretation, writing, and critical thinking related to criminal justice topics/issues.

Student Learning Outcomes/Core Competencies:

1. Think critically about important issues in applied criminology and criminal justice
2. Problem-solving solutions to relevant problems in criminal justice

3. Enhance communication skills and reading/research/writing acumen

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional Methods-Activities-Assessments

This course is the final course in the MS in Applied Criminology program. As such, the purpose of this course is to assist students in preparing and completing their capstone project for the program. You will work toward achieving this goal through discussions/comments and completion of a capstone paper. Below is an explanation of each course requirement including due date, assignment instructions, and other requirements.

Please note that the core competency of this course and program is critical thinking. Critical thinking requires students to think through situations, facts, and issues in an open-minded and objective way in an effort to analyze and evaluate information in an informed manner. Qualities of a critical thinker (and of arguments that embody critical thinking) include:

- **Certainty is not always necessary for a critical thinker; possibility and probability should always be a consideration**—in other words, just because the book tells you it is true, doesn't mean that there may not be another solution or possibility to consider. The way that facts relate to one another—and not just fact alone—should be used to determine truth.
- **Critical thinkers are not only independent thinkers; they are also fair-minded in that they are willing to consider all points of view, and they are careful to take every aspect of an argument into consideration**—your way of thinking may not necessarily be the only way or the right way of thinking, consider other perspectives.
- **Consider evidence (facts), source (from what source your evidence come from), and motivations (what might be the underlying motivation behind these facts)**—in other words, gather information from credible sources and evaluate these sources/factual information in the context of what you have been asked to discuss/evaluate.

As defined by the National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking, critical thinking is: “The intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action. In its exemplary form, it is based on universal intellectual values that transcend subject matter divisions: clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance, sound evidence, good reasons, depth, breadth, and fairness.”

(Scriven, M. & Paul, R. Presented at the 8th Annual International Conference on Critical Thinking and Education Reform, Summer 1987.)

When preparing discussions/comments/papers/etc., use the following to help you critically think through each task. You will be graded (in part) on how well you are able to perform this skill.

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- Determine the problem/issue you are trying to solve. Make sure you remain open-minded and objective and be aware of your own biases on the subject and put them aside
- Develop a hypothesis and/or possible solution to the problem/issue. Brainstorm other possible solutions. Think about the pros and cons of the problem/issue
- Gather information on the problem/issue that may support or contradict your position
- Analyze your facts. Don't assume anything. Evaluate the facts objectively
- Determine a reasonable conclusion based on all the facts
- Make sure your facts (and the reporting of the facts) are accurate. You may assume a causal relationship but there might be other possible conclusions to be drawn based on other factors. Be sure to evaluate what those might be

Introduction/Discussion Posts: (1 Introduction @ 50 points; 4 discussion posts @ 50 points each = 250 course points)

Student Learning Outcomes #1- #3: Think critically about important issues in applied criminology and criminal justice; Problem-solve solutions to relevant problems in criminal justice; Enhance communication skills and reading/research/writing acumen

The **Introduction** is a chance for you to 'meet' your colleagues (although most of you likely know each other by now) in the class and an opportunity to introduce yourself to your professor. You will also be required to answer a course-related question. Specific instructions on what to post are available when you click on the Introduction in Week One. The Introductory post is due on **Wednesday in Week One** of the course.

The **Discussions** are directly related to the work you are doing on your capstone project. Each post will require that you present to the other students in the class, your thoughts/concerns/problems/issues on specific topics related to your project. You are expected to engage in an **ongoing** discussion with your classmates, providing assistance and guidance when possible. Your contributions to the discussion forums will be graded for **quality** and insightful thought/assistance that you provide to your colleagues. Specific discussion post topics are located in D2L.

These posts should be a **minimum of 250 words**. The specific discussion assignment is located in each unit Week by clicking on the Discussion link. Posts are due by 11:00PM CST on **Fridays**.

Comment Posts: (20 comments @ 10 points each = 200 course points)

Student Learning Outcomes #1-#3: **Think** critically about important issues in applied criminology and criminal justice; Problem-solve solutions to relevant problems in criminal justice; Enhance communication skills and reading/research/writing acumen.

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Comment posts are responses you make to the discussion posts that you and your classmates post each week. You are **required** to make a minimum of **five** comments each week. I would strongly encourage you to engage your colleagues well past the five-comment minimum in order to maximize your opportunity for meaningful discussion and learning.

