



## Course Syllabus: WRITING FOR THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROFESSIONAL

College of Health Sciences and Human Services  
CRJU 2943-X11  
Fall 2023

### **Contact Information**

Instructor: Laura J Estrada

Office hours: MWF 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM (Online. Please email, and I will respond immediately during these hours).

Office phone: (940) 397-4036 (leave a message, and I will promptly respond).

E-mail: [laura.estrada@msutexas.edu](mailto:laura.estrada@msutexas.edu)

### **Course Description**

The purpose of this course is to further develop and enhance the basic writing skills you have gained in ENGL 1113 and/or 1123, for use in the criminal justice-specific discipline. Skills relating to research, data analysis, the writing process, editing, and 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, which will utilize the skills you will learn throughout the semester.

### **Textbook & Instructional Materials**

The Little, Brown Compact Handbook (10<sup>th</sup> Edition). ISBN: 978-0134668499.

This book is important in that it will help you with your writing, and it is strongly recommended for this course. You will not be tested over the book, but the material from the book will be *extremely* useful when writing your papers. I will occasionally refer you to the book for samples.

### **Student Handbook**

Refer to: [Student Handbook-2020-21](#)

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Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given).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

You will have a diagnostic writing assignment, a skills assessment assignment, two longer essays, and a final paper for this course. The papers will become progressively longer throughout the semester.

Table 1: You will be graded as follows:

Assignments	Points
Diagnostic Paper	5%
Skills Assessment Paper	10%
First Essay	20%
Second Essay	20%
Final Research Paper	40%
Class Participation	5%
Total Points	100%

Table 2: Total points for final grade.

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

## Homework

You will have a diagnostic assignment, skills assignment, two longer essays, and a final research paper this semester. The topics for these assignments will be explained in detail online. The specific requirements for each assignment will be sent to your D2L email, and available online. These papers will involve your observation of a scenario, typically a YouTube Video (a topic the professor will assign). You will then write about various aspects of what you research and/or observe (YouTube, web search, etc.). These assignments will give you the opportunity to demonstrate the writing skills you have learned up to that specific point in the course. Remember, 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. If in doubt, use a citation or consult with the professor. All work must be your own, submitted specifically for this course, this semester.

## Exams

No exams will be given in this course – you will write papers only. Your final, as explained below, will be a research paper.

## **Projects Required**

During the second half of the semester, each student will be required to complete a research paper. This will be your *final* for this course, and it is worth 40% of your grade. 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 requirements for the research paper will be discussed more extensively online throughout the semester, as we get closer to writing the final paper. The final paper will show your ability to choose an appropriately narrow topic, conduct scholarly research, develop a thesis statement, draft the paper, and revise that paper to produce a professional work product. When the time comes to write the paper, you may a rough draft for feedback – the professor will give you the last date the rough draft will be accepted.

## **Mid-Term Exam**

You will not have a mid-term for this course. However, papers submitted up to that point will serve as a measure for your mid-term assessment.

## **Final Exam**

Your final for this course is the final research paper. This research paper is due by December 9, 2022, no later than 11:50 PM. You will be given ample time to work on this paper towards the end of the semester.

## **Late Work**

Students are expected to submit assignments on or before the due date. Late assignments will not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with the professor. Otherwise, students will not receive any credit for an assignment submitted after the due date.

## **Make Up Work**

Make up assignments will only be allowed in extreme circumstances, and with the proper documentation. You are responsible for letting the professor know if you have an extenuating circumstance before the due date of the assignment. In the event of an extenuating circumstance, such as an 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.

## **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. Remember, you are responsible for checking your D2L

email for any possible course-related information, topics, and/or changes or updates to the course. Your papers will be submitted through DropBox.

### **Attendance/Assignments**

As this is an online course, it is up to you to keep up with assignment due dates, although I do generally send try to send out reminders. You are also responsible for checking your D2L email – failure to do so will cause you to miss assignments, and/or important information.

### **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](#).

### **Instructor Class Policies**

Students are required to complete assignments on or before the due date. Again, you are responsible for checking your D2L email for updates, assignments, etc. You are responsible for letting the professor know if you have any questions or concerns regarding an assignment **before** the due date.

### **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.

### **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**

Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [Undergraduate Catalog](#)

**Notice**

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

**Course Schedule:**

I am available to answer any questions you may have about the course. When a question arises, you may contact me at [laura.estrada@msutexas.edu](mailto:laura.estrada@msutexas.edu) or call my office phone (listed at the top of the syllabus). The class schedule is subject to change, without notice.

## Course Schedule

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
Week 1 - 8/28-9/2	Read syllabus. Email professor with questions. Complete "Introduce Yourself Assignment" (under communications tab, discussions, in D2L)	Introduce yourself assignment due 9/3 at 11:50 PM
Week 2 - 9/4-9/9	Assignment 1, Diagnostic paper instructions sent to D2L Email. ( <b>No classes 9/4</b> )	Diagnostic Paper due in DropBox by 11:50 PM, 9/10
Week 3 - 9/11 - 9/15	Skills Assessment Paper instructions sent to D2L Email.	
Week 4 - 9/18 - 9/23	Work on Skills Assessment Paper.	Skills Assessment due in DropBox by 11:50 PM, 9/24
Week 5 - 9/25 - 9/30	Essay I Assignment instructions sent to D2L Email.	
Week 6 - 10/2 - 10/7	Work on Essay I	Essay I due in DropBox by 11:50 PM, 10/8
Week 7 - 10/9 - 10/14	Essay II Assignment instructions sent to D2L Email.	
Week 8 - 10/16 - 10/21	Work on Essay II	Essay II due in DropBox no later than 11:50 PM on 10/22
Week 9 - 10/23 - 10/28	Final Topic Paper Assigned via D2L Email	Remember to check your D2L Email for your topic assignment!
Week 10 - 10/30 - 11/4	Thesis Statement Assignment to D2L email	<b>Check your D2L email</b>
Week 11 - 11/6 - 11/11	Thesis statement due	Thesis statement due in DropBox by 11:50 PM, 11/12
Week 12 - 11/13 - 11/18	Work on final essay	Please write or call professor with any questions
Week 13 - 11/20 - 11/25	Work on final Essay * <b>No classes 11/22 - 11/25 (Thanksgiving Holiday)</b>	Work on Final Essay ( <b>No classes 11/22 - 11/25</b> )
Week 14 - 11/27 - 12/2	Finish up final Essay <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final day to submit rough draft</li> </ul>	Finish up Final Essay - Rough draft to

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
		DropBox by 11/28 @ 11:50 PM
Week 15 – 12/4 – 12/8	Final Essay Due 12/9 Last day of class 12/8	Final essay <i>must</i> be submitted to DropBox no later than 11:50 PM on 12/9 (no late papers can be accepted)