



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
SAN ANTONIO

Seminar in Criminology

CRIM 4350

3 Credits

Fall 2024

Instructor: Dr. Danielle Fenimore

Office: CAB 351-D

Phone: 210-784-1000

Office Hours: M 12:00 – 3:00

MW 2:00 – 3:00

Virtual by appointment

Email: dfenimore@tamusa.edu

Classroom: Science & Technology 169

Meeting Time: Hybrid

Asynchronous online

W 12:30pm to 1:45pm

Course Description:

This course examines a wide range of ethical issues in the field of criminal justice through a discussion of the various philosophical approaches to ethical decision-making. Topics covered include the use of harm to prevent harm; the use of discretionary decision-making; prediction problems; and ethical dilemmas faced by front police, prosecutors, defense attorneys, corrections officers, etc. in the course of their daily duties. ***Note that some of the topics we may use as examples can be sensitive or polarizing. You are expected to be respectful of others and their opinions while in this course.***

Course Learning Objectives:

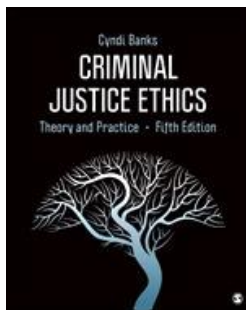
By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Discuss and analyze various ethical philosophies.
- Apply ethics to CJ scenarios.
- Evaluate and defend various approaches to justices.
- Assess current CJ policies from an ethical perspective.

Students will demonstrate their learning by:

- Participating in weekly discussions.
- Sitting for a final exam.
- Writing an article critique.
- Completing a final presentation.

Course Materials:



Title: Criminal Justice Ethics: Theory and Practice, 5th edition

Author: Cyndi Banks

Publisher: SAGE Publishing

ISBN: 9781544353596

Additional resources at the [Student Study Site](#).

Computer requirements:

Activities and assignments in this course will regularly use the Blackboard learning system, available at <https://tamusa.blackboard.com>, and the Packback Questions discussion forum, available at <https://app.packback.co>. Students are required to have regular, reliable access to a computer with an updated operating system (recommended: Windows 10 or Mac OSX 10.13 or higher) and a stable broadband Internet connection (cable modem, DSL, satellite broadband, etc., with a consistent 1.5 Mbps [megabits per second] download speed or higher. You can check your speed settings using the speed test on this website.)

Locations for on-campus computer labs:

Central Academic Building: 2nd and 3rd Floor Open Labs

TAMUSA Library has laptops to check out and a computer lab

Netiquette

We will frequently be using the internet as a means to enhance our learning in this course. We will also be using computers for our online assignments. Please be respectful of your peers and your instructor and do not engage in activities that are unrelated to the class. Such disruptions show a lack of professionalism and will be addressed accordingly.

Assignments & Learning Activities

1. Syllabus Quiz: There will be a syllabus quiz due by the end of the day on the second Tuesday of the semester. This quiz will consist of 5 multiple choice questions and will be available on Blackboard from the first day of class to 11:59 PM on Tuesday, September 3.
2. Exams: There will be 2 exams over the course of the semester. Given the nature of the course, the exams will be applied, and will consist of five essay questions. Exam 1 will include all material up until and including the week the exam is given; Exam 2 will include material from after Exam 1 through the end of the semester. Students will have a list of possible essay questions two weeks before the exam to prepare for the exam, and five questions from that list will be selected at random that you will be required to answer. You may have a single cheat sheet to bring to class on the day of the exam; you may not write the essays beforehand and copy them down to submit for credit.
3. Weekly Packback Assignments: See below for the grading criteria. These are worth 25% of your final grade.
4. In-Class Activities: You will have several practical assignments in-class that will help emphasize the material that we have read about or that you have received a lecture on. These range from in-class discussions, to role-playing activities, to reflection assignments, though other types of assignments may also be used. I will drop your two lowest grades.
5. Final Paper: Students will select a criminal justice policy or practice and determine its ethics by applying a theory that we have discussed in class. Students should review the ethical theory(ies), provide an analysis of the chosen policy/program, and address what changes are needed to make a current policy or practice an ethical one according to ethical theory(ies). More specific instructions are to follow when we get closer to the due date.

