Criminal Investigations  
CJUS 4360

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Criminal Investigations, CJUS 4360.001

**Instructor Name:** Samuel Simon  
**Semester and Year:** Fall 2025 **Number of Credits:** 3 Credits  
**Class Location:** Chilton 255  
**Class Meeting Day(s) & Time(s)**: T, Th 2-3:30p  
**Office Location:** 263 G, Chilton Hall **Office Hours:** M, W, F 1p -2p, or by appointment **Email:** samuel.simon@unt.edu  
**Graduate Assistant:** Victoria Cadena, [Victoria.Cadena@unt.edu](mailto:Victoria.Cadena@unt.edu)

**Response Time:** Email communication with me should be done via my unt.edu email address. You should use your UNT email account for all email communications with me. Communication with students is important to me and I will respond promptly. I will respond to all student emails, so if you do not receive a response within a reasonable period (48 hours) assume I did not receive the initial message and try again.

When sending an email, please put the COURSE NUMBER (CJUS 2100) in the subject line of the email. Only emails sent from your UNT email account (username@my.unt.edu) will receive a response. Please allow 48 hours of turnaround time for your email inquiries. Every effort will be made to provide a prompt response to student emails.

# Syllabus Change Policy

I reserve the right to modify the syllabus as necessary to account for unforeseen developments. While every effort will be made to follow this syllabus, it may be the case that the syllabus must be modified. Students will be made aware of any adjustments in advance and any changes to the syllabus will work to the benefit of the class. It is the student’s responsibility to check ANNOUNCEMENTS, so they are aware of any syllabus changes. Failure to check and read announcements regarding any such changes does not constitute an acceptable excuse for missed assignments.

# Final Exam Date & Other Important Dates

THERE WILL BE NO FINAL EXAM FOR THIS COURSE.

**Important Dates.**   
Monday, August 18, first day of class  
Monday, September 1, Labor Day Holiday  
Monday-Sunday, November 24 through 30, Thanksgiving Holiday   
Thursday, December 4, Last day of class  
Tuesday, December 9, Final day for any approved make up work to be completed.

# Course Description

Undergraduate Catalog Course Description: Study of methods of obtaining and reporting information from the crime scene, victims, witnesses, and suspects. Specific attention is given to investigation of index crimes (homicide, rape, robbery, assault, burglary, arson, motor vehicle theft and larceny).

As the course title indicates, this course concerns criminal investigation. The course is an overview of the process of criminal investigation. The course is divided into three modules. The first module details the basic procedures used in all criminal investigations. The second module provides more detail on 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 which will allow you to apply your knowledge from the course to factual situations.

# Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of following recognized procedures for investigations. (SLO1)
2. Identify and explain the similarities and differences in investigations conducted by agencies of various sizes. (SLO2)
3. Comprehend and describe the legal complexities of a criminal investigation as it relates to landmark court decisions and their impact on criminal investigations. (SLO3)
4. Identify and describe the general investigative techniques in forensic investigations and demonstrate an understanding of the proper procedures for interviewing witnesses and interrogating suspects. (SLO4)
5. Recognize and describe specialized techniques for investigating major crimes such as homicide, sexual assault, crimes against children, arson, etc. (SLO5)
6. Display an understanding of the essential elements in interpreting complex expert opinions and incorporating them into a criminal investigation. (SLO6)

# Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

# Required Texts / Materials

The assigned text listed below is required for all students enrolled in this course. Reading assignments are noted in the Course Calendar. All students are expected to read the assigned chapters prior to the date specified in the Course Calendar. The assigned readings will serve as a foundation for the discussion of the issues in class as well as test material.

Required:

*Criminalistics: How to Properly Process a Crime Scene (E-book).* Simon, Samuel. Kendall Hunt.   
ISBN: 9781792499210.

# Additional / Supplementary Resources

Each week in addition to the required reading, classroom lectures utilizing Power Point presentations will be provided.

Additionally, throughout the semester students will be provided with a variety of handouts, the handouts will be made available through Canvas. The handouts may include excerpts from Department of Justice publications; as well as other state and international legal documents; news and magazine articles; and portions of other publications related to the topic of criminal justice.

# Teaching Philosophy

The UNT mission statement emphasizes empowering students to thrive in a rapidly changing world. This requires critical thinking, analysis and communication skills as key components to learning. This mission statement is perfectly patterned to my teaching philosophy. I believe that true learning occurs in an environment where sound theory and fundamental concepts are combined with solid practical application. I was fortunate to have a very successful career in federal law enforcement and intelligence, and I bring those practical experiences into the classroom. My career experiences demonstrated that, without a sound foundation, grounded in theory and education, it is difficult if not impossible to grow and learn through practical experience.

