



CAPSTONE (CRIJ 5355.060)

Term: Fall 2026

Course Dates: August 24 – December 6, 2026

Professor: Dr. Jennifer Wooldridge

Course Times: Online

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Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 9:30-11:00am (in-person and Zoom) or by appointment

Course Overview

This course provides a capstone experience for students to address an important policy and administrative issue within a criminal justice agency. Students will use concepts from their coursework and experiences to develop specific recommendations for design, implementation, and evaluation of this project task.

Student Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing this course you will be able to:

- **Integrate** graduate-level knowledge in the context of an applied field project.
- **Apply** research methods to move from a research problem to identifying and gathering necessary, sufficient, and appropriate data (“quantitative literacy”).
- **Demonstrate** advanced written and oral communication skills (“information literacy”) including report writing competencies, for a variety of audiences.

Required Textbooks and Readings

- This course is considered an OER/no-cost course. All of the course readings and materials will be provided, at no cost, on Canvas.
- **Total Course Cost:** \$0

Course Structure

This course is fully online taught asynchronously throughout the semester. You will have online lectures and activities each week that correspond with the topic at hand. This is a work intensive course with collaborative and independent work. There are three required faculty meetings this semester, where you will need to schedule a one-on-one Zoom meeting at your convenience for research check-ins.

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

Micro-Lecture Quizzes 10 pts per quiz

Each week, students will complete micro-lecture activities that include short video response questions, comprehension checks, and low-stakes homework reflections. These assignments are designed to reinforce key ideas from the week's lecture material—such as Supreme Court cases, legislative developments, and ethical debates surrounding capital punishment—and to build foundational knowledge for more advanced analysis. Each week's micro-lecture assignments are worth 10 points each.

There will be 16 video quizzes for a total of 160 points toward your final grade.

Faculty Check-Ins (25 pts each)

Three times this semester, you will be required to check in with me, either in person or via Zoom. These check-ins are meant as a way for you to have more face time with me as your instructor, but also as a way to make sure your questions are answered during pivotal points of our research process together. These check-ins are **mandatory** and I am happy to schedule meetings with you based on your availability. That being said, I will have limited time after hours/weekends, so you must be quick to schedule those appointments. Meetings are first come, first serve. Given the availability of times offered, I will not accept work as an excused absence. I only need 30 minutes of your time (at most... unless you need more than we'll schedule more), so you hopefully will be able to find some availability somewhere.

We will meet during the following weeks:

- Week 4 Check In (Must be scheduled no later than Week 3)
- Week 8 Check In (Must be scheduled no later than Week 7)
- Week 11 Check In (Must be scheduled no later than Week 10)

Please note that if you do not schedule your appointment in advance, a 10 point deduction will be applied to your check in grade. There will be 3 faculty check ins for a total of 75 points toward your final grade.

Capstone Research Project

Literature Review Package (150 pts total)

Throughout the semester, students will complete a series of literature review assignments designed to support the development of their final capstone project. To begin the semester, you will need to submit your project topic and semester workplan. You will be required to address your topic, the type of research project you will complete, and your timeline to completion for the semester. Rather than writing one large review at the end of the course, students will progressively locate, evaluate, synthesize, and organize scholarly sources related to their research topic. These assignments are intended to build critical research skills while providing regular instructor feedback, resulting in a well-developed literature review that serves as the foundation for the final manuscript. Full directions are provided for each assignment on Canvas.

You will be required to submit the Project Proposal & Work Plan (25 pts), Literature Review Matrix & Source Collection (25 pts) and your Literature Review Package (100 pts) for a total of 150 points toward your final grade.

Research Methodology Package (150 pts total)

The Research Methodology Package is a comprehensive assignment in which students design a complete qualitative or quantitative research study related to their capstone topic. Students will develop a full methodology section, including an appropriate research design, sampling strategy, data collection procedures, ethical considerations, and a research instrument (e.g., survey, interview guide, content analysis protocol, or other approved measure). This assignment serves as the blueprint for the implementation and final manuscript of the capstone project. Full directions are provided for each assignment on Canvas.

You will be required to submit the Research Instrument (50 pts) and your Research Methodology Package (100 pts) for a total of 150 points toward your final grade.

Data Collection Package (115 pts total)

Students will implement their approved research design by collecting and analyzing qualitative or quantitative data. They will then submit a draft of their findings section that presents the results of their analysis using appropriate tables, figures, themes, or statistical procedures. This assignment provides an opportunity to receive instructor feedback before incorporating the findings into the final capstone manuscript. Full directions are provided for each assignment on Canvas.



You will be required to submit the Data Collection Check-In (15 pts) and your Findings Draft (100 pts) for a total of 115 points toward your final grade.

Final Presentation (100 pts)

Students will deliver a professional presentation summarizing their completed capstone project. Presentations should clearly communicate the research problem, relevant literature, methodology, key findings, and conclusions while demonstrating the ability to effectively present research to an academic or professional audience. This presentation should be between 8-10 minutes, and should include both audio and visual components. Full directions and grading rubric available on Canvas. This presentation is worth 100 points toward your final grade.

Final Submission (250 pts)

The Final Capstone Manuscript is the culminating assignment for the course and integrates all components developed throughout the semester into a single, cohesive APA-formatted research paper. Students will present a complete qualitative or quantitative research study, including the introduction, literature review, methodology, findings, discussion, and conclusions, demonstrating their ability to conduct and communicate scholarly research in criminal justice. Full directions and grading rubric available on Canvas. This paper is worth 250 points toward your final grade.

