

Syllabus
CRIJ 4355 section 001
Fall 2023

Instructor: Richard C. Helfers, Ph.D.

Office: CAS 136

Phone: 903-566-7399

Email: rhelfers@uttyler.edu

(The best way to contact me is by using the messaging function in Canvas.)

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday from 12:30pm-2:30pm and by appointment. Furthermore, I am available throughout the week, so do not hesitate to send me a message and we can arrange an in-person office session or one via Zoom.

Course Prerequisite: All core Criminal Justice major requirements. Course to be taken in the semester of graduation.

Course Overview: CRIJ 4355, Senior Seminar, is one of the final courses you will take as an undergraduate criminal justice student at the University of Texas at Tyler. This course is very different from other courses you have completed thus far. While this course will still be academically demanding, it is meant to help students with the transition from college student to working professional in the criminal justice system. One of the major goals of this course is to help students prepare for job searches, interviews, and employment in policing, corrections, law adjudication, and other related fields.

This course will focus on three main areas of study: Employment, Research, and Policy Application. We will focus on these topics throughout the semester, but they are interwoven throughout the course in terms of assignments and class meetings. In terms of employment, students will have the opportunity to create and improve resumes, find current employment opportunities, and even mock apply to these positions. The research and policy aspects of the course are interconnected. Beginning with research, students will apply the concepts and knowledge learned in CRIJ 4322 (Research Methods) and individually research the effectiveness of a current policy.

Within the Research Methods course, you should have already been exposed to survey creation, data collection, analysis and interpretation of the results in written format. Instead of the group work encountered in the Research Methods course, you'll be on your own in Senior Seminar. The research portion of the class will be an individual requirement and by the end of the semester, students will have completed their own research evaluation of a current criminal justice policy. Within the policy section of the course, students will use the findings from their research project to make suggested changes to the policy to improve that policy's efficacy. While this course does have a reputation for being work intensive, by the end of the semester, students will have the tools to gain employment, evaluate research and promote efficient and ethical criminal justice policies.

Furthermore, this course is an exercise in real-world problem solving. Our policy analyses – while smaller in scale – provide real-world application of statistical findings to make policy recommendations and changes. This is a similar research endeavor that takes place in universities, think tanks, legislators' offices, in large corporations, in state and federal agencies and more. There are so many applicable skills to be learned that would apply to problem solving during a real-world scenario.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1) Develop an understanding of the job market for criminal justice graduates.
2) Create a quality resume and cover letter for a job application.
3) Learn how to successfully interview for a variety of positions.
4) Evaluate published research for its scientific merit and real-world implications.
5) Create a completed/polished research project and present your findings.
6) Recognize that as UT Tyler graduates, they have the potential to affect policy.
7) Discuss policy issues in a variety of situations.
8) Practice presenting arguments related to criminal justice policy.

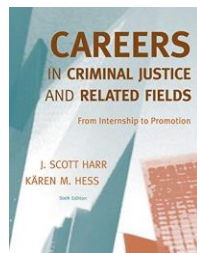
Overall “Big Question” we will be focused on all semester: How can the criminal justice system achieve an acceptable standard of justice in the United States? (This is a question that transcends this course and relates to all of the courses I teach; and can be used for you to be an objective and critical thinker in all criminal justice courses).

Specific Research Objectives: In the completion of the research project, students will be able to apply their research skills to real-world problem solving within the criminal justice system. In addition:

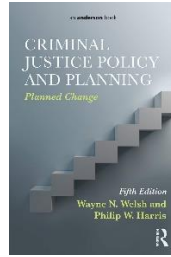
1) Students will be able to construct a clearly defined problem statement with evidence of relevant real-world contextual factors.
2) Students will be able to identify multiple approaches to address the problem within a specific real-world context.
3) Students will be able to evaluate potential/proposed solutions based upon discipline-specific and real-world contextual factors.
4) Students will be able to propose one or more solutions/hypotheses based upon discipline-appropriate support and/or evidence.
5) Students will be able to implement the identified solution to address the problem.
6) Students will be able to evaluate results/outcomes relative to the identified problem, with a discussion of further work within a real-world context.