# Course Policies and Requirements

## Grade Breakdown

Grades are based on your earned point totals for the semester.  
Exams 100 points (2 @ 50 pts each)  
Assignments 200 points (8 @ 25 pts each)  
Attendance 50 points   
**Total Points 350 points**

FINAL GRADE SCALE

A= 350 – 315 points

B= 314 = 280 points

C= 279 – 245 points

D= 244 – 210 points

F= 209 and below points

**Final grades will be calculated based on total points earned in the course using the indicated scale, not on a percentage basis. I reserve the right to resolve borderline grades if students have first completed all the assignments in the course.**

## Exam

There will be 2 exams given worth 50 points each. Exams will be given online using Canvas. Neither of the exams will be comprehensive. That is, each exam will test your understanding of the subject matter covered during the assessment period. You will have 60 minutes to complete your exam (Students with documented ADA requirements will be provided with the appropriate additional time). You must complete your exam in one sitting; this means you will not be able to save and continue later. On the day of the exam, the exam will open at 6:00am and close at 11:59pm. No late work will be accepted. The format of the exams may vary throughout the semester. They may include traditional, true/false, fill-in and multiple-choice questions; they may consist of short answer questions; or they may consist of a short essay paper. Exams will be located on Canvas under the Module labeled “Quizzes”.

**\*\*Note: It is the student’s responsibility to ensure they have a reliable Internet connection. It is highly recommended students take the exam on campus (in the library or in a computer lab).**

## Assignments

The students will be required to complete eight assignments during the course. Each assignment will be unique and may require some form of written documentation. Each assignment will be worth 25 points for a total of 200 points for the semester.

The grading rubrics for each individual assignment will vary, as each assignment will require a different activity. Students may be asked to create a Power Point presentation; create an Infographic; Videotape a response to a provided topic; Complete investigative documentation, or a variety of other assignments. Each assignment will be worth a total of 25 points for an aggregate score of 200 points for the semester.

## Attendance

The UNT Attendance Policy can be found here:

<https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/06.039%20Student%20Attendance%20and%20Authorized%20Absences.pdf>

The University of North Texas recognizes that student success is promoted by regular attendance and participation in class. The student is responsible for regular and punctual attendance and is expected to participate in all courses in which the student is enrolled.

I expect every student to attend class regularly and promptly. Students are allowed a maximum of two unexcused absences during the semester. You are allowed to use them for whatever you deem necessary. Remember; however, if you are absent on the day an assignment or extra credit is given, you forfeit those points as they cannot be made up.

A student who is absent from a class session is responsible for the subject discussed during that particular session. Notes missed (from lecture, guest speaker, presentations, etc.) will need to be obtained from a fellow classmate. It will be extremely difficult for you to obtain an acceptable grade in this course if you miss class consistently.

An absence may be excused for the following reasons: a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose; active military service, including travel for that purpose; participation in an official university function; illness or other extenuating circumstances; pregnancy and parenting under Title IX; and when the University is officially closed by the President. The student is responsible for requesting an excused absence in writing as early in the semester as possible and personally delivering to me satisfactory evidence to substantiate the excused absence.

## Extra Credit

There may be extra credit given but this will be at the discretion of the professor. If this opportunity presents itself, this will be for the entire class and not one individual person. Any extra credit that is given will be given to the entire class. I do not give individual extra credit so it is important for you to do well on all other course work.

## ADA Statement

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one’s specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of 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 accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>

## Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

Minor violations such as an inadvertent instance of plagiarism such as a failure to cite/reference a source may result in an admonition or requirement for a resubmission of the assignment.

More serious violations will be handled consistent with the severity of the violation.

Multiple violations, intentional plagiarism, forgery, sabotage, or sharing of test answers will result in severe sanctions.

## Student Behavior and University Policy

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students’ opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student’s conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university’s expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [www.unt.edu/csrr](http://www.unt.edu/csrr).

To be successful at learning and understanding the material in this class, it is essential that you read and complete the assigned material and engage in thoughtful discussions. Your active participation, along with your willingness to engage in thoughtful discussions will be considered at all times during the semester.

A classroom, especially during times of discussion, is a place to express ideas, opinions, and engage in thoughtful discussions. Students will respect the views and opinions of others at all times or their status in the course will be examined. In sum, simply be appropriate during all interactions. Each student brings unique insight and perspectives, and that can make for a very interesting and lively discussion forum, but please be appropriate and respectful of others.

## Anti-Discrimination and Title IX Information

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one’s specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of 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 accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu.

The University of North Texas (UNT) prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate.

### Title IX (Survivor Advocacy)

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct. Federal laws and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex as well as sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565- 2648.

## Retention of Student Records

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about student’s records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University’s policy. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

## Access to Information – Eagle Connect

Students’ access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: my.unt.edu. All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student’s Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward e-mail Eagle Connect (<https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect>).

## Survivor Advocacy

Students’ access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: my.unt.edu. All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student’s Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward e-mail Eagle Connect (<https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect>).

## 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>).

### Succeed at UNT

UNT endeavors to offer you a high-quality education and to provide a supportive environment to help you learn and grown. And, as a faculty member, I am committed to helping you be successful as a student. Here’s how to succeed at UNT: Show up. Find Support. Get advised. Be prepared. Get involved. Stay focused. To learn more about campus resources and information on how you can achieve success, <https://success.unt.edu/>.

