Criminal Investigation

CJUS 4360-400

Fall 2025

## Instructor Information

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## Course Description Structure and Objectives

### Course Description

The course provides an overview of the criminal investigation process. It is divided into three modules, each corresponding to the textbook.

* The first module details the basic procedures used in all criminal investigations.
* The second module details major skills inherent in all investigations, such as interpreting forensic results, interviewing, interrogation, and crime reconstruction skills.
* Module 3 focuses on specialized investigations such as homicide, sexual assault, child abuse, etc.

Online materials that accompany each chapter will highlight and supplement the assigned text readings. Some chapters will have an accompanying assignment that will allow you to apply your knowledge from the course to factual situations.

### Course Delivery and Format

The course is a 3-semester credit-hour course presented over a regular academic session. It will encompass 15 modules of instruction delivered over the session at the UNT Denton Campus. The course will be delivered entirely online in an asynchronous format.

### Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

* Demonstrate an understanding of how criminal investigations are conducted.
* Explain why utilizing scientific and investigative methods is critical to criminal investigations.
* Identify the major tasks inherent to all criminal investigations (interviewing witnesses, interrogating suspects, and evaluating forensic reports).
* Identify potential pitfalls in a criminal investigation.
* Explain the specialized processes utilized in medicolegal investigations and investigating complex crimes such as sexual assault and death investigations.

## Required/Recommended Materials

1. The Textbook for this course is **Criminal Investigation: Theory and Practice 2nd Edition, Wall and Johnstone, ISBN 13 9798765781524**

The textbook is available through the UNT Bookstore. It is also available online at <https://he.kendallhunt.com/product/criminal-investigations-theory-and-practice>

1. This course has digital components. To fully participate in this class, students need internet access to reference content on the Canvas Learning Management System. They can access the UNT digital library and other online resources through the links provided. You will be informed of other technical needs to access course content if circumstances change.  Information on how to be successful in a digital learning environment can be found at [Learn Anywhere](https://online.unt.edu/learn).

### Technical Assistance

UNT has a variety of resources to assist you with the technological aspects of navigating Canvas. One of the most important of these resources is the Help Desk. Personnel at the help desk can assist you with issues concerning access to an online system and other technological issues. Additional technological resources are described in Appendix 1 of this syllabus. Part of working in the online environment involves dealing with the inconveniences and frustration that can arise when technology breaks down or does not perform as expected. Here at UNT we have a Student Help Desk that you can contact for help with Canvas or other technology issues.

UIT Help Desk: [UIT Student Help Desk site](http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm) (http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm)

Email: helpdesk@unt.edu

Phone: 940-565-2324

In Person: Sage Hall, Room 130

Walk-In Availability: 8am-9pm

Telephone Availability:

* Sunday: noon-midnight
* Monday-Thursday: 8am-midnight
* Friday: 8am-8pm
* Saturday: 9am-5pm

Laptop Checkout: 8am-7pm

For additional support, visit [Canvas Technical Help](https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10554-4212710328) (<https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10554-4212710328>)

