

Police Systems - CJUS 2300.002 - Fall 2026

Instructor Information

Todd Gearman, MFS

Office Location: Chilton Hall 265

Office Hours: Tuesday, 10:45 – 11:45 and Wednesday, 9:45 – 10:45; Other Times by Appointment

Email: Todd.Gearman@unt.edu

Class Information

Class Location: MATT 312

Class Day: Tue/Thurs

Class Hours: 12:45 – 2:05

Course Description

Focuses on the role and function of police in contemporary society, the problems arising between citizens and police from the enforcement of laws, the limitations of police in a democratic society and the methodologies used by the police to be a more effective component of the justice system.

Course Structure

This course emphasizes discussion and the application of policing concepts through assigned readings, scenario-based learning, and class activities. Course content is organized into themed instructional units, as outlined in the course calendar. Students will examine the organization, functions, challenges, and evolving role of law enforcement in American society while applying course concepts to realistic policing situations.

Student learning will be assessed through weekly reading quizzes, two examinations, and four applied assignments that require analysis of contemporary policing issues using course concepts and provided resources. These assignments are designed to strengthen critical thinking and problem-solving skills by requiring students to evaluate realistic scenarios and communicate evidence-based recommendations.

Learning Objectives

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

1. Recognize the role of law enforcement and challenges of policing a free society.
2. Identify the major eras of policing and the influence each era has had on police organization and operations.
3. Compare and contrast the characteristics and structure of modern police agencies.
4. Recognize the fundamental aspects of police work including (1) police recruitment, selection, and training, (2) police patrol, (3) crime detection and investigation, (4) police discretion and its control, and (5) the law of search, seizure, and self-incrimination.
5. Assess the hazards of police work including stress, use of force, misconduct, and corruption.
6. Identify the characteristics of modern policing strategies including community-oriented policing, problem-oriented policing, intelligence-led policing, and evidence-based policing.
7. Examine contemporary and future police technologies.

Important Notice for F-1 Students taking Distance Education Courses

Federal regulations state that students may apply only 3 fully-online semester credit hours (SCH) to the hours required for full-time status for [F-1 Visa \(DOC\)](#) holders. Full-time status for F-1 Visa students is 12 hours for undergraduates and 9 hours for graduate students.

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).

Teaching Philosophy

My teaching philosophy emphasizes applied learning that connects theory to real-world practice. I promote critical thinking and active engagement with complex issues through analysis, discussion, and scenario-based instruction. I also establish clear expectations for student preparation and participation to support these learning objectives. I maintain an accessible and responsive classroom environment that encourages respectful dialogue, diverse perspectives, and timely academic support when needed. My overall goal is to develop students' ability to apply ethical and analytical reasoning beyond the classroom into professional practice.

General Policies

Communication Expectations

Connect with me through email and/or by attending office hours. Please use your official unt.edu email account for all email communications with me and include the CJUS course number in the subject line of the email. I respond to student emails as promptly as possible, typically within 48 hours during the business week. During busy times, my inbox becomes rather full, so if you do not receive a response within two business days, please send a follow up email. A gentle nudge is always appreciated

Coursewide announcements will primarily be shared through Canvas Announcements and may include important updates, reminders, and course changes. It is **your responsibility** to check and read any messages sent through Canvas.

ADA Policy

The University of North Texas makes reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. To request accommodations, you must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) by completing an application for services and providing documentation to verify your eligibility each semester. Once your eligibility is confirmed, you may request your letter of accommodation. ODA will then email your faculty a letter of reasonable accommodation, initiating a private discussion about your specific needs in the course.

You can request accommodations at any time, but it's important to provide ODA notice to your faculty as early as possible in the semester to avoid delays in implementation. Keep in mind that you must obtain a new letter of accommodation for each semester and meet with each faculty member before accommodations can be implemented in each class. You are strongly encouraged to meet with faculty

regarding your accommodations during office hours or by appointment. Faculty have the authority to ask you to discuss your letter during their designated office hours to protect your privacy. For more information and to access resources that can support your needs, refer to the [Office of Disability Access](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access) website (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access>).

Academic Success Resources

UNT strives to offer a high-quality education in a supportive environment where you can learn, grow, and thrive. As a faculty member, I am committed to supporting you, and I want to remind you that UNT offers a range of mental health and wellness services to help maintain balance and well-being. Utilizing these resources is a proactive way to support your academic and personal success. To explore campus resources designed to support you, check out [mental health services](https://clear.unt.edu/student-support-services-policies) (<https://clear.unt.edu/student-support-services-policies>), visit unt.edu/success, and explore unt.edu/wellness. To get all your enrollment and student financial-related questions answered, go to scrappysays.unt.edu.