## Emergency Response Information

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify you 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). The system sends voice messages (and text messages upon permission) to the phones of all active faculty staff, and students. Please make certain to update your phone numbers at my.unt.edu. Some helpful emergency preparedness actions include: 1) know the evacuation routes and severe weather shelter areas in the buildings where your classes are held, 2) determine how you will contact family and friends if phones are temporarily unavailable, and 3) identify where you will go if you need to evacuate the Denton area suddenly. In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

# Tentative Course Schedule

This calendar represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunities. Such changes will be clearly communicated.

| **Date** | **Topic** | **Corresponding Readings** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Week 1 | Introduction and Course/Syllabus Review | Required Reading: Chapter 1 Textbook; Handout Journal of Police Sciences |
| Aug 18-22 |  |  |
| Week 2 | The Preliminary Investigation | Required Reading: Handout, Texas Police Chiefs’ Association; BJA Crime Scene Investigation; Proving Federal Crimes; DOJ Attorney General’s DIOG |
| Aug 25-29 |  |  |
| Week 3 | Crime Scene Investigations | Required Reading: Chapter 3 and 6 Textbook |
| September 2 – 5 | **No Class Labor Day Sept 1** | **Exercise 1: Crime Scene Document** |
| Week 4 | Investigative Resources and Procedures | Required Reading: Handout, Uniform Crime Report; DIOG Investigative Techniques |
| Sep 8- 12 |  | **Exercise 2: Conducting Surveillance** |
| Week 5 | Arrest, Search and Seizure | Required Reading: Textbook Chapters 4, and 5 |
| Sep 15 - 19 |  | **Exercise 3: 4th Amendment** |
| Week 6 | Case Preparation, Case Submission and Court Procedures | Required Reading: Handouts, SOP on Investigative Case File; LAPD Murder Book; Brady v. MD.; Brady Rule; Proving Federal Crimes Ch 12 |
| Sep 22 - 26 |  |  |
| Week 7 | Interpreting Forensics | Required Reading: Textbook Chapter 10 |
| Sep 29 – Oct 3 |  | **QUIZ 1: Biometrics Exam** |
| Week 8 | Interviewing Techniques | Required Reading: Handout, Investigative Interviewing Witness Guide |
| Oct – 6 – 10 |  | **Exercise 4: Interviewing** |
| Week 9 | Interrogations and False Confessions | Required Reading: Handouts, Police Interviewing of Criminal Suspects; Current State of Interview and Interrogation; Miranda v. Arizona |
| Oct 13 - 17 |  | **Exercise 5: Interrogations** |
| Week 10 | Forensic and Field Analysis | Required Reading: Textbook Chapters 9, and 11 |
| Oct 20 - 24 |  |  |
| Week 11 | Medical Investigations; Homicides; Serious Assaults | Required Reading: Handout, Homicide Investigation: A Practical Handbook |
| Oct 27 - 31 |  | **Exercise 6: Homicide Investigation** |
| Week 12 | Sexual Assaults | Required Reading: Handout, What is Sane? |
| Nov 3 - 7 |  |  |
| Week 13 | Crimes Against Children | Video Presentation by NCMEC |
| Nov 10 -14 |  | **Exercise 7: Crimes Against Children** |
| Week 14 | Cybercrimes | Required Reading: Textbook Chapter 12 |
| Nov 17 - 21 |  | **QUIZ 2: Cybercrimes** |
| Week 15 | **NO CLASS THANKSGIVING BREAK** | **NO CLASS** |
| Nov 24 - 28 |  |  |
| Week 16 | Class Review |  |
| Dec 1 – 4 |  | **Exercise 8: Criminal Investigation** |
| Dec 8 - 11 | FINALS WEEK | FINALS WEEK |

\* *5 Quizzes will be randomly selected from any of the 14 chapters throughout the semester.*

# Student Perception of Teaching (SPOT)

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13, 14 and 15 of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey, they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website at www.spot.unt.edu or email [spot@unt.edu](mailto:spot@unt.edu).

# UNT Mission Statement

At the University of North Texas, our caring and creative community empowers our students to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

# The College of Health and Public Service

Health and Public Science students are trained to lead nonprofits, become educators, researchers and professionals who strengthen the diverse communities we serve, with thoughtful, inclusive, and equitable practices as audiologists, behavior analysts, city managers, emergency managers, health care administrators, public safety administrators, public health specialists, rehabilitation counselors, speech language pathologists, social workers, urban planners, and more.

# Criminal Justice Department Mission Statement

The Department of Criminal Justice in the University of North Texas College of Health & Public Service is here to help you learn skills and knowledge that you can use to make a difference. With a diverse student body, students will gain knowledge both from their studies and the unique viewpoints of their peers.

Our programs prepare students with the knowledge, critical thinking, and communication skills they need to collaborate with diverse groups to create just and safe communities.