## Course Requirements/Schedule

**if the student has completed all assigned work in the course.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** |  **Topic** | **Readings** | **Assignments/Exams****Due Dates** |
| *Week 1**Aug 18-24* | An Introduction to Criminal Investigation | Chapter 1 | **Introduce Yourself Discussion****Quiz 1 Due****Aug 24 11:59 pm** |
| *Week 2**Aug 25-31* | The Initial Response and At-Scene Investigations | Chapter 2 | **Quiz 2 Due****Aug 31 11:59 pm** |
| *Week 3**Sep 1-7* | Crime Scene Processing |  Chapter 3 | **Discussion 1** **Quiz 3 Due****Sep 7 11:59 pm** |
| *Week 4**Sep 8-14* | Investigative Resources and Procedures | Chapter 4 | **Exam 1 Due****Quiz 4 Due****Sep 14 11:59 pm** |
| *Week 5**Sep 15-21* | Laws of Arrest Search and Seizure |  Chapter 5 | **Quiz 5 Due****Sep 21 11:59 pm** |
| *Week 6**Sep 22-28* | Case Preparation, Submission, and Court Procedures | Chapter 6 | **Discussion 2****Quiz 6 Due****Sep 28 11:59 pm** |
| *Week 7**Sep 29-Oct 5* | Common Forensic Analyses and Interpretation | Chapter 7 | **Quiz 7 Due****Oct 5 11:59 pm** |
| *Week 8**Oct 6-12* | Interviewing Witnesses | Chapter 8 | **Exam 2 Due****Quiz 8 Due****Oct 12 11:59 pm** |
| *Week 9**Oct 13-19* | Interrogations and False Confessions | Chapter 9 | **Discussion 3****Quiz 9 Due****Oct 19 11:59 pm** |
| *Week 10**Oct 20-26* | Reconstruction and Non-Laboratory-Based Sciences | Chapter 10 | **Quiz 10 Due****Oct 26 11:59 pm** |
| *Weeks 11**Oct27-Nov 2* | Homicides and Assaults  | Chapter 11 | **Quiz 11 Due****Exam 3 Due** **Nov 2 11:59 pm** |
| *Week 12**Nov 3-9* | Sexual Assaults | Chapter 12 | **Discussion 4****Quiz 12 Due****Nov 9 11:59 pm** |
| *Week 13**Nov 10-16* | Crimes Against Children/ Human Trafficking | Chapter 13  | **Quiz 13 Due****Nov 16 11:59 pm** |
| *Week 14**Nov 17-23* | Cybercrime and Computer Crimes | Chapter 14 | **Quiz 14 Due****Discussion 5** **Nov.23 11:59 pm** |
| *Nov 24-30* | Thanksgiving | No Assignment | **Your almost there!!!** |
| *Week 15**Dec 1-7* | Organized Crime, White Collar Crime, and Fraud | Chapter 15  | **SPOT Evaluation Due 12/4****Exam 4 Due 12/7****Quiz 15 Due 12/7** **11:59 pm** |

**\*\*\*Links for assigned readings are provided as active links in footnotes**

## Exams and Discussions

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Assignment | Points | Percent of Grade |
| Exams (4) @100 points each | 400 points | 80% |
| Discussions (5) at 20 points each | 100 points | 20% |
| Total | 500 points | 100% |

## Extra Credit

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Assignment | Points |  |
| Introduce Yourself Discussion | 5 points |  |
| Completion of Spot Evaluation | 5 points |  |
| The total weekly quiz grade from weeks 1-15 ***(total)*** may replace your lowest exam grade *(see explanation below)* | Varies by your lowest score | May ***replace*** lowest exam grade |

## Assessing Your Work

### Grading\*

450 - 500 points = A

400 ‒ 449 points = B

350 – 399 points = C

300 – 349 points = D

Below 300 points = F

**\*Please note that final grades will be determined by the total number of *points* earned during the course, not a percentage. Consideration regarding “borderline grades” will only be given if all assignments have been completed.**

### Assignment Guide and Requirements

There are 3 types of graded assignments in this class: (1) Exams, (2) Discussions, (3) Extra Credit Assignments..

* **Exams**

 There will be four exams, each administered online. Which will be 80% of your grade. They are open-book and may include a mixture of multiple-choice, true/false, or fill-in-the-blank questions.

### **Discussions**

There will be 5 discussions worth 100 points toward your final grade (20points each). Your participation in Discissions will count toward **20**% of your overall course grade.

In order to receive full credit, you should submit the following:

* You should ***respond to the prompt question with a detailed response***. Your response to the prompt will be worth up to 10 points,
* You will also ***respond to the posts of two other students***. Each response to another student will be worth up to 5 points.
* **Extra Credit Opportunities**

There are opportunities for extra credit as follows: (1) An “Introduce Yourself” Discussion (5 points) and SPOT course evaluation credit (5 points). There are also optional weekly quizzes based on the end-of-chapter quizzes in the textbook. Each chapter quiz is worth 5 points. The total points attained from the end of chapter quizzes may be substituted for your lowest exam grade

## How to Succeed in this Course

### Communication

For basic questions please contact the designated TA for this course first. If the situation/issue I not resolved please reach out to me. Please connect with me through my UNT e-mail Robert.Wall@unt.edu. Whenever possible use your “my UNT” email. Please do not use Canvas email or a personal email (gmail etc.) unless necessary. Canvas has limitations regarding attachments, and personal emails are not considered secure by the university. ***For all emails make sure you include the course number and section number in the subject line***.

During busy times, my inbox becomes rather full, so if you contact me and do not receive a response within two business days, please send a follow-up email. A gentle nudge is always appreciated.