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.

How to Succeed in this Course

This course is conducted in person and relies heavily on active participation, discussion, and engagement with course materials presented through lecture, readings, and applied exercises. Regular attendance, preparation, and consistent participation are important components of success in the course. Students are expected to engage thoughtfully with course content, complete assigned readings, and contribute to class discussions and activities.

I encourage you to take advantage of office hours and communicate with me whenever questions or challenges arise. Office hours are not only for students who are struggling. They are an opportunity to discuss course concepts, clarify assignments, develop ideas, and strengthen your understanding of the material. Many students who regularly attend office hours find that the additional discussion and guidance helps improve both their confidence and performance in the course. My goal is to support your academic success and help you develop the critical thinking and analytical skills necessary for professional practice.

Supporting Your Success and Creating an Inclusive Learning Environment

I value the many perspectives students bring to our campus. Please work with me to create a classroom culture of open communication, mutual respect, and belonging. All discussions should be respectful and civil. Although disagreements and debates are encouraged, personal attacks are unacceptable. Together, we can ensure a safe and welcoming classroom for all. If you ever feel like this is not the case, please stop by my office and let me know. We are all learning together.

Required/Recommended Materials

- Brandl, S. G. (2024). Police in America (3rd ed.). SAGE.
 - Paperback ISBN-13: 9781071878293
 - eBook ISBN: 9781071878323, 9781071878323R180

Note: In addition to the required text, journal articles, documentaries, and other sources of reference **may** be used to further enhance students' learning and will be made available in class or on Canvas.

Course Technology & Skills

This course has digital components. To fully participate in this class, students will need internet access to reference content on the Canvas Learning Management System and other required equipment or software such as a webcam, microphone, Adobe Photoshop, etc. If circumstances change, you will be informed of other technical needs to access course content. Information on how to be successful in a digital learning environment can be found at [Learn Anywhere](https://online.unt.edu/learn) (<https://online.unt.edu/learn>).

Minimum Technology Requirements

- Computer
- Reliable internet access
- Speakers
- Microphone
- Plug-ins
- Microsoft Office Suite
- [Canvas Technical Requirements](https://clear.unt.edu/supported-technologies/canvas/requirements) (<https://clear.unt.edu/supported-technologies/canvas/requirements>)

Computer Skills & Digital Literacy

- Using Canvas
- Using email with attachments
- Creating and submitting files in commonly used word processing program formats (.doc, .pdf)
- Downloading and installing software

Technical Assistance

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

This course uses a combination of weekly reading quizzes, applied policing assignments, and examinations to assess student learning. These assessments are designed to promote consistent engagement with the assigned readings, reinforce understanding of core policing concepts, and develop students' ability to analyze contemporary law enforcement issues through realistic scenarios. Together, they promote progression from foundational knowledge to the practical application of policing concepts and prepare students to evaluate real-world policing challenges from an informed, evidence-based perspective.

1. Weekly Quizzes (120 points total)

There will be a total of fourteen (14) weekly reading quizzes administered through Canvas, with the twelve (12) highest scores counting toward your final grade for a total of **120 points (40% of the final grade)**. Therefore, your two lowest quiz scores, including any zeros, will be dropped automatically at the end of the semester.

Each quiz consists of 10 multiple-choice and true/false questions covering the assigned textbook readings, lecture material, and related course content. Quizzes are open-note and open-textbook, and students may consult assigned course materials while completing them. Once opened, each quiz must be completed within 30 minutes.

Each quiz will be available for a seven-day submission window, with due dates listed in the course calendar. Students are responsible for monitoring quiz availability and completing quizzes before the submission window closes. Quizzes not completed before the deadline will receive a score of zero and generally cannot be made up except as permitted under university policy and the course late work policy. ***Quiz due dates are listed in the course calendar below***

2. Applied Policing Assignments (80 points total)

There will be a total of four (4) applied policing assignments worth **80 points (26.7% of the final grade)**, with each assignment worth 20 points.

These assignments require students to apply concepts from the course to realistic policing issues and organizational challenges. Students will analyze authentic or instructor-developed scenarios, evaluate available information, and develop evidence-based recommendations using concepts presented in the assigned readings and course materials.

Assignments may require a variety of professional products, such as analytical memoranda, executive briefings, comparative analyses, or other written responses that reflect the types of communication used within law enforcement agencies. Although each assignment focuses on different topics, all emphasize critical thinking, practical application, and the ability to support conclusions using course concepts rather than personal opinion.

