

CRIJ 4345 – Courtroom Testimony – SPRING 2024

University of Texas at Tyler

Professor: Rolf K. Kotulla, MSCJ

Hybrid Course

Class Hours: 6-8:45pm TUESDAY Evenings

**@ UT Tyler College of Arts and Sciences
Soules College of Business #203**

Hybrid - Canvas and Zoom

Phone: (903) 235-7117

Email: rkotulla@uttyler.edu or rkotulla1@gmail.com

Office Hours: I do not have an office. Please send an e-mail or call

Course Description: This course will discuss the presentation of evidence in the criminal court system. Course topics include the evolution of the law of evidence and expert testimony admissibility in the United States, defining the different types of evidence and testimony presented during a trial, and comparing state and federal rules of evidence and expert testimony. Students will complete a mock testimony exercise at the end of the semester.

Course Prerequisites: CRIJ 1301 Introduction to Criminal Justice

Learning Objectives: By the end of the semester, students should be able to:

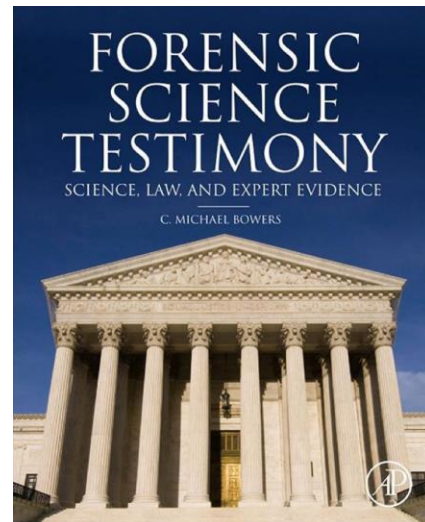
1. Think critically about important issues pertaining to courtroom testimony
2. Identify the immediate needs of professionalism and admissibility of expert testimony
3. Problem-solve solutions to issues found within the presentation of courtroom testimony
4. Identify the criminal justice resources needed to properly testify in a courtroom using forensically sound evidence

Course Materials: This semester there are a variety of readings that you will be assigned for this course. You will be using one required text, but there will be other readings posted online. Please check on Canvas for each unit to identify those.

- **Required:**

Forensic Testimony: Science, Law, and Expert Evidence

- ☑ Author(s) Bowers, C. Michael
- ☑ Publisher Academic Press
- ☑ Print ISBN 9780123970053, 0123970059
- ☑ e-text ISBN 9780123972606



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Course Policies

Class Conduct:

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a courteous manner, both in their interactions with other students and with the professor. Furthermore, this class focuses on a variety of different issues that may spark discussion among students. Please be respectful of others' opinions and experiences, and do not be aggressive or combative over the topics being discussed in the course. You are all adults and are expected to use Netiquette appropriately while working on online assignments. You are also expected to be respectful during your interactions with other students and the faculty members when in the classroom.

Communication:

As a college educated criminal justice practitioner, you will be expected to speak and write professionally, that is, have a highly developed vocabulary and make appropriate word choices, use correct grammar when speaking and writing, and speak and write concisely and accurately. As a professional, your reports will be examined by agency superiors, prosecution and defense attorneys, judges and, under FOI, the media. Your oral communication skills will be judged both within your agency and externally as you speak daily with professionals, conduct interviews, testify in court, and are recorded by or quoted in the press. All written assignments should be word-processed and subjected to thorough spelling and grammar checks. These standards always apply to your everyday speech, emails, etc.

Improving students' oral and written communication skills is a University of Texas at Tyler instructional objective, reinforced by each college, department, and program therein. Therefore, it is an important objective of this course, and every opportunity will be seized to accomplish this objective.

Each class member is expected to complete all assigned readings and demonstrate an increasing ability to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate relevant information. Class members will be assigned as discussion leaders relating to various topics and readings. Active and thoughtful participation through informed comment and demonstration of leadership behavior through class discussion shall constitute a major portion of one's course grade. ***Mere attendance does not constitute participation.***

This is what a UT Tyler Criminal Justice graduate is expected to do in the CJ workplace.

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Course Grades

Your course grade for the semester is dependent on the work that you put into the class. You earn the grade you earn. Please see the following course assignments you are required to complete for the semester.

