

Senior Seminar in Criminal Justice (CRIJ 4355)

Term: Fall 2025

Course Dates: August 25, 2025 – December 13, 2025

Professor: Dr. Jennifer Wooldridge

Course Times: Tuesday/Thursday 9:30am-10:50am

Office Phone: 903-566-7438

Classroom: CAS 104

Email: jwooldridge@uttyler.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 11:00am-12:30-pm & by appointment

Course Times: Tuesday/Thursday 9:30am-10:50am

Course Overview

Senior Seminar is one of the final courses in your criminal justice degree at UT Tyler, designed to help bridge the gap between student and professional. This applied, work-intensive course focuses on three key areas:

Employment, Real-World Problem Solving, and Assessment

Students will build job readiness skills by refining resumes, exploring job openings, and participating in mock applications. The research and policy components are integrated: each student will independently evaluate the effectiveness of a current criminal justice policy using methods learned through their criminal justice career, then use their findings to propose policy improvements.

Throughout the course, students will gain practical experience in real-world problem solving—skills used by professionals in government, research, and justice organizations—to make evidence-based policy recommendations and enhance system effectiveness.

Student Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing this course you will be able to:

1. **Demonstrate job readiness** by creating professional application materials and preparing for interviews in criminal justice careers.
2. **Conduct and present independent research** that evaluates the effectiveness of a criminal justice policy using appropriate methodology.
3. **Analyze and communicate policy issues**, including forming evidence-based arguments and discussing reform in professional contexts.
4. **Recognize their role as future professionals** in shaping ethical and effective criminal justice policy and practice.

Required Textbooks and Readings

- **Primary Textbook:** There is no textbook for this class as it was designed to be an OER/No-Cost Course.
- **Additional Readings:** Throughout the semester, you will encounter insightful readings assigned and posted on Canvas.

- Total Estimated costs of required course materials: \$0

Course Structure

This course is structured around a mix of in-class workshops, independent research, and applied assignments. Class time will often be interactive, with activities focused on career preparation, peer feedback, and guided work on your semester-long research and policy project. Attendance and participation are essential, as many assignments will build on in-class discussions and exercises.

Outside of class, you'll be expected to take ownership of your learning by conducting independent research, refining your resume and cover letter, applying for jobs or internships, and preparing polished written work. Staying on track with deadlines and making steady progress on your research project will be key to your success.

While this course is academically rigorous, it is also designed to be practical and professionally rewarding—providing you with tools to transition confidently from student to criminal justice professional.

Tips for Success in this Course

1. **Participate.** I invite you to engage deeply, ask questions, and talk about the course content with your classmates. You can learn a great deal from discussing ideas and perspectives with your peers and professor. Participation can also help you articulate your thoughts and develop critical thinking skills.
2. **Manage your time.** I get it—students usually juggle a lot, and I know you've got commitments beyond this class. Still, doing your best often means carving out enough dedicated time for coursework. Try scheduling specific blocks of time and ensure you have enough room to finish assignments, allowing extra space for any tech issues that might pop up.
3. **Login regularly.** I recommend that you log in to Canvas several times a week to view announcements, discussion posts and replies to your posts.
4. **Do not fall behind.** This class moves at a quick pace and each week builds on the previous class content. If you feel you are starting to fall behind, check in with the instructor as soon as possible so we can troubleshoot together. It will be hard to keep up with the course content if you fall behind in the pre-work or post-work.
5. **Use Canvas notification settings.** Pro tip! Canvas can ensure you receive timely notifications in your email or via text. Be sure to enable notifications to be sent instantly or daily. ([Canvas Notification Guide](#))
6. **Ask for help if needed.** If you are struggling with a course concept, reach out to me and your classmates for support.

Graded Course Requirements Information

Attendance (100 pts)

- You are required to attend class each session. As incentive, I will provide you 5 points for each day you are present. Excused absences must be documented for an exemption on points.

Online Activities (90 pts)

- Throughout the semester, you will have multiple online activities worth various points throughout the term.

QEP Research Project (150 pts)

- This semester, you will engage in real-world problem solving through an evaluation of criminal justice policies in need of reform. Through a variety of assignments you will work on producing those solutions throughout the semester.
- You will complete a final paper and final presentation, each worth 75 points.
- Everyone will be required to present in person, no exceptions (unless you have accommodations on file).

Assessment Reviews (60 pts)

- In preparation of each assessment exams, I will provide you with two review videos to help study for the upcoming assessment. They must be watched before class and are worth 5 points each.
- We will also review and prepare in class together before the exams are administered.

Assessment Exams (300 pts)

- As graduating seniors, I have the honor of assessing your knowledge and skills from your time with us here at UT Tyler. To do that, I will assess you on 6 content areas: Research Methods; Criminological Theory; Policing; Criminal Law; Corrections; Courts.
- Students who score an 80% or better on all 6 content areas will receive a content proficiency badge which will appear on your co-curricular student transcript.**
- Each exam will be worth 50 points toward your final grade.

Grading Structure

Assignment	Points
Attendance	100 pts
Online Activities	90 pts
QEP Research Project	150 pts
Assessment Reviews	60 pts
Assessment Exams	300 pts
Total	700 pts

Grading Scale

- A - (700 - 630)
- B - (629.5 - 560)
- C - (559.5 - 490)
- D - (489.5 - 420)
- F - (419.5 - below)



Late Work and Make-Up Exams:

Put your late work and make-up exam policy here. Please remember that we all encounter unexpected events in our lives.

