

Course Syllabus: CRIJ-4355.001,
Senior Seminar in Criminal Justice (Fall 2026)

Instructor Contact Information

- **Instructor:** Michael Ferguson
- **UTT Email:** mferguson@uttyler.edu
- **Office Telephone:** 903.730.3927
- **Office Location:** CAS 134
- **Office Hours:** MWF 9:05a - 10:00 and 11:15a - Noon; T/Th 9:30a - 10:50a. For those who wish to meet via Zoom rather than F2F, click this [Zoom office hours](#) link. I will be logged into Zoom during my office hours, so there's no need to arrange an appointment beforehand on those days.

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:** August 24, 2026 - December 12, 2026
- **Meeting Days:** Tuesday and Thursday
- **Time:** 9:30a-10:50a
- **Location:** CAS Room 257

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.

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Textbooks

Required Textbook

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

Recommended Textbook

American Psychological Association. (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 [Purdue University APA Formatting and Style Guide \(7th Edition\)](#). *Because your final paper must be formatted properly, I **strongly** suggest you re-familiarize yourself with APA guidelines!*

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 and to complete your assignments. ***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.***

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Course Assignments

Attendance (100 pts)

- You are required to attend class each session. As incentive, I will provide you five points for each day you are present. Legitimate 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. Your grammar, spelling, formatting, and writing style do have an impact on your paper grade. Your appearance (i.e., your dress, your appearance, and your comportment) will have an impact on your presentation grade.
- Everyone will be required to present in person, no exceptions (unless you have accommodations on file). Presentation order will be determined by random drawing of names.

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.

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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 **09/08/2026**. 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](#)

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Course Schedule

Note: This schedule is tentative and subject to change. Monitor the course page for current deadlines.

Week 1

- Topic(s): Course Introduction, Problem Solving
- Tuesday, 08/25/2026: Meet Mr. Ferguson and your classmates; Review Course Syllabus; Complete Attendance Activity (5 points)
- Thursday, 08/27/2026: Review potential topics; Complete Attendance Activity (5 points)
- Assignment(s) Due: Topic Selection Due Sunday night at 11:59pm (10 points)

Week 2

- Topic(s): Real-World Problem Solving & Topic Selection
- Tuesday, 09/01/2026: Basics of Mind Mapping & Problem Solving; Complete Attendance Activity (5 points)
- Thursday, 09/03/2026: Research Topics and Mind Maps (Work Day); Complete Attendance Activity (5 points)
- Assignment(s) Due: Research Questions and Mind Maps Due Sunday night at 11:59pm (15 points)

Week 3

- Topic(s): Solutions and Implementation Plans
- Tuesday, 09/08/2026: Finding & Implementing Solutions Class Activity; Complete Attendance Activity (5 points)
- Thursday, 09/10/2026: Implementation Guide Class Activity; Complete Attendance Activity (5 points)
- Assignment(s) Due: N/A

Week 4

- Topic(s): Courts Assessment
- Tuesday, 09/15/2026: Lecture Review; Exam Prep; Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)
- Thursday, 09/17/2026: **Courts Assessment Exam (50 pts)**
- Assignment(s) Due: Courts Assessment Review (10 pts)
- Important Note: [HeadshotLinks to an external site.](#) for your résumé is due next Tuesday before class. Please don't wait until the last minute to get it done!

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Week 5

- Topic(s): Employment Applying to Jobs; [Career Success Assistance](#)[Links to an external site.](#) Available at UTT
- Tuesday, 09/22/2026: Guest Speaker; Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)
- Thursday, 09/24/2026: Criminal Justice Employment Opportunities Presentation; Creating Résumés; Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)
- Assignment(s) Due: Headshot Proof Submission due on Tuesday, 09/22/2026 at 9:30am; Job Opportunity Search Assignment due on Sunday night at 11:59pm.
- Important Note: Draft [cover letter](#)[Links to an external site.](#) and draft [résumé](#)[Links to an external site.](#) are due before class next Tuesday. Please don't wait until the last minute to get them done!

Week 6

- Topic(s):
- Tuesday, 09/29/2026: 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 and to earn credit!
- Thursday, 10/01/2026: Mock Interviews; Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)
- Assignment(s) Due: You must upload a copy of your revised/updated cover letter and résumé by Sunday night at 11:59pm.

Week 7

- Topic(s): Corrections Assessment
- Tuesday, 10/06/2026: Lecture Review Exam Prep; Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)
- Thursday, 10/08/2026: **Corrections Assessment Exam (50 pts)**
- Assignment(s) Due: Corrections Assessment Review (10 pts)
- Important Note: You should already be working on your literature review for your final paper. You will have to submit your initial list of references in two weeks. Format your reference page in APA7 style as you write it.

Week 8

- Topic(s): Research Methods Assessment
- Tuesday, 10/13/2026: Lecture Review Exam Prep; Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)
- Thursday, 10/15/2026: **Research Methods Assessment Exam (50 pts)**
- Assignment(s) Due: Research Methods Assessment Review (10 pts)

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- Important Note: Your draft policy solution and draft literature review are due next week!

Week 9

- Topic(s): *Evaluating* Your Own Solutions
- Tuesday, 10/20/2026: Literature Review & Multiple Solutions Peer Review (15 pts); Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)
 - NOTE: In addition to uploading a copy of your literature review and policy draft, you **MUST** bring **hard copies** of your drafts to class to participate and earn credit!
- Thursday, 10/22/2026: Writing Day -- Implementation of Peer Review (bring a writing utensil!); Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)
- Assignment(s) Due: N/A

Week 10

- Topic(s): Policing Assessment
- Tuesday, 10/27/2026: Lecture Review Exam Prep; Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)
- Thursday, 10/29/2026: **Policing Assessment Exam (50 pts)**
- Assignment(s) Due: Policing Assessment Review (10 pts)
- Important Note: your implementation plan draft is due next Tuesday!

Week 11

- Topic(s): *Implementing* Your Own Solutions
- Tuesday, 11/03/2026: Implementation Plan Peer Review (15 pts); Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)
 - NOTE: In addition to uploading a copy of your implementation plan, you **MUST** bring a **hard copy** of your draft to class to participate
- Thursday, 11/05/2026: Writing Day Implementation of Peer Review (Bring a writing utensil!); Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)
- Assignment(s) Due: N/A

Week 12

- Topic(s): Criminological Theory Assessment
- Tuesday, 11/10/2026: Lecture Review Exam Prep; Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)
- Thursday, 11/12/2026: **Criminological Theory Assessment Exam (50 pts)**

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- Assignment(s) Due: Criminological Assessment Review (10 pts)

Week 13

- Topic(s): Criminal Law Assessment
- Tuesday, 11/17/2026: Lecture Review Exam Prep; Complete Attendance Activity (5 pts)
- Thursday, 11/19/2026: **Criminal Law Assessment Exam (50 pts)**
- Assignment(s) Due: Criminal Law Assessment Review (10 pts)

Week 14

- University closed for Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 15

- Topic(s): Final Presentations & QEP Submissions
- Tuesday, 12/01/2026: Student Presentations (≤10 mins. each)
- Thursday, 12/03/2026: Student Presentations (≤10 mins. each)
- Assignment(s) Due: Criminal Justice Policy Research Project (QEP Final Presentation) (75 pts); Criminal Justice Policy Research Project (QEP Final Paper) (75 pts)
 - ***Both are due 12/01/2026 at 9:30am regardless of presentation order***

Week 16

- N/A