

CRIM 5327 – Psychology and Crime

Syllabus for Fall 2025

Online Asynchronous

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by appointment via [Calendly](#) (see link for specific time slots)

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Course Description

This course will explore criminal behavior and criminal justice practices through a psychological lens. Through reading primary research articles, you will explore biological, developmental, and social psychological frameworks, as well as examine offender groups and the role of psychology in policing, courts, and rehabilitation. By engaging with contemporary research and applied case studies, you will learn how psychological science contributes to understanding and responding to crime.

Objectives

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. **Identify** and **summarize** seminal psychological findings relevant to criminal behavior and criminal justice processes.
2. **Explain** how foundational psychological principles contribute to the emergence and persistence of criminal behavior.
3. **Integrate** biological, cognitive, neurological, personality, and social psychological perspectives to construct multi-level explanations of criminal behavior.
4. **Analyze** practices and decision-making within the criminal justice system using psychological theories and concepts.

Academic & Professional Objectives

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. **Analyze** and **synthesize** empirical literature to construct evidence-based arguments.
2. **Develop** clear, well-organized academic writing that adheres to disciplinary conventions and APA style
3. **Engage** in thoughtful and respectful online discussions by **analyzing** assigned readings, **articulating** evidence-based interpretations, and **responding** constructively to peers' perspectives.
4. **Formulate** evidence-based policy recommendations grounded in relevant psychological research findings.

Graded Work

Points for the course are allocated as follows:

Readings:	40%
Synthesis Papers:	40%
<u>Final Paper:</u>	<u>20%</u>
Total:	100%

Readings

- You will complete 4-5 readings each week. These readings will usually be scientific journal articles and are designed to teach core concepts for each topic.
- You will be expected to read and annotate the articles using [Perusall](#) as well as respond to comments from your group members.
- You will be graded on the thoroughness of your comments as well as the thoughtfulness of your responses.

Synthesis Papers

- At the end of each unit, you will write a 1000-word response to a prompt that **critically evaluates** the assigned readings.
- You will be graded both on the quality of your submission *and* the quality of your response to my and your classmates' comments.
- See instructions on Blackboard for more details.

Final Paper

- At the end of the course, you will submit a 2500-word recommendation report (not including references) on a topic related to psychology and crime.
- See instructions on Blackboard for more details.

Course Policies and Procedures

Grading Policies

Letter Grade Ranges and Descriptions. Graded assignments and final grades are administered using the TAMUSA letter grading system:

Table 1. Letter grade ranges and descriptions

Letter Grade	Grade Range	Description
A	90-100	Excellent
B	80-89	Good
C	70-79	Average
D	60-69	Passing
F	> 60	Failure
FN	> 60	Failure (Non-Attendance)

Rounding. Final grades are rounded according to normal rounding rules (e.g., a 79.5 [C] would be rounded up to an 80 [B], but a 79.4 would not). Requests for rounding outside of this rule will guarantee no rounding.

Late Work. Late work will not be accepted for any reason outside of official accommodations. Students who need an extension may use one of their “life happens” tokens (see below).

“Life Happens” Tokens. Students are allotted two (2) “life happens” tokens to accommodate common life mishaps. Each token provides the student a 72-hour extension on readings and synthesis papers. They cannot be used the final paper.

- **To use:** The student must email me to let me know they are using this token *before* the assignment is due. **You do not need to provide a justification to use it, and you do not need me to reply.** Notification is sufficient if you have a token available to use. It is up to you to keep track of how many you have left.

Contesting grades. Students will have 3 days to contest grades beginning on the day they are released. Students should only contest grades in a situation where a specific mistake has been made (e.g., a miscalculated grade).

Course & Communication Policies

How I Contact You. Most communication from me will be through Teams. I will post announcements under the Announcements. You are responsible for keeping up with Teams notifications, so please **check it daily**. If I need to get in touch with you personally, I will send you a chat or email you. I expect students to respond within 24 hours during the work week.

How You Contact Me. For all course-related questions, please post your question in Teams under the Q&A channel. I will try to respond within 24 hours, but I encourage you all to respond to each other's questions when you know the answer.

For questions of a personal nature, email me at ceducate@tamusa.edu. **Include the course number at the beginning of the subject line** and use proper email etiquette. I usually check my email twice a day between 10am and 4pm on weekdays and do not check email on the weekends. If I have not responded to your e-mail within 24 hours (excluding Sat and Sun), **please send another e-mail with a reminder**. Be sure to check the syllabus, assignment instructions, and announcements before emailing me. I will not respond to questions that have been answered in any of those places.

How to Meet with Me. I hold weekly student (i.e., office) hours to allow students to come ask questions about material they are struggling with. During drop-in student hours, students can come by my office in person or stop by virtually via Teams. They can also send live chats via Teams which I will answer during office hours.

I also have virtual by-appointment office hours. To meet with me during these times, you must book a meeting time via Calendly. My Calendly link is: <https://calendly.com/cseducate/office-hour-appointment>. Simply follow the link and select a day and time. It will then provide you with a personalized Teams link to use for the meeting.

You must book your appointment at least 16 hours in advance. If none of the available times work with your schedule, you may email me to work out a time. I do my best to work with students to find a mutually beneficial time, but it is the student's responsibility to ensure they have some availability during normal working hours (i.e., 9am-5pm).