Comment posts should be meaningful. Merely agreeing or disagreeing with a classmate will not be looked upon favorably and will result in a loss of points. A meaningful post is one that moves the discussion forward in some substantive way through providing one's perspective, additional information through research, or reframing the discussion in some new way. You are expected to engage in an **ongoing** discussion with your **classmates**. Your comments will be graded for **quality** and **relevance** and the degree to which you offer useful and relevant suggestions to your colleagues. Your comments will also be graded based on your ability to engage in critical thinking.

All comment posts are due by 11:00PM CST on **Sundays**.

Assessment Method: Comments will be graded using the Comments Grading Rubric attached to the Discussion Post Grading Rubric. The discussion and Comments for each week will be graded together and posted as one grade (Discussion = 50 + Comments 5@10 points each = 100 points/week).

Capstone Paper Instructions (450 points): You began the process of preparing your Capstone paper/project in CJ 575: Research Methods in Criminal Justice. In that class, you spent significant time and effort selecting a topic and research question for evaluation, writing an annotated bibliography, and preparing a literature review. At the time that you completed CJ 575, you should have received detailed comments from your instructor regarding the 'status' of your literature review; a primary component of your final Capstone paper/project. If your professor indicated that minimal changes were necessary, you are in good shape. If your professor indicated that significant additional work should take place, I am hopeful that you took the opportunity to strengthen your literature review before entering this class (as I know your professor suggested you do). If not, you have your work cut out for you, as you will need to work on the literature review as well as other components of the paper simultaneously.

You continued your Capstone paper/project in CJ 576: Data Analysis and Interpretation. This course requires you use the topic you chose for your Capstone as the foundation for preparing a survey instrument. You were also introduced to data evaluation and interpretation through writing a meta-analysis review of the D.A.R.E. program.

You now find yourself in CJ 595: Research Literature and Techniques and in the five remaining weeks you have in the program, you will need to complete your Capstone paper/project. Your Capstone paper/project **must** contain the following elements. A more detailed explanation of what is required is provided below.

- Literature review

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- Body, including insightful and critical analysis of data/information related to your topic
- Body, including key information from your ‘track’ concentration (i.e., management or policy)
- Body, including suggestions for improvement/policy recommendations
- Conclusion

Literature Review: If you did your job in CJ 575, this component of your paper should be near-complete. It might require inclusion of additional sources (outside the 10 you provided for the literature review in CJ 575) based on recently published material or material you did not have time to include in your original work, but you should be almost done with this section.

As the assignment required in CJ 575, a literature review aims to highlight the current state of knowledge regarding a particular topic under study (see any journal article you have read for this program and/or the Literature Review FactSheet located in the CJ 500 Orientation course for more). Literature reviews generally include substantive findings as well as theoretical and methodological contributions to a particular topic. Literature reviews are comprised of secondary sources and as such do not report any new or original experimental work. The main purpose of a literature review is to situate the current study/paper within the body of literature and to provide context for the reader.

A literature review is not a summary but a synthesis of the material you have read. The idea is to take your sources and organize them in some way that informs the reader about the ‘state of knowledge’ regarding the paper you wish to write. This requires that you pull your sources together in a way that explains to the reader why the issue/topic/problem you have identified is worth studying (i.e., not covered in current literature, no consensus in existing literature, augmenting existing literature, etc.). Any self-respecting literature review concludes with a research statement/hypothesis that is expressly stated and is the foundation from which the rest of the paper will be built. If your literature review does not do the above, it needs to. Ask your professor for assistance if you have questions. Access any peer-reviewed journal article as an example. You should have read a multitude of high-quality articles by now.

Body I, including insightful and critical analysis of data/information related to your topic: The body of your paper is just as it sounds; the core of your paper. In this section of your paper, you should explain/argue in some detail for or against your research thesis/hypothesis. You will need to use research you have from your literature review and other materials to do this correctly, but this section of the paper must demonstrate your clear understanding of the topic through a critical analysis of supporting material related to your topic. The exercise from CJ 576 (i.e., meta-analytic review of D.A.R.E) should help you here. By way of example, if you are proposing a new way of implementing community policing in a large metropolitan police department, you will want to explain in detail what community policing is and why new management strategies are necessary (comparing old strategies with new). Here is a good place to do that.

