



## **CJ 2314-01E**

### **CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION**

COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2025

Meets 08/25/2025 – 12/12/2025  
Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 11:00-11:50AM  
BA 243

### **INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

**Instructor:** Serdar San, Ph.D.

**Office Location:** Ferguson 204

**Office Hours:** 10:00-10:45AM Mondays & Wednesdays in person or by virtual appointment

**University Email Address:** serdar.san@etamu.edu

**Preferred Form of Communication:** E-mail

**Communication Response Time:** E-mail is the best way to contact me. I will respond to email and phone calls within 24 hours in most cases, 48 hours on weekends or holidays. If you do not receive a response within that timeframe, please reach out again.

### **COURSE INFORMATION**

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

#### **Required Text/Materials:**

SAGE Vantage for Brandl, S. G. (2024). *Criminal investigation* (6th edition). SAGE.  
ISBN: 9781071968444

#### **Optional Texts and/or Materials:**

Other additional and/or supplementary required readings may be assigned during the semester.

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## **Course Description**

An examination of theories and practices of the investigation process in the criminal justice system. An analysis of information and application of operational techniques relating to crime scenes, forensic sciences, interviews, and interrogations. A study of issues concerning rules of evidence, trial testimony, and other constitutional processes.

## **Student Learning Outcomes**

This course offers a comprehensive examination of criminal investigation and the vital role criminal evidence plays in the process. Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Define the criminal investigation process, criminal evidence, and forensic science.
2. Explain the various types of evidence, including direct, circumstantial, testimonial, real, documentary, and demonstrative.
3. Define basic legal terms such as probable cause, arrest, arrest warrant, search, and search warrant.
4. Explain the rules of evidence and discuss the qualities that evidence must have to be admissible in court.
5. Identify the most important guidelines that should be followed in managing major crime scenes and collecting evidence from them.
6. Define behavioral evidence and criminal profiling.
7. Define digital evidence and identify the electronic devices that may provide such evidence in investigations.
8. Discuss several methods of obtaining crime information from the public, including tip lines, television shows, and AMBER Alerts.
9. Identify the four ways by which people may die (manner of death), the factors that must be considered in determining manner of death, and the relative frequency of the various manners of death.
10. Understand the investigation of burglary, vehicle theft, arson, and other property crimes.
11. Describe the court process as an adversarial process and explain the roles of defense attorneys, prosecuting attorneys, judges, and the police in the process.
12. Discuss the crime detection technologies that will likely be used in the future as well as the implications of these technologies.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Minimal Technical Skills Needed**

For this course, it is recommended to have regular access to a computer and reliable internet. If you do not have access at home, you may be able to use a public library or come to campus to use computers in the library or one of the student computer labs. A

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basic understanding of Microsoft Office Programs (using and being able to perform tasks employing Microsoft Word and PowerPoint) is required and you must be able to use Internet search tools, access D2L, use email, and know how to download and upload documents.

For your privacy and security, only your official ETAMU email account will be used for email communication. No information will be sent to personal email accounts. Please check your ETAMU email regularly.

## Instructional Methods

This course is a face-to-face course with some online components and class attendance is **highly recommended**. **Students who attend class will be more likely to understand the material and will therefore be in a better position to do well in this course**. Students who, for whatever reason, miss a lecture will have to make arrangements to get notes from another student. If you miss class the day an assignment is due, the assignment must be submitted **before** class begins.

This course requires the use of [SAGE Vantage](#), an online learning platform that integrates textbook content with assignable multimedia activities and auto-graded assessments to enhance student engagement and ensure accountability. You will be expected to actively utilize Vantage learning platform to access the textbook readings and study tools, and complete various integrated assignments/assessments which may include weekly end of chapter quizzes, concept-based knowledge checks and multimedia activities. **As outlined in this course syllabus, Vantage assignments will make up a significant part/% of your overall course grade**. If you have not purchased access to Vantage, SAGE provides complimentary 14 day access to Vantage. After 14 days or completion of 3 Chapter Tests you will be **required** to purchase Vantage to complete any further coursework. Please buy access as soon as possible as Vantage will be a key part of your grade and you cannot keep up in the course without it.

Further information regarding how to register for and purchase Vantage can be found here and also will be provided on D2L:

[https://sagevantage.softwareassist.com/Content/Downloads/Vantage\\_Registration\\_and\\_Purchase\\_Info\\_for\\_Integrated\\_Courses.pdf](https://sagevantage.softwareassist.com/Content/Downloads/Vantage_Registration_and_Purchase_Info_for_Integrated_Courses.pdf)

Information about SAGE Vantage learning platform can be found here:

<https://collegepublishing.sagepub.com/students/get-ready-for-class-with-vantage>

This course utilizes the D2L learning management system for the dissemination of supplemental materials. D2L allows for additional communication between students and the professor. Students should check D2L regularly for email announcements, handouts, articles, etc. that may be posted by the professor.

