

CJ 2302: BASIC SKILLS FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Sul Ross State University | Fall 2026

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Classroom & Hours	Online
Course	CJ 2302 - Basic Skills for Criminal Justice

Required Text

Grubb, Robert E., and K. Virginia Hemby. Effective Communication in Criminal Justice. ISBN 9781506392134.

Course Description

This course explores police authority and responsibilities and the basic communication and professional skills needed in law enforcement. The course addresses ethical issues, police values, report writing, verbal and nonverbal communication, interviewing, courtroom communication, and other day-to-day issues faced by criminal justice professionals. Students will develop practical skills for gathering facts, organizing information, and communicating clearly in criminal justice settings.

Course Learning Objectives

- Understand police authority, the court system and process, sources of rights, and the law of arrest, search, and seizure as developed through court decisions.
- Demonstrate knowledge of selected areas of the U.S. Constitution and legal liabilities affecting criminal justice professionals.
- Identify and develop basic skills in police report writing and criminal justice communication.
- Demonstrate a working knowledge of contemporary issues and professional expectations in law enforcement.

Criminal Justice Undergraduate Program Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

- UG-CJ-SLO1: Demonstrate knowledge of police reports and research papers that include general information related to basic skills needed in contemporary law enforcement.
- UG-CJ-SLO2: Demonstrate knowledge of criminological theories and apply those theories through class discussions and course activities.
- UG-CJ-SLO3: Demonstrate working knowledge of criminal justice terminology, the components and costs of the criminal justice system, and political influences on the system.

Departmental Bachelor's Degree Program Marketable Skills

- Develop verbal and written communication skills.
- Access crime-data resources, work with numbers, and demonstrate quantitative skills.
- Use critical thinking and observation.
- Use teamwork and work collaboratively.
- Develop multicultural understanding.
- Analyze factors contributing to crime.
- Know legal codes, procedures, and safety practices.

Course Delivery and Distance Education

This is an online course. Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to university academic support services, including library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. Students should use their Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires secure login. Students are expected to follow university policies on academic honesty and appropriate conduct and to maintain the equipment and software needed to participate in the course.

General Course Expectations

- Complete assigned readings and course activities by the posted deadlines.
- Participate respectfully and substantively in online discussions.
- Use professional grammar, sentence structure, organization, and APA style in written work.
- Check Blackboard announcements and Sul Ross email regularly for course updates.
- Contact the instructor promptly when clarification or assistance is needed.

Course Assessment

Discussion Boards: Discussion questions will generally be assigned after every two chapters. Unless otherwise announced, the initial response and two peer replies are due Sunday by 11:59 p.m.

Quiz (100 points): One cumulative quiz will be administered before the midterm and will cover material assigned before the midterm.

Midterm Exam (100 points): The midterm will apply course concepts and basic skills from the first half of the course. Instructions and format will be provided in Blackboard.

Final Exam/Assignment (100 points): The final will be an informational research/writing assignment. Requirements will be discussed before the assignment is due.

Attendance/Participation (20 points): Because this is an online course, attendance is demonstrated through regular participation, completion of assigned work, and engagement in Blackboard.

Attendance and Participation

Regular participation is an integral part of the learning process. In an online course, students are expected to log in regularly, review announcements, complete assigned work, and participate in required course activities. Extended non-participation may affect course standing in accordance with current Sul Ross State University policy. Students should communicate with the instructor as soon as possible when a university-sponsored activity, emergency, or other significant circumstance affects participation.

Late Assignment Submission Policy

Assignments should be submitted by the posted deadlines. Late work is generally not accepted unless an appropriate circumstance recognized by the University prevents timely submission. Students should contact the instructor as soon as possible when such circumstances arise and should regularly review Blackboard and the syllabus for deadlines.

Grading

Assessment	Points
Quiz	100
Midterm Exam	100
Final Exam/Assignment	100
Attendance/Participation	20
Total	320

Final Grading Scale: A = 288-320 | B = 256-287 | C = 224-255 | D = 192-223 | F = 191 and below

Academic Integrity

Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. Students should submit work that is their own. Examples of academic dishonesty include submitting another person's work as one's own, reusing work from another course without authorization, copying from professional works or internet sources without citation, or collaborating when collaboration is prohibited. Use of generative AI must follow the instructor's directions for each assignment. Violations may result in academic penalties and additional university consequences.

