

**Syllabus:**

**Course Number:** CRIJ 1301W Introduction to Criminal Justice

**Semester & Year:** Summer 2025

**Instructor Information**

Name: Stephen Gass

Office: SSB Office D

Class: SSB Room 14

Telephone: 903-823-3235

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Office Hours: hours by appointment

**Course Description**

CRIJ 1301 Introduction to Criminal Justice will introduce the student to the history, philosophy, and development of the criminal justice system; crime and criminal justice definitions. The nature and impact of crime, overview of the criminal justice system, law enforcement, prosecution and defense, court system, trial process and corrections.

**Student Learning Outcomes for the Course**

1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the history, philosophy, and development of the criminal justice system.
2. Students will demonstrate knowledge of crime and criminal justice definitions.
3. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the nature and impact of crime.
4. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the overview of the criminal justice system, law enforcement, prosecution and defense, court system, trial process and corrections.

**Resources**

Texts: Criminal Justice Today 16e, ISBN # 978-0-13-577058-0, Frank Schmalleger

Other resources: Research Essay with Rubric, Films on Demand Video

**Course Policies**

Instruction for this course will be accomplished through Web-based content and activities on the course homepage, audio/video presentations and weekly discussions between students and I posted on the course homepage. Students should read the text for the course prior to making a post or response. Student participation is essential to the learning process, and students are expected to answer questions and engage in professional debate. This course will cover material involving politics and religion. It is important that you understand some topics might be controversial but are discussed for an academic purpose. Be respectful and professional in your responses. See the listed class schedule for assignment and test due dates. Prior to beginning the course students will take the introductory quiz. It is the student's responsibility to ensure they are accessing the course web-based content from a secure location that will not lose connectivity.

Students will complete all exams through web-based content. All exams will be timed. If you feel you have inadequate time to complete the exam please contact me and arrangements will be made to complete the exam at the campus testing center. In the event of losing internet connectivity while completing an exam, you must complete and submit an LMS Interrupted Test form located in the blue column on the left side of your course homepage. This will notify the Texarkana College Information Technology department of the issue. In addition, you must immediately notify me of the incident. Repeated requests to reopen exams due to losing connectivity will result in a requirement to take exams in the campus testing center.

Students are required to submit an essay including an introduction, body and conclusion in response to the Films on Demand video "The Brain and Violence: Secrets of Your Mind" the first week of the Semester. The video can be accessed from the link on the course home page. However, if you are unable to open the link it can be accessed from Films on Demand at <http://digital.films.com> using the USER ID: texarkana and PASSWORD: texas and searching for the video title. The essay should be approximately 500 words long and must be posted by the due date.

Students are required to complete a **typed** Informative Essay about a substantial contemporary criminal justice issue that will be submitted as an assignment through the course homepage. The essay must be in MLA or APA format and be a minimum of four complete to six double spaced pages long (excluding title page and works cited page) and consist of at least five or six paragraphs including an introduction, body and closing paragraphs, with a works cited page attached. The essay must contain information from a minimum of three cited sources including but not limited to peer-reviewed articles, books and websites. At least one source must be a peer-reviewed article. Do not use Wikipedia as a source. The essay will be graded on content and a demonstration of investigative effort in developing and expressing the factual information on the issue. Do not merely write a paper about your opinion on a subject or individual. The topic, brief abstract and minimum of three (3) sources for the assignment must be approved by Friday, June 13, 2025, for a grade. The assignment must be submitted through the course homepage for grading no later than Friday, June 27, 2025. The assignment is open from the first day of class and there will be no exceptions made for late submissions. You are encouraged to obtain assistance for this assignment from Texarkana College Library staff and me and turn it in before the due date. A timely submission is considered a requirement for the assignment. Additional guidance for the assignment can be obtained from the **Research Essay with Rubric** instructions on the course homepage.

Students are required to submit five (5) brief responses to a Contemporary Criminal Justice issue during this semester. The response must be from an article less than two weeks old and must state the issue being reported and the response of the student to the subject. Sources to consider using are newsprint, professional journals, television and/or radio news programs and internet news sites. A copy of the article must be submitted through attachment with the response or the article or

news program must be cited. As a **bonus** students may submit up to six (6) more responses, however under no circumstances will more than three (3) responses be accepted per week.

Students are required to submit five (5) brief forum posts and responses to a prompt during this semester through the course homepage. You must respond to the prompt from me by Friday at 11:55pm (six points) and respond to two other students' responses by Sunday at 11:55pm (two points each). This is an opportunity for you to interact with other students and have a professional exchange of ideas. It is okay to agree or disagree with each other's position, but it must be done in a professional manner. Do not just say "I disagree" without explaining why. Discussion and debate are a vital part of adult education, and most people have more similarities than differences. This is an opportunity for us all to learn from each other.

