



CJ 1301 (02.W): INTRODUCTION TO CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Fall 2026

Meets 8/20/2026 through 12/11/2026

ONLINE

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor:	Mike Tapia, Ph.D.
Office Location:	SS 231
Office Hours:	M/W/F 12:00 noon – 2:00pm
University Email Address:	michael.tapia@etamu.edu
Preferred Form of Communication:	email
Communication Response Time:	Normally within 24-48 hours

COURSE INFORMATION

*Suggested Textbook: Schmallegger, Frank. 2024. *Criminal Justice: A Brief Introduction*, 14th Edition. Pearson. ISBN: 9780138185312.

*****Older versions of the textbook are also acceptable.*****

*Summaries of relevant chapters and sections are posted as slides on the course webpage, and most test items come from there unless otherwise indicated. Test items appear in red font on the slides.

Course Description

We examine the development, organization, and administration of American justice agencies (police, the courts, & corrections). We also study crime statistics and trends, due process for suspects and defendants, and their justifications.

Student Learning Objectives & Outcomes

- 1) To gain an understanding of the general scope of the American Criminal Justice System;
- 2) To learn to apply the terminology, rationale, and mechanical procedure of the American Criminal Justice System;
- 3) To become prepared for more advanced courses in crime and justice by mastering basic elements & principles.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

Exams

- There are four (4) online tests based on the lecture slides and other relevant materials.
- A 1-page Study Guide is provided no less than a week before the exam.
- Tests are a combination of multiple choice and short answer.

Each test is worth 20 percent of the final grade.

Presentation Project

During Weeks 2 and 3 of the class, students can volunteer to make a Presentation on Crime Stats or Court Cases. See the course *D2L* page for detailed guidelines. Develop an audio-narrated slideshow presentation (via powerpoint, Canva, 'Prezi', 'audacity', VideoNote, or other application of your choice). You will send it to me for uploading to D2L for the class to view and post comments on for extra credit. There are example presentations with audio posted on D2L or you to view. The presentation project & brief writeup is worth 20 percent of the final grade & can be used in lieu of the term paper requirement, also worth 20 percent of the final grade.

- *Presentation Projects start towards the end of Week 2 or early Week 3, whenever students begin sending them in. Brief write-ups of these presentations are due at any point in the term after the presentation.*

Term Paper (Alternative to Presentation Project)

The term paper should be 3 to 4 pages in length plus cover sheet and references. You will use library & web-based research to write about a topic of your choosing in the area of police, courts, or corrections. See the course *D2L* page for a handout with detailed guidelines. The term paper is worth 20 percent of the final grade.

Term Papers and Presentation Write-Ups Due by Friday 12/4/26. (Last Regular Class Meeting)

The final exam (Test #4) is a non-comprehensive test based on readings, lecture slides, and other relevant materials presented in the final part of the term.

To summarize, course requirements are weighted as follows:

In-Class Exams	80%
Presentation Project or Term Paper	<u>20%</u>
TOTAL	100%

Final grades are determined as follows:

A = 90%-100%

B = 80%-89%

C = 70%-79%

D = 60%-69%

F = 59% or Below

Minimal Technical Skills Needed:

1. Ability to use Microsoft Office (Word, .ppt, etc.)
2. Ability to navigate the D2L Learning System
3. Ability to navigate ETAMU Library Resources
4. Ability to navigate the internet and presentation applications.

Instructional Methods

- This is an online course that was originally planned as an in-person course. A last minute decision was made by the CJ department to switch it to online, Please be patient as the instructor makes those adjustments.
- Exams are based on lecture slides, online discussions, guest speakers brought in via zoom, and media items presented in the class.
 - 1-page study guides for exams are provided no less than one week before the date of the exam.
- All slides are made available in clearly labeled modules in D2L, organized into four major sections of the course.
 - Material on the exam appears **in red font** on the lecture slides.

