CRIJ 2329 - Fundamentals of Criminal Law

Fall 2026 Syllabus, Section 161, CRN 17981

Instructor Information

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Office Hours:
7:00 p.m. to 7:30 p. m.
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Times and Location

MW 7:35pm-8:55pm in Bullock Hall 103

Course Description

A study of the nature of substantive criminal law. Included are philosophies and historical developments, major definitions and concepts, classification of crime, and the elements of crimes and their penalties. Texas statues will be utilized as illustrations.
Social Sciences Department, College of Arts & Sciences

Additional Course Information

Make-up Policy: If you miss an exam, there will not be any make-ups, and you will receive a zero for that exam.

Student class responsibilities: During class, we will discuss the cases in your text and various statutes that are relevant. You must read the assigned chapters (and cases within those chapters) prior to class lecture in order to understand the material covered and be prepared to contribute to class discussion.

Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) Policy

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools for this course is permitted under specific conditions to enhance learning and academic integrity. This policy outlines the acceptable and prohibited uses of AI to ensure that students maintain rigorous academic standards and originality in their work.

Permitted Uses of AI:

1. **Brainstorming and Idea Generation:**
   - Students may use AI tools to generate initial ideas and brainstorm potential topics related to course assignments and research projects.
   - AI can assist in exploring different perspectives and generating a broad range of ideas to help students develop their own unique arguments and approaches.
2. **Grammar and Language Improvement**:
   - AI tools may be used for proofreading and correcting grammatical errors, spelling mistakes, and syntax issues in written assignments.
   - AI can assist in enhancing the clarity and coherence of the text by suggesting improvements in language and sentence structure.
3. **Clarity of Original Work:**
   - AI can be employed to improve the overall clarity and readability of students' original work.
   - This includes refining language, rephrasing sentences for better understanding, and ensuring that the writing is concise and well-organized.

Prohibited Uses of AI:

1. **Generation of Original Content:**
 • AI tools may not be used to generate substantial portions of text or original content for assignments, research papers, or any other course-related work.
 • The primary responsibility for writing and developing content must rest with the student.
2. **Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:**
 • AI tools must not be used to plagiarize or to produce work that is not the student's own. All submissions must reflect the student's individual analysis, understanding, and synthesis of course materials.
 • Students are required to properly cite any sources or ideas generated with the assistance of AI tools in accordance with academic standards.
3. **Substitution of Critical Thinking:**
 • AI should not be used as a substitute for critical thinking, analysis, and scholarly engagement with course materials.
 • Students must actively engage in the concepts, theories, and research discussed in the course, using AI only as a supplementary aid rather than a replacement for their intellectual contributions.

Compliance and Enforcement:

 • Students are expected to adhere to this policy and are responsible for ensuring that their use of AI aligns with the guidelines provided.
 • Any suspected misuse of AI tools will be reviewed in accordance with the University's academic integrity policies, and appropriate actions will be taken if violations are found.

By following this policy, students will be able to leverage AI tools effectively while maintaining the integrity and originality of their academic work.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this online course, the student will be able to execute the following:

1.List and explain various terminology, principles, and theoretical concepts of criminal law.
2.Explain the difference between criminal law and civil law.
3.Understand the purpose of criminal law and to some extent its historical development within the United States legal system.
4.Discuss some of the constitutional and statutory limitations on criminal liability.
5.Identify and discuss various defenses to criminal liability and distinguish between justification defenses and excuse defenses.
6.Identify the parties to a crime and explain whether or not there is vicarious liability.
7.Understand and discuss the interplay between inchoate crimes (e.g., attempt, conspiracy, and solicitation) and substantive crimes.
8.State and explain the elements of substantive crimes against persons; against property; and against public welfare and morals (e.g., murder, manslaughter, sex offenses, bodily injury crimes, domestic violence crimes, stalking crimes, personal restraint crimes, false imprisonment, larceny, theft, theft by false pretenses, robbery, extortion, receiving stolen property, damaging/destroying other people's property, invading other people's property, cybercrimes, disorderly conduct, "quality of life crimes," panhandling, gang activity, and other victimless crimes).
9.Analyze various factual scenarios and critique whether a party's conduct may or may not warrant criminal liability.
10.Form one's own opinions regarding the propriety and utilization of these principles in modern times.

