UVU UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY™

Master Course Syllabus

For additional course information, including prerequisites, corequisites, and course fees, please refer to the Catalog: https://catalog.uvu.edu/

Semester: Spring
Course Prefix: CJ
Course Title: Writing For Criminal Justice Professionals

Year: 2025
Course and Section #: 2200-X01
Credits: 3

Course Description

Teaches written communication across the criminal justice spectrum. Emphasizes basic formats and language used to present accurate, understandable and factual information. Requires written reports, affidavits, warrants, probable cause statements and other legal documents. Applies proper communication principles to legal writing situations. Allows students to author a variety of formal legal documents.

Course Attributes

This course has the following attributes:
☐ General Education Requirements
☐ Global/Intercultural Graduation Requirements
☒ Writing Enriched Graduation Requirements
☒ Discipline Core Requirements in Program
☐ Elective Core Requirements in Program
☐ Open Elective
Other: *Click here to enter text.*

Instructor Information

Instructor Name: Lance Howell

Student Learning Outcomes

Apply proper grammar, punctuation, tense and voice in criminal justice and legal documents and reports
Practice correct principles of effective writing and narration to complete case and other reports
Formulate various types of reports capturing essential information, minimizing verbiage and maximizing efficiency
Identify all types of criminal documents and their purpose
Compose a variety of criminal justice documents such as narrative statements, affidavits, witness statements, summons, tickets, probable cause statements, search warrants, use of force statements, legal briefs, reports, documents and papers

Course Materials and Texts

Textbook: "Report writing for Law Enforcement and Corrections Professionals" 1st edition by Ken Morris and Michael Merson, Published by Pearson (January 15, 2016)

Course Requirements

Course Assignments, Assessments, and Grading Policy
Canvas is where course content, grades, and communications will reside for this course.

For this three (3) credit-hour course students should expect to spend up to 9 (+/-) hours a week for a full semester and 18 (+/-) for a BLOCK class completing course activities.

This course has weekly due dates. There are a variety of assignments that will expose the learner to real police writing experiences. The course will cover the following topics:

History and Evolution of Police Writing
Importance of Police Writing
Reports, Language, and Police Jargon
Art of Questioning, Listening, and Note Taking
Writing Mechanics
Writing Structure
Drafting a Variety of Documents
Writing the Case Brief
Editing Poorly Written Documents
Narrative Reports
Each module includes a "Student Lounge" discussion where you can ask and respond to each others questions as needed. This is an ungraded and unmonitored discussion.

Attendance
You are expected to regularly attend class online and participate in all activities. Absence from class makes it extremely difficult to be a successful student.

 Grading and Late Work Statement
Grading Scale:
The following grading standards will be used in this class:

Grade

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E

Percent

94-100	90-93	87-89	83-86	80-82	77-79	73-76	70-72	67-69	63-66	60-62	0-59

Assignment Categories
Activity

Points

Getting Started/ Ending Assignments

20

Assignments

275

Discussions

70

Quizzes

175

Police Reports

690

Final

100

Total

1330

Late Work Statement:
The best way to be successful in this course is to submit all assignments by their due date. All assignments are available from the beginning of the term and you are allowed to work ahead. Discussion participation must occur as per the due dates.

In the event that you will not be able to meet a due date, contact your instructor as soon as possible. If you are unable to contact the instructor ahead of the due date, you will be expected to provide appropriate documentation such as a doctor's note to be allowed to turn in an assignment late.

Canvas will deduct one percent per day from any assignment you turn in late up until the time it is submitted.

   Assignment and Assessment Descriptions
Assignments:
Assignments will explore writing mechanics, writing interview questions and interviewing techniques, note taking, language use, various police reports and the rewriting of poor reports.

Discussions:
Discussions will be opportunities to explore police writing topics together. Posts to the discussion should add significantly to the conversation and support your point of view. Comments that do not add significantly to a discussion will receive no credit. It is okay to disagree in a discussion. In fact much learning happens when we disagree. However we need to be respectful and keep our online classroom a safe place to learn.

Due dates for discussions correspond with the initial post date which is usually a Thursday. Follow up comments are due by Sunday. Follow up posts are expected to be after the due date and are not marked late. Discussions conclude by the Sunday following the due date. After this, posts will be marked late.

In online courses, students appreciate the opportunity to work ahead on assignments. In this course, students may work ahead on all but the discussions. Online discussions are more robust when they are an actual discussion, not just a public post. It helps us have a better discussion when we are all posting during the same time.

"Student Lounge" discussions are included in each module. This is a free space where you can ask and respond to each others questions as needed. This is an ungraded and unmonitored discussion.

Quizzes:
Chapter quizzes are multiple choice, timed and offered twice. You will keep your highest score. There are a couple other quizzes specifically on writing and rewriting.

Police Reports:
You will complete the forms provided as police reports as though you were the responding officer.

Police reports will be submitted within Canvas.

Final:
By the end of the course you will be very familiar with the different types of police reports and will have had experience drafting and rewriting many such reports. Your final exam will be a more significant set of two police reports.

Required or Recommended Reading Assignments
Chapter 1: Reports, The English Language, and Police Jargon
Activate Your VerbsLinks to an external site.
Choosing and Using Verbs
What is Active Voice Links to an external site.
Active v. Passive Voice
Chapter 3 - The Parts of the Narrative Case Report
Chapter 4 - The Basics of English Grammar
Chapter 2 - The Art of Note Taking
Interviewing Techniques in Domestic Violence Cases Download Interviewing Techniques in Domestic Violence Cases
Chapter 5: First Officer on Scene
Chapter 6: Types of Reports
Chapter 8: Types of Statements
Chapter 9: Misdemeanor Crimes Involving People and Property
Chapter 7: Traffic Summons / Tickets and Crash Reports
Chapter 10: Felony Crimes Involving Property
Chapter 15: Correctional Forms and Reports
How to Brief a Case
Terry v. Ohio (Supreme Court Decision)
Terry v Ohio original police report.pdf

Chapter 11: Felony Crimes Involving People
Chapter 12: Documentation of Use of Force
Active v. Passive Voice Links to an external site.

