



# Course Syllabus

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*CJ565-01W: Offender Reentry*

**Instructor:** Dr. Melinda Schlager

**Virtual Office Hours:** M-F 9AM – 11AM

**Office Phone:** 903-886-5175

**University Email Address:** [melinda.schlager@tamuc.edu](mailto:melinda.schlager@tamuc.edu)

## COURSE INFORMATION

### Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

#### Textbook(s) Required:

Schlager, M.D. (2013). *Rethinking the Reentry Paradigm: A Blueprint for Action*. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press. ISBN: 9781594609237.

This book may be ordered from online retailers or you may save 10% and get \$4.00 flat-rate shipping when you order through our website and use this coupon code: SCHLAGER. This link will take you directly to the book's webpage:

<http://www.cap-press.com/books/isbn/9781594609237/Rethinking-the-Reentry-Paradigm>

\*Note: The shipping method is UPS Ground. It will take 3 or 4 days to ship to students in the Central part of the country.

#### Optional

Other materials/readings as assigned will be posted in DocSharing in eCollege.

### Course Description

Offender reentry is the process of transitioning offenders from prisons/jail to the community. This class will provide students with an in-depth analysis of the issues impacting offender reentry, including employment, treatment, family reunification, housing issues as well as barriers and impediments to offender reentry.

## Prerequisites

Please note that prerequisites for this course include CJ 501, CJ 530, CJ 531, and CJ 568. Students who are registered for this class and who do not meet the prerequisites should contact Dr. Melinda Schlager, the Director and Advisor of the MS in Applied Criminology program.

## Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of the course students will be able to:

1. Identify the origins of and reasons behind offender reentry
2. Explain the origins of and reasons behind offender reentry
3. Identify the dimensions of offender reentry
4. Discuss the dimensions of offender reentry
5. Contextualize the dimensions of offender reentry within various paradigms

# COURSE REQUIREMENTS

## Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments

This course will provide a variety of activities and assessments to assist you in achieving the outcomes/objectives for the course. You will work toward achieving these outcomes through discussions/comments, papers, assignments, and tests. Below is an explanation of each course requirement including due date, assignment instructions, and other requirements.

### Introduction/Discussion/Comments Posts (SLOs 1-5)

The **Introduction** is a chance for you to 'meet' your colleagues (although most of you likely know each other by now) in the class and an opportunity to introduce yourself, using VoiceThread, to your professor. There are tutorial handouts for using VoiceThread located in Doc Sharing, under the VoiceThread handout categories. You will also be required to answer a course-related question. Specific instructions on what to post are available when you click on Introduction in Week #1. The Introductory post is due on **Wednesday of Week #1** of the course.

The **Discussions** are directly related to the assigned readings. Upon completion of the assigned readings, you are expected to engage in an **ongoing** discussion/debate with your classmates. Your contributions to the discussion forums will be graded for **quality** and a **detailed analysis** linking the material to a critical appraisal of theory, policy, and practice. The introduction of outside materials is not mandatory (unless otherwise noted in the discussion topic assignment), but is highly recommended. In all cases, students must cite in-text and provide a full

bibliography/works cited at the end of their post for all citations mentioned in the post (See information later in the syllabus for more information on citing utilizing APA citation format. Also see the 'How to Cite' Factsheet).

These posts should be **the equivalent of 1 page in length or a minimum of 250 words**. The specific discussion assignment is located in each unit Week by clicking on the Discussion link.

Posts are due by **11:00PM CST on Thursdays**.

The **Comment** posts are responses you make to the discussion posts that you and your classmates post each week. You are **required** to make a minimum of **five** comments each week. I would strongly encourage you to engage your colleagues well past the five-comment minimum in order to maximize your opportunity for meaningful discussion and learning.

Comment posts should be meaningful. Merely agreeing or disagreeing with a classmate will not be looked upon favorably and will result in a loss of points. A meaningful post is one that moves the discussion forward in some substantive way through providing one's perspective, additional information through research, or reframing the discussion in some new way. You are expected to engage in an **ongoing** discussion/debate with your classmates. Your comments will be graded for **quality**, and **relevance**. Your comments will also be graded based on your ability to engage in critical thinking. Students **must** provide one outside source for **at least** one comment that they make.