Required Textbooks and Readings:

Harr, J. S. & Hess, K. M. (2010). *Careers in Criminal Justice and Related Fields: From Internship to Promotion*, 6th Edition. Cengage Publishing. ISBN-13: 978-0495600329

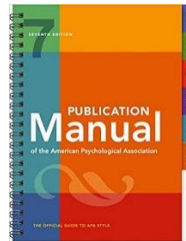


Welsh, W. N. & Harris, P. W. (2016). *Criminal Justice Policy and Planning*, 5th Edition. Routledge Publishing. ISBN-13: 978-1317271550



Recommended:

APA. (2019). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. ISBN: 978-1-4338-3217-8



Assignments and weights/percentage values

1. Getting Started Module Assignments (Padlet posting and Quiz)	2%
2. Chapter Quizzes	10%
3. In Class Learning Activities	10%
4. Project	53%
a. Topic Selection	1%
b. Paper Outline	4%
c. Survey	4%
d. Codebook	4%
e. Data Collection	5%
f. Literature Review	10%
g. Methodology	10%
h. Results/Final Paper	15%
5. Capstone Assessment	15%
6. Microcredential/Google (Program Management)	<u>10%</u> 100%

Grading Scale:

A	90% or greater
B	80 – 89%
C	70 – 79%
D	60 – 69%
F	below 60%

**keep in mind, I round up. This means a 89.45, rounds to a 89.5, which rounds to a 90.0

Late Work and Make-Up Exams: Unfortunately, illnesses, deaths in the family, or other traumatic events are part of life. Such events are unwelcomed and because I understand how difficult these times are, if you contact me within 24 hours of the event **and** provide documentation, I will be happy to give you a make-up quiz or extend an assignment deadline.

The general rule is I will not accept any late assignments. Please pay particular attention to the due dates for each assignment.

Attendance Policy: You are expected to attend every class session. There will be important information being discussed in class that you will need to ensure your success in this course. So, unless you are ill or have a family situation that precludes your attendance (but please let me know if you will not be in class), you are expected to be in class. It is important you read the reading assignments prior to class and arrive ready to discuss the material. Again, I recognize extenuating circumstances arise that can make it difficult to attend each and every class session. In other words, life happens! If a serious family emergency occurs, please let me know as soon as the event occurs or within 24 hours.

UT Tyler does have a [Class Attendance policy](#) in the catalog.

Extra Credit:

There is not any extra credit offered, so please do not ask!

However, you have the opportunity to earn bonus points with your data collection---see that section of the syllabus to learn more. Also, if you are the one with the most responses in the class to your survey, you will receive additional bonus points on that assignment. So plan to distribute your survey early.

Also, if you score above the national average on the MFT exam, I will add 1% to your final grade for each standard deviation you score above that national average/mean. Thus, if you are close to the next higher grade in the course. This could help you earn that “A” that you desire.

Graded Course Requirements Information:

Getting Started Module Quiz:

To ensure you are prepared for the semester, you will need to thoroughly read the syllabus and the material in the “Getting Started Module.” Then you will need to take the quiz, which is located at the end of the “Getting Started Module.” Remember to always think of the syllabus as a binding contract – you are expected to know the content and apply them throughout the semester.

You can take the quiz as many times as you would like in order to earn 100%!

Padlet Posting:

Please post a picture of yourself (close enough so I can recognize your face) and your name. This will help me and others in the class get to associate the names with faces. This should help us develop a healthy learning environment.

Class Assignments:

You are expected to be in the classroom every day we have class. Why is this important? There will be activities that you will receive credit for, but you can only receive the credit if you are in the classroom. There will be several in class type assessments during the semester. Two of the lowest scores for these will be dropped (so you do not have to worry about missing one as up to two will be dropped). Exceptions are provided if you are representing the university (such as attending a conference or engaging in a university approved/sponsored organization that precludes you from being present in class).

Chapter Quizzes:

Each week you will be responsible for reading the chapter and completing the associated quiz prior to the class session the material will be discussed in class (the specific due dates for these are not only detailed in Canvas, but also in the Calendar of Topics, Readings, and Due Dates at the end of the syllabus). I tried not have these accountability measures, but quickly learned that if I don't have students take an assessment for the reading material, many students will not read the material—and are thus, ill prepared for classroom learning. Just look at the weekly modules in Canvas and/or the schedule of events in this syllabus to see which weeks you are responsible for a quiz. Make sure the quizzes are completed prior to 230pm on that date they are due. You have two opportunities to take the quiz and only the highest score will be recorded for your grade. Read, study, and take the quiz and you will be better prepared to learn during our class sessions.

