Sul Ross State University
Courtroom Presentation and Rule of Evidence
Semester: Fall 2026
CJ 5366 Syllabus

Instructor: Corey Rice
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Class hours: Online
Classroom: Remote
Office hours: Virtual (Schedule for times)

REQUIRED TEXT(S):

NONE

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:

In this course, students are provided an overview of the criminal law-forensic science interface. This includes legal concepts of admissibility of evidence and proof, rules of evidence, structure and hierarchy of criminal courts, ethics, and expert testimony.

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- Understand the fundamentals of courtroom testimony.

LO2- Examine and discuss the processes and underlying philosophies of the case law and expert testimony.

LO3- Able to think critically on different parts of the criminal justice system, their current functions, and their interrelationships with each other.

LO4- Develop competencies in analyzing court cases and promoting possible solutions for crime-related social problems.

LO5- Discuss the history of Federal Rules of Evidence.

LO6- Understand and able to think critically on different court systems around the world.

LO7-The student will learn about expert testimony.

LO8-The student will discuss professionalism and ethics in court room presentation.

LO9-The student will discuss the Federal Rules of evidence.

LO10-The student will be able to explain the differences between a lay witness and an expert witness.

LO11-The student will describe when a lay witness may give an opinion.

LO12-The student will explain the qualifications that must be satisfied for an individual to testify as an expert witness at a trial.

LO13-The student will explain why expert witnesses traditionally have not been permitted to testify about an "ultimate issue," and how the Federal Rules of Evidence approach this issue.

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. Students will develop communication skills to include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.
MS 2- Critical Thinking and Observation. Students will develop critical thinking skills to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.
MS 3- Multicultural Understanding.
MS 4- Accessing resources to interrupt case law and case studies.
MS 5- Teamwork and working collaboratively.
MS 6- Analyzing the factors contributing to expert testimony.

GENERAL CLASSROM POLICIES:

Students are encouraged to attend the class, ask questions, and express opinions, however, talking among students and disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. You may bring beverages to class with you, but not food. Reading outside materials such as newspapers or other course work is not permitted during class time. Students should be prepared to engage in discussion over the assigned readings, and for possible pop quizzes. Electronic devices are never allowed to use in class in a way to distract the instructor and other students. Keep your mobile phone in silent mode, otherwise switch it off. Violation of this crucial principal will be penalized. There will be one general rule in class which applies to all situations. This is also called "golden rule". TREAT OTHERS AS YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE TREATED.

GRADING:

Midterm (Writing Assignment)	**25%**
Final Exam	**25%**
Discussion Questions	**50%**
Total	**100%**

DISCUSSION BOARD:

Your Discussion Topics have already been posted. The student is expected to respond to all posted discussion boards (this includes the 'Introduction') during the semester to receive the full credit. All discussions should be completed by midnight on the due date assigned.

Note: Expectations for discussions have recently been updated. Students should review the discussion rubric before posting. Generally, the most important factors related to a student getting the most points possible for weekly discussion posts and responses are:

- Content of original post: your instructor will be looking for you to articulate into at least one well stated post response, a demonstration that you understand the weekly material/subject and possess a command of that material/subject. In addition, the expectation is that you display critical thinking skills by bringing into the discussion at least three relevant resources and that your post(s) will promote significant further thought on the topic.

- Peer response content/weekly involvement in discussion board: Your instructor will be looking for you to engage in discussions with at least three (3) peers. During each of those engagements, your instructor will expect you to build on or respectfully refute the author's position while displaying exemplary critical thinking skills.

- Adherence to Discussion Forum Standards and Guidelines: your instructor will be looking for you to follow all required standards (i.e. APA format; grammar; citations; references, other standards as required).

COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

The exam will be comprehensive and will contain material covered throughout the course. The exam will be 50 questions with a time limit of an hour of completion. The exam will be 20% of the student's overall grade.

MIDTERM:

Choose one of the topics below for your midterm paper.

1) If you could add, delete, or modify one or two of the Federal Rules of Evidence, which Rules would you change and why?

2) Identify something in either the assigned readings or presentations that you agree or disagree with and explain why you agree or disagree.

3) Any topic you choose that has something to do with the law, science, or expert testimony in some way.

Course Paper:

Using course materials, scholarly literature, and industry best practices, prepare a professional management report addressing the topics listed below. The writing assignment must be between 3-5 pages.

