

Criminal Justice Administration (CJA) 2135 Public Safety Communications (3) CSU  
[formerly Criminal Justice Administration 35]

Advisory: Successful completion of English 1500 with a ‘C’ or better strongly recommended

Total Hours: 48 hours lecture

Catalog Description: This is an introductory course dealing with all aspects of public safety communication. It will cover the techniques of effectively communicating facts, information, and ideas in a clear and logical manner for a variety of public safety communications, i.e. crime/violation/incident reports, letters, memoranda, directives, and administrative reports. The course includes experience opportunities in interviewing, note taking, and report writing.

Type of Class/Course: Degree Credit

Text: Miller, Larry, and John Whitehead. *Report Writing For Criminal Justice Professionals*. Cincinnati: Anderson, 2010. Print.

Additional Instructional Materials:

California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST). *Basic Course Workbook Series, Learning Domain #18 – Investigative Report Writing*. Version 2. Sacramento, 2006. Online.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the course, a successful student will be able to

1. Anticipate and understand the potential uses of written communication in the various public safety professions;
2. Use appropriate grammar, syntax, and vocabulary in preparing clear, concise, accurate, objective, and logical documents, that are grammatically correct,
3. Extract and organize information from a variety of sources into written and verbal reports describing/defining problems,
4. Demonstrate the basic steps of interviewing and report writing,
5. Write accurate and factual reports, containing the reportable elements of incidents, based upon the students’ observation and listening skills,
6. Analyze and organize facts into clear, concise, and accurate communication,
7. Determine alternative solutions to common problems in public safety communications,
8. Critique sample documents and justify corrections to them,
9. Differentiate between various types and functions of public safety documents and how they relate to their concerned audiences, and
10. Explain the repercussions of lax report writing.

Course Scope and Content:

Unit I The Nature of Report Writing

A. The Why and How of Report Writing

- i. Definitions frequently used in Criminal Justice

- ii. Types of reports
- iii. The “wh” questions
- B. Starting to Write
  - i. Getting ready to write the report
  - ii. Notes, scenes, and the facts
  - iii. Proofing and revisions
- C. The Face Page
  - i. The “wh” questions applied
  - ii. Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How?
- D. The Narrative – The Continuation Page and Follow-up Report
  - i. The Continuation page
  - ii. Supplemental Reports
  - iii. Law Enforcement Bias
- E. Habits that make for Speedy Writing
  - i. Modus Operandi
  - ii. Habits of good report writers
  - iii. Procuring descriptions from others
- F. Other types of writing
  - i. Other types of professional writings
  - ii. Write to your audience
  - iii. Organization of material
- G. Reading and Correcting Reports
  - i. Supervisors – The buck stops here
  - ii. Common problems with reports
  - iii. Assisting the problem writer

Unit II            The Mechanics of Report Writing

- A. Simplified Study of Grammar
  - i. Word types
  - ii. Sentence structure
  - iii. Verb tense and shifting
- B. Avoiding Errors in Sentence Structure
  - i. Common mistakes
  - ii. Phrases and Clauses
  - iii. Legalese
- C. Making Punctuation Work
  - i. Commas, periods, and other punctuation – Where and when
  - ii. Semicolons
  - iii. Other types of punctuation (ellipsis, etc)
- D. Breaking the Spelling Jinx
  - i. Importance of spelling
  - ii. General rule for ing and ed words
  - iii. Exceptions to the general rules
- E. Using or Abusing Words
  - i. Repeating
  - ii. Euphemisms
  - iii. How words change people and how people change words
- F. Abbreviating and Capitalizing
  - i. Title pages
  - ii. Formatting
  - iii. Dates and titles

Unit III            The Modernization of Report Writing

- A. Innovations and Predictions in Criminal Justice
  - i. Current Trends

Learning Activities Required Outside of Class:

The students in this class will spend a minimum of 6 hours per week outside of the regular class time doing the following:

1. Studying
2. Writing assignments requiring both the gathering and the analysis of information
3. Reading assignments
4. Library research
5. Approved Observations such as court hearing

Methods of Instruction:

1. Lectures
  - A. Outside Presenters by arrangement;
  - B. In class lectures from instructor;
  - C. Interactive discussions.
2. Class discussions & Participation
3. Audiovisual presentations
4. Written assignments
5. In-class exercises and scenarios
6. Study of Materials

Methods of Evaluation:

1. Participation (in-class exercises)
2. Exams
  - A. Multiple Choice
  - B. Short Answer
  - C. Essay
3. Essays
4. Report writing
  - A. Reading and correcting reports
  - B. Generating operational reports
  - C. Professional Memoranda
5. Final exam
6. Research Paper

Supplemental Data:

T.O.P. Code:	210500- Administration of Justice
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Sam Priority Code:	C: Clearly Occupational
Funding Agency:	Y: Not Applicable
Program Status:	1: Program Applicable
Noncredit Category:	Y: Not Applicable
Special Class Status:	N: Course is not a special class
Basic Skills Status:	N: Not Applicable
Prior to College Level:	Y: Not Applicable
Cooperative Work Experience:	N: Course is not a part of a cooperative education program
Eligible for Credit by Exam:	Yes
Eligible for Pass/No Pass:	Yes