Important Dates

Visit the Academic Calendar (tamiu.edu) (https://www.tamiu.edu/academiccalendar/) page to view the term's important dates.

Textbooks

Group	Title	Author	ISBN
Required	Texas Criminal Law (3rd Edition)	Dowling, J. L	9780578390376

Grading Criteria

[Enter Grading Criteria here. You may provide this information using the table below, and/or using bullet points/lists and/or in paragraph form.

- ***To edit the table**, double click on it.*
- ***To remove the table**, click on it and press **DELETE**.*

Please don't forget to remove these instructions.*]*

GRADE	PERCENTAGE
A	91-100
B	80-90.9
C	70-79.9
D	60-69.9
F	Below 60

Open Boilerplate

Examinations: The examinations will cover material from the readings, lectures, and other material presented in the course. Exam #1, Exam #2, and Exam #3 will consist of multiple choice questions, short answer questions and/or true/false type questions. These three exams will each account for 25% of your grade, totaling 75% of your course grade. The Comprehensive Final Exam will consist of multiple-choice questions, true/false type questions, and essay questions and will also account for 25% of your grade. Required 3-page informative report for extra points. In addition to the paper, there will be optional course assignments for extra points as well.. Details to be addressed in class.

Assignment #1 5 points

Assignment #2 5 points

Assignment #3 5 points

Required 3 page informative paper Up to 10 points added to final grade.

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Day	Date	Agenda/Topic	Reading(s)	Due
Mon	8/24	Foundations of Criminal Law	Chapter 1 and power point presentation, Acknowledgement of Syllabus and Policies	
Wed	8/26	Foundations of Criminal Law	Chapter 1 and power point presentation	
Mon	8/31	Elements of A Crime	Chapter 2 power point presentation	
Wed	9/2	Elements of A Crime	Chapter 2 power point presentation	
Mon	9/7	The Criminal Law in Daily Practice	Chapter 3 power point presentation	
Wed	9/9	The Criminal Law in Daily Practice	Chapter 3 power point presentation	
Mon	9/14	Parties to Offenses	Chapter 4 power point presentation	
Wed	9/16	Parties to Offenses, Prepratory Offenses and Organized Criminal Activity	Chapter 4 and 14 power point presentation	
Mon	9/21	Exam # 1 Chapters 1-4 and 14		
Wed	9/23	General Defenses, Criminal Homicide	Chapter 15 and 5 power point presentation	
Mon	9/28	General Defenses, Criminal Homicide	Chapter 15 and 5 power point presentation	
Wed	9/30	Assault and Sexual Assault	Chapter 6 power point point presentation	
Mon	10/5	Assault and Sexual Assault	Chapter 6 power point presentation	
Wed	10/7	Kidnapping and Related Offenses	Chapter 7 power point presentation	
Mon	10/12	Property Destruction Offenses	Chapter 8 power point presentation	
Wed	10/14	Property Destruction Offenses	Chapter 8 power point presentation	
Mon	10/19	Exam # 2		
Wed	10/21	Theft, Fraud, and Related Offenses	Chapter 9 power point presentation	
Mon	10/26	Theft, Fraud, and Related Offenses	Chapter 9 and Related Offenses	
Wed	10/28	Robbery, Burglary, and Criminal Trespass	Chapter 10 power point presentation	
Mon	11/2	Robbery, Burglary, Criminal Trespass	Chapter 10 power point presentation	
Wed	11/4	Offenses Against Government Operations	Chapter 11 power point presentation	
Mon	11/9	Offenses Against Government Operations	Chapter 11 power point presentation	

Wed	11/11	Public Disorder, Indecency, Health and Safety Offenses	Chapter 12 power point presentation
Mon	11/16	Intoxication Offenses	Chapter 13 power point presentation
Wed	11/18	Exam # 3	
Mon	11/23	Turn in Research Paper	
Wed	11/25	Review for Final Exam	
Mon	11/30	Review for Final Exam	
Wed	12/2	Final Examination	Comprehensive Final Exam
Mon	12/7	No Class	
Wed	12/9	No Class	

University/College Policies

Please see the University Policies below.

