



EAST TEXAS A&M
UNIVERSITY

CJ 1301-01E CRN 81313
INTRODUCTION TO CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Course Syllabus: Fall 2025
Tuesday & Thursday 11:00am-12:15pm
Ferguson 311

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: J. Alex Purdon, Ph.D.

Office Location: Ferguson 229

Office Hours: 12:15pm-2:00pm Tuesday & Thursday or by virtual appointment.

Office Phone: (903) 886.5332

University Email Address: James.Purdon@etamu.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 (Found on D2L)

Burke, A. S., Carter, D., Fedorek, B., Morey, T., Rutz-Burri, L., & Sanchez, S. (2019). *Introduction to the American criminal justice system*. Open Oregon Educational Resources.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides a historical and philosophical overview of the American criminal justice system, including the nature, extent, and impact of crime; criminal law; and justice agencies and processes. In addition, the course focuses on the philosophical, ethical, and practical underpinnings, which shape the operation of the criminal justice system. In exploring these areas, the course addresses the history, theory, research, legislation, and policy implications related to criminal justice.

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Describe the history and philosophy of the American criminal justice system.
2. Explain the nature and extent of crime in America.
3. Analyze the impact and consequences of crime.
4. Evaluate the development, concepts, and functions of law in the criminal justice system.
5. Describe the structure of contemporary federal, state, and local justice agencies and processes.
6. Define critical terms and concepts, including deviance, crime, criminal justice, criminology, law, and justice.
7. Critique the various perspectives on law, morality, and justice.
8. Analyze different viewpoints on deviance, crime, and social control.
9. Summarize the major theoretical approaches to crime causation.
10. Delineate how competing perspectives of justice shape criminal justice system policies and outcomes.

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.

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.

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ASSESSMENTS

Attendance and Participation

Attendance is an essential part of the learning process; thus, students are expected to attend class regularly. This ensures students stay engaged with the course material through the instructor's interactive lectures, benefit from in-class discussions and activities, and learn from guest speakers from the field.

While some absences are unavoidable, you are responsible for making up missed absences and notifying the professor. Students are allotted three (3) unexcused absences before seeing a reduction in their class attendance score. Missing more than 25% of the class will result in a failing grade or removal from the class. See Attendance and Participation under the Course Specific Procedures/Policies section below for more information.

Class participation is an essential part of the learning process. Students are expected to have completed all the required readings and to be prepared to contribute to class activities and discussions. The goal of class participation is to engage in critical thinking, practice communication, and develop collaborative skills, all essential elements for professional success. Thus, participation will be assessed based on the frequency, relevance, and quality of the contributions to class discussions, group activities, and online platforms. **Mere attendance alone without active engagement will result in a poor grade.** The instructor reserves the right to implement class participation strategies if participation falls below expectations

Altogether, class attendance and participation are worth 15% of the total grade.

Career Reflection

As part of the Career Module, students will explore professional opportunities in the criminal justice field through a combination of interactive assignments, guest speakers, and career development tools. Students will then complete at least **three (3) embedded assessments** (e.g., Work Interest, Values, Personality, Leisure, and Skills) from the *Focus2* Self-Assessment. Instructions on accessing *Focus2* Self-Assessment can be found on the D2L assignment page. After completing these assessments, students will write a 2–3-page reflection essay addressing 6 questions found on D2L assignment page (i.e., discussing the results and how they relate to possible careers in criminal justice). This assignment is worth 10% of the total grade.

Exams (Midterm and Final)

There will be two (2) exams over the course of the semester, a Midterm and a Final. 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 are graded based on completeness, accuracy, and coherency. Each exam is worth 15% of the total grade.

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Mini Case Analysis

Students will select a real or fictional criminal case and analyze how it moved through the criminal justice system. The assignment requires applying course concepts from policing, courts, and corrections, as well as relevant theoretical perspectives. Students should critically examine how the system functioned in the case, reflect on any institutional challenges or strengths, and discuss how justice was either achieved or not. This assignment should be 2-3 pages in length, follow APA norms, and is worth 10% of the total grade.

Myth-Busting Reflection Journals

Throughout the course, students will confront common myths and misconceptions about the criminal justice system. In these short reflection journals, you will choose one myth and explain why it is inaccurate, using evidence from the course (e.g., textbook). Each entry should connect the myth to course topics and explain its broader impact on public perception or policy. There will be a total of three (3) journal entries due throughout the semester and each journal entry should be between 1-2 pages in length. This assignment is worth 15% of the total grade.

Reforming A Criminal Justice Issue (CJ) Presentation

Students will work in small groups to analyze a major criminal justice problem (e.g., mass incarceration, wrongful convictions) using **either** a criminological theory or policy analysis. Then, students will prepare and deliver a 10-minute professional presentation on the topic. Each group will explain the nature and scope of the issue, conduct an analysis using their selected lens, and propose a realistic, evidence-based reform strategy or solution to the problem. This is to be evidence-based and will need to include at least three (3) academic (e.g., peer-reviewed) sources. Students are encouraged to use any relevant aids to facilitate the presentation, such as visuals (i.e., Adobe Acrobat, PowerPoints, GoogleSlides, or Prezi), **brief** segments or video clips (less than 1 minute), and pictures. The presentation is worth 10% of the total grade.