**NO LATE COMMENTS ARE ACCEPTED.** All comment posts are due by **11:00PM CST on Saturdays**.

**Assessment Method:** Discussion and Comment posts will be graded using the Discussion Post Grading Rubric located in Document Sharing. The discussion and comments for each week will be graded together and posted as one grade up to 150 points a week.

- 1 Introduction Post @ 50 Points;
- 4 Discussion Posts @100 points each = 400 course points
- 20 Comments @ 10 points each = 200 course points

### **Offender Reentry Assignment (SLOs 1-5)**

Students are required to complete one major assignment for this course. This assignment contains multiple parts and so you should be very careful to ensure that you complete and turn in the various components of the assignment on time. The assignment sheet is located under Assignments in Week 1.

This assignment requires that you evaluate a reentry issue in some depth and apply it to what you have learned from your text. The assignment will represent students' observations of their readings and outside source materials, a critical evaluation of their topic of choice, and thoughts on how best to address problems/issues/policies inherent in their topic. In addition to material contained in the text, students MUST utilize a minimum of eight outside sources to inform their paper. These sources MUST be peer-reviewed publications or governmental reports-some popular sources (NY Times, other periodicals) are acceptable, but no Wikipedia.

Keep in mind that the paper will require extensive research as you may have to hunt for laws/agency policies/practices, etc. I would highly recommend that you all start on this paper as soon as the course begins and to use each other as resources for locating information that you might need. Many of you work 'in the field' and are rich sources of information. Please note, however, that in all instances the assignment is an individual and original contribution and not a group project and will be graded accordingly.

You will create a PowerPoint presentation using VoiceThread. You will need a microphone to record your narrations of your slides. Students will also record comments on 10 of their colleagues' PowerPoint presentations using the rubric as template.

**Assessment Method:** Students will receive constructive feedback via the discussion board from their colleagues and in the grade book from their professor. Students will be assessed using the Paper Assignment Grading Rubric and using the PowerPoint Grading Rubric.

- 1 assignment with five parts = 350 course points
  - Part I: Paper Topic = 25 points
  - Part II: 5 Constructive Comments to 5 different colleagues = 25 points
  - Part III: Paper = 100 points
  - Part IV: PowerPoint Presentation using VoiceThread = 100 points
  - Part V: Peer Evaluation of PowerPoint Presentation using VoiceThread = 100 Points

### **Course Pre/Post-test (not graded)**

Pre and post-tests allow the professor to assess your baseline (foundation) knowledge of a particular subject at the time that you enter a course and the degree of increase in knowledge at the end of the course. This pre/post-test is comprised of no more than 10 questions that will assess your knowledge. You will be asked to complete the pre-test by **Friday** of Week #1 and the post-test by **Friday** of Week #5. These tests will not be graded (they are used for assessment purposes only).

## Grading

Assignments for this course will be scored using a points system. Below is an explanation of how each assignment type will be scored.

Assignment Type	# of Assignments	Point Value	Total Points
Introduction	1	50	50
Discussions	4	100	400
Comments	20	10	200
Assignment	1	350	350
Paper Topic	1	50	
Paper	1	100	
PowerPoint Presentation	1	100	
Peer Evaluation	1	100	
Pre/Post-test	1	0	0
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1000</b>

Grades earned on each assignment will be added together and will be divided by the total number of points possible in the course. Below is the overall point scale/grading schema for the course.

Total points possible for the term = 1000.

1000 - 900 = A
899 - 800 = B
799 - 700 = C
699 - 600 = D
599 and below = F

Grades will be available in the grade book so that students can track their progress in the course in 'real time'.

## **TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS**

- You will need regular access to a computer with a broadband Internet connection. The minimum computer requirements for the Epic Web Client are:
  - Any current Flash-compliant browser (e.g., Internet Explorer 7 or Firefox 3.0)
  - 512 MB of RAM, 1 GB or more preferred
  - Broadband connection required courses are heavily video intensive
  - Video display capable of high-color 16-bit display 1024 x 768 or higher resolution
- A sound card and speakers or headphones
- Current anti-virus software must be installed and kept up to date
- Some classes may have specific class requirements for additional software. These requirements will be listed on the course offerings page. Most home computers purchased within the last 3-4 years meet or surpass these requirements.
- You will need some additional free software for enhanced web browsing. Ensure that you download the free versions of the following software:
  - Adobe Reader
  - Adobe Flash Player
- At a minimum, you must have Microsoft Office 2003, XP, 2007 or Open Office. Microsoft Office is the standard office productivity software utilized by faculty, students, and staff. Microsoft Word is the standard word processing software, Microsoft Excel is the standard spreadsheet software, and Microsoft PowerPoint is the standard presentation software. Copying and pasting, along with attaching/uploading documents for assignment submission, will also be required. If you do not have Microsoft Office, you can check with the bookstore to see if they have any student copies.

