



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY  
**SAN ANTONIO**

**Department of Criminology and Political Science**  
**CRIM 2330 Theories of Crime Causation**  
**Spring 2026**

**Professor:** Philip D. McCormack, Ph.D.  
**Email:** [pmccormack@tamus.edu](mailto:pmccormack@tamus.edu)

**Office Hours:** Email to schedule meeting

### **Course Description**

Study of criminal behavior and methodology; causation; typologies of criminal acts and offenders; punishment, corrections, and incapacitation; prevention of crime. TSI Restriction(s): Reading, Math, and Writing

**Levels:** Undergraduate

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### **Student learning Objectives/Outcomes**

By the conclusion of the course, students will have the opportunity to understand and critically assess issues related to:

- Explain the major macro- and micro-levels concerns of a criminologist
- Examine the contributions of theologians, philosophers, and social analysts to the study of crime causation.
- Identify the major theories of crime and its causes and discuss selected sociological and political theories concerning criminal behavior.
- Assess the evidence supporting or contradicting extant theory.
- Apply theoretical constructs and extant research to public policy.

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### **Student Responsibilities**

1. You are expected to complete the weekly tasks prior to deadlines each week.
2. You are responsible for reading the text, supplemental materials, and viewing videos.
3. You are responsible for all announcements, emails, and material posts on Blackboard.

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### **Faculty Responsibilities**

1. A course syllabus will be distributed to the class on Blackboard.
2. Timely feedback will be provided to students regarding their progress.
3. The Professor will make himself available for student consultations and will respond to emails in a timely manner.

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## Required Textbooks and Materials

Siegel, L.J. (2023). *Criminology* (8th Edition). Cengage Learning.

Additional required readings, materials, and media will be distributed through Blackboard.

The Owl at Purdue. Purdue Online Writing Lab: <https://owl.purdue.edu/>

This is a format, punctuation, word usage, citation, and style guide that is invaluable to students in their writing throughout their undergraduate program. Students will also better these mechanics for use in other subject areas as well as better prepare themselves for graduate work.

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## Course Requirements

**Discussion Board Post/Reply:** Throughout the course, you are required to post a response to various prompts on the discussion board section of Blackboard. Each prompt/question of the post must be at least 8-10 sentences in length (1-2 paragraphs) and should directly relate weekly material and cite sources accordingly. The post will be assessed on completeness, correctness, and quality of writing.

Further, each week you must respond to at least 1 classmate with substantive contributions, e.g. you must respond with additional information, offer a different perspective regarding the author's (classmate's) position, etc. Simply agreeing or offering congratulatory remakes ("Good post") are not sufficient and unnecessary. Each response must be 4-5 sentences in length (1 short paragraph).

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**Examinations:** There will be three closed-book exams administered throughout the semester (inclusive of the Final Exam). The exams cover the assigned readings, notes, videos and any additional materials presented or provided. Additional information regarding the format, structure, and specific material will be provided in advance.

No student will be permitted to make up a missed exam unless sufficient documentation is provided. This must be discussed with the Professor

**Vignette Responses:** These short writing assignments require the student to respond to hypothetical examples of criminal behavior. A theory and accompanying prompt will be provided to which the student must respond. Each vignette journal entry must be at least 600 words and will also be graded on the quality of writing. APA citation, where appropriate, is required. The assignment, in sum, will constitute 15% of the overall grade and will be broken into three parts based on various theoretical areas. Specifically: Part I will focus on Rational Choice Theory; Part II will focus on Trait Theory; and Part III will focus on Social Process Theory. More details will be provided on Blackboard.

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### **Grading Mechanisms**

Weekly Discussion Board Post/Reply (10)	25%
Exams (3)	60%
Vignette Responses	<u>15%</u>
	100%

No extra credit will be available in the course.

### **Grade Scale**

<b>A</b>	<b>Excellent, 90-100.</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>Good, 80-89.</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>Average, 70-79.</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>Passing, 60-69.</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>Failure, below 60.</b>

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**Email:** Any email contact will come from my TAMUSA email that is listed atop the syllabus. Be sure to check your student email as that is the only address to which I will address notifications – class-wide emails may also appear through Blackboard announcements. I check my email too regularly so communication outside the classroom will not be an issue.

**Blackboard:** Materials and files (not the textbooks) will be made available to students through Blackboard. Some submissions (Vignette Responses) will be submitted online through Blackboard. Any submission must be in .doc, .docx (Word), or .pdf format. I cannot open MAC .pages files.