*******Assignments related to your paper require my approval before you can proceed to the next assignment!**

Paper/Project Topic:

The first step in this project is to choose a topic. This semester, you will be allowed to choose your own topic. Your topic must have a criminal justice focus AND it must focus on the bigger picture of the CJ system. This is an early assignment and you must submit by the listed due date. If you do not submit on time, you must still complete this portion of the assignment regardless as it will shape the entire remainder of the semester. Think about this topic choice a little bit as you will not be allowed to change topics later.

Paper Outline:

This is the second step in the project and it is an outline of your paper. Provide as much detail in this outline as possible. The outline will help you organize and write your paper!

Literature Review:

For this assignment, you will be required to examine your chosen topic/policy as it currently exists. This is essentially a literature review that examines any current legislation and the associated background research/literature as it pertains to your topic. This section of the paper will need to be completed before you can begin the research component of the project. This

section of the paper is worth 10% of your final grade. I will provide feedback on the paper and that feedback must be incorporated before the paper submission at the end of term. Please see Canvas for instructions regarding the formatting and word limits of the literature review.

Methodology:

In the second section of your research project, you will need to describe your methodology and analysis plan for the research you completed. This section of the paper is worth 10% of your final grade. This will be done before your survey is created and before data collection occurs. Again, all feedback I provide must be incorporated before the final paper submission at the end of the semester. Please see Canvas for instructions regarding the formatting and word limits of the methodology.

Survey Creation:

As part of this project, you will need to individually create a survey that asks questions regarding your chosen topic. Largely this project will focus on your participants' views toward your chosen topic. Therefore, your measures must examine how people view the topic in general. The survey must be created using Google Forms, and must be submitted by the due date listed. The survey must follow the principles you learned in CRIJ 4322 (Research Methods) regarding survey creation and measurement. This assignment is worth 5% of your final grade. If you do not submit this assignment on time, you must still complete this portion of the assignment. Once the survey is created, I will provide feedback for you. You are NOT permitted to collect data until you have my written approval for you to do so.

Data Collection:

Once your survey is approved, you will be permitted to begin data collection. You must collect your data based on the collection technique described in the methodology section you wrote earlier in the semester. You must collect a minimum of 10 participants. You can ask family, friends, or complete strangers to take your survey, but you must have at least 10 people complete it. The data must be submitted through Canvas by the due date listed.

I encourage you to go above and beyond in this area – the more data, the better. Within this section of the course, I will offer bonus points for you. You can earn an additional 1% for hitting the response marks in 25 respondent increments (1% for having 25 respondents, 2% for 50, 3% for 75, 4% for 100, and 5% for 101 or more. Additionally, the one student who collects the MOST participants for the semester will earn an additional 5% for the assignment (effectively this student will earn 10% if the responses are over 100 and it is the most in the class). It can be done—it is not unheard of for students to obtain hundreds of responses (in fact, the most responses anyone has ever had was 1, 431).

This assignment is worth 5% of your final grade. If you do not submit on time, you must still complete this portion of the assignment regardless as you will need it for the final presentation and data analysis portion of the research project.

Codebook:

Before you can complete your data analysis, you must create a code book for the different variables you included in the survey. This code book must contain the original measures and response options and must also show the codified response options that you will use in your

data analysis. This assignment is worth 5% of your final grade. Example code books can be found on Canvas.

Data Analysis:

After collecting data from at least 10 participants (but hopefully much more than that), it will be time to analyze the data and present it in table form. This analysis will require you to complete univariate and bivariate statistics for your final paper presentation. I will provide you with a refresher on how to complete these analyses, but again, these are concepts you should have learned in Research Methods. This portion of the presentation will be included in the final presentation grade, but I am not requiring you to submit it separately to me.

Results and Final Paper:

In the final section of the research project, you will be required to complete a results section, and recommendations based on your findings. You will need to provide several concrete recommendations and changes to your policy program and be prepared to orally discuss ways in which these changes would improve the criminal justice system from a political, economic, and social perspective. In addition to submitting the results and policy recommendations, you will be submitting the revised versions of your literature review and methodology sections for a complete and final paper presentation submission. This total final paper is worth 20% of your final grade and will be due the last week of the regular semester.

