



CJ360.01E: Mass Media and Crime

COURSE SYLLABUS: FALL2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Andrew M. Garcia, J.D., Ph.D.

Office Location: Ferguson Social Sciences 206

Office Hours:

Tuesday/Thursdays- 10:00AM-12:30PM (in-person and zoom)

***Additional availability by appointment

University Email Address: Andrew.Garcia@etamu.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: E-mail

Communication Response Time: 24 hours or sooner during normal M-F business hours.

COURSE INFORMATION

Schedule: **Tuesday-Thursday, 12:30PM-1:45PM, Ferguson 141 (SS141)**

Textbook(s) **Recommended**

Jewkes, Y., & Linnemann, T. (2018). <i>Media and crime in the U.S.</i> Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. ISBN-13: 9781071872413

Assigned readings (provided by instructor; accessible on D2L)

Software Required

Microsoft Office (or compatible) word processor

Course Description

This course examines the media's effects on perceptions of crime and justice in America. An examination is performed on media-generated crime and criminal justice policies. An example of media-generated crime would be when politicians/media "emphasize" a problem to essentially "create" a crime or crime wave. A discussion of the effect of social constructionism and the ability of the various types of media to create a new type of crime will occur. An investigation of the impact of various types of media (radio, television, motion pictures, records, and printed sources, etc.) on criminals, crime fighters, and the courts will be conducted.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Develop an introspective and sociological perspective on the media construction of crime as a social problem
2. Explore and critically analyze major theoretical perspectives on mass media and crime.
3. Explore and critically examine the social construction of public attitudes on crime and deviance through major media apparatuses
4. Develop and foster critical thinking skills and the enhancement of the students' abilities to express their ideas in their communication.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

GRADING

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

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

Final course grades will be based on the criteria outlined below.

Course Evaluation

Personal Music Assignment	5%
Newspaper Analysis	10%
Guided Group Debate	10%
Midterm Exam	20%
Film Analysis Papers	30% (15% each)
Class Participation	10%
Final Project PowerPoint (Student Topic)	15%
	100%

Assessments

***Please check your ETAMU email account and D2L daily because important information about this class could be emailed or uploaded to you. A breakdown of course requirements and how each will contribute to your course grade is included below. *Assignments and exams may be made up without penalty if they are missed due to an excused absence.*

Personal Music Assignment (5% of total course grade): Students will search through their personal musical collection (e.g., Spotify or Apple Music) to identify ways in which crime is being characterized and described. Students will identify five (5) songs that include salient descriptions of crime. Students will create a Discussion Board post where they include: artist, song, excerpted lyrics, and a small explanation under each that analyze how criminal behavior is being described and disseminated.

Newspaper Analysis (10%): Students will analyze online newspaper stories in the killing of Brian Thompson (December 4th, 2024), the 50-year-old CEO of the American health insurance company UnitedHealthcare. Utilizing at least 3 media sources, the student will write an academic essay (approximately 750 words, 2.5 double-spaced pages) in which they analyze the construction of crime news in this case. Successful essays will include a thorough discussion of the main issues in media framing (e.g., threshold, predictability, simplification, etc.), identifying key examples from their chosen sources. Students should reference Chapter 2 of the textbook and course lectures for examples and explanation of relevant concepts.

Guided Group Debate: *Monster* [2003] (10%): Students will watch the film *Monster* in class. A class discussion and debate will be held at the conclusion of the film, in which students will be expected to discuss their overall opinions of the film in the context of gender and construction of media crime news. A list of debate questions will be given to students at the beginning of the film. Students will be graded for their active participation in the discussion and ability to make connections and sites of intersection with the course material.

Note: Before all film viewings, students will be required to read, authorize, and sign a waiver form acknowledging the content to be viewed and opportunity for alternative assignments. Students without complete waiver forms will not be allowed to participate in the course viewings.

Film Analysis Papers (30%, 15% for each paper): Students will be conducting a sociological analysis of two films presented in the course: *City of God* and the *Shawshank Redemption*. In these critical analysis papers, students will be given wide latitude to determine the theme and direction of their final paper but are strongly encouraged to incorporate course theories and make cross-application from semester readings. Students will also be required to cite a minimum of two peer-reviewed, academic sources that support their overall argument. A full assignment description and grading rubric for the analysis papers will be uploaded to D2L.

Midterm Exam (20%): One online exam will be administered (on Brightspace/D2L) in this course. The midterm will be graded on a 100-point scale and include 40-50 multiple-choice, true/false, and fill-in-the-blank questions. The exam will cover the assigned readings, uploaded lecture videos, and assigned multimedia. Students will need access to reliable internet services and a quiet work environment conducive to test taking. **The exam and access password will be made available online on the D2L system on October 8th at 9AM and close at 11:59PM. Once a student is ready during testing week and opens the exam, they will have one hour (60 minutes) to complete all of the questions. Students will not be able to go back to it throughout the day!** More detailed information on the procedure for taking online tests in this course can be found on D2L under ONLINE EXAMS in the CONTENT folder.

Class Participation (10%): Students will be graded on active course participation, which is a holistic measure based on their overall willingness to contribute to both in-class and online discussions. Simple attendance does not count as a form of participation! Students will be given a temporary, interim participation grade during the midterm exam to help them track their overall progress.