- a. Paper topic – Submit a proposed topic (5%);
- b. Reference – Identify 5 peer-reviewed sources relevant to your topic and describe why they are useful to your presentation (5%);
- c. Final paper (15%)

Packback Assignments:

Each week, we will be having discussions on Packback Questions. Packback Questions allows us to engage in discussions through a virtual venue that can be then carried into our in-person class for more practical application. Packback Questions is an online community where you can be fearlessly curious and ask open-ended questions to build on top of what we are covering in class and relate topics to real-world applications.

You will be required to participate in discussions each week and it will account for 25% of your final grade. Each assignment will be worth 20 points and will be due no later than 11:59 PM EST on Tuesday evenings. I will begin grading assignments at this time every week, so I will need all assignments submitted by this time.

In order to receive full credit, you should submit the following per each deadline period:

1. A discussion question that you create based on the readings
 - a. Minimum Curiosity Score of 70; worth 8 points of each assignment
2. Responses to at least two classmates' discussion questions
 - a. Minimum Curiosity Score of 60; worth 12 points of each assignment
 - b. Responses to your classmates that respond to your question

Remember that you will only receive half credit for questions and responses that do not meet the minimum curiosity score.

To register for Packback:

1. An email invitation will be sent to you from help@packback.co prompting you to finish registration. If you don't receive an email (be sure to check your spam), you may register by following the instructions below:
2. Create an account by navigating to <https://app.packback.co> and clicking "Sign up for an Account"
 - a. **Note:** If you already have an account on Packback you can log in with your credentials.
3. Then enter our class community's lookup key into the "Looking to join a community you don't see here?" section in Packback at the bottom of the homepage.
 - a. Community Lookup Key: **J3G-338-VKV7**
4. Follow the instructions on your screen to finish your registration.

Packback will require a paid subscription of \$29. This is in addition to the textbook. Please reach out to me immediately if you are waiting for financial aid, or if you do not presently have the finances to purchase this subscription.

If you have any questions or concerns about Packback throughout the semester, please read their FAQ at help.packback.co. If you need more help, contact their customer support team directly at help@packback.co.

Grading Information:

The method for submission of each assignment will be made available to each student through either oral instruction, a written set of instructions, or a rubric for an assignment. I anticipate grading and returning assignments within two weeks of their submission.

If you have questions about a grade on any assignment, quiz, or examination, you will have ONE WEEK after the grade is posted to come to be with questions about the grade. After that week, your grade will stand as is (even if you did not check your grade in the week-long time period). Should you raise serious concerns about how a learning activity was graded, I reserve the right to regrade the whole assignment.

I recommend drafting any initial reaction emails after a grade is posted; sending your initial response is reactionary but waiting at least 24 hours will allow you sufficient time to process. If you choose to email immediately, be sure to use professional language in your email.

I may or may not round the final grades. Extra credit will ALWAYS be announced; do not ask for extra credit at any point during the semester. Rounding is also inherently unfair, please do not ask if I can round your grade up to get you to the next letter grade. Be sure to do your best work on each assignment and ask for help when you need it to prevent panic at the end of the semester.

I will not speak with parents about grades or assignments, unless the proper procedures have been followed to permit me to do so. As a college student, you are an adult and capable of managing your own academic affairs. However, if you are unsure about how to handle a particular academic situation, be sure to ask. I am happy to discuss navigating university policies or questions about your grades during office hours.

Graded Activities and their Values	
Syllabus Quiz	5%
Exams (2)	30%
In-Class Activities	15%
Weekly Packback Assignments	25%
Final Paper	25%

Final Grading Scale:

Texas A&M, San Antonio uses a five-point scale to submit final grades:

Grade Point Value	
A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	60 or below

Course Policies

Attendance: Attendance for my courses is not mandatory, though students are always expected to attend all scheduled activities for the courses for which they are registered. However, it is important to note that with the size of the class this semester, your absence will be extremely obvious. You must attend class leading up to Census Day (September 11, 2024) and complete one assignment to be counted as present when the census is taken.

