



CRIJ 1301 - Introduction to Criminal Justice 401 Course Syllabus

Description

This course provides a historical and philosophical overview of the American criminal justice system, including the nature, extent, and impact of crime; criminal law; and justice agencies and processes.

Credits 3

Lecture Hours 3

Lab Hours 0

Extended Hours 0

Contact Hours 48

Student Learning Outcomes

Critical Thinking Skills – to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry and analysis, evaluation and syntheses of information

- CT1: Generate and communicate ideas by combining, changing, or reapplying existing information

Communication Skills – to include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication

- CS1: Develop, interpret, and express ideas through written communication

Empirical and Quantitative Skills – to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions

- EQS2: Manipulate and analyze observable facts and arrive at an informed conclusion

Social Responsibility – to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities

- SR3: Engage in regional, national, and global communities

State Approval Code 43.0104.51 24

Instructor Name Katie Ferris

Semester/Year Fall 2025

Meeting Time and Location

Online—students are expected to spend at least 3-4 hours per week reading, reviewing, and participating in assigned activities for successful completion of this course.

Alternate Operations During Campus Closure

In the event of an emergency or announced campus closure due to a natural disaster or pandemic, it may be necessary for Panola College to move to altered operations. During this time, Panola College may opt to continue delivery of instruction through methods that include, but are not limited to: online learning management system (CANVAS), online conferencing, email messaging, and/or an alternate schedule. It is the responsibility of the student to monitor Panola College's website (www.panola.edu) for instructions about continuing courses remotely, CANVAS for each class for course-specific communication, and Panola College email for important general information.

Student Basic Needs

Unexpected circumstances may arise, but Panola College offers various resources to support students. If you need mental health services or are facing challenges with transportation, affording class materials and supplies, or accessing food regularly—issues that may impact your class performance—please visit panola.edu/resources.

Class Attendance

Regular and punctual attendance of classes and laboratories is required of all students. When a student has been ill or absent from class for approved extracurricular activities, he or she should be allowed, as far as possible, to make up for the missed work. If a student has not actively participated by the census date, they will be dropped by the instructor for non-attendance. This policy applies to courses that are in-person, online, hybrid, and hybrid.

Attendance in online courses is determined by submission of an assignment or participation in an activity. According to federal guidelines, simply logging into a distance learning course without participating in an academic assignment does not constitute attendance. Distance learning is defined as when a majority (more than 50%) of instruction occurs when the instructor and students are in separate physical locations. Students must engage in an academic activity prior to the course census date.

When an instructor feels that a student has been absent to such a degree as to invalidate the learning experience, the instructor may recommend to the Vice President of Instruction that the student be withdrawn from the course. Instructors may seek to withdraw students for non-attendance after they have accumulated the following number of absences:

Fall or spring semesters:

3 or more class meeting times per week - 5 absences

2 class meeting times per week - 3 absences

1 class meeting per week - 2 absences

The student is responsible for seeing that he or she has been officially withdrawn from a class. A student who stops attendance in a class without officially withdrawing from that class will be given a failing grade; consequently, the student must follow official withdrawal procedures in the Admissions/Records Office.

Please note: Health Science and Cosmetology courses may require more stringent attendance policies based on their accreditation agencies. Please see the addendum and/or program handbook for further information concerning attendance.

Pregnant/Parenting Policy

Panola College welcomes pregnant and parenting students as a part of the student body. This institution is committed to providing support and adaptations for a successful educational experience for pregnant and parenting students. Students experiencing a need for accommodations related to pregnancy or parenting will find a Pregnancy and Parenting Accommodations Request form in the Student Handbook or may request the form from the course instructor.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Course Policy

The use of artificial intelligence tools, including ChatGPT, is permitted in this course for discussion assignments only. No more than 20% of any discussion post may be AI-generated, and all AI-generated content must be clearly cited within the assignment. Failure to cite AI use appropriately is considered academic dishonesty.

AI use is strictly prohibited on the final semester writing assignment and any related components.

Submitting AI-generated work without permission or proper citation will result in a grade of zero and may be reported as a violation of the academic integrity policy.

Use of AI is allowed only under specific classroom circumstances and with explicit permission. Proper citation is required at all times.

What I look for when evaluating AI overuse includes: sudden changes in writing style, unrealistic submission speeds, and inconsistencies between how a student writes in Canvas vs. how they email or message me.

For example, if a student's emails are unpolished or informal but their Canvas discussions are perfectly academic, this will be a red flag for further review.

Improper or excessive AI use will result in a zero on the assignment and may be treated as academic dishonesty.