COVID-19 Related Policies

If you have tested positive for COVID-19, please refer to the Student Handbook, Appendix A (Attendance Rule) for instructions.

Required Class Attendance

Students are expected to attend every class in person (or virtually, if the class is online) and to complete all assignments. If you cannot attend class, it is your responsibility to communicate absences with your professors. The faculty member will decide if your excuse is valid and thus may provide lecture materials of the class. According to University policy, acceptable reasons for an absence, which cannot affect a student's grade, include:

- Participation in an authorized University activity.
- Death or major illness in a student's immediate family.
- Illness of a dependent family member.
- Participation in legal proceedings or administrative procedures that require a student's presence.
- Religious holy day.
- Illness that is too severe or contagious for the student to attend class.
- Required participation in military duties.
- Mandatory admission interviews for professional or graduate school which cannot be rescheduled.

Students are responsible for providing satisfactory evidence to faculty members within seven calendar days of their absence and return to class. They must substantiate the reason for the absence. If the absence is excused, faculty members must either provide students with the opportunity to make up the exam or other work missed, or provide a satisfactory alternative to complete the exam or other work missed within 30 calendar days from the date of absence. Students who miss class due to a University-sponsored activity are responsible for identifying their absences to their instructors with as much advance notice as possible.

Classroom Behavior (applies to online or Face-to-Face Classes)

In the classroom, students are expected to listen attentively, participate respectfully, and adhere to established rules. Behavior that interferes with the class lecture may result in disciplinary action, ensuring a productive and respectful learning environment for everyone. Any disputes over academic matters should be addressed calmly and constructively, ideally during designated times such as office hours or after class. If a student does not agree with a decision, they can request a meeting with the instructor to discuss their concerns in more detail. Should further resolution be needed, the student may escalate the matter to the department head or use formal grievance procedures as outlined in the sections below. (please refer to Student Handbook Article 4 (https://www.tamiu.edu/handbook/article-04.shtml)).

TAMIU Honor Code: Plagiarism and Cheating

As a TAMIU student, you are bound by the TAMIU Honor Code to conduct yourself ethically in all your activities as a TAMIU student and to report violations of the Honor Code. Please read carefully the Student Handbook Article 7 and Article 10 available at Student Handbook (https://www.tamiu.edu/handbook/index.shtml).

We are committed to strict enforcement of the Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code tend to involve claiming work that is not one's own, most commonly plagiarism in written assignments and any form of cheating on exams and other types of assignments.

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's work as your own. It occurs when you:

1. Borrow someone else's facts, ideas, or opinions and put them entirely in your own words. You must acknowledge that these thoughts are not your own by immediately citing the source in your paper. Failure to do this is plagiarism.
2. Borrow someone else's words (short phrases, clauses, or sentences), you must enclose the copied words in quotation marks as well as citing the source. Failure to do this is plagiarism.
3. Present someone else's paper or exam (stolen, borrowed, or bought) as your own. You have committed a clearly intentional form of intellectual theft and have put your academic future in jeopardy. This is the worst form of plagiarism.

Here is another explanation from the 2020, seventh edition of the Manual of The American Psychological Association (APA):

"Plagiarism is the act of presenting the words, idea, or images of another as your own; it denies authors or creators of content the credit they are due. Whether deliberate or unintentional, plagiarism violates ethical standards in scholarship" (p. 254). This same principle applies to the illicit use of AI.

Plagiarism: Researchers do not claim the words and ideas of another as their own; they give credit where credit is due. Quotations marks should be used to indicate the exact words of another. Each time you paraphrase another author (i.e., summarize a passage or rearrange the order of a sentence and change some of the words), you need to credit the source in the text. The key element of this principle is that authors do not present the work of another as if it were their own words. This can extend to ideas as well as written words. If authors model a study after one done by someone else, the originating author should be given credit. If the rationale for a study was suggested in the discussion section of someone else's article, the person should be given credit. Given the free exchange of ideas, which is very important for the health of intellectual discourse, authors may not know where an idea for a study originated. If authors do know, however, they should acknowledge the source; this includes personal communications (p. 11). For guidance on proper documentation, consult the Academic Success Center or a recommended guide to documentation and research such as the Manual of the APA or the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. If you still have doubts concerning proper documentation, seek advice from your instructor prior to submitting a final draft.

