Sul Ross State University
Criminal Investigation
Spring 2026
CJ/CRIM 3312 Syllabus

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Class hours: Online
Classroom: Online
Office hours: Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday between 10:00 AM and 12:00 PM
REQUIRED TEXT(S)
Criminal Investigation (any version from 4 to newest) Author: Steven G. Brandl. Sage Publication ISBN 978-1544395654
https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/criminal-investigation/book270019
https://www.amazon.com/Criminal-Investigation-Steven-G-Brandl-dp-1544395655/dp/1544395655/ref=dp_ob_image_bk
Additional readings (e.g., articles, reports) will be posted on Blackboard.

SRSU LIBRARY SERVICES
The Sul Ross Library offers FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, www.library.sulross.edu . Off-campus access requires your LoboID and password. Check out materials using your photo ID. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or phone (432-837-8123).

Once you logged in to your Sul Ross Account on Blackboard you should be automatically connected to the library webpage as well. Thus, you can browse the online databases of the University and reach the articles on the reading list.

Syllabus is subject to updates and changes always look to the course announcements and reminders for updates. The faculty member reserves the right to amend this syllabus as needed.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course is intended to introduce you to the steps of criminal investigation. More specifically, the course provides information about the definition, history, and types of criminal investigation process. Role of documentation, definition and types of evidences, the laws related to criminal investigations. Students will also get information about evidence collection from crime scene, role of interrogations and confessions in criminal investigations. Moreover, investigation methods for certain crimes such as, cybercrimes, frauds, homicides, sex crimes, robbery, burglary will be covered during the course.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES
This course is designed to provide knowledge about various topics related to American Criminal Justice system. Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:
LO1- Define the criminal investigation process, criminal evidence, and forensic science
LO2- Explain the role of criminal investigations in the criminal justice process.
LO3- Define the basic distinctions of criminal evidence, including the distinctions between judicial evidence and extrajudicial evidence and those between exculpatory evidence and inculpatory evidence.
LO4- Explain the various types of evidence, including direct, circumstantial, testimonial, real, documentary, and demonstrative

LO5- Discuss the three roles or functions of physical evidence in the criminal investigation process and define class characteristic and individual characteristic forensic evidence.

LO6- Discuss other types of forensic evidence, including fingerprints, bite marks, shoeprints, firearms, and drugs.

LO7- Identify how criminal profiles are constructed, explain the meaning of various perpetrator actions, and discuss the effectiveness of criminal profiles

LO8- Identify and evaluate the legal, technical, and practical issues related to the collection and use of digital evidence in criminal investigations

LO9- Learn and understand the ways social media can be used by investigators

LO10- Understand and identify various methods for different types of offenses such as, cybercrimes, frauds, homicides, sex crimes, robbery, burglary

MARKETABLE SKILLS:

This course is designed also to help the students for building various marketable skills to use in their in careers Criminal Justice related professions. Specifically, in this course, the following marketable skills, which are some of the most important skills for such careers, will be emphasized during this course:

MS 1- Verbal and Written Communication Skills

MS 2- Critical Thinking and Observation

MS 3- Multicultural Understanding.

MS 4- Accessing Resources with Crime Data and the most current updates of legal codes and procedures.

MS 5- Teamwork and Working Collaboratively

MS 6- Analyzing the Factors Contributing to Crime

CLASS ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION:

Given that this is a fully online course; you cannot attend class in a traditional sense. However, students are expected to log into the class at the earliest opportunity to check the class web site every day for announcements. Weekly reaction papers and quizzes are a required part of class participation.

SAGE VINTAGE Assignments (10 POINTS EACH)

You will have assignments on Sage Vintage. Specifically, the students will receive a total of 10 points from the selected video and reading activities on the Sage Vintage LMS dashboard. The due dates for the assignments will be Sunday at 11:00 pm each week.

WEEKLY QUIZZES (10 POINTS EACH)

You will take a quiz every week to measure the knowledge of the week's required readings. The questions will be posted on Friday at 1:00 pm and due date will be Sunday at 11:00 pm every week.