Make-up and Late Work Policy: If you miss an assignment submission deadline because of participation in a university-sanction activity, arrangements to make-up missed work can be made by contacting me. However, this will require documentation. This will include, but is not limited to, providing a letter with your orders for military services, or a doctor's note if you are ill. If you experience any technical difficulties prohibiting you from completing assignments, you must document this issue via screenshot.

Life Happens Pass: Life happens regardless of our plans. To recognize this, you will be granted one "Life Happens" pass in which you will be able to submit an assignment or sit for an exam up to two weeks after they are due. Please send me an email with the subject line "Life Happens" within two days of the assignment's deadline, unless there are extenuating circumstances, and have the body of your email only consist of the assignment or exam in question, and we will work out a plan together on how to get your work submitted.

I have the Life Happens pass to allow for things that are completely out of your control, but you are responsible for keeping track of the work that is not part of your Life Happens pass. You will otherwise be expected to maintain the pace of the course.

All assignments are to be submitted on the date they are due. In the event of planned excused absences late work will ONLY be accepted by an alternate due date that is previously agreed upon by the student and the instructor. Late work will not be otherwise accepted.

Electronics: You may use a laptop or tablet to take notes, but if either of these become a distraction to you or another student, you may be asked to find an alternative form to take notes. Phones are generally prohibited, though I will allow you to take pictures of PowerPoint slides if you need to. Electronics will be prohibited during exams. If you are found to be in violation of this policy, you will receive a zero (0).

University Policies & Resources

Academic Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to providing all students with reasonable access to learning opportunities and accommodations in accordance with The Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, please contact Disability Support Services in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210, or at (210) 784-1335 or visit or email us at dss@tamusa.edu. Disabilities may include, but are not limited to, attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability-related needs with Disability Support Services and their instructors as soon as possible.

Academic Learning Center: The Academic Learning Center provides free course-based tutoring to all currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Students wishing to work with a tutor can make appointments through the Brainfuse online tutoring platform. Brainfuse can be accessed in the *Tools* section of Blackboard. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing tutoring@tamusa.edu, calling (210) 784-1307, or visiting the Central Academic Building, room 202.

Counseling/Mental Health Resources: As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and/or negatively impact your daily functioning. If you are experiencing emotional difficulties or mental health concerns, support is available to you through the Student Counseling Center (SCC). To schedule an appointment call 210-784-1331 or visit Modular C, Room 166 (Rear entrance).

All mental health services provided by the SCC are free and confidential (as the law allows). The Student Counseling Center provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services.

Crisis support is available 24/7 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 (after-hours select option '2'). For more information and self-help resources, please visit www.tamusa.edu/studentcounseling

Emergency Preparedness: JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification. In the event of an emergency, such as inclement weather, students, staff and faculty, who are registered, will have the option to receive a text message, email with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit: <https://tamusa.bbcportal.com/>.

More information about Emergency Operations Plan and the Emergency Action Plan can be found here: <https://www.tamusa.edu/about-us/campus-information/safety/university-police-department/documents/emergency-operations-plan.pdf> and <https://www.tamusa.edu/about-us/campus-information/safety/university-police-department/documents/emergency-action-plan.pdf>

Download the SafeZone App for emergencies or call (210) 784-1911. Non-Emergency (210) 784-1900

Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance: According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended the first week of class. Any student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend the first week of class will have their aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of their federal aid.

Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center: The Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center supports graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. Tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, and plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Our language tutors support students enrolled in Spanish courses and students composing in Spanish for any assignment. Our digital studio tutors support students working on digital projects such as eportfolios, class presentations, or other digital multimedia projects. Students can schedule appointments through JagWire under the Student Services tab. Click on “Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center” to make your appointment. The Center offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on our website at <https://bit.ly/WLDCCenter>.

Meeting Basic Needs: Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Dean of Students (DOS@tamusa.edu) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to provide any resources they may possess.

Military Affairs: Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to communicate, in advance if possible, and special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployment, drill requirements, disability accommodations). You are also encouraged to visit the Patriots’ Casa in-person room 202, or to contact the Office of Military Affairs with any questions at military.va@tamusa.edu or (210)784-1397.

