



CRIJ 5313: Contemporary Issues in Corrections

Term: Spring 2026

Course Dates: 01/12/2026 – 05/02/2026

Professor: Dr. Timbre Wulf

Course Times: Online

Email: twulf@uttyler.edu

Office Hours: Online Only, by appointment (just send me a quick email and we can set up a time to meet!)

Course Description:

An analytical examination of current issues in corrections, including those applicable to American jails and prisons, probation, parole, and correctional programs both within correctional institutions and in the community.

Course Overview:

In the past 30 plus years, the topic of corrections has become a critical policy issue. Legislators have passed much tougher sentencing policies, probation caseloads have swelled, prisons now are at maximum capacity, and the death penalty has faced multiple challenges as the Supreme Court has reviewed the use gas chambers, and several states have halted executions in the face of evidence that its application is flawed. We now confront a larger than ever parolee population as more and more people reenter society from overcrowded prisons. This course will introduce you to these and more important issues in Corrections and public policy from multiple perspectives.

Course Materials:

1) Latessa, E. J., & Holsinger, A. M. (2016). *Correctional contexts: Contemporary and classical readings*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. (ISBN: 9780190280710).
Required.

2) You must have a reliable Internet connection. If you do not have reliable Internet at home, you may be required to come to campus (computer lab), or visit a secondary location in order to connect to the course. For an online class, it is unacceptable to not have reliable Internet.

3) We will also read a variety of journal articles for this course. They will be posted online for your convenience.

Course Objectives:

This course is a core, graduate-level criminal justice course. The main goal of this course is to familiarize you with the foundational and modern applications of correctional policies in the supervision of offenders in both institutional and community-based settings. This course will explore the history of corrections in the United States, but will primarily focus on modern discussions regarding controversial issues such as solitary confinement, continued use of the death penalty, and the influence of the War on Drugs in prison overcrowding.

There are several learning objectives that we will work toward since this course is a core course for the Masters of Criminal Justice Program. By the end of the course, students should:

1. Explain and discuss the history of corrections in the United States and the current goals of the correctional system
2. Develop responses to the growing prison overcrowding issues that state and federal institutions are currently experiencing
3. Recognize problems with current legislative policies that inhibit offender reentry success
4. Assess problems facing correctional officers within the daily scope of their jobs
5. Compare the experiences of special inmate populations (i.e. women, juveniles, elderly)
6. Integrate empirical research into the development of new legislative efforts to reform the correctional system

This course will also provide a firm foundation of general and specific knowledge for other courses in the Criminal Justice degree program, as well as help student who plans a career in criminal justice.

University Policies & Student Resources:

University policies and student resources are available on the University website and in Canvas under "Syllabus."

- University Policy: https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vQXRlbySwSUh3-Ow_8tVR0BoV9Ck3bKN1yTVExKtxygUWZgQ1c1LGttITyN6DpgDVN_ucMP9O12M50G/pub

- Student Resources: https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vRaJGg-hPnk5QtIIDwceH5NWY94GijJFgVdtXwE1kjsUGwXlv-cMpfErK84xN9kZLT21Co_GcBYfg7/pub

Important class policies:

- Cheating, plagiarism (even the tiniest bit), or the use of AI on your exams or assignments will not be tolerated and will result in a zero on the entire assignment or exam in question.
- **Communication** is essential in an Online course. Perhaps more-so than an in-person course. Please do not ever hesitate to reach out to me with questions or concerns. Even the smallest question!! Email is the best way to get ahold of me (twulf@uttyler.edu). That said, I can't fix problems I don't know exist. If you're struggling, or frustrated, or don't understand something, you have to tell me! Let me help!!! I will also do my best to communicate clearly and consistently to you all. I'll do this via announcements, email, assignment instructions, grading, feedback, etc.
- Classroom Conduct: In my classes, we treat each other with respect and dignity. You must be respectful in all interactions with your peers and with me. I hold myself to the same standard. Further, you are welcome to disagree with your peers, or with me, but you must do so respectfully.
- Make sure you read all assignment and exam instructions carefully! Or you may very well lose easy points! And they really add up.
- Late assignments and exams will not be graded.
 - If you have a documented emergency (death in the family, illness, car accident, etc...), you must inform me of your situation within 2 days of the missed assignment and it is mandatory for you to provide documentation to me in order to be eligible for a make-up. Please note that having to work is not an excused absence. While I am sympathetic and understanding to your work schedule, you have made a choice to enroll in this class and it must be considered a priority. Religious holiday are always accepted as exemptions, but not emergencies. You would need to turn assignments in early. Pregnant and parenting student policies also apply here as per state law, so long as the student is on record with the university. Planned events are not emergencies; you must complete your work in advance.

