

**George Mason University**  
**Department of Criminology, Law, and Society**  
**CRIM 306-DL2 Criminal Justice Ethics**  
**Spring 2024**

**When does this course meet?**

This is an asynchronous online course that runs from January 16<sup>th</sup> to May 8<sup>th</sup>. All coursework will be completed on Blackboard.

**Who is the instructor for this course?**

**Dr. Marie Mele Thomas**, Associate Professor, Department of Criminology, Law, and Society. I have been teaching criminology and criminal justice courses for many years, and criminal justice ethics is one of my favorite courses to teach! I will be available for virtual meetings throughout the semester. The best way to reach me is via email at [mmeletho@gmu.edu](mailto:mmeletho@gmu.edu).

**What is this course about?**

This course is about criminal justice ethics. Its goal is to provide you with an overview of what ethics is and what it means to be ethical as a criminal justice practitioner. To achieve that goal, this course provides you with basic information about ethics, including the relationship between morality and ethics; and various theories (or systems) of ethics and their guiding principles. The course explores the notion of moral dilemmas and examines those often faced by criminal justice practitioners, and how these dilemmas may be resolved. Further, this course explores moral reasoning, including why moral reasoning is important, and how to avoid errors in it. Finally, the course provides an analysis of ethical issues involving key personnel in the criminal justice system, including police officers, defense attorneys, prosecutors and judges, correctional professionals, forensic scientists, and researchers.

**What are the course objectives?**

As a result of completing this course, you will be able to demonstrate:

- A general understanding of systems of ethics, moral dilemmas, and moral reasoning.
- An ability to identify and organize relevant information to reach a reasoned conclusion about the ethics of particular behavior.
- An ability to apply guiding principles from various systems of ethics to reason through and develop an argument to support a conclusion on whether a person acted ethically or not.
- An ability to identify and discuss common ethical issues confronting criminal justice practitioners.
- An ability to identify and discuss ethical issues relating to forensic science and criminal justice research.
- A general understanding of the future of criminal justice ethics.

## What books are required for this course?

Sloan, J. (2018). *Criminal Justice Ethics: A Framework for Analysis*. Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-0190639136.

## How will your learning be assessed in this course?

### ***Discussion Boards***

Contribute to a weekly discussion board by answering the prompt questions with an initial post (3 points) and responding to two classmates' posts (2 points). Initial posts will be graded on relevance to the prompt and originality in thought. **Discussion board prompts will be posted on Blackboard at 12:00am on Sunday and will be due at 11:59pm on Wednesday.** Late posts will not receive a grade. Each board is worth 5 points, for a total of 65 points.

### ***Exit Tickets***

Submit an exit ticket at the conclusion of each week. To receive full credit for this assignment, you must fully answer the prompt questions in approximately 300 words. Your answer must show your understanding of and critical thinking about the material. **Exit tickets will be posted on Blackboard at 12:00am on Sunday and will be due at 11:59pm on Friday.** Late submissions will not receive a grade. Each ticket is worth 5 points, for a total of 75 points.

### ***Quizzes***

Complete seven quizzes, each consisting of 10 multiple choice questions on the course material. Quizzes will be administered via Blackboard and must be taken on the dates assigned. Quizzes are designed to assess your retention of the material and are not "open book," which means you should not rely on the weekly slides, videos or readings to complete the quiz. Each quiz is worth 20 points (plus a syllabus quiz worth 10 points), for a total of 150 points.

### ***Final Reflection***

Write a reflection on the prescription offered in the last chapter of the book for promoting ethical behavior among criminal justice practitioners. To receive full credit for this assignment, you must fully answer the prompt questions in approximately 3 pages. Your reflection must show your understanding of and critical thinking about the material. This assignment should be submitted as a Word document in APA format and is worth a total of 10 points.