MIDTERM AND FINAL EXAMS (200 POINTS EACH)

There will be 2 major exams throughout the semester, with questions drawn from the readings and the supplemental materials posted by the professor. These 2 exams will be worth 200 points each. There will be no makeup exams.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Sul Ross State University students are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the Sul Ross Student Code of Conduct." Student Code of Conduct, Responsibilities, Procedures, and Rights are found in the University website. Sul Ross State University and the instructor of this course both place a high priority on the academic integrity of their student scholars. As a result, all institutional guidelines and instructional policies concerning academic integrity will be strictly and uniformly enforced with all students regardless of context.

Academic integrity includes, but is not limited to, the following activities: cheating, plagiarism, collusion, fabrication, obtaining an unfair advantage, and falsifying academic records. In addition, academic dishonesty can include both actions and omissions to act in regards to academic exercises and activities. Cheating is defined here as the obtaining of information (electronic or otherwise) during an examination, the unauthorized use of books, notes, or other sources of information prior to or during an examination, the unauthorized use of books, the removal of faculty examination materials, the alteration of documents or records, or actions identifiable as occurring with the intent to defraud or use under false pretenses. Collusion is defined here as helping other students engage in acts of academic dishonesty, whether the student involved obtains any direct academic advantage from these acts. Plagiarism is defined here as the submission of the ideas, words, or artistic productions of another, without giving due credit or when attempting to falsely represent them as one's own. See https://sulross.libguides.com/citation/plagiarism for more information.

POLICY ON THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TOOLS:

In this course, you are not required to use any form of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot, etc. However, if you choose to use any AI tools as part of your assignments—other than for brainstorming, proofreading, etc.—you must provide proper citation. We use APA citation format in all of our CJ courses. For more information about proper APA citation, please visit SRSU Library Teaching and Learning Guides.

Using AI tools to complete any assignment without proper citation violates academic integrity and will be considered a form of plagiarism, which is a violation of the SRSU Academic Honesty Policy under the Student Handbook. If you are unsure whether something is considered an AI tool, please check with your instructor.

You are permitted to use AI tools for spell check, grammar check, and proofreading. Rephrasing sentences or reorganizing paragraphs you have drafted yourself is also allowed. However, remember that the most important part is that all work you submit must be your own. You should never include anything in your assignment that was not written directly by you without proper citation. DO NOT copy and paste directly from any AI tools.

APA STYLE:

This course will use the American Psychological Association (APA) formatting and style guide for all written assignments. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the use of APA a number of resources have been provided below. Please note that all external sources must be appropriately cited. A failure to do so constitutes plagiarism and is a violation the course academic honesty standards. See SRSU Library Teaching and Learning Guides for help with APA.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES AND BLACKBOARD HELP DESK

Sul Ross State University has established a variety of programs to help students meet the challenges of college life. Support to students includes advising, counseling, mentoring, tutoring, supplemental instruction, and writing assistance. For a complete list of academic support services, visit the Student Support Services. For more information, students are encouraged to contact SSS at (432) 837-9118 or visit Ferguson Hall Room 105. For Blackboard help visit https://www.sulross.edu/bb or call 432-837-8888 (M-F 08:00 am-05:00 pm).

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES STATEMENT

All full-time and part-time students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the Student Handbook and the Undergraduate & Graduate Catalog and for abiding by the University rules and regulations. Additionally, students are responsible for checking their Sul Ross email as an official form of communication from the university. Every student is expected to obey all

federal, state and local laws and is expected to familiarize themselves with the requirements of such laws.

DISTANCE EDUCATION STATEMENT

Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires a secure login. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website. Directions for filing a student complaint are located in the student handbook.

