



CJ 2314-01E

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION

COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2026

Meets 08/20/2026 – 12/11/2026
Tuesday and Thursday 11:00 AM-12:15 PM
Austin Engineering, Technology & Agricultural
Sciences Building Room: 238

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Serdar San, Ph.D.

Office Location: Ferguson 204

Office Hours: 10:00-10:45 AM Tuesdays & Thursdays 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 emails and phone calls within 24 hours in most cases, and within 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:

Brandl, S. G. (2024). *Criminal investigation* (6th edition). SAGE.

Optional Texts and/or Materials:

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

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

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.

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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 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, and class attendance is **highly recommended**. Should you miss class, it is your responsibility to ask a classmate what was missed. If you miss class the day an assignment is due, the assignment must be submitted **before** class begins.

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

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 come to class well prepared and willing to learn from others' experiences and analyses will get the most out of the course.

Students experiencing any difficulty with writing assignments are strongly encouraged to visit the [ETAMU Writing Center](#). In addition, awareness of the course information and university policies outlined here will reduce frustration and maximize enjoyment of the course.

Class announcements will generally be posted on D2L and/or emailed to all students at their ETAMU email accounts. Messages for individual students will be emailed 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

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email account regularly. Failure to do so cannot be used as a reason for dispensation of term work policies and coursework 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 I may not be able to respond straight away. If you do not hear back from me after 24 hours, please resend 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.

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

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

Assessment	Point Value	Percentage
In-Class Tests (4 @ 100 points)	400	80%
Group Presentation	100	20%
Total	500	100%

Assessments

In-Class Tests

There will be **four** in-class tests over the course of the semester. 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 be allowed to use only a writing instrument and will have the full class period to complete the exam. Each in-class test is worth 100 points, for a total of 400 points. **PLEASE DO NOT MISS A TEST; NO MAKE-UP TESTS ARE PLANNED OR ALLOWED WITHOUT DOCUMENTED AND VERIFIED EXCUSES.**

Group Presentations

As a final project, each group of students will present on the investigation of a historical crime case. Students will prepare and deliver a 10-minute professional presentation on the case they are researching. This presentation should cover relevant items such as background facts of the case, the outcome of the case, and how each pillar of the criminal investigation process (i.e., types of criminal evidence collected, the evidence collection process, the investigation, and the presentation of evidence) was involved in the case. Students are encouraged to use any relevant aids to facilitate the presentation, such as visuals (e.g., PowerPoint, Google Slides, or Prezi), brief segments of video clips, and pictures. Presentations are tentatively scheduled for **Week 15 and 16**. Students will work in groups of (5) and everyone is expected to contribute to the project equally (i.e., everyone must research and contribute to the presentation to receive full credit). Student groups will be announced by the professor by the end of Week 2. Further information about the assignment will be provided on D2L.

Extra Credit

No extra credit will be offered in this course.

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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 the 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

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>

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Interaction with Instructor Statement

If you have any questions about the class or the topics we are covering throughout the semester, or have an issue you think the professor should be made aware of, please email me at my ETAMU email address. I will respond to emails within 24 hours in most cases and within 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 this class, please check the course syllabus and announcements in D2L for answers before contacting 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 a 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](#).

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may necessitate the instructor's modification of 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>

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ETAMU Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedures 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 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](#)

[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

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/>

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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.

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).

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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

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
Week 1 08/20/2026	Introduction and Syllabus Review
Week 2 08/25/2026 08/27/2026	Chapter 1 The Investigation of Crime Chapter 2 The History of Criminal Investigation
Week 3 09/01/2026 09/03/2026	Chapter 3 The Role and Documentation of Evidence in Criminal Investigations Chapter 4 The Law and Criminal Investigations
Week 4 09/08/2026 09/10/2026	Chapter 5 The Crime Scene, Forensic Evidence, and DNA Chapter 5 The Crime Scene, Forensic Evidence, and DNA
Week 5 09/15/2026 09/17/2026	Class Review Test #1 Chapter 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Week 6 09/22/2026 09/24/2026	Chapter 6 Interviews and Eyewitness Identifications Chapter 7 Interrogations and Confessions

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Week 7	
09/29/2026	Chapter 8 Behavioral Evidence and Crime Analysis
10/01/2026	Chapter 9 Digital Evidence
Week 8	
10/06/2026	Chapter 10 Information from Social Media, the Public, Video, Information Networks, and Other Sources
10/08/2025	Fall Break (No Classes)
Week 9	
10/13/2026	Class Review
10/15/2025	Test #2 Chapter 6, 7, 8, 9, 10
Week 10	
10/20/2026	Chapter 11 Death Investigation
10/22/2026	Chapter 11 Death Investigation
Week 11	
10/27/2026	Chapter 12 The Investigation of Sex Crimes, Assault, Domestic Violence, and Child Abuse
10/29/2025	Chapter 13 The Investigation of Robbery
Week 12	
11/03/2026	Chapter 14 The Investigation of Burglary, Vehicle Theft, Arson, and Other Property Crimes
11/05/2026	Class Review
Week 13	
11/10/2026	Test #3 Chapter 11, 12, 13, 14
11/12/2026	Chapter 15 The Investigation of Fraud and Cybercrime

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Week 14	
11/17/2026	Chapter 16 The Presentation of Evidence
11/19/2026	Chapter 17 Crime, Intelligence-Led Investigations, Technology, and the Future of Criminal Investigation
Week 15	
11/24/2026	Group Presentations
11/26/2026	Thanksgiving Break-Campus Closed
Week 16	
12/01/2026	Group Presentations
12/03/2026	Group Presentations
Final Exam (Chapter 15, 16, 17): Tuesday, 12/08 10:30am-12:30pm	

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