## IMPORTANT POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Academic Accommodations for Individuals 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, Disability Support Services is located in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210. You can also contact us via phone at (210) 784-1335, visit us <https://www.tamusa.edu/Disability-Support-Services/index.html> or email us at [dss@tamusa.edu](mailto: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.

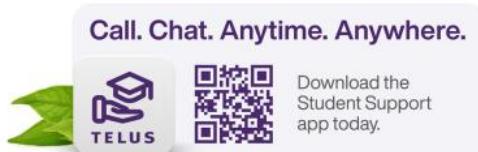
Academic Learning Center: The Academic Learning Center provides free course-based tutoring to all currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Students wishing to work with a tutor can make appointments through the Brainfuse online tutoring platform. Brainfuse can be accessed in the *Tools* section of Blackboard. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing [tutoring@tamusa.edu](mailto: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 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 Madla 120.

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. For more information on SCC services visit [tamusa.edu/studentcounseling](https://www.tamusa.edu/studentcounseling)

*Crisis support is available 24/7 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 (after-hours select option '2').*

Additionally, the TELUS Student Support App provides a variety of mental health resources to including support for in the moment distress, an anonymous peer to peer support network, mental health screenings, podcasts, and articles to improve your mental wellbeing.



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/emergency-management/>.

Download the SafeZone App (<https://safezoneapp.com/>) 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://www.tamusa.edu/academics/>.

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 submit a CARE referral (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/Student-Rights-and-Responsibilities/file-a-report.html>) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to direct you to available resources.

Military Affairs: Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to visit the Office of Military Affairs for any question involving federal or state VA Education Benefits. Visit the Patriots' Casa building, room 202, or to contact the Office of Military Affairs with any questions at [military.va@tamusa.edu](mailto: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 course 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, equal 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.

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, sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator ([titleix@tamusa.edu](mailto: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 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@tamus.edu](mailto:titleix@tamus.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, gender identity, gender expression, and pregnancy/parenting 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, and University Catalog, and to comply with them, as well as with 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 a safe environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their university email for any updates or official university notifications.

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. Conduct that infringes 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 (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/student-rights-and-responsibilities/documents/Student-Handbook-2022-23.pdf>) or visit the resources available in the OSRR website (<https://www.tamusa.edu/university-policies/student-rights-and-responsibilities/academic-integrity.html>).

**No Use of Generative AI Permitted**

This course assumes that all work submitted by students will be generated by the students themselves, working individually or in groups. Students should not have 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. Use of any AI-generated content in this course qualifies as academic dishonesty and violates Texas A&M-San Antonio's standards of academic integrity.

Week	Start Date	Readings(s)	Assignment(s)
1	1/20-1/25	Chapter 1: Crime and Criminology	Week 1 Discussion Board
2	1/26-2/1	Chapter 2: The Nature and Extent of Crime <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changes in Crime Rates during the COVID-19 Pandemic</li> </ul>	Week 2 Discussion Board
3	2/2-2/8	Chapter 3: Victims and Victimization	Week 3 Discussion Board
4	2/9-2/15	Chapter 4: Rational Choice Theory	Exam 1
5	2/16-2/22	Chapter 5: Trait Theories	Week 5 Discussion Board
6	2/23-3/1	Chapter 6: Social Structure Theory	Vignette Journal Part I
7	3/2-3/8	Chapter 7: Social Process Theory	Week 7 Discussion Board
8	3/16-3/22	Chapter 8: Social Conflict, Critical Crim., and Restorative Justice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restorative Justice Programs</li> </ul>	Week 8 Discussion Board
9	3/23-3/29	Chapter 9: Developmental Theories	Week 9 Discussion Board
10	3/30-4/5	Chapter 10: Interpersonal Violence	Exam II
11	4/6-4/12	Chapter 11: Political Crime and Terrorism	Vignette Journal Part II
12	4/13-4/19	Chapter 12: Economic Crimes: Blue-Collar, White-Collar, and Green-Collar	Week 12 Discussion Board
13	4/20-4/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current Event</li> </ul>	Vignette Journal Part III
14	4/27-5/3	Chapter 13: Public Order Crimes	Week 14 Discussion Board
15	5/4	Chapter 14: Crimes of the New Millennium: Cybercrime and Transnational Organized Crime	Week 15 Discussion Board
FINAL EXAM DUE 5/12 11:59pm			