

Criminal Intelligence: Examining the Evidence

CRJU 3923 | Course Syllabus

Midwestern State University | Criminal Justice

Contact Information

Instructor: Michael Alpers

Course location: Online

Office: Martin Hall, Room 105-B

Office hours: The instructor is available through D2L throughout the week and in the office Tuesday and Thursday from 8:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Contact the instructor by email for immediate assistance or personal matters not directly related to course content.

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Course Description

Credit: 3 semester hours. This course introduces the law of criminal evidence and the criminal-intelligence process. Students examine how material is gathered for trial, how guilt or innocence is established, and how investigative and trial processes reflect the rights and values underlying the American system of justice.

Course Rationale

Students preparing for criminal-justice careers, and those interested in a safe, just, and orderly society, need to understand the nature and extent of crime and the methods used to analyze data and evidence. These skills help law-enforcement professionals identify patterns, evaluate information, and respond more effectively to crime and other social problems.

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisite courses for CRJU 3923.

Textbook and Supplemental Materials

Required text: Lippman, Matthew. Criminal Evidence. SAGE Publications. ISBN 978-1-4833-5955-5.

Additional case materials, guidebook files, presentations, messages, and instructional resources may be assigned through D2L.

Course Goals and Objectives

After successfully completing this course, students should be able to explain and apply concepts involving:

- The structure of the legal system and the criminal-justice process.
- Major types of evidence and approaches to evidence analysis.
- Direct and circumstantial evidence.
- Witness testimony and credibility.
- Crime-scene evidence.
- Documentary evidence, models, maps, and diagrams.
- Hearsay and evidentiary privileges.
- The exclusionary rule.

- Searches and seizures.
- Interrogations, lineups, and identifications.

Instructional Methods and Course Format

This fully online course uses a step-by-step guidebook with associated files, instructor messages, hands-on exercises, D2L discussions, and presentations. Participation is demonstrated through meaningful contributions to discussions and timely completion of assigned activities.

Study Hours and Tutoring Assistance

Students should schedule regular weekly time for reading, reviewing evidence and case materials, completing exercises, participating in discussions, and preparing written work and examinations. Consult current MSU Texas student-support information or contact the instructor for guidance.

Course Requirements and Grading

Table 1: Graded Course Requirements

Assignment	Points Stated in Source Syllabus
Exam III	100 points
Discussions	100 points each
Two current-event writing assignments	200 points
Midterm examination	200 points
Final examination	200 points
Calculated course total	See D2L gradebook

The number of graded discussions and the resulting total points are identified in D2L. Students should use the D2L gradebook for current totals, assignment weighting, and the calculated course grade.

Current-Event Writing Assignments

Students will complete two current-event writing assignments connected to criminal intelligence, evidence, law enforcement, or the justice process. Detailed instructions, source requirements, formatting expectations, and due dates are posted in D2L.

Examinations

The course includes three Exams, a midterm examination, and a final examination as listed in the source syllabus. Examination instructions, permitted materials, time limits, content coverage, and due dates are provided in D2L.

Discussion Forums

Online discussions support interaction among class members and allow students to apply course concepts to evidence, intelligence, cases, and current issues. Posts should demonstrate preparation, accurate use of course material, professional communication, and substantive engagement with classmates.

Attendance, Participation, and Course Withdrawal

In this online course, attendance is demonstrated through regular D2L access, meaningful participation, and timely submission of work. All assignment due dates and the applicable course-withdrawal deadline are posted through university and course resources. Students are responsible for monitoring D2L and official university email regularly.

Late Work and Make-Up Work or Tests

Complete all work by the deadlines posted in D2L. If a serious, documented circumstance may prevent timely completion, contact the instructor promptly. Make-up work or deadline exceptions are granted only at the instructor's discretion and in accordance with university policy.

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

D2L is the primary source for course files, messages, discussions, assignments, examinations, announcements, grades, and schedule changes. [Access MSU Texas D2L](#). Contact D2L support or the instructor if difficulties occur.

Online Computer Requirements

Students need a computer with a reliable internet connection and a current, supported browser. High-speed internet is strongly recommended. Test equipment and connectivity before deadlines and maintain backup plans for completing online work.

About the Instructor

Michael Alpers brings more than 20 years of law-enforcement experience, beginning in corrections and continuing through municipal policing, sheriff's-office service, narcotics enforcement, and highway interdiction. He began teaching at Midwestern State University in 2015 and has extensive experience teaching criminal justice, homeland security, and law-enforcement training courses online and in academy settings.

