

Course Syllabus for CRIM 4340-600 (CRN 13824)
Special Topics in Criminology – Forensic Psychology
Fall Semester - 2026

I. Instructor

Michael S. Proctor, Psy.D., Senior Lecturer
Office: 348B – Central Academic Building
Office Hours: Monday: 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. & 2:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.
Tuesday: By appointment
Wednesday: 10:00 a.m. – 1:15 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Thursday: By appointment

Telephone: **210-784-2271 (Office)**

Email: mproctor@tamusa.edu

Do not attempt to send me an email through Blackboard.

When contacting me by email, or voicemail, please indicate your name and the class you are attending, and your university email address.

The class is an online asynchronous class. There are written assignments for the class that are to be completed on Blackboard that should be considered the same as an essay exams. All of the lecture notes are provided as PowerPoint presentations for each chapter

II. Course Designation and Title

Special Topics in Criminology – Forensic Psychology – CRIM 4340-600; Credit Hours = 3 – The class is an online asynchronous class (CRN 13824)

III. Texas A & M University – San Antonio

IV. Specific Time, Location and Duration

Fall Semester – 2026 - The class is an online asynchronous class.

V. Course Description

This course examines the dynamics of human behavior within forensic contexts, including an analysis of the psychology of criminal behavior, as well as current research in the areas of police and investigative psychology (e.g., eyewitness identification, false confessions), psychology in the courts, mental illness in the justice system, and correctional psychology.

VI. Learning Objectives

Upon completion of the course, the student will be able to:

- Describe the role of psychologists interested in the law

- Articulate the five pathways psychology has influenced the legal system
- Describe the methods of detecting deception
- Explain the problem of false confessions and potential solutions
- Explain the different types of profiling (criminal, psychological, etc.)
- Describe the issues associated with eyewitness testimony
- Explain the role of forensic psychologists in child sexual abuse cases
- Explain the difference between insanity and competency to stand trial

VII. Required Text

Forensic and Legal Psychology by Mark Constanzo and Daniel Krauss, 4th ed., 2021, Worth Publisher, ISBN: 978-1-319-24488-0

Access to the Textbook:

Students will receive an email from “Kortext Digital Material” no-reply@kortext.com to your academic email address. Check your university/school-issued email inbox for a message from Kortext, click the activation link provided, and your content opens automatically in your Kortext library.

VIII. Supplemental Text

None

IX. Class Schedule

Refer to the Course Schedule (See Attachment 1).

X. Grading / Means of Assessment

The student learner outcomes will be assessed through students’ performance on the completion of the written assignments on Blackboard.

Written Assignments on Blackboard (8 @ 50 points) = 400 total points

Written Assignments for Mid-Term and Final (2 @ 100 points) = 200

Maximum Total Points Available = 600

90 – 100% of total points (540 – 600 points) = A

80 -- 89% of total points (479 – 539 points) = B

70 -- 79% of total points (418– 478 points) = C

60 -- 69% of total points (357 – 417 points) = D

Less than 60% of total points (356 points or less) = F

NOTE: I do not curve grades. It is your responsibility to manage your course assignments and your grade. If you have concerns about your grade, it is recommended that you discuss your grade with me prior to the end of the semester, not a week or two after the semester ends. I will not accept any assignments after the due date, nor by email.

XI. Examinations

The class is an online asynchronous class. Traditional types of exams will not be conducted. Ten written assignments will be completed on Blackboard and two of the ten written assignments will be completed as a mid-term exam and one will be completed as the final exam. You are required to respond to one posting of one of your fellow class members and provide substantive comments for each written assignment for written assignments 1-8. You are not required to respond to a fellow student for the written assignments for the mid-term and final.

XII. Written Assignment

Ten written assignments are posted on Blackboard and the first assignment will be available to you from 08/31/2026 at 7:00 a.m. until 09/09/2026 at 11:59 p.m. The remainder of the assignments will be available on Blackboard based on the course schedule. The assignments will be available at 7:00 a.m. on Blackboard and remain available to you for eight days and will be discontinued on the due date at 11:59 p.m. The due date for each assignment is identified on the course schedule. The assignments are designed to provide an opportunity for you to engage in critical thinking regarding the issue addressed by the assignment. You must support your response with information from the text (properly cited), and/or the PowerPoint. If you quote information in your response directly from the text or the PowerPoint, you must include an appropriate APA in-text citation and appropriate APA citation at the end of your response. You are not required to use an outside source in developing a response to the assignments, but if you do the outside source must be cited in accordance with APA standards. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Illness, computer problems, not having access to a computer, forgetting to post a response, posting a response for the wrong discussion question etc., or any other excuse will not be accepted as reasons for not completing any of the assignments. Finally, responses to the written assignments not be accepted late or by email for any reason. There is sufficient time provided to you to develop a response and post the response on Blackboard. Once a response has been posted on Blackboard and graded, it cannot be changed and regraded. A grading rubric has been provided to indicate grading criteria. Each student is expected to do their own work. The use of any form of AI (e.g., ChatGBT, etc.) in the development of responses for the discussion questions is prohibited and any such use will be considered as plagiarism.

