

Ethical Decision-Making in Criminal Justice (CRIM 5325)
Texas A&M-San Antonio, Spring 2025
Meets Online

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Office Hours: by appointment

Course Catalog Description

This course explores the application of moral philosophy and ethics to decisions confronting criminal justice practitioners. Criteria for ethical decision making and professional codes of ethics will be discussed. Case studies and hypothetical scenarios will be used to illustrate ethical dilemmas.

Pre-requisite: Admittance to the CRIM/CJ Graduate Program

Course Objectives

1. Introduction to basic concepts related to ethics and ethical behavior.
2. Exploration of the complexity of ethics in the practice of criminal justice.
3. Introduction to the reasoning process practitioners in law enforcement, courts and corrections can use to analyze and evaluate ethical dilemmas.
4. Understanding of the impact of unethical behavior on CJS.

Required Textbook:

Cheeseman, K., San Miguel, C., Frantzen, D., Nored, L. Everyday Ethics for the Criminal Justice Professional, 3rd Edition, Carolina Academic Press, 2023. ISBN 978-1-5310-2122-1
Other required readings will be posted on Blackboard.

You can purchase this book via Amazon or any book seller site. It is not in stock at the university bookstore.

Communication Plan

The format for this course is independent study. That means I will provide you with a reading assignment for each component to the course. Following that, you will submit either a written analysis or verbal presentation via powerpoint covering the assigned readings.

Grade Components

Analytical Writing Assignments (3)
Article Video Presentations (3)
Final Exam
Total Possible pts

Maximum Points
150 (50 pts each)
150 (50 pts each)
100 pts
400 points

Letter Grade Calculation

360-400 points = A
320-359 points = B
280-319 points = C
240-279 points = D
Below 240 points = F

Analytical Writing Assignments

For each of these assignments you will summarize information from the assignment chapters in the book and integrate relevant current events involving ethical dilemmas in the criminal justice system. More information on the components for this assignment will be posted in Blackboard.

Article Video Presentations

For each of these assignments, you will identify an ethical dilemma in the criminal justice system. You will need to select 3 journal articles dealing with that topic. A good starting point to locate articles is the journal *Criminal Justice Ethics*, which you can access here: <https://www.tandfonline.com/journals/rcrc20>. The three article you locate must have some common thread which you will elaborate on in your video presentation. Presentations must be audio narrated in powerpoint (or similar presentation tool). More information on this assignment will be posted in Blackboard.

Final Exam

The final exam will be comprehensive covering the entire textbook. It will be timed and consist of 50 multiple choice questions.

Submission Policy

Submit all your work on Blackboard. It is your responsibility to ensure that it is submitted successfully. Late work is not accepted for credit and there are no make-ups UNLESS you receive written permission from me before the due date. If you receive permission from me to submit late work, I may mark your work as incomplete (partial credit).

Course Calendar

Chapter 1	An Introduction to Everyday Ethics in Criminal Justice	Class begins 1/21
Chapter 2	The Theory Behind the Practice: The Origins of Thought on Ethics and Its Relationship to the CJ Professional	
Chapter 3	Ethics and the Evolution of Police	
	Analytical Writing Assignment #1 due	2/10/24
Chapter 4	Ethics and Police Work	
Chapter 5	Officers of the Court: Ethical Responsibilities of a Lawyer	
Chapter 6	Prosecutors and Judges: Ethical Responsibilities of Public Servants	

	Article Video Presentation #1 due	3/3/24
Chapter 7	Correctional Institutions: Ethics in Prisons and Jails	
	Spring Break (3/10-3/15)	
Chapter 8	Ethics in Probation, Parole, and Community Corrections	
	Analytical Writing Assignment #2 due	3/17/24
Chapter 9	Ethics in Private Security	
Chapter 10	Ethics and the Criminal Justice Supervisor	
	Article Video Presentation #2 due	3/31/24
Chapter 11	Ethics and Fighting Terrorism	
Chapter 12	Ethics and Contemporary Issues in Criminal Justice	
	Analytical Writing Assignment #3 due	4/14/24
Chapter 13	Ethics and Forensic Science	
	Article Video Presentation #3 due	4/28/24
	Last day of schedule classes	5/5/24
	Final Exam	5/9/24

Participation

The complete academic calendar is available online:

<https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/academic-calendar/index.html>

Class Policies

Syllabus

Adjustments Any modifications to this syllabus will be announced in class and posted on Blackboard. Students are responsible for knowing all in-class announcements and Blackboard announcements/adjustments.

Religious Accommodation

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. If you will be observing any religious holidays this semester which will prevent you from attending a regularly scheduled class or interfere with fulfilling any course requirement, please contact me to make appropriate arrangements within two weeks of the beginning of the semester (or three days before any holidays which fall within the first two weeks of class).