Instructional Goals and Purposes

The purpose of this course is to provide a broad overview of the history, philosophy, and ethical considerations of criminal justice, coupled with the nature and impact of crime. The course provides an overview of the criminal justice system, including law enforcement, prosecution, courts and court procedure, probation, parole, corrections, and public policy issues affecting all.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Describe the history and philosophy of the American criminal justice system.
2. Explain the nature and extent of crime in America.
3. Analyze the impact and consequences of crime.
4. Evaluate the development, concepts, and functions of law in the criminal justice system.
5. Describe the structure of contemporary federal, state, and local justice agencies and processes.

Course Content

A general description of lecture/discussion topics included in this course are listed in the Learning Objectives section of this syllabus.

Students in all sections of this course will learn the following content:

1. The Criminal Justice System
2. The Political and Legal Environment of Criminal Justice
3. Criminal Law
4. Law Enforcement
5. Courts and Sentencing
6. Prisons, Jails, and Community Corrections
7. Criminal Justice Theory
8. Special Issues in Criminal Justice

Methods of Instruction/Course Format/Delivery

Online Only

Major Assignments/Assessments

The following items are assigned and assessed during the semester and used to calculate the student's final grade.

Assignments

Assignments

Faculty may assign both in and out of class assignments, essay projects, and exams to assess the student's knowledge and abilities. Faculty may also choose from the following assessment criteria:

1. Exams
2. Tests
3. Quizzes
4. Internet Assignments
5. Journal Assignments
6. Library Assignments
7. Written Assignments
8. Attendance
9. Class Participation/Discussion
10. Class Preparedness

Assessments

Assessments

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLO's): were derived from the descriptions given by THECB. The Core Curriculum Committee developed Panola College SLOs for each Core Objective, adhering as closely as possible to the descriptions given. Each general education course will have course-specific SLOs that correlate with the College SLOs.

Critical Thinking Skills – to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry and analysis, evaluation and syntheses of information

- CT1: Generate and communicate ideas by combining, changing, or reapplying existing information
- Assignment(s): Chapter Critical Thinking Questions (Discussions)

Communication Skills – to include effective development, interpretation, and expression of ideas through written, oral, and visual communication

- CS1: Develop, interpret, and express ideas through written communication
- Assignment: Semester Project

Empirical and Quantitative Skills – to include the manipulation and analysis of numerical data or observable facts resulting in informed conclusions

- EQS2: Manipulate and analyze observable facts and arrive at an informed conclusion
- Assignment: Crime Rate Analysis (Discussion)

Social Responsibility – to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities

- SR3: Engage in regional, national, and global communities
- Assignment: Criminal Justice Across Borders (Discussion)

Course Grade

This is the breakdown of how your final grade will be calculated for this course:

- **Weekly Class Participation/Assignments: 25%** Includes weekly quizzes, discussions, lecture-based activities, and other module tasks. Work submitted after the deadline will not be accepted.
- **Chapter Assignments: 10%** Eight-chapter quizzes, all remotely proctored.
- **Midterm Exam: 25%** Covers weeks 1–7. This is a remotely proctored, closed-note exam. No early testing or make-up exams are allowed.
- **Semester Paper/Project: 15%** The semester project involves researching a contemporary criminal justice topic and developing a slide presentation with speaker notes. The final product must be presented through a recorded video or voiceover and submitted as a YouTube link. Presentations should include clear written content, appropriate visuals, logical structure, and proper APA citations. This assignment demonstrates the ability to communicate complex ideas effectively in both written and spoken formats.
- **Comprehensive Final Exam: 25%** Covers the entire semester. This is also remotely proctored and closed-note. If a student displays suspicious activity during the midterm, they will be required to take the final in person at an approved testing center.

Texts Materials, and Supplies

- OER Textbook
 - Criminal Justice: An Overview of the System, 2ed., by: Adam J. McKee
 - Link to the textbook is in the Start Here module of the course, and links to each section will be in the weekly modules as assigned.

Required Readings

- OER Textbook
 - Criminal Justice: An Overview of the System, 2ed., by: Adam J. McKee

- Link to the textbook is in the Start Here module of the course, and links to each section will be in the weekly modules as assigned.

Recommended Readings

Local and National newspaper and/or magazine/journal articles relevant to the subject matter issues discussed

Other

- Courses conducted via video conferencing may be recorded and shared for instructional purposes by the instructor.
- For current texts and materials, use the following link to access bookstore listings: <https://www.panolacollegestore.com>.
- For testing services, use the following link: <https://www.panola.edu/student-services/student-support/academic-testing-center>.
- The Accommodations & Disability Support (A&DS) Office at Panola College provides and facilitates support services and accommodations for students with disabilities. The A&DS office works under the federal guidelines included in Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the American with Disabilities Act. Please contact the Accommodations & Disability Support (A&DS) Office located in the Charles C. Matthews Student Center or go to <https://www.panola.edu/disabilitysupport> for more information.
- Withdrawing from a course is the student's responsibility. Students who do not attend class and who do not withdraw will receive the grade earned for the course.
- Student Handbook: <https://www.panola.edu/> (located on at the bottom under student)