



CJ 1301-01W CRN 84187
INTRODUCTION TO CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Course Syllabus: Fall 2026
08/20/2026 through 12/11/2026

Web-Based Class / Online Course

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Lindsey B. Shelley, M.S.

Office Location: Online course

Office Hours: Available by email, virtual appointment, telephone call

University Email Address: LBowden@leomail.TAMUC.edu

Communication Response Time: Emails will be answered within 24 hours; please use your university email address.

COURSE INFORMATION

Required Textbook

Siegel, L., & Worrall, J. (2022). *Introduction to Criminal Justice* (17th ed.).
Cengage Learning.

Print ISBN: 9780357630921, 0357630920 / eText ISBN: 9798214346656

Online purchase links: [Amazon](#), [VitalSource](#), [Cengage](#), [Sena Books](#), [Direct Textbook](#)

Additional Resources and Materials

Links to supplementary readings and materials will be posted on the D2L course website. It is imperative that you read the assigned chapters and be prepared to participate in class discussions. Any additional material will be assigned and posted in D2L.

The syllabus and schedule are subject to change.

Course Description

Introduction to Criminal Justice:

This course provides an overview of the American criminal justice system, emphasizing the three primary components of the system: law enforcement, the courts, and corrections. Students will examine the historical development, structure, functions, and theoretical foundations of criminal justice institutions and explore how these components interact to respond to crime and administer justice. The course introduces students to key concepts related to criminal law, policing, judicial processes, sentencing, incarceration, probation and parole, rehabilitation, victims, and contemporary criminal justice issues. Students will also examine how research, legislation, constitutional principles, public policy, ethics, and social factors influence criminal justice practices and decision-making. Through critical analysis of research and current issues, students will evaluate competing perspectives on crime and justice and develop a foundational understanding of the challenges, policies, and practices that shape the criminal justice system.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Define critical terms and concepts related to criminal justice, including crime, deviance, criminology, criminal law, justice, social control, and punishment.
2. Explain how crime is measured in the United States and identify the strengths, limitations, and potential biases of major crime data sources.
3. Discuss the nature, purpose, and development of law and explain how laws influence the structure and operation of the criminal justice system.
4. Analyze competing perspectives on law, morality, justice, and social control and evaluate how these perspectives influence responses to crime.
5. Compare biological, psychological, sociological, and multidisciplinary explanations of deviance and criminal behavior.
6. Summarize major theories of crime and apply theoretical concepts to contemporary examples of criminal behavior and criminal justice issues.
7. Explain how competing philosophies and perspectives of justice influence criminal justice policies, practices, decision-making, and outcomes.
8. Describe the nature and application of criminal law, criminal procedures, constitutional protections, and criminal punishment in the United States.
9. Explain the history, structure, functions, and interrelationships of the major components of the criminal justice system, including law enforcement, courts, and corrections.
10. Evaluate contemporary criminal justice policies and issues using research, empirical evidence, ethical reasoning, and critical thinking to assess their effectiveness, fairness, and impact on individuals and communities.

The syllabus and schedule are subject to change.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

The course is delivered online through the myLeo Portal (D2L Brightspace). Students will need access to a computer and reliable internet. Accessing the course online is equivalent to attending class. Students must be able to use internet search tools, access D2L, use email, and download and upload documents.

Assignments, not otherwise specified, should be submitted in Word (.doc or .docx) format.

For privacy and security, students should use their ETAMUC email account for email communication. The instructor will not send information to personal email accounts. Please check your school email regularly.

Instructional Methods

This course is fully online and asynchronous, so students are not required to participate at the same time. Students may access the course anytime and from any location with an internet connection. Students should review course materials regularly in D2L. Weekly modules close on Sundays at 11:59 PM, except during the final week of the course.

Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to write clearly and use APA style format to cite sources. Students are expected to use proper grammar and correct spelling. Students must cite scholarly sources both in-text and in the reference list. Students will be expected to think critically and analytically about the topics covered to participate in class discussions. Students are expected to read all assigned materials and be prepared to learn actively and participate.

Submit all specified assignments, except for discussion forums, in Word (.doc or .docx) format. A submission that is not attached or not capable of being opened is the same as no submission. Discussion forum submissions must be written in the textbox rather than as an attachment. Attachments in the Discussion Forum are difficult to follow and are not appropriate for that venue. The last assignment will be submitted as a PowerPoint or Google Slides presentation.

Use the textbook as the first resource for all substantive information. Cite and reference the textbook correctly in discussion forums, assignments, and exams. This course cannot be completed without the assigned textbook.