**Office Hours:** Mondays 3-5 pm or by appointment (in person or virtual)

### ADA Statement

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodations for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to the faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodation at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member before implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the [Office of Disability Access](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access). You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

### Resources for Academic Success

UNT strives to offer you a high-quality education and a supportive environment so you learn and grow. As a faculty member, I am committed to helping you be successful as a student. To learn more about campus resources and information on how you can be successful at UNT, go to unt.edu/success and explore unt.edu/wellness. To get all your enrollment and student financial-related questions answered, go to scrappysays.unt.edu.

### Importance of an Inclusive Learning Environment

Every student in this class should have the right to learn and engage in an environment of respect and courtesy from others. We will discuss our classroom’s habits of engagement, and I also encourage you to review UNT’s student code of conduct so that we can all start with the same baseline civility understanding (Code of Student Conduct) (https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-012).

### Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences

Every student in my class can improve by doing their own work and trying their hardest with access to appropriate resources. Students who use other people’s work without citations will be violating UNT’s Academic Integrity Policy. Please read and follow this important set of guidelines for your academic success (https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003). If you have questions about this or any UNT policy, please email me or discuss this with me during my office hours.

### AI and Chat GPT

With the rise of AI-assisted research and engines such as Chat GPT and related AI programs, I wanted to address the issue. The use of AI-assisted programs is acceptable for this course for research purposes. The use of Chat GPT to write any of your assignments is prohibited. For example, using Chat GPT to assist you in finding research is acceptable; however, cutting and pasting or directly copying any response from Chat GPT and similar AI generated platforms is prohibited.

### Attendance/ Completion of Assignments

Research has shown that students who regularly participate are more likely to be successful. You should check Canvas for messages regularly, at least daily. You should complete all assignments on time unless you have a university-excused absence such as active military service, a religious holy day, or an official university function, as stated in the Student Attendance and Authorized Absences Policy (PDF) (https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-039). If you cannot attend a class due to an emergency, please let me know. Your safety and well-being are important to me.

Late Work
**If an assignment is late, there will be a 10% per day deduction, with a maximum deduction of 50% of the grade.** If no submission is made within a week after the due date, the assignment will receive a zero (0). Missed examinations will generally receive a zero unless there is a university-approved excused absence, such as illness, military service, etc. If you have any questions, please contact me before the due date.

### Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

## Important Notice for F-1 Students taking Distance Education Courses

### Federal Regulation

To read detailed Immigration and Customs Enforcement regulations for F-1 students taking online courses, please go to the [Electronic Code of Federal Regulations website](http://www.ecfr.gov/). The specific portion concerning distance education courses is located at Title 8 CFR 214.2 Paragraph (f)(6)(i)(G).

The paragraph reads:

(G) For F-1 students enrolled in classes for credit or classroom hours, no more than the equivalent of one class or three credits per session, term, semester, trimester, or quarter may be counted toward the full course of study requirement if the class is taken on-line or through distance education and does not require the student's physical attendance for classes, examination or other purposes integral to completion of the class. An on-line or distance education course is a course that is offered principally through the use of television, audio, or computer transmission including open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, or satellite, audio conferencing, or computer conferencing. If the F-1 student's course of study is in a language study program, no on-line or distance education classes may be considered to count toward a student's full course of study requirement.

### University of North Texas Compliance

To comply with immigration regulations, an F-1 visa holder within the United States may need to engage in an on-campus experiential component for this course. This component (which must be approved in advance by the instructor) can include activities such as taking an on-campus exam, participating in an on-campus lecture or lab activity, or other on-campus experience integral to the completion of this course.

If such an on-campus activity is required, it is the student’s responsibility to do the following:

(1) Submit a written request to the instructor for an on-campus experiential component within one week of the start of the course.

(2) Ensure that the activity on campus takes place and the instructor documents it in writing with a notice sent to the International Student and Scholar Services Office. ISSS has a form available that you may use for this purpose.

Because the decision may have serious immigration consequences, if an F-1 student is unsure about his or her need to participate in an on-campus experiential component for this course, s/he should contact the UNT International Student and Scholar Services Office (telephone 940-565-2195 or email internationaladvising@unt.edu) to get clarification before the one-week deadline.

### Student Verification

UNT takes measures to protect the integrity of educational credentials awarded to students enrolled in distance education courses by verifying student identity, protecting student privacy, and notifying students of any special meeting times/locations or additional charges associated with student identity verification in distance education courses.

See [UNT Policy 07-002 Student Identity Verification, Privacy, and Notification and Distance Education Courses](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-002).