## **ACCESS AND NAVIGATION**

### **eCollege Access and Log in Information**

This course will be facilitated using eCollege, the Learning Management System used by Texas A&M University-Commerce. To get started with the course, go to:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/myleo.aspx>.

**You will need your CWID and password to log in to the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact Technology Services at 903.468.6000 or [helpdesk@tamuc-commerce.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc-commerce.edu).**

It is strongly recommended that you perform a “Browser Test” prior to the start of your course. To launch a browser test, login to ECollege, click on the ‘myCourses’ tab, and then select the “Browser Test” link under Support Services.

## **Course Navigation**

All aspects of this course, including presentations, assignments, readings, and exams will be completed / turned in through eCollege. Your grades will also be available in eCollege.

This course like the others in the program is divided up into weekly units. Each unit will have an Overview, Outcomes, Activities/Assignments and Resources. The Activities/Assignments will provide you with a list of everything you need to do to be successful in the course.

You should begin by reading the course syllabus, paying particular attention to the assignments and course calendar, and then complete the Start Here unit.

## **COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT**

### **Interaction with Instructor Statement**

My primary form of communication with the class will be through Email and Announcements. Any changes to the syllabus or other important information critical to the class will be disseminated to students in this way via your official University Email address available to me through MyLeo and in Announcements. It will be your responsibility to check your University Email and Announcements regularly.

Students who Email me outside of regular office hours can expect a reply within 24 hours M-F. Students who Email me during holidays or over the weekend should expect a reply by the end of the next regularly scheduled business day.

### **Virtual Office**

Welcome to my office. This space is set aside for students to ask course related questions. Place any questions or concerns about the course here and they will answered within 24 hours on weekdays. (It is possible that I will answer all threads during my office hours as posted on the syllabus.)

Please feel free to answer one another's questions. I will check answers (as well as questions) for correctness, but do not hesitate to respond to a posting if you feel you can answer the question thoroughly and directly.

## **eCollege Student Technical Support**

Texas A&M University-Commerce provides students technical support in the use of eCollege. The student help desk may be reached by the following means 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

- **Chat Support:** Click on '*Live Support*' on the tool bar within your course to chat with an eCollege Representative.
- **Phone:** 1-866-656-5511 (Toll Free) to speak with eCollege Technical Support Representative.
- **Email:** [helpdesk@online.tamuc.org](mailto:helpdesk@online.tamuc.org) to initiate a support request with eCollege Technical Support Representative.

**Help:** Click on the '*Help*' button on the toolbar for information regarding working with eCollege (i.e. how to submit to dropbox, and how to post to discussions, etc.)

**For assistance with the library:** To access the Library databases and tutorials click on the Library link under Course Home or minimize your eCollege session and open another browser window going to the Library's web site directly, at the following link: <http://www.tamuc.edu/library> not from within eCollege.

## **myLeo Support**

Your myLeo email address is required to send and receive all student correspondence. Please email [helpdesk@tamuc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu) or call us at 903-468-6000 with any questions about setting up your myLeo email account. You may also access information at <https://leo.tamuc.edu>.

## **Policy for Reporting Problems with eCollege**

Should students encounter eCollege-based problems while submitting assignments/discussions/comments/exams, the following procedure **MUST** be followed?

1. Students must report the problem to the help desk. You may reach the helpdesk at
2. [helpdesk@online.tamuc.org](mailto:helpdesk@online.tamuc.org) or 1-866-656-5511
3. Students **MUST** file their problem with the helpdesk and obtain a helpdesk ticket number

4. Once a helpdesk ticket number is in your possession, students should Email me to advise me of the problem and to provide me with the helpdesk ticket number
5. At that time, I will call the helpdesk to confirm your problem and follow up with you

**PLEASE NOTE:** Your personal computer/access problems are not a legitimate excuse for filing a ticket with the help desk. You are strongly encouraged to check for compatibility of your browser **BEFORE** the course begins and to take the eCollege tutorial offered for students who may require some extra assistance in navigating the eCollege platform. **ONLY** eCollege-based problems are legitimate.

