Instructor Information

- **Instructor:** Michael Ferguson, MS
- **UTT Email:** mferguson@uttyler.edu
- **Office Telephone:** 903.730.3927
- **Office Location:** CAS 134
- **Office Hours:** MWF from 10:15a - noon. 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 after noon that works for both of us.

Course Catalog Description

CRIJ 4355 - Senior Seminar in Criminal Justice. The policy cycle is studied in relation to critical issues framed by ideological positions labeled "due process" and "crime control." A model for analyzing public policy is introduced. Participants are expected to formulate and defend policy proposals. Prerequisite: CRIJ 1301 and successful completion of upper-division core courses in criminal justice

Course Time and Location

- **Dates:** 01/12/2026 - 05/01/2026
- **Meeting Days:** Tuesday and Thursday
- **Time:** 9:30a-10:50a
- **Location:** CAS Room 104

Student Learning Objectives

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.

Textbooks

***Required* Textbook**

None, as no-cost OER material will be provided via Canvas.

***Recommended* Textbook**

APA (2019). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. ISBN: 978-1-4338-3217-8. Note that you can get the same basic information for free by using the Purdue University "APA Formatting and Style Guide (7th Edition)" by clicking **HERE**.

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. I understand that life happens, but you need to be in class to learn the material we're covering. ***Attendance will be taken each class session and will count toward your final average. Your attendance score will equal up to 100 possible points of the 700 in the course.***

Course Assignments

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 six content areas: *Research Methods; Criminological Theory; Policing; Criminal Law; Corrections; Courts*.
- Students who score an 80% or better on all six 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 Scale
A - (700.0–630)
B - (629.5–560)
C - (559.5–490)
D - (489.5–420)
F - (419.5– 000)

Census Date

The census date for this summer class is 01/26/2026. 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

2026 Schedule

Week / Dates	Topics	Tuesday	Thursday	Assignments Due
Week 1 01/12 - 01/16	Course Introduction Problem Solving	Meet Mr. Ferguson and your classmates Review Course Syllabus Complete Attendance Activity (5 points)	Review potential topics Complete Attendance Activity (5 points)	Topic Selection Due 01/18 at 11:59pm (10 points)
Week 2 01/19 - 01/23	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)	Research Questions and Mind Maps Due 01/25 at 11:59pm (15 points)
Week 3 01/26 - 01/30	Solutions and Implementation Plans	Finding & Implementing Solutions Class Activity – Example Solutions (5 points)	Implementation Guide Class Activity – Implementing Solutions (5 points)	N/A
Week 4 02/02 - 02/06	Courts Assessment	Lecture Review Exam Prep Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)	Courts Assessment Exam (50 pts)	Courts Assessment Review Part 1 due on 02/03 at 9:30am (5 pts) Courts Assessment Review Part 2 due on 02/03 at 9:30am (5 pts)
Week 5 02/09 - 02/13	Employment Applying to Jobs and Career Services	Guest Speaker Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)	Criminal Justice Employment Opportunities Presentation Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)	Headshot Proof Submission due on 02/10 at 9:30am Job Opportunity Search Assignment due on 02/10 at 9:30am
Week 6 02/16 - 02/20	Employment (Resumes, Cover Letters, and Mock Interviews)	Resume/Cover Letter Peer Review (15 pts) Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts) NOTE: You MUST bring a hard copy of each document to class to participate!	Mock Interviews Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)	N/A
Week 7 02/23 - 02/27	Corrections Assessment	Lecture Review Exam Prep Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)	Corrections Assessment Exam (50 pts)	Research Methods Assessment Review Part 1 due on 02/24 at 9:30am (5 pts) Research Methods Assessment Review Part 2 due on 02/24 at 9:30am (5pts)
Week 8 03/02 - 03/06	Research Methods Assessment	Lecture Review Comp Prep Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)	Research Methods Assessment Exam (50 pts)	
Week 9 03/09 - 03/13	N/A	Spring Break - No Class	Spring Break - No Class	N/A
Week 10 03/16 - 03/20	Evaluating Your Own Solutions	Literature Review & Multiple Solutions Peer Review (15 pts) Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts) NOTE: You MUST bring a hard copy of your policy draft to class to participate!	Writing Day Implementation of Peer Review (Bring a writing utensil) Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)	N/A
Week 11 03/23 - 03/27	Policing Assessment	Lecture Review Exam Prep Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)	Policing Assessment Exam (50 pts)	Policing Assessment Review Part 1 due on 03/24 at 9:30am (5 pts) Policing Assessment Review Part 2 due on 03/24 at 9:30am (5pts)
Week 12 03/30 - 04/03	Implementing Your Own Solutions	Implementation Plan Peer Review (15 pts) Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts) NOTE: You MUST bring a hard copy of your policy draft to class to participate	Writing Day Implementation of Peer Review (Bring a writing utensil) Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)	N/A
Week 13 04/06 - 04/10	Criminological Theory Assessment	Lecture Review Exam Prep Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)	Criminological Theory Assessment Exam (50 pts)	Criminological Theory Assessment Review Part 1 due on 04/07 at 9:30am (5 pts) Criminological Theory Assessment Review Part 2 due on 04/07 at 9:30am (5pts)
Week 14 04/13 - 04/17	Criminal Law Assessment	Lecture Review Exam Prep Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)	Criminal Law Assessment Exam (50 pts)	Criminal Law Assessment Review Part 1 due on 04/14 at 9:30am (5 pts) Criminal Law Assessment Review Part 2 due on 04/14 at 9:30am (5pts)
Week 15 04/20 - 04/24	Presentations & QEP Submissions	Final Presentations	Final Presentations	Criminal Justice Policy Research Project (QEP Final Presentation) (75 pts) Criminal Justice Policy Research Project (QEP Final Paper) (75 pts) Both are due 04/21 at 9:30am regardless of presentation order
Week 16 04/27 - 05/01	Final exam day will be used if we are unable to finish all of the presentations during week 15. Because of the size of the class, there is a possibility we may need to use final exam day as a "carry-over" for the remaining presentations.			