## How will your final grade be calculated?

Final grades will be calculated using the following course requirements:

Quizzes	150 points
Exit Tickets	75 points
Discussion Boards	65 points
Final Reflection	10 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>300 points</b>

Final grades will be calculated by dividing the total number of points accumulated by the total number of points available, and then multiplying that figure by 100. For example, if you accumulate 250 points, the grade calculation is as follows:  $250 / 300 \times 100 = 83\%$

Final grades will be determined using the following matrix:

A+	97-100	A	94-96	C+	77-79	C	74-76
A-	90-93	B+	87-89	C-	70-73	D	60-69
B	84-86	B-	80-83	F	0-59		

### **What policies are you expected to follow?**

#### ***Email***

GMU policy provides email as the standard means of communication and requires that all email contact occur through GMU email accounts. **Please check your GMU email regularly** so you do not miss time-sensitive information and course announcements.

#### ***Blackboard***

GMU's online Blackboard program will be used for posting assignments, grades, readings, and course announcements. Here is how to access Blackboard:

- Go to: [mymason.gmu.edu](http://mymason.gmu.edu)
- Log in using your email username and password.
- Click on the link toward the upper-right part of the screen that says "Courses"
- Under "Course List," click on "CRIM 306 (Spring 2024)."

If you need assistance accessing or navigating Blackboard, you can email [courses@gmu.edu](mailto:courses@gmu.edu), call (703) 993-3141, or go to Johnson Center room 311.

#### ***Diversity and Inclusion***

Mason promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty, and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study, and personal growth. An emphasis upon diversity and inclusion throughout the campus community is essential to achieve these goals. Diversity is broadly defined to include such characteristics as, but is not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard, and respected.

#### ***University Honor Code***

Following is a summary of Mason's honor code; see the University Catalog and <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/> for additional information. Mason's honor code will be strictly enforced in this class

and all violations will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity. The Honor Code of George Mason University specifically prohibits cheating and attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing.

Cheating and attempted cheating include “willful giving or receiving of an unauthorized, unfair, dishonest, or unscrupulous advantage in academic work over other students.” Examples include the use of unauthorized resources during an exam, copying another student’s work (with or without their permission), allowing another student to copy your work, using an assignment or test from another student, accessing tests or grades electronically for the purpose of getting an unfair advantage, and any other behavior that fits the general definition above.

Plagiarism includes “presenting as one’s own the words, the work, the ideas, the arrangement of material, or the pattern of thought of someone else without proper acknowledgment. While direct quotations do need citations, so do paraphrases and summaries of opinions or factual information formerly unknown to the writers or which the writers did not discover themselves. Exceptions for this include factual information which can be obtained from a variety of sources, the writers’ own insights or findings from their own field research, and what has been termed common knowledge.” Examples include taking or buying a paper from someone else or the internet and presenting it as your own, and submitting as your own work a paper with substantial unacknowledged contributions from others. Information and graphics obtained from the internet (except for freeware clipart) must include source citations to avoid plagiarism. Your final paper will be submitted to Blackboard and screened by the SafeAssign plagiarism detection program. If you use another student’s paper as a significant, unacknowledged source for your paper, you will be referred to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Lying includes “the willful and knowledgeable telling of an untruth, as well as any form of deceit, attempted deceit, or fraud in an oral or written statement relating to academic work.” Examples include making up source materials or source citations in a paper, pretending to use an actual source that you did not really use, making up an excuse for missing a test or assignment due date, falsifying any written or electronic document, or presenting any other falsehoods through any method and in any context. Other policies are available at <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu>. All members of the university community are responsible for knowing and following established policies.