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Body II, including key information from your ‘track’ concentration (i.e., management or policy): You have chosen a track within which to specialize in this program: management or policy. In fact, you likely selected your Capstone paper/project based on your track specialization. For example, students who are specializing in the management track may have chosen a Capstone paper/project topic that involves changing agency practice through using innovations in criminal justice administration and management. If management is your track specialization, you will need to demonstrate in your paper a clear and critical understanding of management practice that directly relates to your paper/project topic. You will need to include specific concepts learned from CJ 520: CJ Administration and Management in this section of your paper to demonstrate your command of this information. Continuing with the example above, if you are looking to implement a new method of managing community policing, you will want to address issues related to organizational change, job descriptions, etc. (information specifically from CJ 520) in this course to demonstrate that you understand. You should plan to include three specific management issues in this section.

If you selected the policy track within which to specialize, it is likely that your Capstone paper/project reflects this preference and includes policy recommendations/changes/proposals to existing agency policy or provides the foundation for promoting new policy initiatives. If policy is your track specialization, you will need to demonstrate in your paper a clear and critical understanding of policy that directly relates to your paper/project topic. You will need to include specific concepts learned from CJ 583: CJ Policy in this section of your paper to demonstrate your command of this information. Continuing with the example above, if you are looking to implement a new method of managing community policing and wish to evaluate this from a policy perspective, what policy changes would be necessary and what would they be?

Body III, including suggestions for improvement/policy recommendations: The third section of the body of your paper must include suggestions for improvement/change to whatever it is your researching. For example, if you are looking at modifying the management structure of an organization to accommodate organizational change, you will need to discuss how this change will benefit the agency in question as well as other stakeholders. If you are proposing policy changes to current urinalysis protocols, how will this policy impact the organization and stakeholders?

In either case, it is likely you are wishing to make change to management or policy because you believe what you are proposing is better than the status quo. This section of your paper is where you will justify why your idea is better and what outcomes will result. You must make specific suggestions for change and improvement to management/organizational structure and policy recommendations, depending on your area of specialization.

Conclusion: Finally, you will need to conclude your paper. At this point you have put substantial effort into your paper. Close this chapter of your life (and your attendance in this program) with a ‘bang’.

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The Capstone paper/project is due in stages. In all cases, submissions are due by **11:00PM CST** on the day they are due.

Part I:

Literature Review and Body I and Body II

Wednesday, Week #4

Part II:

Final paper (to include Literature Review, Body I, II, III, and Conclusion)

Wednesday, Week #8

Your Capstone Paper/Project must be a **minimum of 25 pages** in length (does not include references), maximum 12-point font, 1-inch margins, include your name on the paper, and utilize proper APA citation format. An example of APA format is in the Resource area. The entire paper must adhere to APA format, including citations.

Assessment Method: Students will be graded on their Capstone paper/project using review using the Capstone Paper Grading Rubric.

GRADING

Assignments for this course will be scored using a points system. Below is an explanation of how each assignment type will be scored.

Assignment Type	# of Assignments	Point Value	Total Points
Introduction	1	50	50
Discussions	4	50	200
Comments	20	10	200
Capstone Paper/Project			
Part I	1	200	200
Part II	1	250	250
		TOTAL	900

Grades earned on each assignment will be added together and will be divided by the total number of points possible in the course. Below is the overall point scale/grading schema for the course.

Total points possible for the term = 900.

900 - 810 = A
809 - 720 = B
719 - 630 = C

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629 - 540 = D
539 and below = F

Grades will be available in the gradebook so that students can track their progress in the course in 'real time'.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University 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

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.

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.

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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

Contact of Professor

Students wishing to contact the Professor should visit his office during the stated office hours or make an appointment. Students may also contact the Professor using the office telephone number or the email, both are provided on the first page of this class syllabus.

Research Assistance:

For research assistance, students should contact: Reference Librarian at James G. Gee Library Room 218; 903-886-5719 or <http://www.tamuc.edu/library>

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Academic Honesty

Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including (but not limited to) receiving a failing grade on the assignment, the possibility of failure in the course and dismissal from the University. Since dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. In **ALL** instances, incidents of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Department Head. Please be aware that academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) cheating, plagiarism, and collusion.