Religious Observances: Texas A&M University-San Antonio recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes.

The Six-Drop Rule: Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student’s GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as “F” grades and will impact the student’s GPA.

Statement of Harassment and Discrimination: Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equality of opportunity and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, A&M-San Antonio encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality and the uniqueness of the individual within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees should be based on applicable law and individual merit. Texas A&M University-San Antonio, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual

orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or pregnancy/parenting status. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the appropriate offices within their respective units.

Title IX Compliance: Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students and for the university as a whole. If you have experienced any form of sex- or gender-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. A&M-San Antonio's Title IX Coordinator can support those impacted by such conduct in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The university strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the Title IX Coordinator. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and trained victim advocates) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator (titleix@tamusa.edu, 210-784-2061, CAB 439K). If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting requirement, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331 or visit them in Madla 120.

Pregnant/Parenting Students: Texas A&M-San Antonio does not require a pregnant or parenting student, solely because of that status or issues related to that status, to (1) take a leave of absence or withdraw from their degree or certificate program; (2) limit the student's studies; (3) participate in an alternative program; (4) change the student's major, degree, or certificate program; or (5) refrain from joining or cease participating in any course, activity, or program at the University. The university will provide reasonable accommodations to pregnant students that would be provided to a student with a temporary medical condition and that are related to the health and safety of the student and the student's unborn child. These could include maintaining a safe distance from substances, areas, and activities known to be hazardous to pregnant individuals and their unborn child; excused absences because of illness or medical appointments; modified due dates for assignments; rescheduled tests/exams; taking a leave of absence; and being provided access to instructional materials and video recordings of lectures for excused absences, if these would be provided to any other student with an excused absence. Pregnant/parenting students are encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator with any questions or concerns related to their status (titleix@tamusa.edu; 210-784-2061; CAB 439K).

Texas A&M-San Antonio has also designated the Title IX Coordinator as the liaison officer for current or incoming students who are the parent or guardian of a child younger than 18 years of age. The Title IX Coordinator can provide students with information regarding support services and other resources.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities: The following statement of students' rights and responsibilities is intended to reflect the philosophical base upon which University Student Rules are built. This philosophy acknowledges the existence of both rights and responsibilities, which is

inherent to an individual not only as a student at Texas A&M University-San Antonio but also as a citizen of this country.

Students' Rights

1. A student shall have the right to participate in a free exchange of ideas, and there shall be no University rule or administrative rule that in any way abridges the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
2. Each student shall have the right to participate in all areas and activities of the University, free from any form of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.
3. A student has the right to personal privacy except as otherwise provided by law, and this will be observed by students and University authorities alike.
4. Each student subject to disciplinary action arising from violations of university student rules shall be assured a fundamentally fair process.

Students' Responsibilities

1. A student has the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others, including other students, the faculty and administration.
2. A student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with the published University Student Rules found in the Student Handbook, Student Code of Conduct, on our website, University Catalog and to comply with them, as well as federal, state, and local laws.
3. A student has the responsibility to recognize that student actions reflect upon the individuals involved and upon the entire University community.
4. A student has the responsibility to recognize the University's obligation to provide an environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their university email for any updates or official university notification.

We expect that students will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful, and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Students are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education. Students engaging in an act that violates the standards of academic integrity will find themselves facing academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Academic misconduct is any act, or attempt, which gives an unfair advantage to the student. Additionally, any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion may be considered as academic misconduct. For more information on academic misconduct policies and procedures please review the Student Code of Conduct.

Generative AI: There are situations and contexts within this course where you may be asked to use artificial intelligence (AI) tools to explore how they can be used. Outside of those circumstances,

you should not use AI tools to generate content (text, video, audio, images) that will end up in any student work (assignments, activities, discussion responses, etc.) that is part of your evaluation in this course. Any student work submitted using AI tools should clearly indicate with attribution what work is the student's work and what part is generated by the AI. In such cases, no more than 25% of the student work should be generated by AI. If any part of this is confusing or uncertain, students should reach out to their instructor for clarification before submitting work for grading. Use of AI-generated content without the instructor's permission and/or proper attribution in this course qualifies as academic dishonesty and violates Texas A&M-San Antonio's standards of academic integrity.

