

Introduction to Criminal Justice

CJ 1301 | Fall 2026

Instructor	Kate Rubio	Campus	Alpine Campus
Email	kate.rubio@sulross.edu	Office Hours	By appointment
Meeting Days	Monday-Thursday	Course	CJ 1301
Classroom	Alpine Campus		
Semester	Fall 2026		

Two class sessions are scheduled each day, Monday through Thursday.

REQUIRED TEXT

Criminal Justice Today: An Introductory Text for the 21st Century (any edition from the 10th through the newest), by Frank Schmalleger.

Additional readings, including articles and reports, may be posted on Blackboard.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to the field of criminal justice and provides an overview of the American criminal justice system and its major subsystems, including police, courts, juries, prosecutors, defense, and correctional agencies, as well as the standards and methods used to respond to crime and criminal offenders.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- LO1 - Understand the fundamentals of the criminal justice system and analyze how society responds to crime through police, courts, and corrections.
- LO2 - Examine and discuss the processes and underlying philosophies of criminal law and punishment.
- LO3 - Examine social and individual theoretical approaches explaining crime, including strain, subculture, differential association, social control, ethnic succession, and psychological theories.
- LO4 - Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the American system of criminal justice.
- LO5 - Think critically about the functions of the major parts of the criminal justice system and their interrelationships.
- LO6 - Develop competencies in analyzing criminal justice issues and identifying possible solutions to crime-related social problems.
- LO7 - Describe the main goals of contemporary criminal sentencing and understand traditional and alternative sentencing options and their relationship to justice reinvestment strategies.
- LO8 - Compare the advantages and disadvantages of probation and parole and compare the work of probation and parole officers.
- LO9 - Discuss the history of drug abuse and antidrug legislation in America and explain links between drugs and other social costs.
- LO10 - Think critically about criminal justice systems around the world, globalization, and transnational threats such as cybercrime, organized crime, and terrorism.

MARKETABLE SKILLS

- MS1 - Verbal and written communication, including the development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication.
- MS2 - Critical thinking and observation, including creative thinking, inquiry, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of information.
- MS3 - Multicultural understanding.

- MS4 - Accessing resources containing crime data and current legal codes and procedures.
- MS5 - Teamwork and collaborative work.
- MS6 - Analyzing factors that contribute to crime.

GENERAL CLASSROOM POLICIES

Students are encouraged to attend class, ask questions, express opinions, and participate in discussion. Disruptive behavior and side conversations that interfere with instruction will not be tolerated. Beverages are permitted, but food is not. Students should not read unrelated materials or complete other coursework during class. Students should be prepared to discuss assigned readings and may be given pop quizzes. Electronic devices must not be used in a way that distracts the instructor or other students; mobile phones should remain on silent. The guiding classroom rule is: TREAT OTHERS AS YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE TREATED.

GRADING

Course grades are based on two major exams, quizzes, attendance, and an in-class presentation. Exam questions may be drawn from assigned readings and supplemental materials posted on Blackboard. Make-up exams are not ordinarily offered. The grading breakdown is:

Assessment	Weight
Midterm Exam	35%
Final Exam	35%
Quizzes	10%
Attendance	10%
In-Class Presentation	10%

IN-CLASS PRESENTATION

Students are required to prepare and deliver an in-class presentation on a selected course-related topic. The PowerPoint presentation must be submitted to Blackboard before the presentation is delivered in class. Depending on enrollment, presentations may be individual or group-based. For group presentations, the topic will be divided into subtopics and each group member will present an assigned portion.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. Students must complete their own work unless collaboration is expressly authorized. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, submitting another person's work as one's own, copying from professional works or internet sources without citation, unauthorized collaboration, or reusing work from another course without authorization. Violations may result in academic penalties and university disciplinary action. Students are responsible for reviewing and following the current SRSU Student Handbook and Catalog.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

Unless an assignment specifically states otherwise, generative AI may be used only as a support resource and may not replace the student's own analysis, writing, or demonstration of course learning. When AI use is permitted, students must follow the instructor's directions for disclosure, citation, and verification of AI-generated material. Unauthorized AI use may be treated as an academic-integrity violation.

IN-CLASS ATTENDANCE

The Department of Criminal Justice considers attendance an important predictor of student success. Faculty will take attendance in accordance with current SRSU policy. Students are responsible for notifying the instructor in advance of university events that will cause an absence. Attendance is taken daily; students should arrive on time, remain for the entire class period, and be prepared to participate. University attendance and withdrawal rules in the current Student Handbook and academic calendar govern the course.

REQUIRED 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 University rules and regulations. Students are also responsible for checking their Sul Ross email, an official form of communication from the University, and for complying with applicable federal, state, and local laws.