Capstone Assessment:

Because this is the Criminal Justice Program's Capstone Course, it is appropriate to assess students' comprehension of the learning objectives of all core (required) CJ courses. This examination will consist of 10 objective style questions from each of the core courses (excluding Ethics) in the CJ program and a short essay section. I will provide you with recorded lectures through Canvas which will provide you with reviews from the core classes. You are responsible for watching these reviews, taking notes, and preparing for the exam. There will be no review sheets provided.

The Capstone Assessment is worth 10% of your final grade. **If you do not take the Capstone Assessment Exam, you will fail the entire course.** This exam cannot be made up. This exam is part of our assessment purposes and it is imperative that all students take it during the same time. Please schedule your availability according to the scheduled dates listed in the Course Schedule for this exam.

Major Field Test (MFT): The second assessment exam of the semester is a national standardized exam covering key elements about the criminal justice system. While this exam is required for assessment purposes, it will not count toward your final grade. However, it must be completed in order for students to graduate from the Criminal Justice program at UT Tyler. Bonus points will be added to the student's semester average for each standard deviation above the national mean for that student's score. One to four percentage points will be awarded to your final semester average depending on how well you score on the exam (one standard deviation above the mean equates to a 1% point bump to your overall grade for the course).

If you do not take the MFT Assessment Exam, you will fail the entire course. This exam cannot be made up. This exam is part of our assessment purposes and it is imperative that all students

take it during the same time. Please schedule your availability according to the scheduled dates listed in the Course Schedule for this exam. **The exam takes 2.5 hours to complete.**

You will need to schedule a remote proctoring appointment with the company that hosts the Major Field Test. You will be provided a whole month to book an appointment and to schedule a proctor session for this exam. This company, Educational Testing Services (ETS), requires the appointment to be made 72 hours prior to the actual proctoring session. If you do not show up to your scheduled appointment, then the company forfeits your exam. The department will be required to cover the cost of the exam regardless of whether you take the exam. If you are still within the available window to take the exam, you may schedule a second appointment to complete the exam **BUT you will be required to pay out of pocket**. The cost of this exam is roughly \$50. The department will not pay for your individual exam twice. This provides additional incentive for you to take this exam the first time you schedule the appointment. Please note that I am not affiliated with this company in any way, and I do not have access to the exam or to their scheduling process. This process is similar to taking any external, standardized exam through a proctor service.

In order to complete the exam through the remote proctoring session, you will need a laptop/desktop with audio/visual capabilities. You will need to download a unique browser in order to complete the exam through ETS, so a Chromebook or other similar computers probably won't work for this assignment. You are permitted to take the exam in the library, computer lab, or anywhere else on campus that allows for the use of institutional computers. You may also borrow someone's computer, but it is up to you to find a computer system that works for you.

There will not be any additional exams besides the MFT and Capstone Assessments. You have ample time to complete both assessments and to plan your schedule. Thus, there will be no makeup exams provided for any reason. You must plan accordingly to make sure you are able to take the exams. I understand that students get sick or emergencies happen, but these exams are special and related to assessment. Please understand that it is possible to still make up other course work, provided that the student has documentation for the emergency. If you have Canvas issues, it is your responsibility to get those fixed before the exam occurs. Unless there is a widespread outage, individual technology issues may not be accepted as an excuse for an incomplete exam.

DO NOT wait until the last possible minute to take these exams. Weekday appointments allow for the best access to technical support and to me. If you wait until the last weekend before the due date to take the exam, you risk doing so on your own without any technical assistance. These exams occur near the end of the semester and the bulk of your work is already finished before these assessments happen. I really, really, really don't want to have to fail you for not taking these exams... so please make it easy on both of us by taking the exams. Please don't try and call my bluff on this one. It's the only way you will automatically fail the course.