Beginning of the Semester Quizzes

To ensure you are prepared for the semester, you will have two activities to do in the first days of class. **FIRST**, I am now requiring that students read this syllabus thoroughly and completely outside of class. You will then take an online quiz to test your comprehension of the material covered here. Think of this syllabus as a binding contract – if you violate its rules and regulations, you will be penalized. This assignment can be found with the other Week One work on Canvas and will be worth 20 points toward your final grade. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Each semester, I encounter multiple instances of plagiarism in all my classes. Some of you may think that you are writing papers correctly and are not guilty of plagiarism but are unaware of what really constitutes this violation. Therefore, you will be required to review material on plagiarism and APA citation skills before this class begins in earnest. If – after you review this material – you plagiarize in my class, you will automatically fail the assignment and the entire course as that is within my discretion as a professor. This is your one warning. This **SECOND** assignment can be found with the other Week One work and will be worth 20 points toward your final grade. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Exams: This semester you will have two (Mid-Term and Final) exams that will test your knowledge and ability to apply the concepts learned in class. Each exam will be worth 100 points toward your final grade. The exam format will include multiple choice and true/false questions. In addition, you will have essay answer responses that you will be required to complete. Your exams will be completed online and will be timed.

Makeup exams will only be given with a medical note to excuse the student, and if the professor is informed within 2 days of the exam that the student is ill. I do not allow students to make up exams simply because they forgot or were unprepared. **DO NOT** wait until the last possible minute to take the exam. If you have Canvas issues, it is your responsibility to get those fixed before the exam occurs. Unless there is a widespread outage, individual technology issues may not be accepted as an excuse for an incomplete exam.

Online Quizzes

Reading Quizzes (10 points each): Each reading quiz will consist of 10 multiple choice/true-false questions derived from the text. This will assess how well you are reading the chapters and digesting the information. Reading quizzes will be worth 10 points per quiz and cannot be made up unless there are extenuating circumstances.

Online Weekly Activities: Each week you will be required to complete an online activity that corresponds with the materials presented in the lecture for the week. These will be online activities that will be completed individually. You will be provided with instructions for each activity, and they will differ based on what is required for the week. Each activity, no matter the assignment, will be worth 10 points toward your final grade. Please refer to the course schedule to see the format in which these activities will take place.

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Research Paper:

For the final requirement for this course the student will be expected to conduct a research paper for 100 points of the final average. The subject of the research paper will consist of either a case study or a topic from the course addressing any type of investigative process, criminal investigations, serial killers, etc. The student will be responsible for drafting an **8-page research paper** while always adhering to the APA format. **This research paper will be due the week before final examinations. No late work will be accepted!**

- The selection of the topic for this paper will be up to the student. You must have a pre-selected topic that you are interested in learning more about that is specific to criminal investigations.
 - Due on **February 6th**; minimum of 2-pages covering your thesis, intent of paper and summary of paper. This will count as one of your Weekly Activities
- The topic must be pre-approved by me. It is necessary that you complete a two or three paragraph explanation of the topic for my approval.
- You must use one-inch margins, Times New Roman with 12pt font.
- Use APA format (this includes title page, page numbering, running head, in text citations and references).
- **An eight (8) page minimum that utilizes peer-reviewed references. (Your Title page, Abstract, and Reference page(s) are not included in the minimum).**
- **Minimum of Five Peer-Reviewed Sources**
- Your paper will be subject to submission through safe assign. Therefore, DO NOT PLAGIARIZE.

Final Grading Scale

Your grade will consist of points awarded to the successful completion of the following components

(This may change as the semester goes on):

- Syllabus Quiz 20 points
- Plagiarism Activity 20 points
- Weekly Reading Quizzes (10 points each) 140 points
- 2 exams (100+ points each) 200 points
- Online Activity Assignments (10 points each) 140 points
- Research Paper 100 points
- **620 total points**

Letter Grades will be assigned as follows:

Total Points	Grade Percentage	Letter Grade	Grade Points
620 – 558	100 – 90%	A	4.0
557.5 – 496	89.9 – 80%	B	3.0
495.5 – 443	79.9 – 70%	C	2.0
442.5 – 372	69.9 – 60%	D	1.0
371.5 – below	59.9% and below	F	0.0

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Additional Policies

- **Late Assignment Policy**

As a rule, I do not accept late assignments. I never spring any last-minute assignments on you – from the first day of class, you will know what is due and when it is due to me. It is up to you to plan accordingly as you have ample time to complete these assignments.