Recordings & Use of Course Materials. Students may *not* record audio or video from the course unless specified by DSS accommodations. Recordings through DSS accommodations should be used *exclusively* for the student's learning and should be deleted after the student has completed the course. ***No student has permission to sell or distribute any recording or material made in the course. This includes Coursera and similar course material exchanges online.*** Distribution of materials is a copyright violation, and distribution of recordings violates students' right to privacy.

Work and Submission Policies

General Assignment Requirements

- Submit work in 12-pt Times New Roman and double-spaced.
- Use appropriate APA citations (this means in-text citations AND a references section)
 - Submissions without appropriate APA citations will receive an automatic 0.
- I grade whatever is uploaded by the deadline. It is your responsibility to upload the correct document. Be sure to check the document preview BEFORE submitting.

Academic Integrity & AI Use. As a TAMUSA student, I expect you to follow the Student Code of Conduct (see Section 14 of the [Student Handbook](#)). **When you submit an assignment with your name on it, you are signifying that the work contained therein is yours and only yours** unless otherwise cited or referenced. This includes both assignments and exams. This means that **all work submitted by students must be generated by the students themselves**, working individually or in groups (as specified in the assignment).

What is Allowed:

- Using AI technologies, such as ChatGPT and CoPilot, **in the form of a tutor**. In other words, you can use it as a resource the same way you would use me as a resource. You **cannot**, therefore, ask it to answer specific assignment questions for you or submit any of its answers as your own. If you aren't sure whether you are violating this rule, don't use it.
- Studying with fellow classmates.

What is Not Allowed

- Having another person/entity do the writing of any portion of an assignment for them, which includes hiring a person or a company to write assignments and/or using artificial intelligence (AI) tools like ChatGPT or Grammarly. This includes *ideas* as well as *written text*.

To ensure academic honesty, **you will be expected to be able to defend your work**. This means that you need to **maintain a version history** of your work and **be able to explain your submission verbally**. If I suspect plagiarism or cheating of any kind, I reserve the right to question you about your knowledge of your submitted work. When a student is suspected of plagiarism or cheating, they will receive a **temporary 0** on the assignment until they arrange a meeting with the professor to discuss the assignment. Students who cannot demonstrate the origins of their submission either through verbal mastery or clear documentation (e.g., edit history on Google docs) will be considered to have plagiarized.

Consequences

- **Strike one:** Fail the assignment and be reported to the university on the first strike in accordance with TAMUSA policies.
- **Strike two:** Fail the class.

Disability Accommodation. Students with disability accommodations should **set up a one-on-one meeting with me ASAP** to discuss the specifics of their accommodations. Don't worry—you do not need to disclose anything about your disability! I just want to be sure you're getting what you need. What DSS sends me about your accommodations is usually vague, so this meeting ensures that I understand exactly what it is you need. Students who suspect they need accommodations can visit the [DSS website](#) to discuss their options. Students who need extra time can also arrange exam proctoring via that website.

Expectations

Academic Expectations

Skills. As Master's students, you are expected to have the following academic skills:

- Finding and evaluating scholarly sources through academic databases
 - See the TAMUSA library's [Criminology & Criminal Justice Research Guide](#)
- Avoiding [plagiarism](#) by [paraphrasing](#) and [quoting](#) correctly
- [Citing sources properly](#) using a standard citation style (APA, MLA, etc.)
- Ability to read and apply the [APA citation style guide](#) (see library tutorial [here](#))
- Editing for [grammar](#), clarity, and formatting
- Summarizing and analyzing scholarly texts
- Identifying central arguments and supporting evidence
- Asking critical questions (not just accepting information at face value)
- [Formatting text](#) using Microsoft Word

Technology Expectations

Tools. You should have the following technological tools:

- A functional and reliable computer (laptop or desktop)
- [Zoom](#) or Teams
- A web camera (for office hour meetings when meeting virtually)
- An email client
- Adobe Reader (download [here](#))
- Microsoft Office 365 (Microsoft Word & Microsoft PowerPoint)
 - Note: TAMUSA students can use MS365 for free. [Log in to their online portal here.](#)
- [Zotero](#) for citation management (*optional but highly recommended*)

Skills. You are also expected to have the following technological & digital literacy skills:

- Using [Blackboard](#) (including viewing rubrics & feedback)
- Writing [professional emails](#)

- Creating documents using [Google Docs](#)
- Saving Google Docs document as a .docx file (instructions [here](#))
- Downloading PDFs from Blackboard
- [Annotating PDFs](#) using Adobe Reader
- Using web conferencing tools and software (e.g., Teams, [Zoom](#))

If you aren't confident in these skills, **visit the Writing Center ASAP** (see [here](#) for how to make an appointment) and ask for assistance with creating digital objects. You can also make an appointment with our library, Megan Gonzales, [here](#), or email her at Megan.Gonzales@tamusa.edu.

Technical issues. Technical and logistical problems, such as being unable to access a computer, computer failure, problems with internet connections (such as speed or quality of the connection) or browser, difficulty printing, failure to check that your assignments have properly uploaded, etc., **will not result in additional accommodations.**

To avoid last minute problems, it is highly recommended that you complete your work as **early as possible** during each module. If you have a question about using Blackboard as a student, **please check the help page first:** <https://tinyurl.com/tamusastudentbbhelp>. If you have difficulty accessing Blackboard or using Teams, please contact IT here: <https://www.tamusa.edu/information-technology-services/index.html>. You can also **call them** at (210) 784-4357.

Course Schedule

See supplemental document titled “Course Schedule” for the tentative course schedule. Because no two semesters are the same, note that it is subject to change. All substantive changes will be announced via Blackboard (e.g., changes in due dates) and reflected in the schedule.