

Course Syllabus - Fall 2025 Semester  
CRIJ-1301.001, Introduction to Criminal Justice  
The University of Texas at Tyler

## INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

- **Instructor:** Michael Ferguson, MS
- **UTT email:** [mferguson@uttyler.edu](mailto:mferguson@uttyler.edu)
- **Office telephone:** 903.730.3927
- **Office location:** CAS 134
- **Office hours:** See [THIS](#) document. For those who wish to meet via Zoom rather than F2F, click [THIS LINK](#) and use passcode **519250**. I will be logged into Zoom during my MWF office hours, so there's no need to arrange an appointment beforehand on those days. If you need to meet on T/Th, send me an email to arrange a time that works for both of us.

## COURSE CATALOG DESCRIPTION

This course provides a historical and philosophical overview of the American criminal justice system, including the nature, extent, and impact of crime; criminal law; and justice agencies and processes.

## COURSE RATIONALE

This course provides you with an overview of the United States' criminal justice system. Students will learn the "who, what, when, where, why, and how" of the CJS and its actors. This course will give you the basic information you need to understand the complexities of our system and why it is the way it is today. Introduction to Criminal Justice will be the foundation upon which all your other CRIJ classes will be built.

## COURSE TIME AND LOCATION

- 08/25/2025 - 12/13/2025
- Monday, Wednesday, and Friday
- 8:00AM to 8:55AM
- Stewart Hall #127

## STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. *Design* policy recommendations based on crime trend data (Critical Thinking)
2. *Design* written arguments that use high-quality and credible sources to support your opinion (Written Communication)
3. *Construct* tables, graphs, and other visuals to explain crime trends (Quantitative Reasoning)

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4. *Evaluate* criminal justice practices in the United States from the perspective of diverse international cultures (Social Responsibility)
5. *Describe* the history, philosophy, and structure of the American criminal justice system
6. *Explain* the nature and extent of crime in America
7. *Compare* American criminal justice practices with those of global partners
8. *Assess* criminal justice policy developments and their applications
9. *Communicate* empirical findings from criminal justice policy research to appropriate laypersons

Objectives one, two, three, and four are tied to the UT-Tyler Core Curriculum. For more information about the University's core requirements, see the UT-Tyler *Catalog*.

### **REQUIRED TEXTBOOK**

Peak, KJ & Herold, TD. (2024). *Introduction to Criminal Justice Practice and Process* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.

### **RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOK**

APA. (2019). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. ISBN: 978-1-4338-3217-8

### **TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS**

Students must have access to a computer or tablet with internet access to use UT-Tyler's Canvas LMS. Assignments and quizzes will be handled through Canvas. Additionally, students must have access to, and use of, a word processor (e.g., MS Word or Apple Pages) and presentation software (e.g., MS PowerPoint or Apple Keynote). Lastly, students must have access to a mind-mapping application. Work uploaded to Canvas must be in one of the following file formats:

- Documents: .docx, .doc, .pages, or .pdf (.pdf is the preferred format)
- Presentations / graphs: .docx, .doc, .pptx, .ppt, .key, or .pdf (.pdf is the preferred format)

### **ATTENDANCE**

You can't learn if you're not in class. You must attend and participate in the class to earn credit!

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## COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

It is the student's responsibility to keep track of due dates. Please note that quizzes, assignments, and tests will be available for several days, so missing a due date for any given quizzes, assignments, or tests will translate into a score of zero. There will be no extra credit or extensions to complete a missed quiz, assignment, or test.

1. **Anti-Plagiarism Certificate:** You must complete the free, online [anti-plagiarism course](#) for which I will provide a link. Upon completion of the two required modules, you must upload a copy of your completion certificate to Canvas. **This certificate is worth 5% of your grade and is required for successful completion of the course.**
2. **Quizzes:** Reading the assigned chapters puts concepts into action. To help with retention and comprehension of the material, you will complete short quizzes each week. Quizzes will consist of multiple choice and true/false questions. **Quizzes are worth 50% of your grade.**
3. **Activities:** Your class consists of five units. You will complete various activities, including in-class discussion, over the course of the semester. **These activities are worth 25% of your grade.**
4. **Final Exam:** The final will consist of true/false and multiple-choice questions taken from the material covered during the semester. **Your final exam is worth 20% of your grade.**

## ACTIVITIES/ASSIGNMENTS

Below are the learning objectives for each online activity. More detailed instructions, including grading rubrics, are provided to you on the respective assignment page in Canvas.