Technical Support for Educational Testing Service (ETS):

- Phone: 1-800-514-8491 (Monday – Friday, 8:00am to 6:00pm EST)
- Email: MFTSupport@testsys.com
- After Hours Support: 1-800-514-8491 and Press 1

Microcredential:

In this class you will earn a professional microcredential from Grow with Google. This microcredential provides a valuable enhancement to the course material you will be learning and can be highlighted on your resume and professional social media presences. The specific microcredential that we will be pursuing is Project Management. This microcredential consists of *six* Coursera courses, *three* of which will be required as assignments in this course. Coursera can be accessed through the canvas course using your UT Tyler login credentials. While not required, I highly encourage you to complete the microcredential in its entirety. If you choose to complete the microcredential after the course has concluded, then the Career Success Office can provide you support as you pursue completion.

Calendar of Topics, Readings, and Due Dates

This is a tentative course schedule

Week 1 August 21-26
 "Introduction and Policy Briefs"

Monday Activities

- In class we will meet each other and review the course syllabus

Wednesday Activities

- In class we will discuss policy briefs

Other Assignments Not Due on the Day of Class

- Read the Syllabus and the Getting Started Module thoroughly
- Complete the Getting Started comprehension quiz, due by Saturday night no later than 11:59pm
- **Begin working on the Project Management microcredentialing course**
- Submit Policy Topic no later than 11:59pm on Saturday

Week 2 August 27-September 2
 "Evidence-Based Practices"

Monday Activities

- In class we will discuss evidence-based practices
- Read the three articles that are in Canvas on evidence-based practices, prior to class

Wednesday Activities

- In class we will complete an activity on "Runaway Legislators"
- Read Chapters 1 and 2 in the Welsh book, prior to class
- Complete the quizzes associated with the two Chapters, prior to class

Other Assignments Not Due on the Day of Class

- **Continue working on the Project Management microcredentialing course**
- Complete the Pre-survey in regard to the Google Program Management certificate

September 1 is Census Day!

Week 3

September 3-9
"Credible Research Sources"

Monday Activities

- No class, Sep 4 is the Labor Day Holiday and UT Tyler is closed

Wednesday Activities

- In class we will discuss research findings from credible sources
- Read the article How to Write a Literature Review by Tewksbury, prior to class
- Read the UCLA Research Lab—How to Write a Literature Review, prior to class
- Read Chapters 3 and 4 in the Welsh book, prior to class
- Complete the quizzes associated with the two Chapters, prior to class

Other Assignments Not Due on the Day of Class

- **Continue working on the Project Management microcredentialling course**
- Submit your Paper Outline assignment, no later than 11:59pm on Saturday

UT Tyler is closed on Monday September 4 for the Labor Day Holiday!

Week 4

September 10-16
"Literature Reviews"

Monday Activities

- In class we will discuss the formatting of a literature review
- Re-read the article How to Write a Literature Review by Tewksbury, prior to class
- Re-read the UCLA Research Lab—How to Write a Literature Review, prior to class

Wednesday Activities

- Graded activity is likely
- Read Chapter 5 in the Welsh book, prior to class
- Complete the quiz associated with Chapter 5, prior to class

Other Assignments Not Due on the Day of Class

- **Continue working on the Project Management microcredentialling course**
- Submit your literature review, no later than 11:59pm on Saturday

Week 5

September 17-23
"Methodologies"

Monday Activities

- In class we will focus on different data collection techniques
- Read How to Plan and Write a Quantitative Research Methodology Section, prior to class
- Read Helfers et al. (2019) – Example paper for methodology purposes

Wednesday Activities

- Graded Activity is likely
- Read Chapters 6 and 7 in the Welsh book, prior to class
- Complete the quizzes associated with the two Chapters, prior to class

Other Assignments Not Due on the Day of Class

- **Continue working on the Project Management microcredentialling course**
- Submit Methodology assignment, no later than 11:59pm on Saturday

Week 6

September 24-30
"Career Services and Employment"

Monday Activities

- Guest Speaker-Dawn Dearion
- Bring to class your rough draft of your resume and cover letter

Wednesday Activities

- Peer-review activity: "Resumes and Cover Letters"
- Read Chapters 1, 5, 9, and 10 in the Harr book, prior to class
- Complete the quizzes associated with the Chapters, prior to class
- Submit two (2) career openings, prior to class

Other Assignments Not Due on the Day of Class

- **Continue working on the Project Management microcredentialling course**
- Submit your first Program Management certificate/course 1 by 11:59pm on Saturday