TAMIU has penalties for plagiarism and cheating.

- **Penalties for Plagiarism**: Should a faculty member discover that a student has committed plagiarism, the student should receive a grade of 'F' in that course and the matter will be referred to the Honor Council for possible disciplinary action. The faculty member, however, may elect to give freshmen and sophomore students a "zero" for the assignment and to allow them to revise the assignment up to a grade of "F" (50%) if they believe that the student plagiarized out of ignorance or carelessness and not out of an attempt to deceive in order to earn an unmerited grade; the instructor must still report the offense to the Honor Council. This option should not be available to juniors, seniors, or graduate students, who cannot reasonably claim ignorance of documentation rules as an excuse. For repeat offenders in undergraduate courses or for an offender in any graduate course, the penalty for plagiarism is likely to include suspension or expulsion from the university.
  - *Caution*: Be very careful what you upload to Turnitin or send to your professor for evaluation. Whatever you upload for evaluation will be considered your final, approved draft. If it is plagiarized, you will be held responsible. The excuse that "it was only a draft" will not be accepted.
  - *Caution*: Also, do not share your electronic files with others. If you do, you are responsible for the possible consequences. If another student takes your file of a paper and changes the name to his or her name and submits it and you also submit the paper, we will hold both of you responsible for plagiarism. It is impossible for us to know with certainty who wrote the paper and who stole it. And, of course, we cannot know if there was collusion between you and the other student in the matter.
- **Penalties for Cheating**: Should a faculty member discover a student cheating on an exam or quiz or other class project, the student should receive a "zero" for the assignment and not be allowed to make the assignment up. The incident should be reported to the chair of the department and to the Honor Council. If the cheating is extensive, however, or if the assignment constitutes a major grade for the course (e.g., a final exam), or if the student has cheated in the past, the student should receive an "F" in the course, and the matter should be referred to the Honor Council. Additional penalties, including suspension or expulsion from the university may be imposed. Under no circumstances should a student who deserves an "F" in the course be allowed to withdraw from the course with a "W."
  - *Caution*: Chat groups that start off as "study groups" can easily devolve into "cheating groups." Be very careful not to join or remain any chat group if it begins to discuss specific information about exams or assignments that are meant to require individual work. If you are a member of such a group and it begins to cheat, you will be held responsible along with all the other members of the group. The TAMIU Honor Code requires that you report any such instances of cheating.
- **Student Right of Appeal**: Faculty will notify students immediately via the student's TAMIU e- mail account that they have submitted plagiarized work. Students have the right to appeal a faculty member's charge of academic dishonesty by notifying the TAMIU Honor Council of their intent to appeal as long as the notification of appeal comes within 10 business days of the faculty member's e-mail message to the student and/or the Office of Student Conduct and Community Engagement. The Student Handbook provides more details.

Use of Work in Two or More Courses

You may not submit work completed in one course for a grade in a second course unless you receive explicit permission to do so by the instructor of the second course. In general, you should get credit for a work product only once.

AI Policies

Your instructor will provide you with their personal policy on the use of AI in the classroom setting and associated coursework.

TAMIU E-Mail and SafeZone

Personal Announcements sent to students through TAMIU E-mail (tamiu.edu or dusty email) are the official means of communicating course and university business with students and faculty –not the U.S. Mail and no other e-mail addresses. Students and faculty must check their TAMIU e-mail accounts regularly, if not daily. Not having seen an important TAMIU e-mail or message from a faculty member, chair, or dean is not accepted as an excuse for failure to take important action.

Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to download the SafeZone app, which is a free mobile app for all University faculty, staff, and students. SafeZone allows you to: report safety concerns (24/7), get connected with mental health professionals, activate location sharing with authorities, and anonymously report incidents. Go to SafeZone (https://www.tamiu.edu/adminis/police/safezone/index.shtml) for more information.