APA Style

This course uses the American Psychological Association (APA), Seventh Edition, formatting and citation style for written assignments. All external sources must be appropriately cited.

SRSU Accessibility Services

Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access and provides reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students are responsible for initiating an accommodation request each semester for each class. Students seeking accessibility/accommodation services should contact Accessibility Services at 432-837-8203. The office is located in Ferguson Hall, Suite 112, Alpine campus.

Counseling and Student Wellness

Counseling support is available through Sul Ross State University's Counseling and Accessibility Services. Tiffany Telesca is listed as the current counselor for purposes of this syllabus. Students may contact the Counseling and Accessibility Services office at 432-837-8203 or counseling@sulross.edu for appointments and current service information. In-person and telehealth options may be available.

Library Information

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library and Archives of the Big Bend in Alpine offers free resources and services to the SRSU community. Students may access books, articles, databases, and research assistance through the library. Off-campus access requires a LoboID and password. Librarians can be reached at srsulibrary@sulross.edu or 432-837-8123.

Technology Help

For technology assistance, students should use the Lobo Technology Assistance Center (LTAC). For Blackboard-specific assistance, students may contact the university's Blackboard support resources.

Classroom Climate of Respect

This course supports free expression, critical investigation, and open discussion of ideas. Students are expected to help maintain an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect. Disagreement should focus on ideas and evidence and should not involve intimidation, harassment, or personal attacks.

Supportive Statement

I aim to create a learning environment that supports students with varied perspectives and experiences. Unexpected life events can affect the conditions necessary for academic success. If circumstances outside the course are affecting your performance, please contact me so that we can discuss appropriate university resources and options.

Student Support Services

Sul Ross State University provides academic support services that may include advising, tutoring, mentoring, writing assistance, library support, and other student-success resources. Students are encouraged to use available university services as needed.

Weekly Tentative Course Schedule

Week	Dates	Topics	Assignments
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1	Aug. 24	Course Introduction & Requirements; Chapter 1	Syllabus; Chapter 1
2	Aug. 31	Chapter 2: Think Before You Speak	Discussion Board #1 due Sept. 6, 11:59 p.m.
3	Sept. 7	Labor Day - University Holiday	No class activities due
4	Sept. 14	Chapter 3: Actions Speak Louder Than Words	Chapter 3
5	Sept. 21	Chapter 4: Grammar - A Lesson in the Basics	Discussion Board #2 due Sept. 27, 11:59 p.m.
6	Sept. 28	Chapter 5: Preparing to Speak, Presentations, and Visual Aids	Chapter 5
7	Oct. 5	Chapter 6: Written Communication - An Agency Lifeline	Discussion Board #3 due Oct. 11, 11:59 p.m.
8	Oct. 12	Chapter 7: Interviewing and Interrogating	Chapter 7
9	Oct. 19	Chapter 8: The Court System; Quiz Review	Discussion Board #4; Quiz due Oct. 25, 11:59 p.m.
10	Oct. 26	Midterm Week	Midterm due Nov. 1, 11:59 p.m.
11	Nov. 2	Criminal Justice Student Writer's Manual / Writing Skills	Class discussion
12	Nov. 9	Criminal Justice Student Writer's Manual / Writing Skills	Class discussion
13	Nov. 16	Extra Credit Activity / Final Preparation	As announced
14	Nov. 23	Final Preparation; Thanksgiving Holiday Nov. 25-27	Discuss final
15	Nov. 30	Final Review	Last class day Dec. 2; Dead Day Dec. 3
16	Dec. 4 & 7-9	Final Examination Period	Final due date announced in Blackboard

Important Fall 2026 University Dates

- August 24: First day of classes.
- September 7: Labor Day holiday - no classes.
- September 9: Census date / last day to drop a 16-week course without creating an academic record.
- November 6: Last day to withdraw from a 16-week course/term with a grade of W.
- November 25-27: Thanksgiving holiday.
- December 2: Last class day before finals.
- December 3: Dead Day.
- December 4 and 7-9: Final examinations for the 16-week term.
- December 11: Fall Commencement - Alpine.

End-of-Course Evaluations

Student evaluations of faculty are administered online at the end of each term/session for eligible courses. Students will receive university instructions for completing the evaluation. Responses are anonymous.

This syllabus is subject to reasonable updates and changes by announcement. Students are responsible for reviewing Blackboard announcements, course messages, and reminders for updates.