SERVICE STATEMENT:

I aim to create a learning environment for my students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, socioeconomic class, age, nationality, etc.). I also understand that the crisis of pandemics, economic disparity, and health concerns, or even unexpected life events could impact the conditions necessary for you to succeed. My commitment is to be there for you and help you meet the learning objectives of this course. I do this to demonstrate my commitment to you and to the mission of Sul Ross State University to create an inclusive environment and care for the whole student as part of the Sul Ross Familia. If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:

SRSU Accessibility Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Ronnie Harris, LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Director at 432-837-8203 or email ronnie.harris@sulross.edu. Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall, room 112, and our mailing address is P.O. Box C122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine. Texas, 79832.

LATE ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION POLICY:

Students are supposed to finish their coursework on time and assignments must be submitted before the deadlines. Students are expected to show appropriate cause for missing or delaying major assignments or examinations. Late assignments will not be accepted unless there is an excuse that is recognized by the university. Discussion board posts will not be accepted for credit once the discussion board closes.

GRADING:

There will be 1 midterm exam, 1 final exam, weekly quizzes and activity assignments throughout the semester. Questions for exams and quizzes will be drawn from the readings and the supplemental materials posted on Blackboard. The midterm exam and final exam will be worth 200 points each. There will be no makeup exam. Every week there will be a quiz for the related chapter(s). Each quiz will worth 10 points. The total grade will be 130 for all quizzes. Weekly activity assignments will be 10 points each. The total grade for papers will be 130.

Midterm Exam   **200 pts**

Weekly Quizzes   **140 pts (14 quizzes, 10 points each)**
Weekly Activity Assignments   **140 pts (14 assignments, 10 points each)**
Final Exam   **200 pts**
Total   **680 pts**
 Scale:
A   680-580   B   579-480   C   479-380   D 379-280   F 279 & below

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

W	DATES	TOPICS	READINGS
1	January 14-18	Introduction of the course and syllabus	
2	January 19-25	Introduction What is Criminal investigation?	Brandl, Chapters 1-2 Activity 1 Quiz 1
3	Jan.26-Feb.1	The Role and Documentation of Evidence in Criminal Investigations	Brandl, Chapter 3 Activity 2 Quiz 2
4	February 2-8	The Law and Criminal Investigations	Brandl, Chapter 4 Activity 3 Quiz 3
5	February 9-15	Physical Evidence and the Crime Scene	Brandl, Chapter 5 Activity 4 Quiz 4
6	February 16-22	Interviews and Eyewitness Identifications	Brandl, Chapter 6 Activity 5 Quiz 5
7	Feb. 23-Mar.1	Interrogations and Confessions	Brandl, Chapter 7 Activity 6 Quiz 6
8	March 2-8	Behavioral Evidence and Crime Analysis	Brandl, Chapters 8 Activity 7 Quiz 7
	March 9-13	**SPRING BREAK**	
9	**March 16-22**	Open Source intelligence and information gathering **MIDTERM EXAM**	Brandl, Chapters 9 Activity 8 Quiz 8
10	March 23-29	Death Investigation	Brandl, Chapter 10 Activity 9 Quiz 9
11	Mar. 30-April 5	The Investigation of Sex Crimes, Assault, Child Abuse, and Related Offenses	Brandl, Chapter 11 Activity 10 Quiz 10
12	April 6-12	The Investigation of Robbery	Brandl, Chapter 12 Activity 11

			Quiz 11
13	April 13-19	The Investigation of Burglary, Vehicle Theft, Arson, and Other Property Crimes	Brandl, Chapter 13 Activity 12 Quiz 12
14	April 20- 26	The Investigation of Fraud and Other Computer-Related Crimes	Brandl, Chapter 14 Activity 13 Quiz 13
15	April 25- 30	The Presentation of Evidence	Brandl, Chapter 15 Activity 14 Quiz 14
16	**May 1,5-6**	**FINAL EXAM**	

END OF COURSE EVALUATIONS:
 Student evaluations of faculty are administered online at the end of each term/session for all courses with five or more students. Students will receive an email containing a link to a survey for each course in which they are enrolled. All responses are anonymous.