CJ 577 (02.W): CJ PLANNING & EVALUATION

Fall 2025
10/20/2025 through 12/12/2025

Online

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor:	Mike Tapia, Ph.D.
Office Location:	SS 231
Office Hours:	Tu/Th 4:00pm – 5:30pm
Office Phone:	Phone: 903-886-5332 (messages only)
University Email Address:	michael.tapia@etamu.edu
Preferred Form of Communication**:**	email
Communication Response Time:	Normally within 24-48 hours

COURSE INFORMATION

No Textbook: All Readings found online and posted on D2L as they come in

Course Description

We'll study topics in CJ program, agency, and policy evaluation with some focus on those in Texas. We examine the various methods and approaches involved in evaluating the value of programs and practices common to criminal justice at the federal, state, and local levels. We use classical and current readings on program and policy evaluation, attempting to determine whether historical and current practices meet their objectives and goals, and, in short, whether and how well they "work". Do they make sense and are/were effective, efficient, needing improvement, etc. What data and mode of analysis provide the best measures or tests of these outcomes.

The American CJ System is a vast network of subsystems and agencies, each with numerous functions. This results in a very large number of ever-changing programs and practices that might be focused upon – far more than a single course can cover, especially in five weeks. Thus, students will have more freedom and leeway on the topics they choose to discuss, develop, evaluate, and write about than in most classes. The course culminates in the writing of a term paper that draws on published academic research that evaluates a particular CJ Policy, agency, program, or practice.

After learning about expert evaluations and their methods, students design an evaluation of their own on their chosen topic.

Student Learning Objectives & Outcomes

1) To examine the basis of CJ programs, policies, and practices in the broader society;

2) To understand what drives CJ program or policy creation.
3) To explore the effectiveness of particular CJ programs, policies, and practices;
4) To learn how to evaluate these elements with unbiased data, analyses, experiments, etc.
5) To choose a particular program, policy, or practice, profile its history and purpose, and evaluate its effectiveness for your term project,
6) To build toward your final project with selected reading summaries & presentation.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

Course Requirements:

1.	Journal Article Summaries: 3 x 7pts each	21%
2.	Presentation	20%
3.	Weekly Discussions	10%
4.	Term Paper Drafts & Updates: 3 x 3 pts each	9%
5.	Term Paper	40%
	TOTAL	**100%**

1. ***Readings Summaries***: To facilitate class discussions and to develop your skills in critically reviewing published research for your term paper, you are required to summarize three (3) academic journal articles from outlets on CJ Program Evaluation or CJ Policy Analysis. A summary guide with bulleted points to address in these summaries is on D2L.

Articles are searched & located by students using the ETAMU Library Homepage or Google/Google Scholar online. I suggest browsing the following Journals to begin your search for CJ program evaluation articles:

Justice Evaluation Journal	*American Journal of Evaluation*
CJ Policy Review	*Justice Policy Journal*
Criminal Justice and Behavior	*Criminal Justice Policy Review*
Evaluation & Program Planning	*Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*
Criminology & Public Policy	*Policy and Politics*

Here are some examples of foundational Evaluation Research to orient you to this subfield:

Braga, A.A., & Weisburd, D. L. 2013. Editors' Introduction: Advancing program evaluation methods in criminology and criminal justice. *Evaluation Review*, 37(3-40. 163-169.

McGuire, J. & Hatcher, R. 2001. Offense-focused problem solving: Preliminary evaluation of a cognitive skills program. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 28(2), 564-587.

Nagin, D. S., & Weisburd, D. 2013. Evidence and Public Policy: The example of evaluation research in policing. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 12(4), 651-679.

Palumbo, D. J., & Petersen, R. D. 1994. Evaluating Criminal Justice Programs: Using policy as well as program theory. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 17(2), 159-164.

Students should browse these journals and select three (3) full-text articles to summarize. To access these journals, use the "One Search" feature of the TAMUC Library homepage at: https://inside.tamuc.edu/library/index.php and type in the journal title e.g."*Justice Evaluation Journal*". This will prompt you to sign in with student credentials and it will take you to the journal link. While titles for 2024-25 are visible, these most current articles are not always available in full text. But 2023-24 and all years prior are typically fully available. Utilize the Inter-Library Loan program link at the library website to order hard to find items. They show up in your in-box within days of the request.

During the first week of class, as part of your participation grade, choose your three (3) readings from any of the journals listed above, download them, and send .pdf copies to the professor with the full APA formatted citations in an email for approval. He will schedule them for discussion on a weekly reading list, and post updates to D2L.

Summaries are due on Sunday evening before the week the reading is scheduled for discussion. Each summary is worth 7% of your course grade. *See* the 1-page *Summaries handout on D2L for details*. Hit each bullet point on the summaries guidelines to earn a good grade.