Final Project [PowerPoint] (15%): Students will choose a relevant crime event described in U.S. mass media and develop a final PowerPoint project analyzing its construction. Students will need to provide analysis slides that provide salient examples (pictures, images, audio clips, etc.) that support their overall thesis and argument. Full instructions and a grading rubric will be uploaded to D2L.

Makeup Exam Policy: I totally understand that life happens. Students that experience exceptional circumstances which cause them to miss a scheduled exam should contact me ASAP. Students that have a university approved absence or otherwise produce written documentation regarding their absence will be scheduled for a make-up time. Students that have not reported their absence or spoken to me within 3 days of the exam will be considered unexcused and receive a "0" score for that exam.

Classroom Guidelines

Electronic Device Policy: Please refrain from the use of electronic devices during class, as it is distracting to not only you, but also to your instructor and peers. Laptops should only be used for note taking unless it is part of the instructor assignment and discussion for the class day.

Classroom Civility, Respect and Tolerance: University study is largely about exposure to a diverse range of worldviews and lived experiences. **This course relies on challenging and critiquing deeply held societal beliefs over a wide range of sensitive topics.** Students should engage in discourse with other students and the instructor respectfully. **My classroom is predicated on principles of mutual respect** and students are expected to exhibit this same respect for the diversity of ideas. **Forms of incivility towards other students or the instructor will not be tolerated.**

Instructor Error: Because instructor errors can and do occur, students should keep an extra copy of any work they submit. In addition, make sure to keep and safeguard graded assignments and tests until final course grades have been posted.

Course Policies

Access to Grades: All grades will be available in D2L. Please note that I am unable to furnish any information about grades or student status via e-mail or telephone. This is considered a violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), even with student permission or at student request. Verify your D2L grades often. Discuss grade posting errors/omissions with me immediately.

Borderline Grades: Students will not be awarded extra points at the discretion of the instructor. Be aware at the outset that this course has a firm policy against grade “bumping”. However, students will be automatically rounded to a higher letter grade at the .5 threshold (i.e., 89.5% is an A).

Incompletes: Grades of “incomplete” are given only under rare circumstances when students provide detailed documentation of a significant crisis (e.g., serious illness of the student or death in the immediate family) near the end of the semester and which render them unable to finish the course. Incomplete grades will not be given under any other circumstances. Students with circumstances negatively affecting their class performance should discuss the situation with me immediately so that we can identify and implement strategies for managing the problem(s).

PowerPoint: Students with approved documentation from Student Disability Services may receive hard copies of the PowerPoint presentations used to develop the online videos. Email the instructor for more information.

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

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

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

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>

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific 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>

<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/>

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 ETAMU 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 ETAMU campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

Counseling Center Services

The Counseling Center at ETAMU 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

ETAMU Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center ETAMU, 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 policy [Draft 2, May 25, 2023]

ETAMU 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

CJ360 Tentative Course Calendar

Week (Dates)	Topics, Videos, and Activities	Readings	Assignments
1 AUG20-21	Course Introduction: Syllabus, course structure, and assessment Theorizing Media and Crime	Jewkes & Linnemann (JL), CH. 1	
2 AUG24-28	Theorizing Media and Crime	JL, CH. 1	Music Assignment (5%) introduced AUG25, due AUG30@11:59PM
3 AUG31- SEP4	Construction of Crime News	JL, CH. 2	Newspaper Assignment (10%) introduced SEP3
4 SEP7-11	Media and Moral Panics Lecture Videos (NO IN PERSON CLASS)	JL, CH. 3	**NO IN-PERSON CLASS DUE TO PROFESSOR TRAVEL** FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS ON D2L***
5 SEP14-18	Media Misogyny: Monstrous Women	JL, CH. 5	Newspaper Assignment due (D2L) SEP17@11:59PM <i>Film Analysis Instructions</i>
6 SEP21-25	Movie Analysis: Monster (2003)	Film Waiver (sign and return before viewing)	Guided Debate (10%) in class on SEP24
7 SEP28-OCT2	Media Constructions of Children	JL, CH. 4	
8 OCT5-9	Midterm Review and Exam		Online midterm exam opens OCT8 on D2L at 9AM and closes at 11:59PM***
9 OCT12-16	Comparative Media and Crime: Multicultural perspectives	Assigned readings on D2L	

10 OCT19-23	<i>City of God (2003)</i>	Film Waiver	City of God Film Analysis Paper due OCT25@11:59PM on D2L
11 OCT26-30	Crime Films and Prison Films	JL, CH. 7	
12 NOV2-6	<i>Shawshank Redemption (1994)</i>	Film Waiver	Shawshank Film Analysis Paper due NOV8@11:59PM
13 NOV9-13	Crime and the Surveillance Culture	JL, CH. 8	<i>Final Project topic selections by NOV12@12:15PM</i>
14 NOV16-20	Rethinking Media and Crime	JL, CH. 10	
15 NOV23-27	SCHOOL HOLIDAY		
16 NOV30-DEC4	PowerPoint Workshop/Student Choice	TBD	

FINAL POWERPOINTS DUE FRIDAY DEC. 4 at 11:59PM (D2L)

*****All course readings besides the text will be found under the Content tab on D2L****