## **Internet Access**

An Internet connection is necessary to participate in discussions and assignments, access readings, transfer course work, and receive feedback from your professor. View the requirements as outlined in Technology Requirements above for more information.

## **Learner Support**

Go to the following link [One Stop Shop](#)- created to serve you by attempting to provide as many resources as possible in one location.

Go to the following link [Academic Success Center](#)- focused on providing academic resources to help you achieve academic success.

# **COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES**

## **Course Specific Procedures**

### **Academic Honesty**

Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including (but not limited to) receiving a failing grade on the assignment, the possibility of failure in the course and dismissal from the University. Since dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. In **ALL** instances, incidents of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Department Head. Please be aware that academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) cheating, plagiarism, and collusion.

*Cheating* is defined as:

- Copying another's test or assignment

- Communication with another during an exam or assignment (i.e. written, oral or otherwise)
- Giving or seeking aid from another when not permitted by the instructor
- Possessing or using unauthorized materials during the test
- Buying, using, stealing, transporting, or soliciting a test, draft of a test, or answer key

*Plagiarism* is defined as:

- Using someone else's work in your assignment without appropriate acknowledgement
- Making slight variations in the language and then failing to give credit to the source

*Collusion* is defined as:

- Collaborating with another, without authorization, when preparing an assignment  
If you have any questions regarding academic dishonesty, ask. Otherwise, I will assume that you have full knowledge of the academic dishonesty policy and agree to the conditions as set forth in this syllabus.

Students should also reference the following link [Criminal Justice web site](#) for more information.

### **Attendance Policy**

While this is an online course, students are expected to 'attend class' and actively participate. Student participation/activity will be monitored by the professor. Students should plan to dedicate approximately 15-20 hours/week of time to this course, of which approximately 1 hour/week should be spent in the discussion board (reading posts and comments and conversing with others).

### **APA Citation Format Policy**

It is very important that you learn how to cite properly. In some ways, citations are more important than the actual text of your paper/assignment. Therefore, you should take this task seriously and devote some time to understanding how to cite properly. If you take the time to understand this process up front, it will save you a significant amount of time in the long run (not to mention significant deductions in points).

In the social and behavioral sciences (including Criminal Justice), we use APA (American Psychological Association) format. As a rule of thumb, one cites whenever they are paraphrasing other people's words or when they quote other's words directly. You may learn to cite from a variety of different sources including the APA Tutorial and the sources listed below and in the Getting Started section of your course.

[www.apastyle.org](http://www.apastyle.org)

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/02/>  
[www.library.cornell.edu/resrch/citmanage/apa](http://www.library.cornell.edu/resrch/citmanage/apa)

It is the student's responsibility to understand how to cite properly. If you have questions, feel free to ask.

### **Late Work**

In principle, I do not accept late work and do not believe in allowing students to turn in work after the due date. My position is that everyone knows the rules of engagement at the beginning of the term and that it is the student's responsibility to ensure that they plan accordingly to submit their assignments in a timely manner. However, I also do understand that sometimes there are circumstances outside one's control that may impact timely submission of assignments. To that end, I have developed a policy on late work. Please note that this policy applies **ONLY** to your discussions, paper, and PowerPoint presentations, **not** your comments, paper topic submissions, or peer evaluations.

Late assignments will be accepted after the due date and time up to 1 day (24 hours) late. Twenty (20) points will be deducted from all late assignments. Assignments turned in more than one day late **will not** be accepted/graded.

### **Drop Course Policy**

Students should take responsibility for dropping themselves from the course according to University policy should this become necessary.

## **University Specific Procedures**

### **ADA Statement -Students with Disabilities:**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

#### **Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**

**Texas A&M University-Commerce**

**Gee Library- Room 132**

**Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835**

**Fax (903) 468-8148**

Go to the following email address: [StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu)

Go to the following link: [Student Disability Resources & Services](#)

## **Student Conduct**

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*). Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum:

<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

## COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Every effort will be made to adhere to the course schedule as noted below. However, unforeseen circumstances may require changes to the schedule. In that case, changes will be announced via University Email and in Announcements. The professor reserves the right to change the schedule if necessary and depending on the progress of the class. I highly recommend that you follow the schedule outlined below **VERY CAREFULLY** so that you are sure to complete readings as assigned and turn your assignments in on time.