### **Use of Student Work**

A student owns the copyright for all work (e.g., software, photographs, reports, presentations, and email postings) he or she creates within a class and the University is not entitled to use any student work without the student’s permission unless all the following criteria are met:

* The work is used only once.
* The work is not used in its entirety.
* Use of the work does not affect any potential profits from the work.
* The student is not identified.
* The work is identified as student work.

If the use of the work does not meet all the above criteria, then the University office or department using the work must obtain the student’s written permission.

Download the UNT System Permission, Waiver and Release Form

**Transmission and Recording of Student Images in Electronically Delivered Courses**

1. No permission is needed from a student for his or her image or voice to be transmitted live via videoconference or streaming media, but all students should be informed when courses are to be conducted using either method of delivery.
2. In the event an instructor records student presentations, he or she must obtain permission from the student using a signed release in order to use the recording for future classes in accordance with the Use of Student-Created Work guidelines above.
3. Instructors who video-record their class lectures with the intention of re-using some or all of recordings for future class offerings must notify students on the course syllabus if students' images may appear on video. Instructors are also advised to provide accommodation for students who do not wish to appear in class recordings.

Example: This course employs lecture capture technology to record class sessions. Students may occasionally appear on video. The lecture recordings will be available to you for study purposes and may also be reused in future course offerings.

No notification is needed if only audio and slide capture is used or if the video only records the instructor's image. However, the instructor is encouraged to let students know the recordings will be available to them for study purposes.

## Academic Support & Student Services

### **Student Support Services**

#### Mental Health

UNT provides mental health resources to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the nature of an issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:

* [Student Health and Wellness Center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center)
* [Counseling and Testing Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services)
* [UNT Care Team](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care)
* [UNT Psychiatric Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry)
* [Individual Counseling](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling)

#### Chosen Names

A chosen name is a name that a person goes by that may or may not match their legal name. If you have a chosen name that is different from your legal name and would like that to be used in class, please let the instructor know. Below is a list of resources for updating your chosen name at UNT.

* [UNT Records](https://registrar.unt.edu/transcripts-and-records/update-your-personal-information)
* [UNT ID Card](https://sfs.unt.edu/idcards)
* [UNT Email Address](https://sso.unt.edu/idp/profile/SAML2/Redirect/SSO;jsessionid=E4DCA43DF85E3B74B3E496CAB99D8FC6?execution=e1s1)
* [Legal Name](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services)

*\*UNT EUIDs cannot be changed at this time. The collaborating offices are working on a process to make this option accessible to UNT community members.*

#### Pronouns

Pronouns (she/her, they/them, he/him, etc.) are a public way for people to address you, much like your name, and can be shared with a name when making an introduction, both virtually and in-person. Just as we ask and don’t assume someone’s name, we should also ask and not assume someone’s pronouns.

You can [add your pronouns to your Canvas account](https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-18406-42121184808) so that they follow your name when posting to discussion boards, submitting assignments, etc.

Below is a list of additional resources regarding pronouns and their usage:

* [What are pronouns and why are they important?](https://www.mypronouns.org/what-and-why)
* [How do I use pronouns?](https://www.mypronouns.org/how)
* [How do I share my pronouns?](https://www.mypronouns.org/sharing)
* [How do I ask for another person’s pronouns?](https://www.mypronouns.org/asking)
* [How do I correct myself or others when the wrong pronoun is used?](https://www.mypronouns.org/mistakes)

#### Additional Student Support Services

* [Registrar](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cjdl0126%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CTemp%5COneNote%5C16.0%5CNT%5C0%5CRegistrar) (https://registrar.unt.edu/registration)
* [Financial Aid](https://financialaid.unt.edu/) (https://financialaid.unt.edu/)
* [Student Legal Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services)
* [Career Center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center)
* [Multicultural Center](https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center) (https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center)
* [Counseling and Testing Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services) (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services)
* [Pride Alliance](https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance) (https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance)
* [UNT Food Pantry](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry) (https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry)

### *Academic Support Services*

* [Academic Resource Center](https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources) (https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources)
* [Academic Success Center](https://success.unt.edu/asc) (https://success.unt.edu/asc)
* [UNT Libraries](https://library.unt.edu/) (https://library.unt.edu/)
* [Writing Lab](http://writingcenter.unt.edu/) (<http://writingcenter.unt.edu/>)