The syllabus and schedule are subject to change.

Tips for Success in the Course

1. The instructor will provide a Course Calendar to help keep track of assignments and due dates. The course assignments and due dates are also listed on the last page(s) of the syllabus.
2. Review the Syllabus and the Course Calendar to remain up to date on requirements for the course.
3. Read announcements and check your email. Any updates or changes to the syllabus, assignments, or required readings will be posted on D2L.
4. Communicate with your instructor and peers during the Class Discussions.
5. Set aside time to complete your coursework. Pace yourself and submit your assignments on time.
6. Utilize student resources: [A&M-Library](#), [IT Support](#), and the [Writing Center](#).

ASSESSMENTS / ASSIGNMENTS

Attendance and Participation

Attendance and participation in course activities are essential to the learning process; thus, students are expected to attend class by signing into D2L. Students are expected to have completed all required readings and be prepared to contribute to class discussions. Students are responsible for notifying the instructor of any missed assignments.

Introduction Assignment

Students will write a brief paragraph introducing themselves, their background, and their future goals. Include personal thoughts, opinions, and/or events that influenced your interest in criminal justice.

Discussions

Students will participate in eight (8) class discussion forums to engage with course materials and their peers. Initial posts should respond to the prompt, incorporate the required reading material, and include additional research. These posts should be a minimum of 400 words and follow APA style format. **Peer Responses:** Students will respond to at least one (1) classmate's post in a substantive way that moves the discussion forward.

Exams

There will be five (5) exams over the semester that align with the textbook. 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. Students may begin the exam at any time on the scheduled day (12:00 AM to 11:59 PM). The exams will be timed and will cover material from the assigned chapters and readings. Exams will be administered via D2L. Once a student begins the exam, they must complete and submit it within the specified time frame and before 11:59 PM.

Movie Reflection

Students will choose a movie or crime-drama episode and critique how accurately it portrays policing. Analyze the show based on the principles from this course (e.g., how policing is portrayed in the show compared to how policing actually functions). This paper should include the name of the movie/show, a short summary of the episode, and a comparative analysis of the movie/show. The paper must be at least two (2) full pages, double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman. Word (.doc or .docx) format.

Policy Project

Students will assess the issues and merits of a criminal justice policy. This paper should explain the issue, how the policy attempts to address it, and whether the policy has support or validity. Students must use official government statistics and/or primary sources (i.e., peer-reviewed journal articles) to assess the policy accurately. This project introduces students to a variety of criminal justice-related issues while also exposing them to critical research practices. The paper should be at least three (3) pages, double-spaced, in 12-point Times New Roman, and follow APA style. Word (.doc or .docx) format.

Case Study Paper

Students will research and write a detailed examination of a particular case within a real-world context. This project requires students to choose a case, summarize the background facts, and explain the roles of the three criminal justice institutions (i.e., law enforcement, courts, and corrections) in the case. This paper should be a minimum of four (4) pages in length, double-spaced, 12-point font, Times New Roman font, and conform to APA style format. Word (.doc or .docx) format.

Case Study Presentation

Students will prepare a 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 justice system (i.e., police, courts, and corrections) was involved. Students are encouraged to use aids to facilitate the presentation, such as visuals, brief segments, video clips, and pictures. Submit this assignment as a PowerPoint presentation or Google Slides.

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 Values				
<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Points Each</i>	<i>Total Points</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Exams	5	44	220	44%
Discussions	8	5	40	8%
Intro & Responses	8	5	40	8%
Movie Reflection	1	50	50	10%
Policy Project	1	50	50	10%
Case Study Paper	1	50	50	10%
Presentation	1	50	50	10%
TOTAL			500	100%

Grades can be accessed on D2L.

The syllabus and schedule are subject to change.

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

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 coursework in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student should 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, a campus computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or have difficulties with the course material, please contact the 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:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

Interaction with Instructor Statement

The instructor for this course is available by email. Please send all correspondence from your university email. If you are requesting a virtual meeting or telephone call, please allow at least 24 hours for confirmation of a date/time. Email responses during weekends may be delayed. The instructor will review material on the D2L platform daily.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Attendance and Participation

Regular attendance is essential even for an online course. Each week's assignments comprise instructional tasks and classwork activities that correspond to a specific module on D2L. All work is expected to be completed and submitted on time, within the specified module.

All essays, assignments, exams, and papers should be proofread and corrected before submission. Points will be deducted for grammar and spelling errors.