Presentations: You will be assigned several presentations throughout the semester. In short, you will present on your assigned chapters and the 2-3 scholarly journal articles that you pick to expand on each of your chapters. You can present these in a variety of ways from a YouTube video to a simple voice over PowerPoint. Grading criteria will be provided in a separate

document. You will have one 50 point presentation and one 100 point presentation. You may be required to complete the 50 point presentation with a peer.

Discussion Boards: You will complete weekly discussion boards. While detailed grading criteria and instructions will be provided in a separate document, in short, you will comment on and ask meaningful questions about your peers' presentations. These will need to be substantive and thoughtful in order to earn points. On your presentation week, you will be expected to "run" the discussion boards (respond to questions, prompt discussion, etc.). I will, of course, be there to support you if you have any questions or problems. These will be worth 20 points each week.

Exam: You will have one Final Exam. It will be worth 100 points. It will cover the entirety of the course, including content (i.e. journal articles) provided by your peers. It will be entirely essay. It will be Take Home and Open Book/Note.

Grading:

Exams: 1 x 100 points each = 100 points

Discussion Boards: 15 x 20 points each = 300 points

Intro Quiz: 1 x 10 points each = 10 points

Presentations: 150 points = 150 points

Total = 560 points

Overall Course % Grade:

A-	90-92	B-	80-82	C-	70-72
A	93-96	B	83-86	C	73-76
A+	97-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79
D-	60-62	F	Below 69		
D	63-66				
D+	67-69				

Course Schedule*:

*I may make changes as necessary. Any changes will be announced on the course page.

Week 1: Jan. 12-17

- Read: Syllabus, Chapters 1 & 2
- Intro Quiz and Discussion Board: Due Jan 17
- Fill out the Presentation Sign-Up

Week 2: Jan. 18-24

- Jan. 19: MLK Jr. Day
- Read: Chapters 3 & 4
- Presentation 1: Due Jan 20
- Discussion Board: All posts Due Jan 24

Week 3: Jan. 25-31

- Read Chapters 5 & 6
- Presentation 2: Due Jan 26
- Discussion Board: Due Jan 31

Week 4: Feb. 1-7

- Read Chapters 7, 8 & 9
- Presentation 3: Due Feb 2
- Discussion Board: Due Feb 7

Week 5: Feb. 8-14

- Read Chapters 10 & 11
- Presentation 4: Due Feb 9
- Discussion Board: Due Feb 14

Week 6: Feb. 15-21

- Read Chapters 12 & 13
- Presentation 5: Due Feb 16
- Discussion Board: Due Feb 21

Week 7: Feb. 22-28

- Read Chapters 14 & 15
- Presentation 6: Due Feb 21
- Discussion Board: Due Feb 28

Week 8: Mar. 1-7

- Read Chapters 16, 17, & 18
- Presentation 7: Due Mar 2
- Discussion Board: Due Mar 7

Week 9: Mar. 8-14

- Spring Break

Week 10: Mar. 15-21

- Read Chapters 19 & 20
- Presentation 8: Due Mar 16
- Discussion Board: Due Mar 21

Week 11: Mar. 22-28

- Read Chapters 21 & 22
- Presentation 9: Due Mar 23
- Discussion Board: Due Mar 28

Week 12: Mar. 29-Apr. 4

- Read Chapters 23 & 24
- Presentation 10: Due Mar 30
- Discussion Board: Due Apr 4

Week 13: Apr. 5-11

- Read Chapters 25 & 26
- Presentation 11: Due Apr 6
- Discussion Board: Due Apr 11

Week 14: Apr. 12-18

- Read Chapters 27 & 28
- Presentation 12: Due Apr 13
- Discussion Board: Due Apr 18

Week 15: Apr. 19-25

- Read Chapters 29 & 30
- Presentation 13: Due Apr. 20
- Discussion Board: Due Apr 25

Finals: Apr. 26-May 2

- Final Due: May 1, by 11:59 pm, CST