If you do not turn in your assignments on time, it is a zero in the gradebook and I will not grade the assignment. If you are severely ill, you must inform me of your illness within 2 days of the missed assignment and it is mandatory for you to provide medical documentation to me to be eligible for make-up.

The same policy goes for a death in the family. I know this may sound strict to you, but time management is your responsibility in a university class.

- **Email Policy**

I like to keep open lanes of communication between students and myself. If you need to ask any questions or discuss anything class related, please do not hesitate to email me, or call me. As I said before, please include CRIJ 4309 in the subject line, so I know that it is class related. You may also email me through Canvas, but please do not leave comments in the assignments themselves. I do not go back and check for those. My preferred method of contact is through email, please try that first. Please use professionalism in emailing faculty members and address them by their designated title.

You are responsible for checking your email daily. I frequently email students individually or as a group – if I send you an email, I assume that you have read it and are informed with the message. At most, I will send you two emails and if I do not have a response in a reasonable amount of time then I will assume you have chosen not to reply to me, and I will act accordingly. For instance, if you submit a paper and I cannot open the attachment I will email you to send me another copy of the paper. I will always include a reasonable deadline – if you do not respond by that deadline that I will not grade the paper and you will not receive credit for it.

- **Instructor Expectations**

Just as I have certain expectations of you, you should have certain expectations of me. If you email or call me, you will receive a response within 48 hours during the business week and business hours. Email responses during late hours and the weekend are not a guarantee, so late minute questions for assignments may not receive answers if they are sent during those times.

As for grading, you will receive feedback on all assignments within 2 weeks. Please do not email within a day or two of the assignment submission looking for a graded assignment. If there is a technological issue, please get in touch with the university IT department. I am unable to fix Canvas issues that are system based.

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- **Resources to assist you in the course**
 - [UT Tyler Student Accessibility and Resource \(SAR\) Office](#) (provides needed accommodations to students with document needs related to access and learning)
 - [UT Tyler Writing Center](#)
 - [The Mathematics Learning Center](#)
 - [UT Tyler PASS Tutoring Center](#)
 - [UT Tyler Supplemental Instruction](#)
 - [Upswing \(24/7 online tutoring\) - covers nearly all undergraduate course areas](#)
 - [Robert Muntz Library](#) and [Library Liaison](#)
 - [Canvas 101](#) (learn to use Canvas, proctoring, Unicheck, and other software)
 - Digital Support Toolkit (for supported courses only. Students are automatically enrolled in the toolkit for supported courses)
 - LIB 422 -- Computer Lab where students can take a proctored exam
 - [The Career Success Center](#)
 - [UT Tyler Testing Center](#)
 - [Office of Research & Scholarship Design and Data Analysis Lab](#)

Resources available to UT Tyler Students

- [UT Tyler Counseling Center](#) (available to all students)
- [TAO Online Support Center](#) (online self-help modules related to mental & emotional health)
- [Military and Veterans Success Center](#) (supports for our military-affiliated students)
- [UT Tyler Patriot Food Pantry](#)
- [UT Tyler Financial Aid and Scholarships](#)
- [UT Tyler Registrar's Office](#)
- [Office of International Programs](#)
- [Title IX Reporting](#)
- [Patriots Engage](#) (available to all students. Get engaged at UT Tyler.)

University Policies and Information and UT Tyler Students Rights and Responsibilities

To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link: <http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php>

- **UT Tyler is a Tobacco-Free University**

All forms of tobacco will not be permitted on the UT Tyler main campus, branch campuses, and any property owned by UT Tyler. This applies to all members of the University community, including students, faculty, staff, University affiliates, contractors, and visitors.

Forms of tobacco not permitted include cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes (hookah), bidis, kreteks, electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco, and all other tobacco products.

There are several cessation programs available to students looking to quit smoking, including counseling, Quitline's, and group support. For more information on cessation programs please visit www.uttyler.edu/tobacco-free.

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- **Withdrawing from Class**

Students are allowed to [withdraw](#) (drop) from a course through the University's [Withdrawal Portal](#). Texas law prohibits students who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career.

The number includes courses dropped at other 2-year or 4-year Texas public colleges and universities. Make sure to consider the impact withdrawing from any course has on your academic progress as well as the financial implications. We encourage you to consult your advisor(s) and financial aid for additional guidance.

