

CRIJ 1301.060 — Summer I 2026

Instructor Information

- **Instructor:** Michael Ferguson, MS
- **UTT Email:** mferguson@uttyler.edu
- **Office Telephone:** 903.730.3927
- **Office Location:** Virtual, via Zoom
- **Office Hours:** By appointment only. We will meet via Zoom rather than F2F. After arranging an appropriate time, click [THIS ZOOM LINK](#) and use passcode **519250**.

Course Catalog Description

This course provides a historical and philosophical overview of the American criminal justice system, including the nature, extent, and impact of crime; criminal law; and justice agencies and processes.

Course Rationale

This course will give you a big picture view of how the criminal justice system in the United States works. You'll get to know the key players, the main events, and the reasons behind how things function. It's designed to give you the essential knowledge you need to grasp the complexities of our CJ system and understand *why* it is the way it is now. Introduction to Criminal Justice will be the starting point for all your other CRIJ classes.

Course Time and Location

- **Dates:** 06/01/2026 - 07/04/2026
- **Meeting Days:** Asynchronous / online only
- **Time:** Asynchronous / online only
- **Location:** Canvas LMS

Student Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Design policy recommendations based on crime trend data (Critical Thinking)
2. Design written arguments that use high-quality and credible sources to support your opinion (Written Communication)
3. Construct tables, graphs, and other visuals to explain crime trends (Quantitative Reasoning)

4. Evaluate criminal justice practices in the United States from the perspective of diverse international cultures (Social Responsibility)
5. Describe the history, philosophy, and structure of the American criminal justice system
6. Explain the nature and extent of crime in America
7. Compare American criminal justice practices with those of global partners
8. Assess criminal justice policy developments and their applications
9. Communicate empirical findings from criminal justice policy research to appropriate laypersons

Objectives one, two, three, and four are tied to the [UT-Tyler Core Curriculum](#). For more information about the University's core requirements, [click on the UT-Tyler Catalog](#).

Textbooks

Required Textbook

1. None, as no-cost OER material will be provided via Canvas. The primary OER textbook will be [***Criminal Justice: An Overview of the System***](#) by Adam J. McKee, Ph.D.

Recommended Textbook

1. 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 [visiting the OWL page here](#).

Technology Requirements

This course is 100% online, so students must have access to a computer or tablet with internet access to use UT-Tyler's Canvas LMS. Assignments, quizzes, course materials, and announcements 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 participate in the class and submit your assignments to earn credit.** I understand that life happens, but you need to participate in class to learn the material we're covering.

Course Assignments

It is the student's responsibility to keep track of due dates. Please note that quizzes, assignments, and tests will be available for several days, so missing a due date for any given quizzes, assignments, or tests will translate into a 50% reduction in score when submitted. ***There will be no extensions to complete the final exam -- if you don't complete the final by the due date, you will receive a score of zero for the final. PLEASE don't "forget" that you have a final exam!***

- **Anti-Plagiarism Certificate (5%):** You must complete the free, online anti-plagiarism course for which I will provide a link. Upon completion of the two required modules, you must upload a copy of your completion certificate to Canvas. This certificate is worth 5% of your grade and is required for successful completion of the course.
- **Quizzes (50%):** Reading the assigned chapters puts concepts into action. To help with retention and comprehension of the material, you will complete short quizzes each week. Quizzes will consist of multiple choice and true/false questions.
- **Activities (25%):** Your class consists of multiple units. You will complete various activities, including in-class discussion, over the course of the semester.
- **Final Exam (20%):** The comprehensive final will consist of true/false and multiple-choice questions taken from the material covered during the semester.

Activities and Learning Objectives

Below are the learning objectives for each online activity. More detailed instructions, including grading rubrics, are provided to you on the respective assignment page in Canvas.

Crime Data

- Interpret crime trend data from official data sources.
- Construct tables, graphs, and other visual aids to explain crime trends.
- Design an infographic that summarizes crime data for your hometown.

A Day in the Life of a Cop

- Summarize normal duties for law enforcement officers in the United States.
- Appraise law enforcement duties to determine risk level.
- Design a poster that depicts the work life of a typical law enforcement officer.