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## Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

This course is designed to help students explore, understand, and critique criminal investigation procedures and practices. Students who engage with the assignments and course material and who come to class well prepared and willing to learn from the experiences and analysis of others will get the most out of the course.

Students experiencing any difficulty writing assignments are very much encouraged to visit the [ETAMU Writing Center](#). In addition, awareness of the course information and university policies provided in this outline will reduce frustration and maximize enjoyment of the course.

Class announcements will generally be posted on D2L and/or e-mailed to all students at their ETAMU email accounts. Messages for individual students will be e-mailed to ETAMU email accounts only, and only student messages from ETAMU email accounts will be read by the professor. It is important that you check D2L and your university email account regularly. Failure to do so cannot be used as a reason for dispensation of term work policies and course work requirements.

I am happy to answer questions about the course and about the field of criminology. If you have a question, please follow these guidelines:

1. **Check the course outline.** It is likely that a question about the course will already be answered in the course outline.
2. **Visit the professor's office hours.** I can be reached by e-mail for brief, factual questions only. If you have a question or concern that requires substantive or back-and-forth discussion, please come to my office hours. You are very welcome to come to my office hours with other students in the class if you are more comfortable raising questions or chatting that way. It is unlikely that I will be available outside my office hours, so it is advisable that you make yourself available during those times.
3. **Ask well in advance.** I aim to respond to student e-mail within 24 hours. I will get back to you as soon as possible, but it is unlikely that I will be able to respond straight away. If you do not hear back from me after 24 hours, please re-send your e-mail. At busy times (e.g., prior to class tests or deadlines), there may not be time to meet with everyone who comes to my office hours. It is advisable that you come to ask questions well in advance.

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## GRADING

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

| GRADE | PERCENT      | POINTS  |
|-------|--------------|---------|
| A     | 90%-100%     | 450-500 |
| B     | 80%-89%      | 400-449 |
| C     | 70%-79%      | 350-399 |
| D     | 60%-69%      | 300-349 |
| F     | 59% or Below | < 300   |

Weights of the assessments in the calculation of the final letter grade:

| Assessment                   | Point Value   | Percentage |
|------------------------------|---------------|------------|
| Vantage Assignments          | 350           | 70%        |
| Exams (Midterm and Final)    | 100 (50 each) | 20%        |
| Career Reflection Assignment | 50            | 10%        |
| Total                        | 500           | 100%       |

## Assessments

### Vantage Assignments

SAGE Vantage assignments will make up a significant portion of your overall course grade in this class. There will be 4 different types of Vantage assignments you are expected to complete:

- 1) Chapter Quizzes: These are end-of-chapter summative assessments made up of 15 questions pulled randomly from a pool and shuffled. The goal of chapter quizzes is to measure progress and long-term retention.
- 2) Knowledge Checks: These are short assignments which provide formative assessments after each major section of text content to reinforce retention of key concepts.
- 3) Video Activities: These are short, formative assessments that aim to build critical thinking and data literacy while consistently engaging students in an interactive application of text content.

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- 4) Reading Activities: These are short, formative assessments built around a reading.

### **Midterm and Final Exam**

There will be two in-class tests over the course of the semester (midterm and final exam). The purpose of the in-class tests is to assess your overall understanding of five critical areas essential to understanding criminal investigations: background and contextual issues, criminal evidence, legal procedures, evidence collection procedures, and forensic science. These exams will include a variety of objective questions, such as true/false and multiple choice. Exams will be administered in-person on an assigned day according to the course schedule. Students will only be allowed to use a writing instrument and will have the full class time to complete the exam. Each in-class test is worth 50 points, for a total of 100 points. **Please do not miss a test, no make-up is planned or will be allowed without documented and verified excuses.**

### **Career Reflection Assignment**

For this assignment, you are expected to write a short essay (500–750 words) explaining how the course content applies to a specific career in the criminal justice field. This assignment is designed to help you connect course concepts to real-world professional roles.

For this essay, you should first select a career that involves criminal investigation, directly or indirectly. Appropriate choices include but are not limited to:

- Law Enforcement Officer or Detective
- Crime Scene Investigator
- Criminal Defense Attorney or Prosecutor
- Forensic Psychologist
- Intelligence Analyst
- Federal Agent (e.g., FBI, DEA, Homeland Security)
- Digital Forensics Examiner

After selection your particular career, you should organize your essay using the following format:

#### **I. Introduction (approx. 1 paragraph)**

- Introduce the selected career and its general responsibilities and how this career links to your values, interests, and personal strengths (VIPRESS)
- Present a thesis that outlines how this course prepares individuals for this role.

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## **II. Analytical Body (2–4 paragraphs)**

- Select 2–3 specific skills, knowledge or competencies from the course (e.g., evidence collection, suspect interrogation, interviewing witnesses, crime analysis, report writing, legal procedures).
- Explain how each is relevant to the selected career's daily functions or responsibilities.
- Use specific examples, hypothetical scenarios, or case studies to support your analysis.