**Please note that all discussions/comments/assignments are due by 11:00PM CST in eCollege on the day they are due as outlined in the syllabus. Please note that this course runs on a Monday-Sunday schedule.**

### WEEK #1—Understanding the Reentry Problem/Dimensions of Offender Reentry

<b>Monday</b>	<p>Read the syllabus carefully.</p> <p>This week’s readings will contextualize the reentry problem for you and introduce you to some of the significant problems offenders face when they reenter society.</p> <p><b>Readings from the Text</b></p> <p><i><b>Introduction</b></i></p> <p><i><b>Chapter 1:</b></i> Reentry in Context</p> <p><i><b>Chapter 2:</b></i> Parole</p> <p><i><b>Chapter 3:</b></i> Housing and Reentry</p> <p><i><b>Chapter 4:</b></i> Education and Employment and Reentry</p>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<p>Post a Week #1 Introduction using VoiceThread where you introduce yourself, accept the conditions of the syllabus, agree to the Rules of</p>

	<p>Netiquette, and answer the question posed in the Week #1 Introduction link. Please note that this post is required for ALL students and will be graded. The link to the Rules of Netiquette may be found under Course and University Procedures/Policies under Student Conduct or here:</p> <p><a href="http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html">http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html</a></p>
<b>Thursday</b>	Complete Discussion Assignment #1
<b>Friday</b>	Complete course pre-test
<b>Saturday</b>	<p>Complete Comments for Discussion Assignment #1</p> <p>Paper Topic Email due</p>
<b>Sunday</b>	Paper Topic comments due

## WEEK #2—Dimensions of Offender Reentry, Part II

<b>Monday</b>	<p>This week's readings will continue to explore issues that impact offenders once they leave prison and are returned to the community</p> <p><b>Readings from the Text</b></p> <p><i>Chapter 5:</i> Families and Children and Reentry</p> <p><i>Chapter 6:</i> Incarcerated Parents and Reentry</p> <p><i>Chapter 7:</i> Physical Health and Offender Reentry</p> <p><i>Chapter 8:</i> Mental Health and Offender Reentry</p> <p><i>Chapter 9:</i> Gender and Offender Reentry</p>
<b>Thursday</b>	Complete Discussion Assignment #2
<b>Saturday</b>	Comments for Discussion #2 due

## WEEK #3—Contextualizing Offender Reentry

<b>Monday</b>	<p>This week's readings provide a variety of 'lenses' through which to view the offender reentry process.</p> <p><b>Readings from the Text</b></p> <p><i>Chapter 10:</i> Stigma and Public Opinion</p> <p><i>Chapter 11:</i> Risk, Risk Prediction, and Recidivism</p> <p><i>Chapter 12:</i> Resilience and Desistance</p>
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	<p><b>Chapter 13:</b> Risk Management and Risk Reduction</p> <p><b>Chapter 14:</b> The Community</p>
<b>Thursday</b>	Complete Discussion Assignment #3
<b>Saturday</b>	Comments for Discussion #3 due

**WEEK #4—A Blueprint for Change**

<b>Monday</b>	<p>This week’s readings provide the framework for reorienting our thinking about offender reentry.</p> <p><b>Readings from the Text</b></p> <p><b>Chapter 15:</b> A Strengths-based Approach to Offender Reentry</p> <p><b>Chapter 16:</b> A Narrative for Offender Reentry</p>
<b>Thursday</b>	Discussion Assignment #4 due
<b>Friday</b>	Course Post-test due (You will not be able to submit your assignments that are due in Week 5 until you complete the post-test.)
<b>Saturday</b>	Comments on Discussion #4 due

**WEEK #5—Rethinking Offender Reentry**

<b>Monday</b>	<p>There are no readings for this week.</p> <p><i>Make sure you have completed the post test</i></p>
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	Course Evaluations-don't forget to complete the course evaluation for this course located in MyLeo. Your comments and thoughts regarding the course are welcome.
<b>Tuesday</b>	Paper Due
<b>Thursday</b>	PowerPoint presentation due in VoiceThread with voiceover narration
<b>Sunday</b>	PowerPoint peer evaluations due