Copyright Restrictions

The Copyright Act of 1976 grants to copyright owners the exclusive right to reproduce their works and distribute copies of their work. Works that receive copyright protection include published works such as a textbook. Copying a textbook without permission from the owner of the copyright may constitute copyright infringement. Civil and criminal penalties may be assessed for copyright infringement. Civil penalties include damages up to $100,000; criminal penalties include a fine up to $250,000 and imprisonment. Copyright laws do not allow students and professors to make photocopies of copyrighted materials, but you may copy a limited portion of a work, such as article from a journal or a chapter from a book for your own personal academic use or, in the case of a professor, for personal, limited classroom use. In general, the extent of your copying should not suggest that the purpose or the effect of your copying is to avoid paying for the materials. And, of course, you may not sell these copies for a profit. Thus, students who copy textbooks to avoid buying them or professors who provide photocopies of textbooks to enable students to save money are violating the law.

Students with Disabilities

Texas A&M International University seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for all qualified persons with disabilities. This University will adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required to afford equal education opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to register with the Office of Disability Services for Students located in Student Center 124. This office will contact the faculty member to recommend specific, reasonable accommodations. Faculty are prohibited from making accommodations based solely on communications from students. They may make accommodations only when provided documentation by the Office of Disability Services for Students.

For accommodations or assistance with disabilities, contact the Disability Coordinator, Karla Pedraza, at karla.pedraza@tamiu.edu, call 956.326.2763, or visit Student Center 124.

Student Attendance and Leave of Absence (LOA) Policy

As part of our efforts to assist and encourage all students towards graduation, TAMIU provides
LOA's for students, including pregnant/parenting students, in accordance with the Attendance Rule (Section 3.07) and the Student LOA Rule (Section 3.08), which includes the "Leave of Absence Request" form. Both rules can be found in the TAMIU Student Handbook (URL: Student Handbook (https://www.tamiu.edu/handbook/index.shtml)).

Pregnant and Parenting Students

Under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, harassment based on sex, including harassment because of pregnancy or related conditions, is prohibited. A pregnant/parenting student must be granted an absence for as long as the student's physician deems the absence medically necessary. It is a violation of Title IX to ask for documentation relative to the pregnant/parenting student's status beyond what would be required for other medical conditions. Students who experience or observe alleged or suspected discrimination due to their pregnant/parenting status, should report to the TAMIU Title IX Coordinator (Lorissa M. Cortez, 5201 University Boulevard, KLM 159B, Laredo, TX 78041, TitleIX@tamiu.edu, 956.326.2857) and/or the Office of Civil Rights (Dallas Office, U.S. Department of Education, 1999 Bryan Street, Suite 1620, Dallas, TX 75201-6810, 214.661.9600). You can also report it on TAMIU's anonymous electronic reporting site, *Report It*, at https://www.tamiu.edu/reportit (https://www.tamiu.edu/reportit/index.shtml).

TAMIU advises a pregnant/parenting student to notify their professor once the student is aware that accommodations for such will be necessary. It is recommended that the student and professor develop a reasonable plan for the student's completion of missed coursework or assignments. The Office of Compliance (Lorissa M. Cortez, lorissam.cortez@tamiu.edu) can assist the student and professor in working out the reasonable accommodation. For other questions or concerns regarding Title IX compliance related to pregnant/parenting students, contact the Title IX Coordinator. In the event that a student needs a leave of absence for a substantial period of time, TAMIU urges the student to consider a Leave of Absence (LOA) as outlined in the TAMIU *Student Handbook*.#As part of our efforts to assist and encourage all students towards graduation, TAMIU provides LOAs for students, including pregnant/parenting students, in accordance with the Attendance Rule and the Student LOA Rule.#Both rules can be found in the TAMIU *Student Handbook*.

For parenting-related rights, accommodations, and resources, contact the Parenting Liaison, Mayra Hernandez, at mghernandez@tamiu.edu, call 956.326.2265, or visit Student Center 226.