### **Evaluation/Grading Scale:**

|   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1) 6 Chapter tests (100 points each) -                | 600 total points        |
| 2) The Brain and Violence: Secrets of Your Mind -     | 100 total points        |
| 3) Informative Essay (100) – Essay Approval (100)     | 200 total points        |
| (4) 5 Contemporary Issues response (20 points each) - | 100 total points        |
| (5) 5 Forum Post (10 points each) -                   | 50 total points         |
| (6) Final Exam (100 points) -                         | <u>100 total points</u> |
|   | 1,150 total points      |

**Bonus** Up to **six (6)** Contemporary Issues response (10 points each)

### **Grading Scale**

| <b>Grade</b> |          |
|--------------|----------|
| <b>A</b>     | 90-100   |
| <b>B</b>     | 80-89    |
| <b>C</b>     | 70-79    |
| <b>D</b>     | 60-69    |
| <b>F</b>     | 59-below |

## Class Schedule

Holidays: Emancipation Day June 19, 2025

| Week | Dates            | Material to be covered  |
|------|------------------|---|
| 1    | 6/02 – 06/2025   | Read the Syllabus and take introductory quiz  |
|      |                  | Review course material and respond to Forum Post, Contemporary Responses, Take Chapters 1-3 <u>test</u>   |
|      |                  | View and respond to video<br><b>The Brain and Violence: Secrets of Your Mind</b>                          |
| 2    | 6/09 – 13/2025   | Review course material and respond to Forum Post, Contemporary Responses, Take Chapters 4-6 <u>test</u>   |
|      |                  | <b>Research Essay Topic Approval due by 6/13/2025</b>   |
| 3    | 6/16 – 20/2025   | Review course material and respond to Forum Post, Contemporary Responses, Take Chapters 7-9 <u>test</u>   |
|      |                  | Review course material and respond to Forum Post, Contemporary Responses, Take Chapters 10-11 <u>test</u> |
| 4    | 6/23 - 27/2025   | Review course material and respond to Forum Post, Contemporary Responses, Take Chapters 12-14 <u>test</u> |
|      |                  | <b>Research Essay due 6/27/2025 by 11:55pm</b>  |
| 5    | 6/30 – 7/03/2025 | Review course material and respond to Forum Post, Contemporary Responses, Take Chapters 15-17 <u>test</u> |
|      |                  | Comprehensive Exam due July 02, 2025 @ <b>11:55am</b>   |

## Attendance Policy

Success in this course depends on your regular participation in class through the course homepage and participation in forums and email communications to discuss progress in the course. Attendance will be determined through weekly participation in discussion forums and exams. A student will be dropped from the course due to excessive unexcused absences. A student may be dropped from this course after their second absence, to be determined by failure to participate in forums and completing at least one exam during the week. Exams will be closed on Sunday of each week at 11:55pm. If you are expecting to be unable to perform your assignments and exams for a week you should obtain prior approval by contacting me in my office by telephone at 903-823-3235 or email at [stephen.gass@texarkanacollege.edu](mailto:stephen.gass@texarkanacollege.edu) prior to the beginning of the week. Approval will only be given in the case of unavoidable emergencies and you may be required to provide written proof.

A student absent due to school trips and/or school business will not have the absence counted against the student's allowable number of absences. A student absent for military duty or for recognized Holy Days will not have the absence counted against the student's allowable number of absences in accordance with the Texarkana College Student Handbook. In these circumstances students will be expected to satisfactorily complete the assignment and/or examination within a reasonable time after the absence. It is the student's responsibility to notify the Instructor of their intended absence. The Texarkana College Student Handbook can be accessed for guidance at [www.texarkanacollege.edu](http://www.texarkanacollege.edu).

Do not stop attending class without formally withdrawing from the course by the institution's published Last Day to Drop for this semester. Texarkana College policy states that if a student does not attend class and does not withdraw from the class, the student will receive a grade of **F** in the class and this could affect your current or future financial aid eligibility. The last date you attend will be reflected on the final grade sheet resulting in the reimbursement of grant and scholarship funds.

### **Class Conduct Policy**

There will be a zero tolerance policy for any behavior that is disruptive to classroom learning. Professional debate is encouraged to enhance the learning environment however rude and vulgar behavior will not be tolerated. This includes ANY use of vulgar language or rude behavior toward instructor or any other student in the class. Communication is expected to be professional and emails are to be sent using your Texarkana College e-mail address, and include the course information in the subject. The field of Criminal Justice often involves topics that some might find controversial including but not limited to political and religious beliefs. Topics discussed in class are for an educational purpose and students must remain civil and respectful. Students asked to leave the class for improper behavior will be dropped from the course.

### **Academic Integrity Statement**

Scholastic dishonesty, involving but not limited to cheating on a test, plagiarism, collusion, or falsification of records will make the student liable for disciplinary action after being investigated by the Dean of Students. Proven violations of this nature will result in the student being dropped from the class with an "F".

This policy applies campus wide, including TC Testing Center, as well as off-campus classroom or lab sites, including dual credit campuses. This information can be found in the Texarkana College Student Handbook at [www.texarkanacollege.edu](http://www.texarkanacollege.edu).

### **Disability Act Statement:**

Texarkana College complies with all. Provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act and makes reasonable accommodations upon request. Please contact Tonja Blase at 903-823-3349 or go by the office of Disability Services located in the Academic Commons (library) for personal assistance.

If you have an accommodation letter from their office indicating that you have a disability which requires academic accommodations, please present it to me so we can discuss the accommodations that you might need for this class. *It is best to request these changes at the beginning if not before the start of class* so there is ample time to make the accommodations.

TC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its programs or activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: Human Resources Director, 2500 N. Robison Road, Texarkana, TX 75599, (903) 823-3017, [human.resources@texarkanacollege.edu](mailto:human.resources@texarkanacollege.edu)

**Basic Needs Security Statement:**

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing enough food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live and believes this may affect their performance in this course or ability to remain in school, is urged to contact Tonja Blase, Director of Student Retention, at 903.823.3349 for support.

Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so.

**Financial Aid:**

**Attention!** Dropping this class may affect your funding in a negative way! You could owe money to the college and/or federal government. Please check with the Financial Aid office before making a decision.