### ***Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)***

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) is a federal law that gives protection to student educational records and provides students with certain rights. For more information on your FERPA rights, please visit <https://registrar.gmu.edu/ferpa/>

### **What University resources are available to you?**

#### ***Health and Safety Concerns***

#### ***WAVES: Wellness, Alcohol and Violence Education and Services***

WAVES (Wellness, Alcohol and Violence Education and Services) promotes wellness within the Mason community through health education, alcohol/drug assessment and education, and violence awareness, prevention, and sexual assault response. We help students make healthy, safe choices and encourage lifelong, thoughtful healthy decision-making through individualized support, creative programming, and evidence-based education and outreach. You can reach the WAVES office at 703-993-9999 or at

waves.gmu.edu. The office is located in SUB (Student Union Building) I, Suite 3200. Additional resources include:

- 24-Hour Sexual and Intimate Partner Violence Crisis Line 703-380-1434
- Fairfax County Office for Women and Domestic and Sexual Violence Services 703-360-7273
- Arlington County Domestic Violence Services 703- 228-4848
- Prince William County Sexual Assault Victims Advocacy Services (SAVAS) 703-368-4141
- Virginia Family Violence and Sexual Assault 1-800-838-8238
- Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network 1-800-656-HOPE <https://ohl.rainn.org/online/>

### ***CAPS: Counseling and Psychological Services***

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) provides a wide range of free confidential services to students, faculty, and staff. Services are provided by a staff of professional clinical psychologists, social workers, counselors, learning specialists, and psychiatric providers. CAPS individual and group counseling, workshops, and outreach programs are designed to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance. Visit caps.gmu.edu for additional resources.

- For consultation or emergency assistance during office hours call 703-993-2380.
- For assistance during non-office hours, call University Police at 703-993-4357.

Additional resources include:

- 703-527-4077 (CrisisLink)
- 1-800-273-8255 (National Suicide Prevention Lifeline)
- 1-877-838-2838 (Veterans' Crisis Hotline)

### ***Students with Disabilities***

If you have (or think you may have) a disability or other condition that may affect your academic performance, please make sure documentation is on file with the Office of Disability Services (703-993-2474; ods.gmu.edu) to determine the necessary accommodations. By Mason policy, I can only make accommodations for students with certification from ODS.

### ***English Language Skills***

If you are not a native English speaker and are interested in linguistic or cultural enrichment services, you can contact Mason's English Language Institute at eli.gmu.edu.

### ***Academic Skills***

If you are interested in improving your academic skills, the university offers students assistance through Learning Services at caps.gmu.edu/learningservices. Learning Services offers workshops on the study cycle, effective note-taking techniques, individual learning styles, exam preparation, and effective time management.

### ***Writing Skills***

If you are interested in improving your writing skills, the university offers students assistance through the Writing Center at writingcenter.gmu.edu/

## What is the course schedule for the Spring 2024 semester?

Week	Reading/Topic	Assignment	Due Day/Time	Objectives
Week 1 (Jan 16-19)	Chapter 1 Overview of Ethics	Discussion Board  Exit Ticket  Syllabus Quiz	Friday 11:59pm  Friday 11:59pm  Friday 11:59pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinguish morality from ethics.</li> <li>• Contrast metaethics, normative ethics, applied ethics, and professional ethics.</li> <li>• Distinguish teleological systems of ethics from deontological systems of ethics.</li> <li>• Contrast terminal values with instrumental values.</li> <li>• Describe the relationships among morality, ethics, and values.</li> <li>• Contrast the values-imported perspective from the values-learned perspective.</li> <li>• Identify and compare the values associated with the crime control and the due process models of criminal justice</li> </ul>
Week 2 (Jan 22-26)	Chapter 2 Systems of Ethics	Discussion Board  Exit Ticket  Quiz #1	Wednesday 11:59pm  Friday 11:59pm  Friday 11:59pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinguish teleological-, deontological-, and virtue-based systems of ethics.</li> <li>• Describe the guiding principles of Act and Rule Utilitarian ethics.</li> <li>• Identify the major criticisms of Utilitarian ethics.</li> <li>• Distinguish the categorical and the hypothetical imperative.</li> <li>• Describe the major criticisms of Kantian ethics.</li> <li>• Distinguish Divine Command Theory from Modified Divine Command Theory.</li> <li>• Identify the Euthyphro Dilemma.</li> <li>• Identify the major criticisms of Divine Command Theory.</li> <li>• Describe the guiding principles of virtue ethics.</li> <li>• Identify the major criticisms of virtue ethics.</li> </ul>
Week 3 (Jan 29-Feb 2)	Chapter 3 Moral Dilemmas in Criminal Justice	Discussion Board  Exit Ticket	Wednesday 11:59pm  Friday 11:59pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the components of the moral arena.</li> <li>• Describe the role of emotion in moral dilemmas.</li> <li>• Distinguish the three categories of moral dilemmas.</li> <li>• Differentiate among the different types of obligations we have to others.</li> <li>• Describe the characteristics of common-sense morality.</li> <li>• Identify examples of moral dilemmas involving the police, the courts, and corrections.</li> <li>• Explain whistleblowing and the moral dilemmas that give rise to it.</li> </ul>