Grades

I maintain course grades on Blackboard and it is possible that I occasionally enter an incorrect grade (i.e., sometimes I make a mistake). Please check the feedback I provide on your assignments and your grades via Blackboard throughout the semester and address any concerns immediately: do not wait until the end of the semester

University Policies & Resources

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 dss@tamusa.edu. If you have a disability and need academic accommodations, please provide a letter of accommodation from Disability Support Services early in the semester. I am not able to provide accommodations without verification from DSS.

Academic Dishonesty Policy

Students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Academic dishonesty for which a student is subject to penalty includes cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, multiple submissions, misrepresentation of academic records, facilitating academic dishonesty, unfair advantage, violating known safety requirements and ethical misconduct. This includes holding other students to the same standards and reporting any incidents of alleged violation of the honesty policy to the instructor involved or, if necessary, to the appropriate academic department head. All students are responsible for being familiar with the Academic Dishonesty Policy, which may be found in the Texas A&M University-San Antonio Student Handbook.

University policy prescribes serious consequences for acts of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, a grade of 'F' on the particular paper or assignment, a failing grade in the course, or possible expulsion from the University. Considering the potential consequences of academic misconduct, it is obviously in students' best interests to avoid even the appearance of such behavior. If you are ever unclear whether a specific act might constitute academic misconduct, please contact your instructor for an assessment of the situation.

All student written assignments are subject to analysis by anti-plagiarism software. If you are unsure about what plagiarism is, please take the plagiarism course offered through the university library. Not understanding plagiarism rules will not be accepted as a justification for plagiarized work. Here are the basics:

- Any time you use ideas or information from any other source, you must add a complete citation (including situations in which you do not use the author's words);
- A citation is made up of two parts: the internal citation (also called an in-text citation) at the point in your paper where the idea or information was used and an end citation (also called external citation) in your works cited or references section at the end of your paper. Both must be present to be considered a citation;
- If you use another person's words, they must be cited, they must be in quotation marks, and the internal citation must include a page number if the source is a book or article; and
- A paper that is substantially composed of quotes does not qualify as independent student work and will be treated as plagiarism, even if properly cited.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy

Use of Generative AI Permitted Under Some Circumstances or With Explicit Permission

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.

Academic Learning Center

All currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio can utilize the Academic Learning Center for subject-area tutoring. The Academic Learning Center is an appointment based

center where appointments are made through the Navigate platform. Students access Navigate through Jagwire in the Student Services tab. The Center is active on campus outreaching to students to highlight services offered. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing tutoring@tamusa.edu or calling (210)-784- 1332. Appointments can also be made through JagWire under the services tab.

Counseling 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 or someone you know is experiencing life stressors, emotional difficulties, or mental health concerns at Texas A&M University – San Antonio, please contact the Student Counseling Center located in Modular C, Room 166 (Rear entrance) or call 210-784- 1331 between the hours of 8:00AM and 5:00PM, Monday through Friday. After-hours crisis support is available by calling 210-784-1331 (select option “2”). Please contact UPD at 911 if harm to self or harm to others is imminent. All mental health services provided by the Student Counseling Center are free, confidential (as the law allows), and are not part of a student’s academic or university record. The Student Counseling Center SCC provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services. For more information, 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 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.

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@tamusa.edu or (210)784-1397.

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 class, on campus, and as a future professional in the global community.

Statement about 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 UniversitySan 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.

If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these incidents, know that you are not alone. TAMUSA has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

Please be aware that many A&M-San Antonio employees, including all faculty members, are required reporters. This means that if you tell me about a situation involving sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, I must report the information to the Title IX Coordinator. Although I have to report the situation, you will still have options about how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. 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. Our goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources you need.

Additional information about your options is also available at <http://www.tamusa.edu/businessaffairs/titleix/index.html>

Students' Rights and Responsibilities

All students are required to follow all policies and regulations as set forth by The Texas A&M University System. This includes the A&M-San Antonio Student Code of Conduct. For more information, please see the Texas A&M University-San Antonio Student Handbook.

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.

University Email Policy and Course Communications

All correspondence between professors and students must occur via University email accounts. You must have Jaguar email account ready and working. If it is not working, contact the help desk at sahelp@tamusa.tamusa.edu or at 210-784-4357. If you don't hear back from them within 48 hours, contact them again. They have a lot of requests during the first part of the semester, so you may need to check up on them. I will distribute course materials, including announcements and updates, via Blackboard, so I encourage you to log-in to that system at least twice per week.

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 e-portfolios, 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>.