The instructor looks forward to helping students connect criminal-intelligence and evidence principles with professional practice. Students are encouraged to ask questions and seek assistance throughout the course.

Criminal Justice Program Philosophy on Career Preparation

The Criminal Justice Program provides students opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills, abilities, and professional sensitivities needed for criminal justice, human-service, public-service, and private-sector careers.

Three-Part Foundation

- Basic skills: reading, writing, arithmetic and mathematical operations, listening, and speaking.
- Thinking skills: creative thinking, decision-making, problem-solving, visualization, learning, and reasoning.
- Personal qualities: responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, and integrity.

Five Competencies

- Resources: identifies, organizes, plans, and allocates resources.
- Interpersonal: works effectively with others.
- Information: acquires and uses information.
- Systems: understands complex interrelationships.
- Technology: works with a variety of technologies.

The faculty emphasize professional behavior to help graduates locate, enter, and retain satisfying careers.

Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures

Students must comply with the university's Academic Honesty Policy. Cheating, plagiarism, deception, inappropriate citation, inflated references, purchasing or copying work, and copying and

pasting without attribution are prohibited. Plagiarized assignments receive a grade of zero and may be reported through university procedures.

For current standards and procedures, consult the [Office of Student Conduct](#) and the Student Handbook.

Student Honor Creed

As an MSU student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, steal, or help anyone else do so.

Students share responsibility for maintaining a community in which integrity and honorable conduct are the norm. Each student is expected to submit honest, original work and avoid giving or receiving unauthorized assistance.

Student Handbook

Students are responsible for policies and procedures contained in the [MSU Texas Student Handbook](#).

Moffett Library

Moffett Library provides books, peer-reviewed journals, criminal-justice databases, multimedia materials, study rooms, and research assistance. Visit the [Moffett Library get-started page](#) to explore available resources.

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University provides reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodations should apply through Disability Support Services, located in the Student Wellness Center, at (940) 397-4140. Current documentation may be required, and each request is reviewed individually.

Additional information is available from [Disability Support Services](#).

Emergency Aid Resources for Basic Needs

Unexpected circumstances can affect housing, utilities, food, transportation, healthcare, technology, textbooks, or other necessities. For assistance, contact the Office of Student Affairs, Clark Student Center Room 108, (940) 397-7500, or student.affairs@msutexas.edu.

Review [Student Emergency Support and Resources](#) for current options.

Important University Dates and Schedule Changes

Students are responsible for current deadlines for schedule changes, graduation applications, drops, withdrawals, and refunds. Dates vary by term.

Consult the [MSU Texas academic calendar](#) and published registration information.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn may be eligible for a refund of some tuition, fees, or room and board charges. If the student received financial aid, some or all of a refund may be returned to the applicable aid programs. Eligibility and calculations depend on the circumstances and withdrawal date.

College and Campus Policies

Campus Carry

Licensed individuals may carry a concealed handgun in permitted campus areas, subject to university rules and legal requirements. Open carry is not permitted on college campuses. Review the current [MSU Texas Campus Carry rules and policies](#).

Alcohol, Drugs, Smoking, and Tobacco

Students must comply with university policies and all applicable local, state, and federal laws concerning alcohol, illicit drugs, smoking, and tobacco on university property and at university-sponsored activities.

Active Aggressor Preparedness

Campus safety is a shared responsibility. Students are encouraged to review MSU Police Department guidance on responding to an active aggressor, including the Run, Hide, Fight options and related emergency-preparedness resources.

Grade Appeal Process

A student who believes a final course grade was assigned incorrectly should follow the grade-appeal procedures in the current university catalog and Student Handbook, beginning with timely communication with the instructor.

Course Schedule

The schedule is tentative. Specific topics, readings, evidence exercises, discussions, writing assignments, examinations, and due dates are posted in D2L. The instructor may revise the schedule or assignments when needed; changes will be communicated through D2L and university email.

Table 2: Course Activity Schedule

Course Component	Activities and Assessments	Due-Date Source
Orientation	Review syllabus and faculty expectations; access course files; introduce yourself.	D2L course calendar
Evidence modules	Complete readings, presentations, evidence exercises, and discussions.	D2L Content tab and course calendar
Current events	Complete two current-event writing assignments.	D2L course calendar
Examinations	Complete Exam III, the midterm examination, and the final examination as assigned.	D2L course calendar