2. ***Presentation & Writeup***: To get you thinking critically about programs, policies, and practices within policing, courts, corrections, and any of their subcomponents, you'll develop an audio-narrated slideshow presentation via powerpoint. Send it to me for uploading to D2L for the class to view and post comments on. During weeks 2 & 3, you will present on one or more CJ programs, policies, or practices. Browse the entirety of the syllabus, slides, journal articles & other readings, D2L links, online searches, and look to your prior CJ courses to get ideas for topics. The quality of your presentation & write-up accounts for 20% of your course grade. (*See the Presentations handout on D2L for details*).

3. ***Class Participation via 'Discussions' on D2L***. This course is a seminar, where concepts, issues, and ideas related to formally evaluating CJ Programs, Policies, and Practices are presented then debated and developed. Therefore, weekly online discussions of the readings, student summaries, student presentations, and other materials is essential. Early in the week, I post a series of 'Discussions' in D2L. Your job is to comment with valuable insights and provide files or internet links to relevant, research material on that topic to support and supplement your comments. Superficial comments like "good job", "I liked the reading", and purely opinionated comments are not credited. General notes about the quality of class participation in Discussions are posted periodically on D2L throughout the term. Discussion comments are graded on a scale of 0-1.25 each week for a total maximum of 10 points for the term. As such, the quality of your Class Participation constitutes 10% of your course grade.

4. ***Term Paper Drafts & Progress Updates***: At two points in the semester (3/19/23 and 3/26/23) I will gauge your progress on the term paper, assign a grade ranging from 0 to 3, and provide feedback. For the first draft, include: 1) a general statement of the CJ Program, Policy, or Practice you are interested in evaluating, 2) your approach to researching it, thoughts about how best to evaluate it, and how your work is progressing to date; 3) key concepts in your topic 4) summaries of published evaluation research on your topic you've found so far 5) identify other key resources for examining the topic 6) problems that you have encountered, or expect to encounter, and 7) a works cited/references page. These write-ups are due on the dates listed above and the written feedback I

provide throughout the term should be reflected in your final term papers. These term paper progress updates constitute <u>9% of your final grade.</u>

5.   *Term Paper*: Your primary assignment for the course is to develop a term paper (6-8 pp., double-spaced). This begins with a literature review (summary) of several published evaluations of a particular CJ Program, Policy, or Practice. While you will learn about many CJ Programs, Policies and Practices via Discussions and others' presentations of material, you will focus and specialize on a single topic for your own term paper.

Towards the end of the paper, <u>include a *section labeled "Program Evaluation".*</u> This is where you design a hypothetical study *detailing how you would evaluate whether the program, policy, or practice is effective or not. This means you will detail the data you would hypothetically gather & analyze to determine the value of a program, policy, or practice. i.e. is it meeting its stated goals and objectives? Is it an effective and efficient practice?*

A preliminary description of the paper idea (2 page minimum), plus a list of references collected to date is due on <mark>Sunday November 9th</mark>. A second update is due <mark>Sunday, November 30th</mark>. The quality of <u>your final term paper will count as 40% of your course grade</u>.

<div align="center">

Term Paper Due on or before <mark>Friday, Dec 12th, :</mark> last class day.

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To summarize, course requirements are weighted as follows:

Journal Article Summaries	21%
Presentation	20%
Participation in Weekly Discussions	10%
Term Paper Progress Updates & Drafts	9%
Term Paper	<u>40%</u>
TOTAL	**100%**

Final grades are determined as follows:

A = 90%-100%	D = 60%-69%
B = 80%-89%	F = 59% or Below
C = 70%-79%	

Minimal Skills Needed:
1. Ability to use Microsoft Word & Powerpoint
2. Ability to navigate the D2L Learning System
3. Ability to navigate ETAMU Library Resources to find journal articles/readings per the instructions above
4. Ability to navigate the internet to find journal articles/readings and other items for discussion posts
5. Ability to complete your own work independently, without plagiarism or the use of Artificial Intelligence (A-I) tools to write papers

Instructional Methods

This is a fully online graduate seminar delivered on the D2L/Brightspace Platform.

Student Responsibilities and Tips for Success in the Course

1. Read this syllabus with great care and pay attention to its details. Mark assignment due dates and other important notes in your personal calendar. Revisit the syllabus periodically and ask questions if you have them.

2. The key to doing well in an online class is to thoroughly and carefully review all content on the D2L course page.

3. ==The class is designed for you to use your assignments to build towards your final project==, so please start reviewing readings, slides, etc., and brainstorming ideas for your projects a.s.a.p. I am always willing to discuss your ideas.