Week 4 (Feb 5 - 9)	Chapter 4 Moral Reasoning and Criminal Justice Ethics	Discussion Board  Exit Ticket  Quiz #2	Wednesday 11:59pm  Friday 11:59pm  Friday 11:59pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the steps involved in moral reasoning.</li> <li>• Explain how moral considerations can be identified and sorted, and conflicts among them resolved.</li> <li>• Explain how moral reasoning includes learning from experience and changing one's mind.</li> <li>• Describe moral dumbfoundedness and why it occurs.</li> <li>• Identify Kohlberg's levels and stages of moral reasoning.</li> <li>• Identify guiding principles for moral reasoning.</li> <li>• Describe common errors in moral reasoning</li> </ul>
Week 5 (Feb 12-16)	Chapter 5 A Framework for Ethical Analysis	Discussion Board  Exit Ticket	Wednesday 11:59pm  Friday 11:59pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the "totality of the circumstances" doctrine and why it is useful for assessing the ethics of behavior.</li> <li>• Identify examples of moral ideals and how they fit into assessing the ethics of behavior.</li> <li>• Differentiate substantive from procedural ideals.</li> <li>• Explain why the Principle of Respect for Persons is important when assessing the ethics of behavior.</li> <li>• Describe obligations and distinguish among the different types.</li> <li>• Summarize different types of consequences, including direct and indirect, short-and long-term.</li> <li>• Explain why impacts on the natural world should be included in assessments of the ethics of behavior.</li> </ul>
Week 6 (Feb 19-23)	Chapter 6 Contextual Overview of Police Ethics	Discussion Board  Exit Ticket  Quiz #3	Wednesday 11:59pm  Friday 11:59pm  Friday 11:59pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contrast the theories of "rotten apples," "rotten barrels," and "rotten orchards" as explanations for unethical or illegal behavior by police officers.</li> <li>• Describe how police recruitment, hiring, and training processes work in concert to weed out "rotten apples."</li> <li>• Identify the core values of "the" police culture and how they influence the behavior of police officers.</li> <li>• Distinguish the various positions taken on police gratuities.</li> <li>• Identify the factors affecting the organizational climate of police agencies and how it relates to unethical behavior.</li> </ul>

Week 7 (Feb 26- March 1)	Chapter 7 Ethics and the Tactics of Policing	Discussion Board  Exit Ticket	Wednesday 11:59pm  Friday 11:59pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the dimensions of police work and how various police tactics fit into them.</li> <li>• Describe how police use deception during investigations, in interrogations, and in courtroom proceedings, and provide examples.</li> <li>• Explain the legal limits imposed on police use of deception.</li> <li>• Contrast the subjective and objective tests for entrapment.</li> <li>• Discuss how the Reid technique creates psychological pressure on those being interrogated.</li> <li>• Discuss why people confess to crimes they have not committed.</li> <li>• Explain why police perjury occurs and the factors contributing to its perpetuation.</li> <li>• Explain how the ethics of police deception can be assessed.</li> <li>• Distinguish between explicit and implicit bias.</li> <li>• Distinguish profiling from racial profiling.</li> <li>• Describe how the ethics of police surveillance can be assessed.</li> </ul>
<b>Spring Break – No coursework to complete this week!</b>				
Week 8 (March 11 – 15)	Chapter 8 Ethics and the Courts	Discussion Board  Exit Ticket  Quiz #4	Wednesday 11:59pm  Friday 11:59pm  Friday 11:59pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the courtroom workgroup, including its members, goals, and dynamics.</li> <li>• Describe the ABA's Standards for the Prosecution Function, including their purpose and organization.</li> <li>• Describe the ethical issues associated with prosecuting people.</li> <li>• Define prosecutorial misconduct and provide examples of the forms it can take.</li> <li>• Identify hurdles to curtailing prosecutorial misconduct.</li> <li>• Describe the ABA's Model Standards for the Defense Function, including their purpose and organization.</li> <li>• Identify the ethical issues associated with attorneys "zealously" defending their clients.</li> <li>• Describe two examples of model rules for the judiciary, including their purpose and organization.</li> <li>• Explain how caseloads, delegating decision-making, ambition, and "doing justice" are ethical issues for the judiciary.</li> </ul>