Attendance Policy (optional):

If you have an attendance policy, please put this here. Check with your department or college to verify any institutional attendance requirements.

University Policies & Student Resources:

University policies and student resources are available on the University website and in Canvas under “Syllabus”. (You may copy or print the following information to include in your syllabus or use the links provided below.)

- [University Policy](#)
- [Student Resources](#)

Fall 2025 Course Schedule

<i>Module/Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>
1 8/25-8/31	Course Introduction and Problem Solving	Meet Dr. Wooldridge and Your classmates Review Course Syllabus Complete Attendance Activity (5 points)	Review potential topics Complete Attendance Activity (5 points)
		Assignments Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Topic Selection Due 8/31 at 11:59pm (10 points)</i> 	
2 9/1 – 9/7	Real-World Problem Solving & Topic Selection	Mind Mapping & Problem Solving Complete Attendance Activity (5 points)	Research Topics and Mind Maps (Work Day) Complete Attendance Activity (5 points)
		Assignments Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Research Questions and Mind Maps Due 9/7 at 11:59pm (15 points)</i> 	
3 9/8 – 9/14	Solutions and Implementation Plans	Finding & Implementing Solutions Class Activity – Example Solutions (5 points)	Implementation Guide Class Activity – Implementing Solutions (5 points)
4 9/15 – 9/21	Courts Assessment	Lecture Review Exam Prep Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)	Courts Assessment Exam in Class (50 pts)
		Assignments Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Courts Assessment Review Part 1 due on 9/16 at 9:30am (5 pts)</i> • <i>Courts Assessment Review Part 2 due on 9/16 at 9:30am (5pts)</i> 	
5 9/22 – 9/28	Employment Applying to Jobs and Career Services	Guest Speaker – Amy Swindell (Career Success) Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)	Criminal Justice Employment Opportunities Lecture Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)
		Assignments Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Headshot Proof Submission due on 9/25 at 9:30am</i> • <i>Job Opportunity Search Assignment due on 9/25 at 9:30am</i> 	
6 9/29 – 10/5	Employment (Resumes, Cover Letters and Mock Interviews)	Resume/Cover Letter Peer Review (15 pts) Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts) ***You MUST bring a hard copy of each document to class to participate***	Mock Interviews Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts) Business, Arts & Sciences Career Fair *Extra Credit Opportunity*

		Assignments Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Headshot Proof Submission due on 9/25 at 9:30am</i> • <i>Job Opportunity Search Assignment due on 9/25 at 9:30am</i> 	
7 10/6 – 10/12	Corrections Assessment	Lecture Review Exam Prep Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)	Corrections Assessment Exam in Class (50 pts)
		Assignments Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Corrections Assessment Review Part 1 due on 10/7 at 9:30am (5 pts)</i> • <i>Corrections Assessment Review Part 2 due on 10/7 at 9:30am (5pts)</i> 	
8 10/13 – 10/19	Research Methods Assessment	Lecture Review Comp Prep Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)	Research Methods Assessment Exam in Class (50 pts)
		Assignments Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Research Methods Assessment Review Part 1 due on 10/14 at 9:30am (5 pts)</i> • <i>Research Methods Assessment Review Part 2 due on 10/14 at 9:30am (5pts)</i> 	
9 10/20 – 10/26	Evaluating Your Own Solutions	Literature Review & Multiple Solutions Peer Review (15 pts) Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts) ***You MUST bring a hard copy of your policy draft to class to participate***	Writing Day Implementation of Peer Review (Bring a device to write with) Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)
10 10-27 – 11/2	Policing Assessment	Lecture Review Exam Prep Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)	Policing Assessment Exam in Class (50 pts)
		Assignments Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Policing Assessment Review Part 1 due on 10/14 at 9:30am (5 pts)</i> • <i>Policing Assessment Review Part 2 due on 10/14 at 9:30am (5pts)</i> 	
11 11/3 – 11/9	Implementing Your Own Solutions	Implementation Plan Peer Review (15 pts) Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts) ***You MUST bring a hard copy of your policy draft to class to participate***	Writing Day Implementation of Peer Review (Bring a device to write with) Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)

12 11/10 – 11/16	Criminological Theory Assessment	Lecture Review Exam Prep Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)	Criminological Theory Assessment Exam in Class (50 pts)
		Assignments Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Criminological Theory Assessment Review Part 1 due on 11/11 at 9:30am (5 pts)</i> <i>Criminological Theory Assessment Review Part 2 due on 11/11 at 9:30am (5pts)</i> 	
13 11/17 – 11/23	Criminal Law Assessment	Lecture Review Exam Prep Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)	Criminological Theory Assessment Exam in Class (50 pts)
		Assignments Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Criminal Law Assessment Review Part 1 due on 11/18 at 9:30am (5 pts)</i> <i>Criminal Law Assessment Review Part 2 due on 11/18 at 9:30am (5pts)</i> 	
14 12/1 – 12/7	Presentations & QEP Submissions	Final Presentations	Final Presentations
		Assignments Due: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Criminal Justice Policy Research Project (QEP Final Presentation) (75 pts)</i> <i>Criminal Justice Policy Research Project (QEP Final Paper) (75 pts)</i> <i>Both are due 12/2 at 9:30am regardless of presentation order</i> 	

Note: This is a tentative schedule, and subject to change as necessary – monitor the course page for current deadlines. In the unlikely event of a prolonged university closing, or an extended absence from the university, adjustments to the course schedule, deadlines, and assignments will be made based on the duration of the closing and the specific dates missed.