Student Responsibilities and Tips for Success in the Course

1. Read this syllabus with great care and pay attention to its details. Mark test dates and other important notes in your personal calendar. Revisit the syllabus periodically and ask questions if you have them.
2. Students should review all components of the D2L Coursepage and explore each link, document, etc. to become familiar with the course structure and requirements.
3. Students should be in the habit of checking D2L for announcements, new posts, revisions to course material and the weekly schedule (below).
4. To prepare for exams, students should review the study guide and refer back to the lecture slides to locate all items appearing on the study guide. **Hint:** they will be the items **appearing in red font** on the slides. If you obtained the suggested textbook, use its index to locate test items and skim those sections.
5. To do well on the Presentation or Term Paper requirement, select a topic as early in the term as possible and run it by the instructor for approval if the student is unsure about its suitability.

6. Do not wait until the end of the term to begin writing papers. Your instructor is always willing to provide feedback on early drafts. Finally, stick closely to guidelines on the Presentation or Term Paper handout on D2L for best results, grade-wise & heed the info and warnings in item 7. below.

7. Avail yourself of resources at the ETAMU Writing Center for proofreading and advice:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/colleges/humanitiessocialsciencesarts/departments/literatureLanguages/writingCenter/default.aspx> As freshmen or sophomores, you probably haven't written many term papers in your life. As such, please take your paper drafts to the writing center for help or schedule a session with them online. **Do not plagiarize or purchase term papers off of the internet or rely on Artificial Intelligence (A-I) apps like Chat GPT, Gemini, etc. 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 on p. 6 below.**

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

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. Modifications to the syllabus are nearly guaranteed to occur during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance. This is particularly the case in this course, as you know that your instructor initially planned to teach it in-person.

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 & Dishonesty

Students at East 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>

<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/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.

A&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

Tentative Reading, Lecture, & Test Schedule (Subject to Minor Changes)

Part I: *Definitions, History, and Philosophy on Crime in America and System Response*

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading</u>
Week 1 8/21	<u>Move in-person class to online format</u> Course Introduction "What is Criminal Justice?" Submit Personal Bio/Intro online	Chapter 1
Week 2 8/24 – 8/30	Crime Data and Crime Types Frequency and Form of Crime Crime Data Presentations?	Chapter 2
Week 3 8/31 – 9/4	Criminal Law Case Law Presentations?	Chapter 3
Week 4 9/7 – 9/13	Test #1 (Friday 9/11) Over Chapters 1-3, Lectures, & Readings	Test Review

Part II: *Policing*

Week 5 9/14 – 9/20	Test 1 RESULTS Review ONLINE Police Management: Purpose and Organization	Chapter 4
Week 6 9/21 – 9/27	Legal Aspects	Chapter 5
Week 7 9/28 - 10/4	Special Issues & Challenges in Policing	Chapter 6
Week 8 10/5 – 10/11	Test 2 Review Test #2 (Friday 10/9): Ch's 4-6, Lects., Readings, & Speakers	

Part III: *Adjudication: Court Processing*

Week 9 10/12 – 10/18	Test 2 RESULTS Review Online American Court Structure & History	Chapter 7
Week 10 10/19 – 10/25	Courtroom Dynamics Visit to Hunt County District Court (Fri 10/23)?	Chapter 8 See Term Paper Option #2
Week 11 10/26 – 11/1	Criminal Sentencing See Term Paper Option #3	Chapter 9
Week 12 11/2 – 11/8	Test #3 (Friday 11/6) Over Chapters 7-9, Lecture slides, Readings, Tours	Review

Part IV: Corrections: Punishment, Supervision, and Rehabilitation

Week 13 11/9 – 11/15	Test Results Review Probation, Parole, and Community Corrections	Chapter 10
Week 14 11/16	Incarceration: Jail and Prison Hunt County Jail Tour, Monday 11/16 CONFIRMED **11/18 -11/20; instructor conference travel**	Chapter 11
Week 15 11/23 – 11/29	Jail and Prison Life Texas Prison Tour. Choice Moore Unit, Monday, Nov. 23 CONFIRMED Thanksgiving Holiday 11/25 – 11/27	Slideshow
Week 16 11/30 – 12/4	Final Projects Due Wrap up and Review for Final Exam	

Term Papers and Presentation Write-Ups Due: Regular Class Ends, FRIDAY, 12/4/26.

Final Exam: Friday, Dec 11th

*****Final is Not Cumulative: It Covers Chapters 10-12, Lectures, Speakers, & Tours*****