Grading Structure

Assignment	Points
Micro-Lecture Quizzes	160
Faculty Check Ins	75
Literature Review Package	150
Data Collection Package	115
Research Methodology Package	150
Final Presentation	100
Final Paper	250
Total	1000 pts

Grading Scale

- A - (1000 – 900)
- B - (899.5 – 800)
- C - (799.5 – 700)
- D - (699.5 – 600)
- F - (599.5 – below)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use:

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. For this course, AI is encouraged during the course, and appropriate acknowledgement is expected.

You can use AI programs (ChatGPT, Copilot, etc.) in this course. These programs can be powerful tools for learning and other productive pursuits, including completing assignments in less time, helping you generate new ideas, or serving as a personalized learning tool. However, your ethical responsibilities as a student remain the same. You must follow UT Tyler's Honor Code and uphold the highest standards of academic honesty. This applies to all uncited or improperly cited content, whether created by a human or in collaboration with an AI tool. If you use an AI tool to develop content for an assignment, you must cite the tool's contribution to your work. 2 c.

Late Work and Make-Up Exams:

As a general rule, I do not accept late assignments. I never spring any last-minute assignments on you – from the first day of class, you will know what is due and when it is due to me. It is up to you to plan accordingly as you have ample time to complete these assignments. If you do not turn in your assignments on time, it is a zero in the gradebook and I will not grade the assignment. However, there are always times when I am lenient and will accept the assignment so long that it is submitted before I begin grading. But that's a game of chance on your end 😊

If you have a documented excuse (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. First responders and military personnel will receive exemptions from the work policy in this class on an individual basis. Religious holiday are always accepted as exemptions. Pregnant and parenting student policies also apply here as per state law, so long as the student is on record with the university.

Attendance Policy:

As this is an online course, there are no mandatory requirements for you to be on campus during set times. You are required to attend the Faculty Check ins during the set time you schedule your appointment.



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](#)

Calendar of Topics, Readings, and Due Dates

CRIJ 5355 Graduate Capstone - Fall 2026 Semester Schedule

Module	Week	Dates	Topic	Major Activities	Due Dates
<i>Module 1: Launching the Project</i>	Week 1	Aug. 24–30	Welcome to Capstone	Course orientation, review expectations, exemplary projects, quantitative, qualitative, and applied options	Week 1 Lecture Quiz (10 pts)
<i>Module 1: Launching the Project</i>	Week 2	Aug. 31–Sept. 6	Developing a Research Question	Narrow topics, create problem statements, develop research questions, assess feasibility	Week 2 Lecture Quiz (10 pts)
<i>Module 1: Launching the Project</i>	Week 3	Sept. 7–13	Building the Project Plan	Develop methodology, identify preliminary sources, create semester timeline	Week 3 Lecture Quiz (10 pts) Project Proposal & Work Plan (50pts)
<i>Module 2: Building the Foundation</i>	Week 4	Sept. 14–20	Literature Review Strategies	Database searching, source management, literature matrices, identifying themes	Week 4 Lecture Quiz (10 pts) Faculty Check-In #1 (25 pts)

<i>Module 2: Building the Foundation</i>	Week 5	Sept. 21–27	Synthesizing the Literature	Writing a thematic literature review, building conceptual foundations, identifying research gaps	Week 5 Lecture Quiz (10 pts) Literature Review Matrix & Source Collection (50 pts)
<i>Module 2: Building the Foundation</i>	Week 6	Sept. 28–Oct. 4	Literature Review Workshop	Continue literature review development and source synthesis	Week 6 Lecture Quiz (10 pts) Literature Foundation Package (100 pts)
<i>Module 3: Designing the Study</i>	Week 7	Oct. 5–11	Research Instrument Development	Create surveys, interview protocols, coding frameworks, document analysis guides, or assessment instruments	Week 7A Lecture Quiz (10 pts) Week 7B Lecture Quiz (10 pts) Research Instrument (50 pts)
<i>Module 3: Designing the Study</i>	Week 8	Oct. 12–18	Instrument Review & Methods Workshop	Refine methodology, receive feedback on research instruments, finalize collection plans	Week 8 Lecture Quiz (10 pts) Faculty Check-In #2 (25 pts)

<i>Module 3: Designing the Study</i>	Week 9	Oct. 19–25	Finalizing Research Design	Complete methodology section and finalize research instruments	Week 9 Lecture Quiz (10 pts) Research Design Package (100 pts)
<i>Module 4: Conducting the Project</i>	Week 10	Oct. 26–Nov. 1	Data Collection & Project Implementation	Begin surveys, interviews, coding, document analysis, policy review, or project implementation	Week 10 Lecture Quiz (10 pts) Data Collection Check in (15 pts)
<i>Module 4: Conducting the Project</i>	Week 11	Nov. 2–8	Research Progress Assessment	Evaluate project status, troubleshoot challenges, refine implementation plan	Week 11 Lecture Quiz (10 pts) Faculty Check-In #3 (25 pts)
<i>Module 4: Conducting the Project</i>	Week 12	Nov. 9–15	Preliminary Analysis/Findings Development	Analyze data, develop themes, create tables and figures, organize findings	Week 12 Lecture Quiz (10 pts) Findings Draft (100 pts)
<i>Module 5: Communicating Results</i>	Week 13	Nov. 16–22	Discussion, Implications, and Revision	Complete discussion section, identify limitations, develop recommendations, revise full project	Week 13 Lecture Quiz (10 pts)

<i>Module 5: Communicating Results</i>	Week 15	Nov. 30–Dec. 6	Final Project Submission	Final editing, formatting, presentation preparation	Week 14A Lecture Quiz (10 pts)
					Week 14B Lecture Quiz (10 pts)
					Final Capstone Report (250 pts)
					Final Presentation (100 pts)

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.