4. Use a handpicked set of readings for your Term Paper as well as for Presentation Projects & Summary requirements.

5. You should conduct internet searches to contribute high-quality (informative) entries to online Discussions. Search for published evaluations of the programs, policy(ies), and practices being discussed, for example. Do the same for your Presentation and the Final Paper.

- When selecting readings and presentation topics, make them coincide with your final project topic wherever possible. This will greatly increase your efficiency in the class.

6. Avail yourself of resources at the ETAMU Writing Center for proofreading and advice: [TAMUC Writing Center](). Do not plagiarize or purchase term papers off of the internet or use Artificial Intelligence tools to present as your own work. This never ends well for the student or the instructor, as filing paperwork for academic misconduct with the university takes time out of everyone's busy schedule. Please see the info on Academic Dishonesty/Integrity on p. 6 below.

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

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 ETAMU campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

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

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor. His preferred method of contact is ETAMU email: michael.tapia@etamu.edu, or via D2L's messaging program.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY 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

ETAMU 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

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
East 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

East 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/34SafetyOf EmployeesAndStudents/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.

ETA&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**

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Detailed Schedule   (Subject to Minor Adjustments)

Week 1: *Course Orientation, Intros, CJ Program Eval Foundations, Browse & Select Three Readings to Summarize*

Date   Topics / Duties

10/20:   ▪ Carefully read the Syllabus & browse all Course Materials on D2L
(Mon.)   ▪ Post a brief Self Intro/Bio per the instructions on the professor's emailed intro notes. This comprises half of your Class Participation grade for Week 1.
              ▪ View this Recorded Library Workshop: "Finding Scholarly Peer reviewed articles on Your Research Topic": **Finding peer reviewed, scientific, academic journal articles**

10/21:   ▪ Browse the Journals listed on p. 2 & choose three (3) Articles to Summarize
(Tues.)   per the instructions on p. 2 of this syllabus.
              ▪ Send the Instructor a .pdf copy of each article you wish to Summarize. Upon approval, he will assign you a due date, update the reading list schedule, and post it to D2L. This comprises the other half of your Week 1 Participation Points.

10/23:   ▪ Review Slides on General Overview of CJ Policy and Criminology
(Thurs.)   ▪ Review The ABA's Comprehensive List of CJ Policies from the 1996-2022 Link
              ▪ Brainstorm for your Presentation project (especially Presenters 1 & 2)
              ▪ those summarizing readings for Week 2 Discussion, begin reading

10/24:   ▪ Browse the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) List of Programs Link &
(Fri)   The TX Vera Institute of Justice link.
              ▪ Browse the TX Justice Initiative and TX Center for Justice Websites

       ▪ Presenters 1 & 2: work on your project.

10/25:   ▪ Review the Slides on the current state of CJ Policy (entire class)
       ▪ Week 2 Summary writers, begin writeup
(Sat)   ▪ Presenters 1 & 2: Spend the weekend assembling your Presentation.
   *******Feel free to email the instructor with ideas, questions, and issues to discuss.*******

10/26:   ▪ Review the "Assessing the Effectiveness of CJ Programs" Link (entire class)
(Sun.)   ▪ Presenters 1 & 2: Presentations due by 11:59 pm.
       ▪ Week 2 Summary writers, submit 2-page summary by 11:59pm.

Week 2: *Discussions over Presentations 1 & 2 and Scheduled Article Summaries*

<u>Date</u>   <u>Topics</u> / <u>Duties</u>

10/27:   ▪ Week 2 Article Summaries Posted for Class Discussion
(Mon.)   ▪ Presenters 1 & 2 Projects Posted for Class Discussion
       ▪ View: ETAMU Library Video HOW TO START A RESEARCH PROJECT

10/28:   ▪ View Presentations & Article Summaries.
(Tues.)   ▪ Review the Slides on Specialty Courts, Corrections, and Police in Schools
       ▪ Link the content in Presentations & Article Summaries to slides, readings, and internet
       research to inform your Week 2 Discussion comments.

10/29 – 10/31: ▪ Presenters 3 & 4 work on Presentation
(Wed.-Fri.)   ▪ Week 3 Article Summary writers: read your selection(s) & draft your Summary(ies).

11/2   ▪ Week 2 Discussion Posts Due by 11:59pm.
(Sun.)   ▪ Week 3 Article Summaries, Due by 11:59pm.
       ▪ Presenters 1 & 2 Project Write-ups Due by 11:59pm.
       ▪ Presentations 3 & 4 Due by 11:59pm.

Week 3: *Discuss Presentations 3 & 4, Reading Summaries, &*
    ***********Prelim. Term Project Statement / Ideas Due*********

11/3:   ▪ Presentations 3 & 4 Posted for Class Discussion
(Mon.)   ▪ Week 3 Article Summaries Posted for Class Discussion

11/4:   ▪ Reminder to search for citations to inform & support your Week 3 Discussion comments.
(Tues)   ▪ Re-examine your Summaries reading selections to best/better fit with your term paper topic.