SERVICE STATEMENT

I aim to create a learning environment that supports varied perspectives and experiences. Unexpected life events, economic concerns, health concerns, and other circumstances can affect a student's ability to succeed. My commitment is to support students in meeting the learning objectives of this course and to contribute to the Sul Ross Familia's supportive learning environment. Students whose academic performance is being affected by circumstances outside class are encouraged to speak with me.

SRSU COUNSELING AND ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

Sul Ross State University provides confidential counseling and accessibility services through the Counseling and Accessibility Services Office, Ferguson Hall 112, Alpine, Texas. The office may be reached at 432-837-8203 or counseling@sulross.edu. Tiffany Telesca is the current counselor listed for this syllabus. Counseling services are available to support student mental health and well-being, and appointments may be available in person or online.

SRSU DISABILITY / ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access and provides reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. Students seeking accessibility or accommodation services should initiate a request each semester for each class through SRSU Counseling and Accessibility Services. Contact the office at 432-837-8203 or counseling@sulross.edu; the office is located in Ferguson Hall, Suite 112, Alpine, Texas.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES AND BLACKBOARD HELP

Sul Ross State University provides advising, counseling, mentoring, tutoring, supplemental instruction, writing assistance, and other academic-support resources. Student Support Services may be reached at 432-837-9118 or in Ferguson Hall, Room 105. Students needing Blackboard or technology assistance should use the current SRSU Blackboard and technology-support resources.

SRSU LIBRARY SERVICES

The Sul Ross Library offers free resources and services to the SRSU community. Students may access and borrow books, articles, and other materials through the library. Off-campus access requires a LoboID and password. Librarians are available in person, by email at srsulibrary@sulross.edu, or by phone at 432-837-8123. Blackboard access also provides convenient access to university library resources and databases.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR - FALL 2026

The course schedule below reflects the Fall 2026 semester. Classes begin Monday, August 24, 2026. University holidays and the final-examination period are reflected in the schedule. Course topics and readings follow the sequence of the original syllabus.

Week	Dates	Topics / Assessments	Readings
1	Aug. 24-30	Introduction; What is Criminal Justice?	Schmallegger, Ch. 1
2	Aug. 31-Sept. 6	The Crime Picture; Quiz 1	Ch. 2
3	Sept. 7-13	Criminological Theories (Labor Day: Sept. 7 - no classes)	Ch. 3
4	Sept. 14-20	Criminal Law; Quiz 2	Ch. 4
5	Sept. 21-27	Policing: Purpose and Organization	Ch. 5
6	Sept. 28-Oct. 4	Policing: Legal Aspects; Quiz 3	Ch. 7

7	Oct. 5-11	Policing: Issues and Challenges	Ch. 8
8	Oct. 12-18	The Courts, Pretrial Activities, and the Criminal Trial; Quiz 4	Ch. 9-10
9	Oct. 19-25	Midterm Exam; Sentencing	Ch. 11
10	Oct. 26-Nov. 1	Probation, Parole, and Reentry; Quiz 5	Ch. 12
11	Nov. 2-8	Prisons and Jails	Ch. 13
12	Nov. 9-15	Juvenile Justice; Quiz 6	Ch. 15
13	Nov. 16-22	Drugs and Crime	Ch. 16
14	Nov. 23-29	Thanksgiving Week - University holiday Nov. 25-27	Review as assigned
15	Nov. 30-Dec. 2	Terrorism, Multinational Criminal Justice, Global Issues, and High-Technology Crimes; Quiz 7	Ch. 17-18
16	Dec. 4 & 7-9	Final Examination Period - exact course exam date/time announced by instructor	Comprehensive review

IMPORTANT FALL 2026 UNIVERSITY DATES

- August 24 - First day of classes for the 16-week term.
- September 7 - Labor Day holiday; no classes.
- September 9 - Twelfth class day and last day to drop a 16-week course without creating an academic record.
- November 6 - Last day to withdraw from the 16-week course/term with a grade of W; processing deadline is 4 p.m.
- November 25-27 - Thanksgiving holiday.
- December 2 - Last class day before finals for the 16-week term.
- December 3 - Dead Day.
- December 4 and December 7-9 - Final examinations for the 16-week term.

END-OF-COURSE EVALUATIONS

Student evaluations of faculty are administered online at the end of each term/session for courses meeting the university's enrollment threshold. Students will receive an email containing a survey link for each eligible course. Responses are anonymous.

Syllabus notice: This syllabus is subject to updates and changes. Students should review course announcements and reminders regularly. The instructor reserves the right to amend the syllabus as needed.