Detailed instructions, submission requirements, and grading rubrics for each assignment are provided in Canvas. Students are encouraged to review the assignment instructions and grading rubric before beginning each assignment. ***A rubric for the assignment is provided in Canvas.***

3. Midterm and Final Examinations (200 points total)

The course includes one midterm examination and one final examination worth 100 points each, for a combined total of 200 points (**50% of the final course grade**). Each examination consists of 50 multiple-choice and true/false questions designed to assess students' understanding and application of course concepts.

The midterm examination covers Chapters 1–7, while the final examination covers Chapters 8–15. Questions may be based on assigned readings, lectures, class discussions, videos, and other required course materials associated with the covered chapters. Students are responsible for all required course content, regardless of the format in which it is presented.

Both examinations are open-book and open-note and will be administered through Canvas according to the schedule provided in the course calendar. Each examination is timed, and students will have 100 minutes to complete the examination once it has been started. Students may begin the examination at any time during the scheduled availability period but are permitted one attempt for each examination. Once an examination has been started, it must be completed in a single session.

Students are expected to complete each examination independently and in accordance with university academic integrity policies. Unless otherwise authorized by the instructor, collaboration or assistance from another person during an examination is prohibited. Students who do not complete an examination during the scheduled availability period will receive a zero unless other arrangements have been approved in advance or the absence qualifies under university policy.

Schedule

Students will be notified by Eagle Alert if there is a campus closing that will impact a class. The calendar is subject to change in line with the [Campus Closures Policy](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/15-006) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/15-006>).

Course Schedule (Fall 2026)

Week	Date	Topic	Assignment	Due
Part I – Background and Foundations				
1	08/18	Course Introduction and Syllabus Review,	Text: Chapter 1 and Chapter 2	

		The History of the Police in America	(No Chapter 1 Quiz – Reading Only) Quiz: Chapter 2	08/24
	08/20	The History of the Police in America	Assignment 1: Agency Analysis	09/03
2	08/25	The Characteristics and Structure of Police Organizations	Text: Chapter 3 Quiz: Chapter 3	08/31
	08/27	The Characteristics and Structure of Police Organizations		
3	09/01	The Role of The Police	Text: Chapter 4 Quiz: Chapter 4	09/08
	09/03	The Role of The Police		
Part II – Police Work				
4	09/08	Police Recruitment, Selection, and Training	Text: Chapter 5 Quiz: Chapter 5	09/14
	09/10	Police Recruitment, Selection, and Training	Assignment 2: Video Review	10/08
5	09/15	Police Patrol	Text: Chapter 6 Quiz: Chapter 6	09/21
	09/17	Police Patrol		
6	09/22	Crime Detection and Investigation	Text Read: Chapter 7 Quiz: Chapter 7	09/28
	09/24	Crime Detection and Investigation		

7	09/29	Police Discretion and Its Control	Text Read: Chapter 8 Quiz: Chapter 8	10/05
	10/01	Police Discretion and Its Control	MIDTERM EXAM (covering chapters 1-7)	10/08
8	10/06	The Law of Search, Seizure, and Self-Incrimination	Text Read: Chapter 9 Quiz: Chapter 9	10/12
	10/08	The Law of Search, Seizure, and Self-Incrimination		
Part III – The Hazards of Police Work				
9	10/13	Health and Safety Issues in Police Work	Text: Read Chapter 10 Quiz: Chapter 10	10/19
	10/15	Health and Safety Issues in Police Work	Assignment 3: Briefing	10/29
10	10/20	Police Use of Force	Text: Read Chapter 11 Quiz: Chapter 11	10/26
	10/22	Police Use of Force		
11	10/27	Police Misconduct and Corruption	Text: Read Chapter 12 Quiz: Chapter 12	11/02
	10/29	Police Misconduct and Corruption		
Part IV -Police Strategies and the Future of Police in America				
12	11/03	Community and Problem-Oriented Policing	Text: Read Chapter 13 Quiz: Chapter 13	11/09
	11/05	Community and Problem-Oriented Policing	Assignment 4: Response Memo	11/19
13	11/10	Evidence-Based and Intelligence-Let Policing	Text: Read Chapter 14 Quiz: Chapter 14	10/16