Cheating is defined as:

- Copying another's test or assignment
- Communication with another during an exam or assignment (i.e. written, oral or otherwise)
- Giving or seeking aid from another when not permitted by the instructor
- Possessing or using unauthorized materials during the test
- Buying, using, stealing, transporting, or soliciting a test, draft of a test, or answer key

Plagiarism is defined as:

- Using someone else's work in your assignment without appropriate acknowledgement
- Making slight variations in the language and then failing to give credit to the source

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Collusion is defined as:

- Collaborating with another, without authorization, when preparing an assignment
If you have any questions regarding academic dishonesty, ask. Otherwise, I will assume that you have full knowledge of the academic dishonesty policy and agree to the conditions as set forth in this syllabus.

Students should also reference the following link for more detailed information.

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/colleges/humanitiesSocialSciencesArts/departments/sociologyCriminalJustice/default.aspx>

APA Citation Format Policy

It is very important that you learn how to cite properly. In some ways, citations are more important than the actual text of your paper/assignment. Therefore, you should take this task seriously and devote some time to understanding how to cite properly. If you take the time to understand this process up front, it will save you a significant amount of time in the long run (not to mention significant deductions in points).

In the social and behavioral sciences (including Criminal Justice), we use APA (American Psychological Association) format. As a rule of thumb, one cites whenever they are paraphrasing other people's words or when they quote other's words directly. You may learn to cite from a variety of different sources including the APA Tutorial and the sources listed below and in the CJ 500 Orientation Course.

www.apastyle.org

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/02/>

www.library.cornell.edu/resrch/citmanage/apa

It is the student's responsibility to understand how to cite properly. If you have questions, feel free to ask.

Late Work

The way this course is designed, every course hour should be spent either working on your paper/posting a discussion/answering discussion or waiting for comments from your professor. If late papers are routinely accepted, it would be impossible for you to complete your work and the program. Therefore, I **strongly** suggest that should you need to turn in an assignment late, you contact your professor **immediately**. It is completely within an instructor's discretion to allow or not allow late work in this course. Verifiable documentation will be requested/required.

Drop Course Policy

Students should take responsibility for dropping themselves from the course according to University policy should this become necessary.

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.

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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

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things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring 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

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 based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination based on 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 East Texas A&M University buildings only by person 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.

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Counseling Center Services

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connections 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

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Every effort will be made to adhere to the course schedule as noted below. However, unforeseen circumstances may require changes to the schedule. In that case, changes will be announced via University Email and in Announcements. The professor reserves the right to change the schedule if necessary and depend on the progress of the class. I highly recommend that you follow the schedule outlined below **VERY CAREFULLY** so that you are sure to turn your assignments in on time.

Please note that all discussions/comments/assignments are due by 11:00PM CST in D2L on the day they are due as outlined in the syllabus. Please note that this course runs on a Monday-Sunday schedule.

WEEK #1 January 13, 2025 - January 19, 2025

Monday	Read the syllabus carefully and make note of important course due dates. I would strongly encourage you to begin work immediately on your paper, emailing your professor with any questions as you work.
Wednesday	Post a Week #1 Introduction where you introduce yourself, accept the conditions of the syllabus, agree to the Rules of Netiquette. Please note that this post is required for ALL students and will be graded. The link to the Rules of Netiquette may be found under Course and University Procedures/Policies under Student Conduct or here: http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html
Friday	Complete Discussion Assignment #1 – Due -Your Capstone Topic / Research Question
Sunday	Complete Comments for Discussion Assignment #1

WEEK #2 January 20, 2025 - January 26, 2025

Friday	Suggested Reading List Review
Sunday	

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WEEK #3 January 27, 2025 - February 2, 2025

Friday	Complete Discussion Assignment #2 Due – Statistical Data / Information
Sunday	Comments for Discussion Assignment #2 due

WEEK #4 February 3, 2025 - February 9, 2023

Wednesday	Part 1 of Capstone Paper/Project Paper
Friday	Suggested Reading List Review
Sunday	

WEEK #5 February 10, 2025 - February 16, 2025

Friday	Complete Discussion Assignment # 3 Due – Track Specialization
Sunday	Comments for Discussion Assignment # 3

WEEK # 6 February 17, 2025 – February 23, 2025

Friday	Suggested Reading List Review
Sunday	

WEEK # 7 February 24, 2025 – March 2, 2025

Friday	Discussion Assignment # 4 Due – Improvement / Policy / Policy Consideration / Conclusion
Sunday	Comments on Discussion Assignment # 4

WEEK # 8 March 3, 2025 – March 7, 2025

Wednesday	Final Capstone Paper Due March 5, 2025
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