



Course Syllabus: Correctional Systems & Practices

CRJU-2243-101

Fall 2026

Tuesday & Thursday 11-12:20 Martin Room #108

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Atkins

Office: Martin #101

Office hours: Monday 830-1130 Tues 8-930, Thurs. 8-930 (email for appointment)

Office phone: (940) 397-6295

E-mail: ben.atkins@msutexas.edu

Course Description

This course is an overview of the field of Corrections: courts, sentencing, detention, institutions, parole, probation, juvenile corrections, and the death penalty. Students will be tested both on chapter content and instructor material presented in the classroom, as well as any guest speaker information and/or field trips taken.

Course Objectives

1. You will gain a good understanding of the evolution of the corrections field
2. You will the legal, philosophical, political and practical aspects of sentencing alternatives
3. You will learn how to critically analyze correctional programs and operations and identify areas in need of reform.

Textbook

Hanser, Robert D. (2023). *Introduction to Corrections* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications. ISBN-13: 978-1-0718-4899-9

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

[Office of Student Conduct](#)

Grading

Percentage Breakdown

Assignments	Percent
Participation	5%
Short Writings (2 at 10% each)	20%
Chapter Quizzes (10 of 12 at 1.5% each)	15%
Exams (3 at 20% each)	60%

Grading Scale

Grade	%
A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	Less than 60

Exams

Three examinations will be administered during the semester. Each examination is worth 20% of the final course grade.

Examinations will cover assigned textbook readings, lectures, class discussions, and other course materials. Exams will be administered online through D2L and may consist primarily of multiple-choice and other objective questions. Exam due dates are listed in the course schedule on the last page of this syllabus as well as in the D2L Calendar for this course.

Chapter Quizzes

Twelve (12) chapter quizzes will be administered online during the semester through D2L. Quizzes are designed to assess students' understanding of assigned textbook readings and important concepts covered in the course.

At the end of the semester, each student's **two lowest quiz grades will be dropped**, and the remaining ten (10) quiz grades will be used to calculate the chapter quiz 15% portion of the final course grade. Thus, each of the 10 quiz grades will count as 1.5% of the final grade. A missed quiz will receive a grade of zero and may serve as one of the student's two dropped quiz grades.

Because the two lowest quiz grades are dropped, **make-up quizzes will generally not be given** except in circumstances approved by the instructor.

Chapter quizzes will consist of no more than 10 questions and are designed to encourage students to remain current with assigned readings and to reinforce important concepts covered in the course. Quiz due dates will be listed in the D2L Calendar.

Short Writings

Two short writing assignments will account for 20% (10% each) of the final course grade.

Writing #1 - Correctional Agency Profile

A short written assignment (minimum of 3 pages double spaced) examining a correctional agency or organization. Students may select an appropriate jail, prison, probation department, parole agency, community corrections program, or other approved correctional organization. The assignment will require students to describe the agency, its purpose and responsibilities, the population it serves, and its role within the larger correctional system. Students will also relate the agency to concepts discussed in the textbook and course.

Writing #2 - Contemporary Corrections Issue Analysis

A short written analysis (minimum of 3 pages double spaced) of a contemporary issue facing the correctional system. Possible topics include prison overcrowding, correctional officer staffing, inmate mental health, substance abuse treatment, prison gangs, solitary confinement, rehabilitation, probation and parole, prisoner reentry, recidivism, private prisons, inmate rights, the death penalty, or another approved corrections-related issue. Students will use course material and credible outside sources to explain the issue, discuss its significance, and demonstrate how it relates to concepts covered in the course.

Class Attendance & Participation

Regular attendance and active participation are important components of the course and will account for 5% of the final course grade. Students are expected to attend class, arrive prepared, participate appropriately in class activities, complete all assignments by due dates and remain engaged with course material throughout the semester.

Extra Credit

Extra credit is not accepted

Late Work

Late work will receive a grade of F unless a prior agreement exists between the student and Dr. Atkins

Make Up Work/Tests

This is an online course, make-ups not allowed. Missed assignments will automatically receive a grade of F unless a prior arrangement exists between Dr. Atkins and the student.