In addition to fulfilling the specifics of the assignment, a successful paper must also meet the following criteria:

- Assignment must be submitted as a Word Document; **a PDF or link will not be accepted.**
- Include a cover page and references page in 10–12-point font (Arial, Courier, and Times New Roman are acceptable)
- Establish and sustain a clear viewpoint and purpose
- Assignment should follow the conventions of Standard English (correct grammar, punctuation, etc.)
- Writing should be well ordered, logical, and unified, as well as original and insightful
- Your work should display superior content, organization, style, and mechanics
- Appropriate citation style should be followed
- Your "Turn it in" score may not be over 20%, if the assignment is submitted with an over 20% score this may result in a "0" for the assignment.

You should also make sure to:

- Include a title page with full name, class name, section number, and date
- Include an introductory and concluding paragraph and demonstrate college-level communication through the composition of original materials in Standard English
- Use examples to support your discussion

- Cite all sources on a separate reference page at the end of your paper and cite within the body of your paper using APA format and citation style. For more information on APA guidelines, visit Academic Tools.

LATE POLICY:

Late assignments, quizzes and exams will not be accepted without prior approval. Please do not ask for an exception to this after the due date. None will be granted.

CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM:

Students are expected to do their own work on all tests and papers. Cheating on tests and plagiarism on assignments will result in a grade of "F" on that part of the course, a possible grade of "F" for the entire course, and possible recommendation for suspension from the university.

Plagiarism consists of presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgment of the source) and submitting examinations or other work as a whole or in part as one's own when such work has been prepared by another person or copied from another person (see the Student Handbook).

ARTIFICIAL INTELEGENCE:

The use of generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT, DALL-E, etc.) are not permitted in this class; therefore, any use of AI tools for work in this class may be considered a violation of Policy and Student Conduct Code, since the work is not your own. The use of unauthorized AI tools will result in a grade of "F" on that part of the course, a possible grade of "F" for the entire course, and possible recommendation for suspension from the college.

IN-CLASS and ON-LINE ATTENDANCE:

The Department of Criminal Justice feels very strongly that class attendance is a direct predictor of student classroom success. Therefore, the faculty of the CJ department as a group will enforce the following student attendance policy. This policy does not supersede the SRSU policy on student attendance; it simply reinforces those stated goals. Criminal justice faculty will take class attendance. In accordance with current SRSU policy, when a student misses a total of 9 hours of class, the presumption is that the student will be dropped from that class with an "F".

Students who violate the SRSU attendance policy may also find that they are ineligible for any extra credit, or any discretionary grading curve applied to any or all exams for that course/semester. It should also be noted that it is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor prior to any University event that would cause an absence. Failure of the student to inform the instructor will result in that absence being recorded as unexcused. Attendance is important! Attendance demonstrates maturity, responsibility, and a serious attitude toward education. Additionally, instructors seldom teach only from the book. Missing a class (even an excused absence) will put you at a disadvantage for all the materials covered when you were absent such as films, presentations, and guest lectures which cannot be made up. Attendance will be taken daily, and absences cannot be made up. Students should be in class on time and should be prepared to stay for the entire class period. Students who are late will not be counted as attending if attendance has already been taken.

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 COVID, 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.

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 https://www.sulross.edu/section/311/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 432-837-8523 (M-F 09:00 am-06:00 pm). You can get The Distance Education Handbook at https://tvpb.sulross.edu/start/index.html

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 Mrs. Mary Schwartze Grisham, LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Director at 432-837-8203 or email mschwartze@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.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR FALL 2026

W	DATES	TOPICS	READINGS
1	08/24 - 08/28	Class Introductions	Course Orientation
2	08/31-09/04	Federal Rules of Evidence	Federal Rules of Evidence
3	09/07-09/11	Overview of Evidence	Law and Evidence Chapter 1
4	09/14-09/18	Real Evidence	Law and Evidence Chapter 2
5	09/21-09/25	Demonstrative Evidence	Law and Evidence Chapter 3
6	09/28-10/02	Documentary Evidence	Law and Evidence Chapter 4
7	10/05-10/09	Lay Witness	Law and Evidence Chapter 5
8	10/12-10/16	**MIDTERM**	
9	10/19-10/23	Expert Evidence	Law and Evidence Chapter 6
10	10/26-10/30	Admissions and Stipulations	Law and Evidence Chapter 7
11	11/02-11/06	Motion Practice and Evidence	Law and Evidence Chapter 8
12	11/09-11/13	Trial Evidence	Law and Evidence Chapter 9
13	11/16-11/20	Export Report	Course Material
14	11/23-11/27	**Thanksgiving Break**	
15	11/30-12/04	Reflection	
16	12/07-12/09	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.