	11/12	Evidence-Based and Intelligence-Let Policing		
14	11/17	Crime, Technology, and The Future of American Policing	Text: Read Chapter 15 Quiz: Chapter 15	11/23
	11/19	Crime, Technology, and The Future of American Policing		
Course Conclusion				
15	11/24	No Class	Thanksgiving Break	
	11/26	No Class	Thanksgiving Break	
16	12/01	Course Review	Course Evaluation Final Exam Available	
	12/03	Prefinals	Prefinals	
12/07-12/11		FINAL EXAM WEEK	Final Exam (covering chapters 8-15)	TBA – Must be completed by Designated Final Exam Period

Assessing Your Work

This course uses a variety of assessments designed to support the course learning objectives and evaluate your understanding and application of policing concepts. Throughout the semester, students will complete weekly reading quizzes, applied policing assignments, and two examinations. These assessments are intended to encourage consistent engagement with assigned readings, reinforce key concepts, and develop the ability to analyze realistic policing issues using evidence-based reasoning and course materials.

Grades and feedback will generally be made available within seven (7) business days, although applied policing assignments may require additional grading time due to the individualized feedback provided. Students are encouraged to review instructor feedback and monitor their progress throughout the semester. A total of 400 points may be earned in this course. The grading policy is outlined below.

Assignment	Details	Points Possible	% of Grade
Weekly Reading Quizzes	14 administered; lowest 2 dropped; (12 × 10 points)	120	30%
Applied Policing Assignments	4 × 20 points	80	20%
Midterm Examination	50 questions	100	25%
Final Examination	50 questions	100	25%
Total		400	100%

Grading Scale

A = 360-400

B = 320-359

C = 280-319

D = 240-279

F = Below 240 points

Academic Integrity Policy

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. To read more about the policy, please visit: [Academic Integrity Policy \(PDF\)](#).

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 come discuss this with me during my office hours.

Generative AI Use

In this course, the use of GenAI tools is limited as directed by the instructor. Any additional use requires explicit permission, proper citation, and authentic student work.

Throughout the semester, you will or may use specific Generative AI (GenAI) tools for certain assignments, with guidance on responsible use. These assignments help build ethical resilience and GenAI literacy, preparing you for careers in a GenAI oriented workforce.

I use GenAI to enhance materials, streamline tasks, generate prompts, create scenarios, draft syllabi, build study guides, and analyze performance. I will always disclose how I use GenAI, and I expect the same from you.

In accordance with the UNT Honor Code, unauthorized use of GenAI tools is prohibited. Using GenAI content without proper credit or substituting your own work with GenAI undermines the learning process and violates UNT academic integrity policy. If you're unsure whether something is allowed, please seek clarification

Late Work

Late work and make-up assignments are generally not accepted except in cases of authorized university absences or documented extreme circumstances approved by the instructor. Authorized absences are those recognized under university policy. Students are responsible for following university procedures for requesting an excused absence and should provide written documentation in advance whenever possible.

If a serious illness or emergency prevents completion of a required assignment or exam, documentation must be provided within 3 calendar days. The instructor reserves the right to evaluate exceptional circumstances on a case-by-case basis.

Any approved make-up work must be completed within 3 days of returning from the authorized absence. For assignments or exams with extended availability windows, the authorized absence must substantially prevent access to the full submission period in order to qualify for a make-up opportunity.

Extra Credit

There is no extra credit offered for this course. Any change to this policy would apply to the entire class and not to individual students. Students should focus on completing assigned coursework and maximizing performance on required assessments.

Attendance and Participation

Regular attendance and active participation are important components of success in this course and are required. Because much of the course relies on discussion, applied exercises, and in-class engagement, students are expected to attend class consistently, arrive prepared, and participate thoughtfully in course activities.

Important assignment information, instructions, examples, announcements, and class discussions are presented throughout the semester during scheduled class meetings. These in-class activities are intended to clarify course concepts, reinforce assigned readings, and support successful completion of assignments. While assignment materials and resources will be available in Canvas, students are responsible for all information presented during class, including assignment expectations, announcements, and instructional guidance, regardless of attendance.

I understand that many students balance academic responsibilities with work, family, and other personal obligations. If circumstances arise that may affect your attendance or participation, I encourage you to communicate with me as early as possible so we can discuss available options and support your success in the course.

Syllabus Change Policy

I reserve the right and have the discretion to change this syllabus. While every effort will be made to follow this syllabus as closely as possible, it is sometimes the case that it must be modified. In the case that it needs to be adjusted, I will announce such adjustments to the class. I will make every effort to ensure that any changes to the syllabus benefit the class as a whole. It is the student's responsibility to check announcements/email so that all changes are documented. Failure to obtain syllabus changes because of failure to check and read announcements/email does not constitute a defense against a missed Reading, test date, or other applicable changes.