Points will be deducted from written assignments as follows:

- No response or late response – 50 point deduction
- No response for mid-term and final assignments - 100 point deduction
- Failing to provide a substantive comment to the response of a fellow class member 10 point deduction
- Spelling and grammatical errors – 2 point deduction
- Use of improper format – 5 point deduction
- Plagiarism – 50 point deduction for written assignments 1-8; 100 point deduction for mid-term or final written assignments.

XIII. Attendance, Punctuality, and Classroom Etiquette

The class is an online asynchronous class. There are no class meetings, and all of the course work must be completed online using Blackboard. You will have a week to complete each written assignment. Each student is expected to complete the written assignments on your own without the assistance of other students or the use of AI. If you need assistance or if you have questions, you can contact me during my office hours by phone or email. Your responses to the written assignments must be in Word (doc) or .pdf format. If you use Pages as a word processing format you must convert the Pages document to a .doc format or .pdf format.

XIV. Academic Honesty

Students are expected to complete all individual assignments in a scholarly manner, and reflect both honesty and integrity in this course as well as all other courses. Ensure that you are familiar with the Student Handbook, especially the section addressing academic misconduct. Students who engage in academic misconduct are subject to university disciplinary procedures. Forms of academic dishonesty are:

- **Cheating: deception in which a student misrepresents that he/she has mastered information on an academic exercise that he/she has not mastered; giving or receiving aid unauthorized by the instructor on assignments or examinations.**
- Academic Misconduct: tampering with grades or taking part in obtaining or distributing any part of a scheduled test
- Fabrication: use of invented information or falsified research
- **Plagiarism: unacknowledged quotation and/or paraphrase of someone else's words, ideas, or data as one's own work submitted for credit. Failure to identify information or essays from the Internet and submitting them as one's own work also constitutes plagiarism as does the use of AI in the development of a response to any written assignment.**

XV. Class Preparation

The class is an online asynchronous class. There are no class meetings, and all of the course work must be completed online using Blackboard. You will have a week to complete each written assignment. Each student is expected to complete the written assignments on your own without the assistance of other students or the use of AI. If you need assistance or if you have questions, you can contact me during my office hours by phone or email.

XVI. Services for the Disabled

Academic Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are federal anti-discrimination statutes that provide comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Title II of the ADAAA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act require that students with disabilities be guaranteed equal access to the learning environment through the provision of reasonable and appropriate accommodation of their disability. If you have a diagnosed disability that may require an accommodation, please contact

Disability Support Services (DSS) for the coordination of services. The phone number for DSS is (210) 784-1335 and email is dsupport@tamusa.edu.

XVII. Career Services

The Office of Career Services prepares students for real life objectives and expectations regarding careers and employment through the use of innovative research and learning techniques. Career Services provides quality counseling in the areas of choosing a major, job search strategies, pursuing employment and graduate school opportunities. Due to the high demand for services, they are available to currently enrolled A&M-SA undergraduate, and graduate students, and alumni who have graduated within the last year. The phone number is (210) 784-1356 and the email is career.services@tamusa.edu.

XVIII. The Writing Center at Texas A & M University – San Antonio

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 wldcc@tamusa.edu

XIX. Nonacademic Misconduct

The university respects the rights of instructors to teach and students to learn. Maintenance of these rights requires campus conditions that do not impede the exercise of those rights. Some examples are: Physical or verbal abuse or threats; sexual misconduct or harassment, theft of property or services; and disruptive activities (see p. 19 of the student handbook for the complete list). Such incidents will be adjudicated by the Dean of Students. Appropriate conduct is essential to the effective functioning of the university. University policy defines unacceptable conduct, both academic and non-academic misconduct, and penalties for such behavior. Please see the Texas A & M University – San Antonio Student Handbook online at: <http://www.tamuk.edu/sanantonio/studenthandbook.pdf>, for details about disciplinary procedures.

XX. Sexual Misconduct

Sexual misconduct of students and employers at Texas A & M University – San Antonio is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Any member of the university community violating this policy will be subject to disciplinary action (see p. 21 of the student handbook for more information).

