

Writing for the Criminal Justice Professional

CRJU 2943-X10

Online Course

Fall, 2025

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Course Materials:

Fowler (2019). Little Brown Handbook (14th ed.). Pearson, ISBN: 9780135571316

You are responsible for having a textbook on the first day of class

Supplemental D2L

Course Prerequisite:

Introduction to Criminal Justice (CRJU 1113)

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to further develop and enhance the basic writing skills you have obtained during your undergraduate education for use in a criminal justice-specific discipline. Skills relating to research, data analysis, the writing process, editing, as well as research format and style, will be taught through assignments relating to various criminal justice fields. Several skill-specific assignments will be required throughout the semester, in addition to a final research paper that will utilize all the skills learned throughout the semester. Students will work individually and in groups to complete these assignments.

Course Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, you should have a thorough understanding of research and writing as a criminal justice professional. You should be able to:

- 1) Complete writing assignments using a professional writing style
- 2) Conduct thorough and complete research on various criminal justice-related topics
- 3) Examine, analyze, and incorporate research into writing assignments
- 4) Summarize and paraphrase information in writing, using a concise and eloquent manner

- 5) Utilize information from both primary and secondary sources in your research and writing
- 6) Document research and writing through use of a professional format and style

Course Policies:

A. Late Assignments

Students are expected to submit assignments on the due date and late assignments will **not be accepted**. Unless prior arrangements have been made with the professor, students will receive **no credit** for an assignment submitted past the due date.

B. Assignment Submission

All writing assignments will be submitted via the D2L Dropbox.

C. Midwestern State University Student Handbook:

Issues not specifically addressed by the syllabus are governed by the student handbook and the MSU Catalog. Make sure you have a copy and are familiar with all the procedures therein. Pay close attention to the Code of Student Conduct section in the handbook.

D. Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is something that I take very seriously. As future professionals, it is something that you should take seriously as well. Establishing ethical work habits and maintaining both your own integrity and that of your profession begins during your education and training.

All writing assignments must be your own original work, created and submitted **exclusively for this course**. Submitting a writing assignment identical to or substantially similar to work submitted for any other course, whether at MSU or another institution, will be considered an act of academic dishonesty and will result in an automatic grade of F for the course.

Each student is expected to abide by the rules of ethical and academic honesty as defined by the student handbook. All cases of academic dishonesty will result in a **failing grade for the course** and a letter to the Dean of Students requesting that you be **withdrawn from the University**. If there are any questions as to whether an action is academically dishonest, please consult with the professor.

E. Syllabus Change Policy:

This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to reasonable changes. Students will be notified of any changes to the syllabus in a timely fashion. Notice of any changes will be given via D2L email.

ALL COMMUNICATIONS WITH ME MUST COME FROM YOUR OFFICIAL MSU EMAIL ADDRESS OR THROUGH D2L EMAIL. ANY EMAILS FROM EXTERNAL EMAIL ADDRESSES WILL NOT BE READ OR RESPONDED TO.

Course Requirements:

A. Class Essays and Paragraph Assignments

A diagnostic paragraph assignment, a skills assessment assignment, and two longer essays will be required during the regular semester. The topics for these paragraphs and essays will be assigned and the specific requirements for each will be given in the specific assignment within the “Course Assignments” folder on the course homepage. Many of these paragraphs and papers will involve your observation of a scenario and then writing about various aspects of what you have observed. These assignments will give you the opportunity to demonstrate the writing skills you have learned up to that point in the course, and will also serve as exercises in editing and revising your work.

B. Research Paper

40% of your grade will be determined through your submission of a final research paper. The process of researching, writing, developing, and editing this paper will take place throughout the semester as you learn and develop the skills necessary to write such a paper.

The paper should show your ability to choose an appropriately narrow topic, conduct scholarly research, develop a thesis statement, draft a paper, and revise that paper at various levels to produce a professional work product. Several progressive steps will be taken in the completion of your final research paper. **All** portions of the research paper must be completed in order to receive full credit on the final research paper. For each portion of the research paper assignment that is not completed in accordance with the deadlines stated in the syllabus and subsequently approved by the professor, **one (1) letter grade will be deducted from your final research paper grade.**

The paper should be between 10-12 double-spaced pages in length, **excluding title page(s), references, graphs, charts, appendices, and other supplementary writings.** This means 10-12 **substantive** pages (i.e., 10-12 pages of your own writing). The paper should be written in 12-point Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins. Papers should be carefully edited to eliminate grammatical errors. For each full or partial page

that the research paper is short of the length requirements, **one (1) letter grade will be deducted from your final research paper grade.**

The paper must utilize a minimum of five (5) scholarly journal articles. Your paper may **not** utilize electronic sources. For the purposes of this course, electronic sources are unverifiable web pages, blogs, and other non-scholarly publications found on the Internet. Books, scholarly journals, and other reliable publications that are accessed by means of the Internet are not considered electronic sources and are perfectly acceptable for use in your paper. If there are any questions about the acceptability of a certain source, please contact the professor.

APA 7th edition referencing should be utilized throughout the paper. Exploring the scholarly work of others is an important part of active research. However, when the work of others is reflected in your own paper, credit must be given through proper citation. Failure to do this is plagiarism and constitutes academic dishonesty.

Your research paper must be an original work, created and submitted ***exclusively for this course***. Submitting a research paper identical to or substantially similar to a paper submitted for any other course, whether at MSU or another institution, will be considered an act of academic dishonesty and will result in an automatic grade of F for the course.

Grading Policy:

Diagnostic Paper	10%
Skills Assessment Paper	10%
First Essay	20%
Second Essay	20%
Final Research Paper	40%
TOTAL	100%

Failure to complete any of these assignments will result in a grade of F for the course.

Your grades will be determined on the following scale:

90-100	= A
80-89	= B
70-79	= C
60-69	= D
60-below	= F

Extenuating Circumstances

In the event of extenuating circumstances, such as illness, death in the family, etc, please get in touch with me as soon as possible. Assignments and deadlines may be modified on a case-by-case basis. Verifiable documentation of the circumstance may be required. The more quickly you let me know what is going on, the more options I will have for allowing you to complete the course.

Course Schedule

Weeks 1 and 2 (due by 11:59 PM CST, Sunday, September 7):

Diagnostic Writing Assignment

Weeks 3 and 4 (due by 11:59 PM CST, Sunday, September 21):

Essay I

Week 5 (due by 11:59 PM CST, Sunday, September 28):

Skills Assessment Assignment

Weeks 6 and 7 (due by 11:59 PM CST, Sunday, October 12)

Essay II

Week 8 (due by 11:59 PM CST, Sunday, October 19)

Research Paper Topics

Week 9 (due by 11:59 PM CST, Sunday, October 26)

Annotated Bibliography

Week 10 (due by 11:59 CST, Sunday, November 2)

Thesis and Research Paper Outline

Weeks 11 and 12 (due by 11:59 PM CST, Sunday, November 16)

Research Paper First Draft

Weeks 13, 14, and 15 (due by 11:59 PM CST, Sunday, December 7)

Research Paper Final Draft