Textbook Mind-map Project

- Read an assigned chapter from the textbook.
- Create a mind-map of a specified topic covered in that chapter. The mind-map will contain the main ideas, concepts, and information from the area(s) specified by the instructor.
- Submit the mind-map to the instructor.

Census Date

The census date for this summer class is **06/04/2026**. 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

Most assignments in this course will permit using artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT or Copilot. **When AI use is permissible, it will be documented in the assignment description, and all use of AI must be appropriately acknowledged and cited.** When using AI tools for assignments, add an appendix showing:

- A. the entire exchange (e.g., prompts used), highlighting the most relevant sections;
- B. a description of precisely which AI tools were used,
- C. an explanation of how the AI tools were used (e.g., to generate ideas, elements of text, etc.); and
- D. an account of why AI tools were used (e.g., to save time, to surmount writer's block, to stimulate thinking, to experiment for fun, etc.).

Students shall not use AI tools during in-class examinations or assignments unless explicitly permitted and instructed to do so.

Student Resources and UT-Tyler Policies

[Student Resources can be found here](#)

[University Policies and Information can be found here](#)

Course Schedule

June 1, 2026 – July 4, 2026

How to Use This Schedule

Suggested weekly rhythm

- **Mon–Thur:** Read chapters from textbook, read/review instructional materials provided, watch "explainer" videos, listen to AI-generated podcasts, and take notes.
 - **Fri–Sun:** Complete your quizzes & activities.
 - **Sun:** Submit work by 11:59p.
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Due time

Unless otherwise stated in Canvas, items listed as "Due" should be completed by **Sunday at 11:59p** of that week.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1: June 1 – June 7

Chapter 1, "The Criminal Justice System"

- 1.1 Major Components
 - 1.2 Roles, Objectives, and Limits in Criminal Justice
 - 1.3 Measuring Crime
 - 1.4 & 1.5 The Criminal Justice *Process*
 - **Week 1 Quizzes**
 - **Anti-Plagiarism Certificate**
 - **Crime Data Analysis Assignment**
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Important dates:

- June **1st** is the first day to file for Spring 2027 Graduation (if applicable).
- June **4th** is the Summer I census date.

Week 2: June 8 – June 14

NOTE: You should have a "feel" for how the schedule works by now. If you're having any problems, please contact me ASAP so I can help!

Chapter 2, "The Political and Legal Environment of Criminal Justice," and Chapter 3, "Criminal Law"

- 2.1 Dual Federalism
 - 2.5 Theories of Punishment
 - 3.1 Sources of the Criminal Law
 - 3.2 Substantive Criminal Law
 - 3.3 Elements of Crimes
 - **Week Two Quizzes**
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Important date:

- June **8th** is the "drop for non-payment" date!

Week 3: June 15 – June 21

Unit 5: Chapter 4, "Law Enforcement," and start of Chapter 5, "Courts and Sentencing"

- 4.1 Early History of Policing
 - 4.2 Structure and Nature of Policing
 - 4.3 Police Methods
 - 4.4 Investigations and Specialized Units
 - 4.5 Legal Environment of Policing
 - 5.1 State and Federal Courts
 - **Week Three Quizzes**
 - **"A Day in the Life of a Cop" Assignment**
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Important dates:

- June **15th** is the final filing deadline for Summer 2026 graduation
- June **19th**: University offices will be closed for the Juneteenth holiday

Week 4: June 22 – June 28

Unit 8: Chapter 5 — Courts and Sentencing

- 5.2 Prosecution and Defense
 - 5.3 Pretrial Process
 - 5.4 The Criminal Trial
 - 5.5 Sentencing
 - **Week Four Quizzes**
 - **Mind-map assignment**
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Important date:

- June **24th** is the last day to withdraw from one or more classes

Week 5: June 29 – July 4

Chapter 6, "Prisons, Jails, and Community Corrections"

- 6.1 Jails
 - 6.2 Prisons
 - 6.3 Prisoners' Rights
 - 6.4 Probation
 - 6.5 Parole
 - **Week Five Quizzes**
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Comprehensive Final Exam

- **Final Exam** (Opens Thursday; due by 11:59p on **Saturday**, July 4)

Reminder: Check each weekly module in Canvas for detailed instructions.

Source: Canvas Syllabus page, course 53605 (<https://uttyler.instructure.com/courses/53605/assignments/syllabus>). Retrieved 2026-09-21.