Weekly Quizzes

To make sure students keep current with the assigned reading, students must complete weekly quizzes on D2L. These quizzes may contain open-ended questions (i.e., short answer) or objective questions (i.e., multiple choice or true/false questions) and are due at the end of every week. Quizzes are **“open-book”**—meaning that students may refer to their textbook, the online lectures, articles, and notes while taking the quizzes. But do note, **all quizzes are timed**. And even though these quizzes are “open book,” students may not confer in any way—electronically, by phone, or in person—with anyone else while taking any quiz. Missed quizzes 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 only count the top ten (10) quizzes, and drop the rest. In total, the weekly quiz assignment is worth 10% of the total grade.

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GRADING

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

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

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

Table 2: Assessments and Their Values		
<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Attendance & Participation	50	15%
Career Reflection	50	10%
Exams (Midterm and Final)	150 (75 each)	30% (15% each)
Mini-Case Analysis	50	10%
Myth-Busting Journals (3)	75 (25 each)	15%
Reform A CJ Issue Presentation	50	10%
Weekly Quizzes (lowest 1 will be dropped)	50	10% (1% each)

Grades can be accessed on D2L.

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

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

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.

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

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

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Attendance and Participation

Class attendance is a vital part of participation and key to your success in this course. You are expected to attend class regularly and come prepared to engage with the material and your peers.

Attendance will be recorded using a simple attendance roster at the beginning of each class. If you arrive after the roster has circulated, it is your responsibility to speak with me immediately after class to ensure you are marked present. Failure to do so will result in an unexcused absence.

Missing more than 25% of class meetings—including both unexcused absences and chronic lateness—may result in a failing grade or removal from the course in accordance with university policy.

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.).

Chronic Lateness Policy

Chronic lateness disrupts the class and undermines your engagement with the material. Arriving late more than three (3) times will begin to impact your attendance grade. For every additional three instances of lateness, your attendance grade will be reduced by 5%. For example: 1-3 late arrivals: no penalty, 4-6 late arrivals: -5%, 7-9 late arrivals, -10%, 10+ late arrivals: -15% (and a required meeting with the instructor).

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* (22nd ed.) in all papers.

Extra credit

No individualized extra credit work will be permitted in my class. Why? Extra credit is unfair to the students who do their work diligently all semester long. However, extra credit may be offered to the whole class for a variety of activities that go beyond what is anticipated in the syllabus.

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Late or Missed Assignments

All assignments are due by 11:59 pm on the stated due date unless otherwise noted. Late assignments will be penalized a full letter grade (10%) for every calendar day the assignment is late. After 5 days, late work will not be accepted unless you have made prior arrangements with the instructor.

Each student has **one (1) “Oops” Token** they can use during the semester for a no-questions-asked, **one-week extension** on any assignment (except exams). Simply submit the assignment late within 7 calendar days of the original deadline and comment “Using my Oops Token.” No penalty will be applied, and no explanation is required.

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>

ETAMU Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx).

<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 East Texas A&M University 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](http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.03)

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.03)

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<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

East Texas A&M University

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

East Texas A&M University 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 East Texas A&M University 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 East Texas A&M University Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

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 East Texas A&M University campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

EAST TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SUPPORTS STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M University, 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

AI Use in COURSES

East Texas A&M University 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 Criminal Justice		08/25-08/31
Readings: Syllabus	--	--
Readings: 1.1-1.5	--	--
Weekly Quiz 1	1%	08/31
WEEK 2: Conflict, CJ Models, and Victimization		09/01-09/07
Labor Day-Campus Closed	--	09/01
Readings: 1.6-1.16	--	--
Weekly Quiz 2	1%	09/07
WEEK 3: Police		09/08-09/14
Readings: 6.1-6.14	--	--
Weekly Quiz 3	1%	09/14
Week 4: Courts and Legal Actors		09/15-09/19
Readings: 7.1-7.10	--	--
Weekly Quiz 4	1%	09/19
WEEK 5: Corrections		09/22-09/28
Readings: 8.1-8.,13	--	--
Weekly Quiz 5	1%	09/28
Assignment: Myth-Busting Journal #1	5%	09/28
WEEK 6: Community Corrections		09/29-10/05
Readings: 9.1-9.16	--	--
Weekly Quiz 6	1%	10/05
Assignment: Mini-Case Analysis	10%	10/05
WEEK 7: Review & Midterm Exam		10/06-10/12
Study!	--	--
Assignment: Midterm	15%	10/09
WEEK 8: Measuring Crime		10/13-10/19
Readings: 2.1-2.5	--	--
Weekly Quiz 7	1%	10/19
WEEK 9: Criminal Law Foundations		10/20-10/26
Readings: 3.1-3.5	--	--
Weekly Quiz 8	1%	10/26

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WEEK 10: Substantive and Procedural Law		10/27-11/02
Readings: 3.6-3.12	--	--
Weekly Quiz 9	1%	11/02
Assignment: Myth-Busting Journal #2	5%	11/02
WEEK 11: Criminal Justice Policy		11/03-11/09
Readings: 4.1-4.5	--	--
Weekly Quiz 10	1%	11/09
WEEK 12: No Class! Conference		11/10-11/16
WEEK 13: Criminological Theory		11/17-11/23
Readings: 5.1-5.12	--	
Weekly Quiz 11	1%	11/23
WEEK 14 Careers in Criminal Justice		11/24-11/30
Bring a laptop!	--	11/25
THANKSGIVING BREAK 11/26-11/28		
Assignment: Myth-Busting Journal #3	5%	11/30
WEEK 15: Presentations		12/01-12/07
Readings: TBA	--	
Assignment: Career Reflection	10%	12/05
Assignment: Presentation	10%	12/05
WEEK 16: FINAL EXAM/EXPERIENCE		
Assignment: Final Exam	15%	12/09 10:30-12:30

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