Citations – APA Style Format

All course assignments, essays, exams, and projects must adhere to the guidelines described in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA). All citations and references must adhere to APA style, or points will be deducted. In-text citations and a corresponding reference section line item are required in academic writing for all statements of fact, either to show who is being paraphrased (attribution citation) or to show the source used to draw your own independent conclusion (evidence citation), as well as being required for direct quotes. Using APA style properly is simply a matter of reviewing the APA Publication Manual and matching in-text citations or reference section line items against the examples. If they do not match exactly for capitalization, italics, punctuation, etc., they are not correct.

Plagiarism

Submitted work for this course is expected to be original work by the student, prepared specifically for this course, not using work from previous courses without express permission from the instructor. Submitted work is expected to be prepared without aid from other persons, including other students and other faculty. Please see the Academic Integrity section for further information.

Discussion Forum

Discussion Board Posts will be accepted if submitted before the close of the module on Sunday at 11:59 PM, Central Standard Time. No special permission is needed to use this late submission. Participation, by definition, cannot occur once the window has passed. Initial Discussion Board posts and Peer Response posts will not be accepted or graded after the due date outlined in the schedule; they will be considered a missing assignment.

The instructor will evaluate each unit periodically throughout the semester. There is no set schedule for receiving graded work.

Late or Missed Assignments

All work must be submitted prior to the end of the course. Late work cannot be accepted or graded after the course has ended. The university submission deadlines for course grades cannot be changed or altered by the instructor.

All work will be submitted via the online D2L platform. If there is any cause that you cannot or are not able to submit an assignment on or before the scheduled date, please email the instructor prior to the due date/time. The instructor has discretion to accept or deny late or missing assignments.

Assignments and Exams will not be accepted or graded after the last day of the course.

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. The instructor will announce any changes to the syllabus 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>

TAMUC Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateschool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyFormold.pdf>

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

Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other 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

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation 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/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

Counseling Center Services

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

AI USE IN COURSES

Texas A&M University-Commerce 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. Document any use of such software. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism). Individual instructors may disallow 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

Week	Assignments	Due Date
1	<i>Crime, Law, and Criminal Justice</i> Part I	
	Introduction	Aug 20-23
	Read Syllabus	
2	Read Chapter 1: Crime & CJ	
	Class Discussion 1	Aug 26-30
3	Read Chapter 2: The Nature & Extent of Crime	
	Peer Response 1	Sept 2-6
	Assignment 1: Movie Critique	Sept 4-6
4	Read Chapter 3: Crime & Victimization	
	Class Discussion 2	Sept 2-6
5	Read Chapter 4: Criminal Law	
	Peer Response 2	Sept 16-20
	Exam 1 (Chapters 1-4)	Sept 18
6	<i>Police & Law Enforcement</i> Part II	
	Read Chapter 5: Public Policing	
	Class Discussion 3	Sept 23-27
7	Read Chapter 6: The Police	
	Peer Response 3	Sept 30-Oct 4
8	Read Chapter 7: Issues in Policing	
	Class Discussion 4	Oct 7-11
	Assignment 2: Policy Project	Oct 9-11
9	Read Chapter 8: Police & Rule of Law	
	Peer Response 4	Oct 14-18
	Exam 2 (Chapters 5-8)	Oct 16
10	<i>Courts & Adjudication</i> Part III	
	Read Chapter 9: Court Structures	
	Class Discussion 5	Oct 21-25
11	Read Chapter 10: Pretrial & Trial	
	Peer Response 5	Oct 28-Nov 1
12	Read Chapter 11: Punishment	
	Class Discussion 6	Nov 4-8
	Exam 3 (Chapters 9-11)	Nov 6
13	<i>Corrections</i> Part IV	
	Read Chapter 12: Sentences	
	Peer Response 6	Nov 11-15
14	Read Chapter 13: Corrections	
	Class Discussion 7	Nov 18-22
	Exam 4 (Chapters 12-13)	Nov 20
	Assignment 3: Case Study	Nov 20-22
	<i>Contemporary Challenges</i> Part V	
15	Read Chapter 14: Prison Life	

	*No Assignments – Enjoy Thanksgiving Break	
16	Read Chapter 15: Juvenile Justice	
	Class Discussion 8	Dec 2-6
	Assignment 4: Presentation	Dec 4-6
17	Read Chapter 16: Crime & Justice	
	Peer Response	Dec 7-11
	Exam 5 (Chapters 15-16)	Dec 10 & 11

The syllabus and schedule are subject to change.