- **Crime Data.** During this activity, you will:
  1. Interpret crime trend data from official data sources.
  2. Construct tables, graphs, and other visual aids to explain crime trends.
  3. ***Design an infographic that summarizes crime data for your hometown.***
- **A Day in the Life of a Cop.** During this activity, you will:
  1. Summarize normal duties for law enforcement officers in the United States.
  2. Appraise law enforcement duties to determine risk level.
  3. ***Design a poster that depicts the work life of a typical law enforcement officer.***
- **Textbook Mind-map Project.** During this activity, you will:
  1. Read an assigned chapter from the textbook.
  2. Create a mind-map of a specified topic covered in that chapter; the mind-map will contain the main ideas, concepts, and information from the area(s) specified by the instructor.
  3. ***Submit the mind-map to the instructor.***

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## CENSUS DATE

The census date for this summer class is **09/08/2025**. Drops/withdrawals after Census Date and before the Last Day to Withdraw will result in a grade of W. Courses dropped prior to Census Date will not appear on the student's record or the transcript.

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE POLICY

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course (see below) is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy.

The work submitted by students in this course will be generated by themselves. This includes all process work, drafts, brainstorming artifacts, editing, and final products. This extends to group assignments where students must collaboratively create the project. Any instance of the following constitutes a violation of UT Tyler's Honor Code: a student has another person/entity do any portion of a graded assignment, which includes purchasing work from a company, hiring a person or company to complete an assignment or exam, using a previously submitted assignment and/or using AI tools (such as ChatGPT).

## STUDENT RESOURCES AND UT-TYLER POLICIES

- [Student Resources](#)
- [University Policies and Information](#)

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### Week 1: August 25 - August 31, 2025

- Welcome to class, introductions, review of syllabus
- Chapter One: Fundamentals of Criminal Justice: Essential Themes and Practices
- Anti-plagiarism certificate
- Chapter One quiz

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**Week 2: September 1 - September 7, 2025**

- September 1: Labor Day holiday; all offices closed; no classes held
- Chapter Two: Foundations of Law and Crime: Nature, Elements, and Measurement
- Assignment: Crime Rate Analysis
- Chapter Two quiz

**Week 3: September 8 - September 14, 2025**

- Chapter Three: Theories of Criminality and Crime
- Chapter Three quiz

**Week 4: September 15 - September 21, 2025**

- Chapter Five: Police Organization
- Chapter Five quiz

**Week 5: September 22 - September 28, 2025**

- Chapter Six: Police at Work: Patrolling and Investigating
- Assignment: Mindmap of Wilson's Policing Styles
- Chapter Six quiz

**Week 6: September 29 - October 5, 2025**

- Chapter Seven: Policing Methods and Challenges: Issues of Force, Reform, and Liability
- Assignment: "A Day in the Life of a Cop" poster
- Chapter Seven quiz

**Weeks 7 and 8: October 6 - October 19, 2025**

- Chapter Eight: Expounding the Constitution: Laws of Arrest, Search, and Seizure
- Assignment: *Mapp v Ohio* case brief
- Chapter Eight quiz

**Week 9: October 20 - October 26, 2025**

Chapter Nine: Court Organization: Structure, Functions, and the Trial Process

Chapter Nine quiz

**Week 10: October 27 - November 2, 2025**

- Chapter 10: The Bench and the Bar: Those Who Judge, Prosecute, and Defend
- Chapter 10 quiz

**Weeks 11 and 12: November 3 - November 16, 2025**

- November 3: Last Day to Withdraw from one or more 15-Week courses.
- Chapter 11: Court Methods and Challenges: Sentencing and Punishment
- Mindmap Assignment: Determinate vs Indeterminate Sentences
- Quiz over Chapter 11

**Week 13: November 17 - November 23, 2025**

- Chapter 12: Prisons and Jails: Structure and Function
- Chapter 13: The World Behind Bars: The "Keepers" and the "Kept"
- Chapters 12 and 13 quizzes

**Week 14: November 24 - November 30, 2025**

- Thanksgiving holidays for faculty and students - no class this week. Enjoy your holiday!

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**Week 15: December 1 - December 7, 2025**

- Chapter 14: Corrections in the Community: Probation, Parole, and Other Alternatives to Incarceration
- Chapter 14 quiz

**Week 16: December 8 - December 11, 2025**

- Final Exam

IMPORTANT NOTE: I reserve the right to amend the schedule if needed. I will notify you of any changes that I make!