For pregnancy-related rights, accommodations, and resources, contact the TIX Coordinator, Lorissa Cortez, at lorissaM.cortez@tamiu.edu, call 956.326.2857, or visit Killam Library 159.

Anti-Discrimination/Title IX

TAMIU does not discriminate or permit harassment against any individual on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, educational programs, or employment. If you would like to file a complaint relative to Title IX or any civil rights violation, please contact the TAMIU Director of Equal Opportunity and Diversity/Title IX Coordinator, Lorissa M. Cortez, 5201 University Boulevard, Killam Library 159B, Laredo, TX 78041, TitleIX@tamiu.edu, 956.326.2857, via the anonymous electronic reporting website, ReportIt (https://www.tamiu.edu/reportit) and/or the Office of Civil Rights (Dallas Office), U.S. Department of Education, 1999 Bryan Street, Suite 1620, Dallas, TX 75201-6810, 214.661.9600.

Incompletes

Students who are unable to complete a course should withdraw from the course before the final date for withdrawal and receive a "W." To qualify for an "incomplete" and thus have the opportunity to complete the course at a later date, a student must meet the following criteria:

1. The student must have completed 90% of the course work assigned before the final date for withdrawing from a course with a "W", and the student must be passing the course;
2. The student cannot complete the course because an accident, an illness, or a traumatic personal or family event occurred after the final date for withdrawal from a course;
3. The student must sign an "Incomplete Grade Contract" and secure signatures of approval from the professor and the college dean.
4. The student must agree to complete the missing course work before the end of the next long semester; failure to meet this deadline will cause the "I" to automatically be converted to an "F"; extensions to this deadline may be granted by the dean of the college. This is the general policy regarding the circumstances under which an "incomplete" may be granted, but under exceptional circumstances, a student may receive an incomplete who does not meet all of the criteria above if the faculty member, department chair, and dean recommend it.

WIN Contracts

The Department of Biology and Chemistry does not permit WIN contracts. For other departments within the college, WIN Contracts are offered only under exceptional circumstances and are limited to graduating seniors. Only courses offered by full-time TAMIU faculty or TAMIU instructors are eligible to be contracted for the WIN requirement. However, a WIN contract for a course taught by an adjunct may be approved, with special permission from the department chair and dean. Students must seek approval before beginning any work for the WIN Contract. No student will contract more than one course per semester. Summer WIN Contracts must continue through both summer sessions.

Student Responsibility for Dropping a Course

It is the responsibility of the student to drop the course before the final date for withdrawal from a course. Faculty members, in fact, may not drop a student from a course without getting the approval of their department chair and dean.

Independent Study Course

Independent Study (IS) courses are offered only under exceptional circumstances. Required courses intended to build academic skills may not be taken as IS (e.g., clinical supervision and internships). No student will take more than one IS course per semester. Moreover, IS courses are limited to seniors and graduate students. Summer IS course must continue through both summer sessions.

Grade Changes & Appeals

Faculty are authorized to change final grades only when they have committed a computational error or an error in recording a grade, and they must receive the approval of their department chairs and the dean to change the grade. As part of that approval, they must attach a detailed explanation of the reason for the mistake. Only in rare cases would another reason be entertained as legitimate for a grade change. A student who is unhappy with his or her grade on an assignment must discuss the situation with the faculty member teaching the course. If students believe that they have been graded unfairly, they have the right to appeal the grade using a grade appeal process in the Student Handbook and in the Faculty Handbook.

Final Examination

All courses in all colleges must include a comprehensive exam or performance and be given on the date and time specified by the Academic Calendar and the Final Exam schedule published by the Registrar's Office. In the College of Arts & Sciences all final exams must contain a written component. The written component should comprise at least 20% of the final exam grade. Exceptions to this policy must receive the approval of the department chair and the dean at the beginning of the semester.

Mental Health and Well-Being

The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to Telus Health, a service available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code to download the app and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it. The Telus app is available to download directly from TELUS (tamiu.edu) (https://www.tamiu.edu/counseling/telus/) or from the Apple App Store and Google Play.