Week 7

October 1-7

“Survey Building”

Monday Activities

- In class we will focus on creating survey questions and working in Google forms

Wednesday Activities

- In class we will work on survey building (bring your laptop, tablet, or mobile device to class)
- Read Chapters 6, 7, and 8 in the Harr book, prior to class
- Complete the quizzes associated with the Chapters, prior to class

Other Assignments Not Due on the Day of Class

- **Continue working on the Project Management microcredentialling course**
- Submit your Final Survey, no later than 11:59pm on Saturday

Week 8

October 8-14

“Data Collection, Code Books, and Mock Interviews”

Monday Activities

- In class we will discuss codebooks and interview techniques

Wednesday Activities

- In class we will conduct a mock interview activity

Other Assignments Not Due on the Day of Class

- Complete and submit your codebook no later than 11:59pm on Saturday
- Distribute your survey according to your methodology, no later than 11:59pm on Saturday
- **Continue working on the Project Management microcredentialling course**

Week 9

October 15-21

“Data Analysis and Career Success Conference”

Monday Activities

- In class we will explore how to complete frequency and descriptive statistics
- In class we will download a sample data set
- Download JASP on your laptop or other device (so bring them to class)

Wednesday Activities

- No class because you are expected to attend the Career Success Conference tomorrow
-

Other Assignments Not Due on the Day of Class

- **Continue working on the Project Management microcredentialling course**
- Data Analysis exercise on Frequencies is due no later than 11:59pm on Saturday

Week 10 October 22-28
"Data Analysis continued"

Monday Activities

- In class we will explore how to complete a bivariate analysis
- In class we will work with sample data to show bivariate analysis

Wednesday Activities

- In class we will complete a Cross-Tab activity

Other Assignments Not Due on the Day of Class

- **Continue working on the Project Management microcredentialling course**
- Submit your completed data collection assignment, no later than 11:59pm on Saturday

Week 11 October 29-November 4
"Capstone Reviews"

Monday Activities

- No class as you prepare for the Capstone and MFT exams

Wednesday Activities

- No class as you prepare for the Capstone and MFT exams

Other Assignments Not Due on the Day of Class

- Complete the Corrections review, no later than 11:59pm on Saturday
- Complete the Criminal Law review, no later than 11:59pm on Saturday
- Complete the Research Methods review, no later than 11:59pm on Saturday
- **Continue working on the Project Management microcredentialling course**
- Submit your first Program Management certificate/course 2 by 11:59pm on Saturday

*******Last day to Withdraw from one or more classes is October 30**

Week 12 November 5-11
"Capstone Reviews continued"

Monday Activities

- No class as you prepare for the Capstone and MFT exams

Wednesday Activities

- No class as you prepare for the Capstone and MFT exams

Other Assignments Not Due on the Day of Class

- Complete the Policing review, no later than 11:59pm on Saturday
- Complete the Courts review, no later than 11:59pm on Saturday
- Complete the Criminology review, no later than 11:59pm on Saturday
- **Continue working on the Project Management microcredentialling course**

Week 13 November 12-18
"Capstone and MFT exams"

Monday Activities

- No class due to you taking your Capstone and MFT exams this week

Wednesday Activities

- No class due to you taking your Capstone and MFT exams this week

Other Assignments Not Due on the Day of Class

- Complete the Capstone exam no later than 11:59pm on Saturday
- Complete the MFT exam no later than 11:59pm on Saturday
- **Continue working on the Project Management microcredentialling course**

Turkey Week, UT Tyler is closed for classes (November 19-25)

Week 14 November 26-December 2
"Final Submission"

Monday Activities

- Review your final submission formatting
- Ask any remaining questions pertaining to your submission (just not an extension)

Wednesday Activities

- No class, but I will be available in my office for any last second questions about your paper

Other Assignments Not Due on the Day of Class

- Submit your final paper, no later than 11:59pm on Saturday
- **Continue working on the Project Management microcredentialling course**
- Submit your first Program Management certificate/course 3 by 11:59pm on Saturday
- Complete the Post-survey in regard to the Google Program Management certificate

Week 15 December 3-8
"Finals Week"

NO CLASS, YOUR SUBMISSION OF YOUR FINAL PAPER COMPLETES THE COURSE FOR YOU!