NOTE: Guidance for how to cite AI-generators, like ChatGPT, can be found here <https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt>

Important Dates:

August 26	First day of class
September 11	Census Day
October 7-18	Midterm grading period
November 11	Last day to drop with an automatic "W"
November 19	Last day to drop a course or withdraw from the University
November 27	Study Day – No classes
December 5	Last day of weekday classes
December 6	Study Day – No classes
December 7-13	Final exams

The complete academic calendar is available online: <https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/academic-calendar/index.html>



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SAN ANTONIO

Full Course Schedule:

Readings are to be completed BEFORE coming to class on the day that it is scheduled.

Week	Online (By Wednesday at Class Time)	Wednesday
Wk. 1 (8/26 - 9/1)		Introduction to the Course Review syllabus and course policies Introduction Ice Breaker
Wk. 2 (9/2 - 9/8)	Chapter 1 (Textbook) Syllabus Quiz (Blackboard) Trolley Problem Discussion Board Practice Topic for Final Paper Submission	Review Chapter 1 Overview of ethical theories Discussion on personal values
Wk. 3 (9/9 - 9/15)	Chapters 2 & 3 (Textbook) Police Ethics Discussion	Review of Chapters 2 & 3 Guest Speaker Reflection
Wk. 4 (9/16 - 9/22)	Chapter 4 (Textbook) Racial Discrimination Discussion	Review Chapter 4 Case Studies on Racial Discrimination in the CJ System

Week	Online (By Wednesday at Class Time)	Wednesday
Wk. 5 (9/23 – 9/29)	Chapter 5 (Textbook) Courthouse Ethics Discussion Annotated Bibliography Submission	Review Chapter 5 Prosecutorial & Judicial Discretion
Wk. 6 (9/30 – 10/6)	Chapter 6 (Textbook) Punishment Discussion	Review Chapter 6 Q&A- Exam Materials Jury Decision-Making Activity
Wk. 7 (10/7 – 10/13)	Chapters 7 & 8 (Textbook) Ethics in Corrections Discussion	<i>**Midterm Exam in Class**</i> Covering material through Chapter 8
Wk. 8 (10/14 – 10/20)	Chapter 9 (Textbook) Ethics in Policy-Making Discussion	Review Chapters 7, 8, & 9 Developing Ethical Policies in the Justice System
Wk. 9 (10/21 – 10/27)	Chapters 10 & 11 (Textbook) Media Ethics OR War on Terror Discussion	Review Chapters 10 & 11 George Floyd Protests Media Coverage
Wk. 10 (10/28 – 10/3)	Chapter 12 (Textbook) Duty & Principal Discussion	Review Chapter 12 Fishbowl Discussions
Wk. 11 (11/4 – 11/10)	Chapter 13 (Textbook) Consequences Discussion	Review Chapter 13 Out-of-Class Assignment Option Selection Rubric Creation Assignment

Week	Online (By Wednesday at Class Time)	Wednesday
Wk. 12 (11/11 - 11/17)	<i>Nothing due before class online this week. Focus on the out-of-class assignment.</i>	<i>**Dr. Fenimore will be out of town for the American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting this week**</i> Out-of-Class Assignment due by Tuesday 11/19 on Blackboard
Wk. 13 (11/18 - 11/24)	Chapter 14 (Textbook) Importance of Character Discussion	Review Chapter 14 The Role of Character in Sentencing Decisions
Wk. 14 (11/25 - 12/1)	Chapter 15 (Textbook) Hedonistic Calculus Discussion	<i>**Study Day - No Classes**</i>
Wk. 15 (12/2 - 12/6)	Chapters 16 & 17 (Textbook) Justice & Caring Final Paper Submission	Review Chapters 16 & 17 Q&A Exam Review Safe Society and the Veil of Ignorance
Wk. 16 (12/7 - 12/13)	<i>**Final Exam**</i> Covering material from Chapters 9 through 17	