11/5 – 11/8: ▪ Work on 2-page preliminary term paper statement: See description on p. 3 above and
(Wed. – Sat.) D2L Assignment Guidelines

11/9:   ▪ 2-page prelim term paper statement/draft due by 11:59pm (entire class).
(Sun.)   ▪ Presentations 5 -7 due
       ▪ Presenters 3 & 4: Project write-ups due by 11:59pm.
       ▪ Week 3 Discussion Posts due by 11:59pm (entire class)
       ▪ Week 4 Article Summaries Due by 11:59pm.

Week 4: *Term Paper Feedback, Discuss Presentations 5 - 7,* and Week 4 Reading *Summaries*

11/10:
(Mon)
- Presentations 5 - 7 Posted for Class Discussion
- Review Slides on Homeland Security & National Guard Crime Control actions

11/11:
(Tues.)
- Week 4 Article Summaries Posted for Class Discussion

11/12 – 11/14:
(Wed. – Fri)
- Review Graded Term Paper Assignment Feedback

11/16:
(Sun.)
- Week 4 Discussion Posts due by 11:59pm (entire class)
- Week 5 Article Summaries Due by 11:59pm.

Week 5: *Concepts Continued, Discuss Reading Summaries, Draft 2 Term Papers*

11/17:
(Mon.)
- Review Slides on Re-Entry, Females & Corrections, The Death Penalty & LWOP, & Juvenile Corrections

11/18:
(Tues.)
- Week 5 Article Summaries Posted for Class Discussion
- View this Recorded Library Workshop: "Developing Your Research Question" :
  https://youtu.be/jkZ5slFUPAk?feature=shared

11/19-11/22:
(Wed.- Sat.)
- Work on Term Paper 2nd Draft

11/23
(Sun.)
- Week 5 Discussion Posts Due by 11:59pm.
- Week 6 Reading Summaries Due by 11:59pm

Week 6: *Concepts Continued, 2nd Draft of Final Project Due.*

11/24:
(Mon.)
- Review Slides on the Police & Youth
- Browse Week 6 Readings

11/25:
(Tues.)
- Week 6 Article Summaries Posted for Class Discussion

11/26 – 11/29:
(Wed. - Sat.)
- Work on Term Project 2nd Draft

11/30:
(Sun.)
- Week 6 Discussion Posts due by 11:59pm
- Week 7 Article Summaries Due by 11:59pm.
- 2nd Draft of Final Project Due by 11:59pm

Week 7: *Concepts Continued, Week 7 Discussions, Final Project Refinement*

12/1:
(Mon.)
- Review Slides on Drug War
- Browse Week 7 Readings

12/2:
(Tues.)
- Week 7 Article Summaries Posted for Class Discussion

12/3:
(Wed.)
- Review Graded Term Paper 2nd Draft & Feedback

12/4 – 12/6
(Thurs. – Sat.)
- Revise Final Project Draft

| 12/7: | ▪ Week 7 Discussion Posts due by 11:59pm |
| (Sun.) | ▪ Week 8 Article Summaries Due by 11:59pm. |

Week 8: *Final Readings & Concepts, Final Project Due.*

| 12/8: | ▪ Review Slides on Status Offenders |
| (Mon.) | ▪ Browse Week 8 Readings |

| 12/9: | ▪ Week 8 Article Summaries Posted for Class Discussion |
| (Tues.) | ▪ Review Slides on Juvenile System Overview & Critique |

| 12/10: | ▪ Review Graded Term Paper 2nd Draft & Feedback |
| (Wed.) | |

| 12/11: | ▪ Final Projects Due |
| (Thurs.) | |

| 12/12: | ▪ Final "Exam" Due 11:59pm |
| (Fri.) | ▪ Week 8 Discussion Posts Due by 11:59pm. |

Final "Exam":   Due on or before Friday, Dec. 12th, 11:59pm.

The final "exam" is a brief reflection regarding

1) your final project and 2) the class as a whole. Also answer these additional Qs: 3) What did you learn from writing the paper/grant proposal, 4) any regrets, 5) different approaches you would've taken, 6) what would be the next steps in continuing on with your research?, 7) If your work schedule and location permitted it, gauge your interest in / preference for in taking in-person master's level courses vs. the online program, and finally, 8) Did you access the MSAC program orientation page, CJ 500 prior to, or during this course, and if so, did it help you with your research and writing skills?

There is no page requirement for this reflection. It will constitute the last portion of your grade for the Term Paper Progress Updates. Each entry is worth 3 points total x 3 ~ 9 pts.