## **III. Conclusion (1 paragraph)**

- Summarize your key points.
- Reflect on the significance of investigative knowledge in your career trajectory.

### **Extra Credit**

No extra credit will be offered in this course.

## **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](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).

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**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**

If you have any questions about the class and/or the topics we are covering throughout the semester or have an issue that you think the professor needs to be made aware of, please send an email to my ETAMU email address. I will respond to emails within 24 hours in most cases, 48 hours on weekends or holidays. If you do not receive a response within that timeframe, please reach out again.

Emails are expected to be concise, clear, and respectful. Please make sure you include the title of the course (preferably in the subject line), and your full name in your email.

I will disseminate any important course-related information through your university email accounts and D2L announcements. When questions arise during the course of this class, please remember to check course syllabus and announcements in D2L for an answer before you contact me.

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

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

You are required to use the citation style and format of the American Psychological Association (APA) in your assignments in this course. Review the *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.) or similar APA Citation Style online resource. For assistance with writing or formatting in APA, seek guidance from me, the [ETAMU Writing Center](#), [the Waters Library](#), and [OWL of Purdue](#).

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## **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 [Procedures 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/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf)

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf)

<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/academics/graduateschool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyFormold.pdf>

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

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## **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](mailto: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 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 East Texas A&M campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

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## **East Texas A&M Supports Students' Mental Health**

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M, 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 <https://www.etamu.edu/counseling-center/>

## **AI Use Policy**

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

Every effort will be made to adhere to the course schedule as noted below. However, unforeseen circumstances may require changes to the schedule. Changes will be announced via university e-mail and D2L course announcements.

| Week                              | Readings/Assessments Due  |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Week 1</b><br>08/25-08/31/2025 | Introduction and Syllabus Review<br>Chapter 1 The Investigation of Crime<br>Vantage Assignments (08/31)   |
| <b>Week 2</b><br>09/01-09/07/2025 | Labor Day-Campus Closed (09/01)<br>Chapter 2 The History of Criminal Investigation<br>Vantage Assignments (09/07)   |
| <b>Week 3</b><br>09/08-09/14/2025 | Chapter 3 The Role and Documentation of Evidence in Criminal Investigations<br>Chapter 4 The Law and Criminal Investigations<br>Vantage Assignments (09/14) |
| <b>Week 4</b><br>09/15-09/21/2025 | Chapter 5 The Crime Scene, Forensic Evidence, and DNA<br>Vantage Assignments (09/21)  |
| <b>Week 5</b><br>09/22-09/28/2025 | Chapter 6 Interviews and Eyewitness Identifications<br>Chapter 7 Interrogations and Confessions<br>Vantage Assignments (09/28)                              |

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|------------------------------------|--|
|                                    |  |
| <b>Week 6</b><br>09/29-10/05/2025  | Chapter 8 Behavioral Evidence and Crime Analysis<br>Vantage Assignments (10/05)  |
| <b>Week 7</b><br>10/06-10/12/2025  | Chapter 9 Digital Evidence<br>Vantage Assignments (10/12)  |
| <b>Week 8</b><br>10/13-10/19/2025  | Chapter 10 Information from Social Media, the Public, Video, Information Networks, and Other Sources<br>Midterm Exam (In-class) (10/15)<br>Vantage Assignments (10/19) |
| <b>Week 9</b><br>10/20-10/26/2025  | Chapter 11 Death Investigation<br>Vantage Assignments (10/26)  |
| <b>Week 10</b><br>10/27-11/02/2025 | Chapter 12 The Investigation of Sex Crimes, Assault, Domestic Violence, and Child Abuse<br>Vantage Assignments (11/02)   |
| <b>Week 11</b><br>11/03-11/09/2025 | Chapter 13 The Investigation of Robbery<br>Vantage Assignments (11/09)   |
| <b>Week 12</b><br>11/10-11/16/2025 | Chapter 14 The Investigation of Burglary, Vehicle Theft, Arson, and Other Property Crimes  |

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|  | Vantage Assignments (11/16)  |
| <b>Week 13</b><br>11/17-11/23/2025       | Chapter 15 The Investigation of Fraud and Cybercrime<br>Vantage Assignments (11/23)  |
| <b>Week 14</b><br>11/24-11/30/2025       | Thanksgiving Break-Campus Closed (11/27-11/28)<br>Chapter 16 The Presentation of Evidence<br>Vantage Assignments (11/30)               |
| <b>Week 15</b><br>12/01-12/05/2024       | Chapter 17 Crime, Intelligence-Led Investigations, Technology, and the Future of Criminal Investigation<br>Vantage Assignments (12/05) |
| <b>Final Exam: 12/10 10:30am-12:30pm</b> |  |

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