Important Dates

Last day for term schedule changes:	Aug. 27
Deadline to file for graduation:	Sept. 21
Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:"	Nov. 23 by 4:00pm
Refer to:	Drops, Withdrawals & Void

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

Extensive use of the MSU D2L program is a part of this course. Each student is expected to be familiar with this program as it provides a primary source of communication regarding assignments, examination materials, and general course information. You can log into [D2L](#) through the MSU Homepage. If you experience difficulties, please contact the technicians listed for the program or contact your instructor.

Attendance

Attendance is a course requirement. Students who have repeated unexcused absences may be administratively withdrawn from the course.

Online Computer Requirements

Taking this class requires you to have access to a computer (with Internet access) to complete and upload your assignments. It is your responsibility to have (or have access to) a working computer in this class. ***Assignments and tests are due by the due date, and personal computer technical difficulties will not be considered reason for the instructor to allow students extra time to submit assignments, tests, or discussion postings.*** Computers are available on campus in various areas of the buildings as well as the Academic Success Center. **Your computer being down is not an excuse for missing a deadline!!** There are many places to access your class! Our online classes can be accessed from any computer in the world which is connected to the internet. Contact your instructor immediately upon having computer trouble. If you have technical difficulties in the course, there is also a student helpdesk available to you. The college cannot work directly on student computers due to both liability and resource limitations however they are able to help you get connected to our online services. For help, log into [D2L](#).

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exist in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Services for Students With Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#)

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by WATC. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes has prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more

information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled “*Run. Hide. Fight.*” which may be electronically accessed via the University police department’s webpage: [“Run. Hide. Fight.”](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

***Notice:** Changes in the course syllabus, procedure, assignments, and schedule may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Course schedule is on the following page.

Course Readings and Exam Schedule

See the D2L Calendar for Chapter Quiz due dates.

Week or Module	Topic/Activity/Reading	Assignment
Week 1 (Aug. 24)	Course Introduction, go over syllabus	
Week 2 (Aug. 31)	- Ch. 1 History of Punishment and Prisons in U.S. - Ch. 2 Sentencing & Correctional Policy	Quiz Ch.1 Quiz Ch.2
Week 3 (Sept. 7)	Ch. 3 Correctional Law and Legal Liabilities	Quiz Ch.3
Week 4 (Sept. 14)	Ch. 4 Jail & Detention Facilities	Quiz Ch.4
Week 5 (Sept. 21)	Ch. 5 Probation	Quiz Ch.5
Week 6 (Sept. 28)	Exam #1 Due Oct. 4 in D2L	Exam #1 (Ch. 1-5)
Week 7 (Oct. 5)	- Ch. 6 Intermediate Sanctions - Ch. 7 Facility Design Needs	Quiz Ch.6 Quiz Ch.7
Week 8 (Oct. 12)	Ch. 8 Classification & Custody	Quiz Ch.8
Week 9 (Oct. 19)	Ch. 9 Prison Subculture & Gangs	Quiz Ch.9
Week 10 (Oct. 26)	- Ch. 10 Immigration Detention Writing #1 Due Nov. 1 in D2L	NO QUIZ Writing #1
Week 11 (Nov. 2)	Exam #2 Due Nov. 8 in D2L - Ch.11 Female Offenders	Exam #2 (Ch. 6-10)
Week 12 (Nov. 9)	- Ch.12 Special Inmate Population - Ch.13 Juvenile Corrections	Quiz Ch.12 Quiz Ch.13
Week 13 (Nov. 16)	- Ch.15 Prison Programming - Ch.16 Parole & Reentry Issues	Quiz Ch.16
Week 14 (Nov. 23)	THANKSGIVING BREAK	NO CLASS
Week 15 (Nov. 30)	- Ch.17 The Death Penalty - Final Exam Review Writing #2 Due Dec. 6 in D2L	NO QUIZ Writing #2
Week 16 (Dec. 7)	Exam #3 Due Dec. 8 in D2L	Exam #3 (Ch. 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17)