General Description of the Subject Matter of Each Lecture or Discussion
Module 1: History and Evolution of Police Writing
Module 2: Importance of Police Writing
Module 3: Reports, Language, and Police Jargon (2 weeks)
Module 4: Art of Questioning, Listening, and Note Taking
Module 5: Writing Mechanics (2 weeks)
Module 6: Writing Structure
Module 7: Drafting a Variety of Documents (3 weeks)
Module 8: Writing the Case Brief
Module 9: Editing Poorly Written Documents
Module 10: Narrative Reports

Required Course Syllabus Statements

Generative AI
Artificial Intelligence (AI) Expectations and Requirements
AI programs are not a replacement for your human creativity, originality, and critical thinking. Writing, thinking, and researching are crafts you must develop over time to develop your voice. At the same time, you should learn how to use AI and in what instances AI can be helpful to you.

The use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Google Bard, etc.) is permitted in this course for the following activities:

Brainstorming and refining your ideas;
Fine-tuning your research questions;
Finding information on your topic;
Drafting an outline to organize your thoughts and
Checking grammar and style.
The use of generative AI tools is not permitted in this course for the following activities:

Impersonating you in classroom contexts, such as by using the tool to compose discussion board prompts/responses assigned to you or content that you put into a Teams/Canvas chat.
Completing group work that your group has assigned to you unless it is mutually agreed upon that you may utilize the tool.
Writing a draft of a writing assignment.
Writing entire sentences, paragraphs or papers to complete class assignments.
You are responsible for the information you submit based on an AI query (for instance, that it does not violate intellectual property laws or contain misinformation or unethical content). Your use of AI tools must be properly documented and cited to stay within university policies on academic honesty.

Any student work submitted using AI tools should clearly indicate what work is the student's work and what part is generated by the AI. In such cases, no more than 25% of the student work should be

generated by AI. If any part of this is confusing or uncertain, please contact me for a conversation before submitting your work.

Using Remote Testing Software
☒ This course does not use remote testing software.

☐ This course uses remote testing software. Remote test-takers may choose their remote testing locations. Please note, however, that the testing software used for this may conduct a brief scan of remote test-takers' immediate surroundings, may require use of a webcam while taking an exam, may require the microphone be on while taking an exam, or may require other practices to confirm academic honesty. Test-takers therefore shall have no expectation of privacy in their test-taking location during, or immediately preceding, remote testing. If a student strongly objects to using test-taking software, the student should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to determine whether alternative testing arrangements are feasible. Alternatives are not guaranteed.

Required University Syllabus Statements

Accommodations/Students with Disabilities
Students needing accommodations due to a permanent or temporary disability, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions may contact UVU Accessibility Services at accessibilityservices@uvu.edu or 801-863-8747.

Accessibility Services is located on the Orem Campus in BA 110.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing students requesting ASL interpreters or transcribers can contact Accessibility Services to set up accommodations. Deaf/Hard of Hearing services can be contacted at DHHservices@uvu.edu

DHH is located on the Orem Campus in BA 112.

Academic Integrity
At Utah Valley University, faculty and students operate in an atmosphere of mutual trust. Maintaining an atmosphere of academic integrity allows for free exchange of ideas and enables all members of the community to achieve their highest potential. Our goal is to foster an intellectual atmosphere that produces scholars of integrity and imaginative thought. In all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others must be appropriately acknowledged and UVU students are expected to produce their own original academic work.

Faculty and students share the responsibility of ensuring the honesty and fairness of the intellectual environment at UVU. Students have a responsibility to promote academic integrity at the university by not participating in or facilitating others' participation in any act of academic dishonesty. As members of the academic community, students must become familiar with their rights and responsibilities. In each course, they are responsible for knowing the requirements and restrictions regarding research and writing, assessments, collaborative work, the use of study aids, the appropriateness of assistance, and other issues. Likewise, instructors are responsible to clearly state expectations and model best practices.

Further information on what constitutes academic dishonesty is detailed in UVU Policy 541: *Student Code of Conduct*.

Equity and Title IX
Utah Valley University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age (40 and over), disability, veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth, or pregnancy-related conditions, citizenship, genetic information, or other basis protected by applicable law, including Title IX and 34 C.F.R. Part 106, in employment, treatment, admission, access to educational programs and activities, or other University benefits or services. Inquiries about nondiscrimination at UVU may be directed to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights or UVU's Title IX Coordinator at 801-863-7999 – TitleIX@uvu.edu – 800 W University Pkwy, Orem, 84058, Suite BA 203.

Religious Accommodation
UVU values and acknowledges the array of worldviews, faiths, and religions represented in our student body, and as such provides supportive accommodations for students. Religious belief or conscience broadly includes religious, non-religious, theistic, or non-theistic moral or ethical beliefs as well as participation in religious holidays, observances, or activities. Accommodations may include scheduling or due-date modifications or make-up assignments for missed class work.
To seek a religious accommodation, a student must provide written notice to the instructor and the Director of Accessibility Services at accessibilityservices@uvu.edu. If the accommodation relates to a scheduling conflict, the notice should include the date, time, and brief description of the difficulty posed by the conflict. Such requests should be made as soon as the student is aware of the prospective scheduling conflict.

While religious expression is welcome throughout campus, UVU also has a specially dedicated space for meditation, prayer, reflection, or other forms of religious expression.