XXI. Computer Access and Computer Issues/Problems

Do not contact me if you are having problems accessing the Texas A & M University – San Antonio website or Blackboard; contact the IT office at the main campus. If you indicate to me that you could not post a response to a discussion question because of a computer problem or problem with Blackboard you will need to provide me with written confirmation of such provided by the IT staff at the main campus.

XXII. Counseling and Wellness

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

XXIII. Title IX

Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs and activities at institutions that receive federal financial assistance. Sexual harassment, including sexual violence, is a form of sex discrimination and is therefore prohibited under Title IX. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, nonverbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when this conduct is so severe, persistent or pervasive that it explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work or educational performance, or creates an intimidating or hostile work or educational environment. Phone number for the Title IX coordinator is (210) 784-2061 and email is Janice.parten@tamusa.edu.

XXIV. Library Services

The University Library at Texas A&M University - San Antonio is an integral part of the University's mission to prepare and empower students through a solid foundation for success as the primary learning support service for students on campus. The library is actively engaged in the teaching, research, and public service activities of A&M-SA. The University Library provides research assistance and instruction, curriculum support, access to a wide variety of information resources, and facilities that foster independent study and collaborative engagement. The phone number for the library is (210) 784-1500 and the email is library@tamusa.edu.

XXV. Concealed Carry on Campus

As many of you know, concealed carry on campus is legal. All faculty members have been trained on the laws pertaining to this issue. Based on that training, there are two issues I

want to review: The first is that anyone carrying a weapon on campus must keep that weapon concealed (unless a licensed peace officer; badge/credentials should be readily visible if a peace officer's weapon is exposed). The second is that there are legal limitations on what I am allowed to ask a student. My job is to ensure that the law is complied with and that each student's rights are protected, so this will be my classroom policy: 1) If you carry a gun, you must keep it concealed; 2) If I see a gun, I will notify campus police. By law they have the authority to demand you to present your Permit to Carry; I do not; 3) If you see a gun, please feel free to talk with me. Please do not ask the student whether or not he or she is licensed, etc. Also, please remember that seeing the outline of a gun through clothing is not considered "seeing" the gun; 4) If you hear a student threaten to harm themselves or another person, contact the A&M-SA Police Department immediately. You can also make a report using the CARE program; 5) If you have a permit to carry, please follow all safety recommendations and the law. Our campus police department is stressing the importance of a safe holster and the danger of an unintentional discharge of unholstered guns stored in purses or bookbags.

XXVI. Academic Learning Center

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.

XXVII. Other Important Policies and Resources

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. In addition, you may notify the instructor if you are comfortable doing so.

Military Affairs: Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to communicate, in advance, if possible, about 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@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 A&M System 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.

Respect for Diversity: We understand that our students represent diverse backgrounds and perspectives. When we are equity-minded, we are aware of differences and inequalities and are willing to discuss them so we can act to resolve them. The University is committed to

building cultural competencies, or the attitudes, skills, and knowledge that enable individuals and organizations to acknowledge cultural differences and incorporate these differences in working with people from diverse cultures. Respecting and accepting people different than you is vital to your success in the classroom, on campus, and as a future professional in the global community. While working together to build this community we ask all members to:

- Share their unique experiences, values, and beliefs.
- Be open to the views of others.
- Honor the uniqueness of their colleagues.
- Value each other's opinions and communicate respectfully.
- Use this opportunity together to discuss ways in which we can create an inclusive environment in this course and across the A&M-San Antonio community.

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, diversity, pluralism, 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, or gender expression. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the appropriate offices within their respective units.

Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to helping create 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 has staff members trained to support survivors 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 university. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and other healthcare providers) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about an incident

of sexual harassment or sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator. If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331, Modular C.

Students' Rights and Responsibilities: The purpose of the following statement is to enumerate the essential provisions of students' freedoms and responsibilities to learn at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. All students are required to follow all policies and regulations as set forth by The Texas A&M University System, including the A&M-San Antonio Student Code of Conduct.

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 procedure 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, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, 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 staff, and the administration.
2. A student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted and compliant with the University Student Rules found in the Student Handbook, Student Code of Conduct, on our website, and in the University Catalog.
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 a safe environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their University email for any updates or official University notifications.

6. 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.

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

More information about Emergency Preparedness and the Emergency Response Guide can be found here: <https://www.tamusa.edu/upd/index.html>.

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.

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 such reasonable accommodations to pregnant students as would be provided to a student with a temporary medical condition 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).