CAUTION #1: Withdrawing before census day does not mean students receive a full refund. Please see the [Tuition and Fee Refund Schedule](#).

CAUTION #2: All international students must check with the [Office of International Programs](#) before withdrawing. All international students are required to enroll full-time for fall and spring terms.

- **Final Exam Policy**

Final examinations are administered as scheduled. If unusual circumstances require that special arrangements be made for an individual student or class, the dean of the appropriate college, after consultation with the faculty member involved, may authorize an exception to the schedule.

Faculty members are required to maintain student final examination papers for a minimum of three months following the examination date.

- **Incomplete Grade Policy**

If a student, because of extenuating circumstances, is unable to complete course requirements by the end of the semester, then the instructor may recommend an Incomplete (I) for the course.

The "I" may be assigned in lieu of a grade only when all the following conditions are met:

- (a) the student has been making satisfactory progress in the course.
- (b) the student is unable to complete all course work or final exam due to unusual circumstances that are beyond personal control and are acceptable to the instructor; and
- (c) the student presents these reasons prior to the time that the final grade roster is due.

The semester credit hours for an Incomplete will not be used to calculate the grade point average for a student. The student and the instructor must submit an Incomplete Form detailing the work required and the time by which the work must be completed to their respective department chair or college dean for approval.

The time limit established must not exceed one year. Should the student fail to complete the work for the course within the time limit, the instructor may assign zeros to the unfinished work, compute the course average for the student, and assign the appropriate grade.

If a grade has not been assigned within one year, then the Incomplete will be changed to an F or to NC, if the course was initially taken under the CR/NC grading basis.

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- **Grade Appeal Policy**

UT Tyler's Grade Appeal policy requires the completion of a Grade Appeal form for this action to take place. The grade appeal begins with the instructor of the course.

If a student does not agree with the decision of the instructor, the student may then move the appeal to the department chair/school director for that course.

If the student is still dissatisfied with the decision of the chair/director, the appeal moves to the Dean of the College offering that course, who has the final decision.

Grade appeals must be initiated within sixty (60) days from the date of receiving the final course grade. The Grade Appeal form is found in the [Registrar's Form Library](#).

- **Disability/Accessibility Services**

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA), The University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychological disabilities.

If a student has a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, the student is encouraged to visit <https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler> and fill out the New Student application.

The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact the student when the application has been submitted and schedule an appointment with the Assistant Director Student Accessibility and Resources/ADA Coordinator.

For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at <http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices>, the SAR office located in the University Center, # 3150 or call 903.566.7079."

- **Military Affiliated Students:**

UT Tyler honors the service and sacrifices of our military-affiliated students. If you are a student who is a veteran, on active duty, in the reserves or National Guard, or a military spouse or dependent, please stay in contact with your faculty member if any aspect of your present or prior service or family situation makes it difficult for you to fulfill the requirements of a course or creates disruption in your academic progress.

It is important to make your faculty members aware of any complications as far in advance as possible. Your faculty member is willing to work with you and, if needed, put you in contact with university staff who are trained to assist you.

Campus resources for military-affiliated students are in the [Military and Veterans Success Center \(MVSC\)](#). The MVSC can be reached at MVSC@uttyler.edu or via phone at 903.565.5972.

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- **Academic Honesty and Academic Misconduct**

The UT Tyler community comes together to pledge that “Honor and integrity will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do.”

Therefore, we enforce the [Student Conduct and Discipline policy](#) in the Student Manual of Operating Procedures (Section 8).

- **FERPA**

UT Tyler follows the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as noted in [University Policy 5.2.3](#). The course instructor will follow all requirements in protecting your confidential information.

- **Recording of Class Sessions**

Class sessions may be recorded by the instructor for use by students enrolled in the course. Recordings that contain personally identifiable information or other information subject to FERPA shall not be shared with individuals not enrolled in the course unless appropriate consent is obtained from all relevant students.

Class recordings are reserved only for the use of students enrolled in the course and only for educational purposes. Course recordings should not be shared outside of the course in any form without express permission.

- **Absence for Official University Events or Activities**

All courses follow the practices related to approved absences as noted by the Student Manual of Operating Procedures ([Sec. 1 -501](#)).

- **Absence for Religious Holidays**

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious holiday are requested to inform the instructor by the second-class meeting of the semester.

- **Campus Carry**

We respect the rights and privacy of students who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in all courses. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at <http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php>