



Course Syllabus: Ethical Issues in Criminal Justice

College of Health Science and Human Services
CRJU 3713 Section X10
Fall 2026

Contact Information

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Course Description

This course examines a wide range of ethical issues in the field of criminal justice through a discussion of the various philosophical approaches to ethical decision-making. Topics covered include the use of harm to prevent harm; the use of discretionary decision-making; prediction problems; and ethical dilemmas faced by front police, prosecutors, defense attorneys, corrections officers, etc. in the course of their daily duties.

Course Objectives

On successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Discuss and analyze various ethical philosophies and apply them to criminal justice scenarios.
- Evaluate and defend various approaches to justice within various ethical paradigms.
- Apply ethical paradigms to case scenarios; and
- Assess current criminal justice policies from an ethical perspective

Textbook & Instructional Materials

Banks, C. (2020). *Criminal Justice Ethics: Theory and Practice* (5th ed.). Sage Publications. (ISBN: 9781544353593)

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Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given).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](#)

Moffett Library

Moffett Library provides resources and services to support student's studies and assignments, including books, peer-reviewed journals, databases, and multimedia materials accessible both on campus and remotely. The library offers media equipment checkout, reservable study rooms, and research assistance from librarians to help students effectively find, evaluate, and use information. Get started on this [Moffett Library webpage](#) to explore these resources and learn how to best utilize the library.

Grading

Course Grade - List all graded assignments with their point value and or percentage of total grade. Letter Grade Scale indicate the overall points or % to letter grade scale for example 1270 to 1137 = A.

Table 1: Points allocated to each assignment

Assignments	Percent
Discussion Questions	20%
Article Critique Paper	20%
Exams (3 at 20% each)	60%

Table 2: Total percentage points for final grade.

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

Discussion Questions

For most chapters, I will post discussion questions that are geared to help students think about the topics discussed in the chapter. Each student is required to answer ALL questions posted for a given chapter. Discussions question due dates will be listed in the D2L calendar for the course. The combined average of

your discussion question grades will account for 20% of your final grade. Carefully read through the following discussion question instructions:

Be sure to meet ALL the minimum requirements if you would like to earn an "A" on your discussions.

Discussion answers for EACH question must be a MINIMUM of 150 words. This is only the minimum. If you only complete the minimum, you are unlikely to receive full credit for the discussion. Thus, more than 150 words is highly encouraged.

Discussion answers must be posted (typed or pasted) directly to the discussion forum. If you prefer to type your answers in Microsoft Word, you must copy and paste your answers from Word to the Discussion Forum. Do not upload a Microsoft Word Document as you would an attachment in an email. If you do not post directly to the forum, you will not receive any credit for the discussion.

Your initial post must include your Discussion answers. You cannot see your classmates' posts until after you have posted your own answers.

A good discussion answer offers insight that goes beyond simply restating a few sentences directly from your textbook. To receive full credit for any given discussion you must provide a substantial comment/reply to at least 1 of your classmates' discussion posts for that week. This will help you gain a more thorough understanding of the content. Try to expand the dialogue by reflecting on the topic with your thoughts, opinions, experiences, etc. The idea is to answer the questions in a manner that fosters discussion amongst your classmates. Replies such as "Good job!! I completely agree with your answer" are not substantial comments and will not be recognized.

The most important element of a good Discussion answer is that it specifically addresses all parts of the questions at hand.

See the D2L Calendar for Discussion Due Dates/End Dates. Late submissions will receive a score of ZERO, no exceptions.

Article Critique

An article critique paper will account for 20% of your final grade. Article critiques are written evaluations of an article published in a peer-reviewed journal. Most articles in peer-reviewed journals address a research project undertaken by the authors. The article is submitted for publication and then sent to several experts in the field who review the authors' methodology and how it contributes to the current knowledge in the field. The article can then be accepted, rejected or revised for resubmission.

For our purposes, you are going to find ONE article that is related to ethics and a topic from Chapters 2-4 or 6-11. It must come from a journal, must address research, and must be peer reviewed.

Further details about the rules of this assignment will be given in D2L. The article critique will be due the last week of the semester. The due date for the article critique assignment will be listed in the D2L calendar.

Exams

Three exams will account for a total of 60% of your final grade (20% per exam). Exams will be completed online in D2L. Each exam will have a time limit and may include multiple choice, true-false, short answer, fill-in-the-blank, and/or short essay questions. More details on each exam, such as the chapters covered, will be given in D2L. The due date for each exam will be listed in the D2L Calendar.

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: August 27
- Deadline to file for graduation: September 21
- Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" November 23

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

Coursework will be completed online in D2L..

Online Computer Requirements

Taking an online 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 Student Wellness Center, (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:

See the D2L Calendar for weekly discussion due dates.

Week or Module	Topic	Assignment
Week 1 (Aug. 24)	- Go over syllabus - Ch.1 Importance of Ethics in CJ	Read Syllabus
Week 2 (Aug. 31)	Ch. 2 Police Ethics-Corruption	Discussions 1 & 2
Week 3 (Sept. 7)	Ch. 3 Police Ethics-Use of Force	Discussion 3
Week 4 (Sept. 14)	Ch. 4 Discrimination in CJ	Discussion 4
Week 5 (Sept. 21)	Ch. 5 Judges Lawyers Ethics	Discussion 5
Week 6 (Sept. 28)	Exam #1 due Oct. 4	Exam #1 (Ch. 1-5)
Week 7 (Oct. 5)	Ch. 6 Criminal Punishment	Discussion 6
Week 8 (Oct. 12)	Ch. 7 Nature of Corrections	Discussion 7
Week 9 (Oct. 19)	Ch. 8 Guarding Ethically	Discussion 8
Week 10 (Oct. 26)	Ch. 9 Ethics in CJ Policy	Discussion 9
Week 11 (Nov. 2)	Ch. 10 Ethics in War on Terror	Discussion 10
Week 12 (Nov. 9)	Exam #2 due Nov. 15	Exam #2 (Ch. 6-10)
Week 13 (Nov. 16)	- Ch. 11 Media Ethics in CJ - Ch. 12 Duty & Principle	Discussion 11 & 12
Week 14 (Nov. 23)	THANKSGIVING BREAK	
Week 15 (Nov. 30)	Article Critique Paper due Dec. 6 - Ch.13 Considering Consequences - Ch. 14 Importance of Character	Article Critique No Discussions
Week 16 (Dec. 7)	Exam #3 (Final Exam) due Dec. 8	Exam #3 (Ch. 11-14)