Week 9 (March 18 – 22)	Chapter 9 Ethics of Legal Punishment	Discussion Board  Exit Ticket	Wednesday 11:59pm  Friday 11:59pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe recent trends in the correctional population of the United States.</li> <li>• Identify the features of legal punishment and define the concept.</li> <li>• Explain the ties among the state, legal punishment, and crime.</li> <li>• Contrast major justifications for legal punishment.</li> <li>• Describe the major criticisms that have been raised with justifications for legal punishment.</li> <li>• Identify how race and wrongful convictions raise ethical issues with the death penalty in America.</li> <li>• Contrast legal punishment in America with legal punishment in Scandinavia</li> </ul>
Week 10 (March 25 – 29)	Chapter 10 Ethics of Institutional Corrections	Discussion Board  Exit Ticket  Quiz #5	Wednesday 11:59pm  Friday 11:59pm  Friday 11:59pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain crime control theology.</li> <li>• Describe who is incarcerated in America and the ethical implications of those findings.</li> <li>• Distinguish prisons as punishment from prisons for punishment and the ethical implications of both.</li> <li>• Explain how codes of ethics can guide the behavior of correctional officers and treatment staff.</li> <li>• Identify ethical issues associated with correctional officers and treatment staff.</li> <li>• Explain how the Lucifer Effect can lead to unethical or illegal behavior by correctional staff.</li> </ul> <p>Describe how jails can be misused in this country and the ethical implications of that misuse.</p>
Week 11 (April 1-5)	Chapter 11 Ethics of Community-Based Corrections	Discussion Board  Exit Ticket	Wednesday 11:59pm  Friday 11:59pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distinguish the three pillars of community-based corrections.</li> <li>• Compare the development and purpose(s) of probation, parole, and intermediate sanctions.</li> <li>• Contrast the administration of probation and parole.</li> <li>• Explain the purpose(s) of intermediate sanctions.</li> <li>• Explain the importance of ethical standards for probation/parole officers.</li> <li>• Describe the duality of the role of probation/parole officer and its ethical implications for supervising offenders.</li> <li>• Describe why arming probation/parole officers is an ethical issue.</li> </ul>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the ethical issues associated with offender-funded corrections and for-profit privatization of community-based corrections.</li> <li>Identify the ethical issues associated with electronic monitoring.</li> </ul>
Week 12 (April 8-12)	Chapter 12 Ethics and Forensic Science	Discussion Board  Exit Ticket  Quiz #6	Wednesday 11:59pm  Friday 11:59pm  Friday 11:59pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe how forensic practitioners are hired and trained, and the value systems forensic practitioners tend to exhibit.</li> <li>Identify the origins and purpose of the National Code of Professional Responsibility for Forensic Science and Forensic Medicine Service Providers.</li> <li>Describe the ethical issues that are associated with forensic laboratory analytical procedures.</li> <li>Explain the difference between science and law.</li> <li>Identify the obligations of forensic practitioners to the larger field.</li> <li>Describe whistleblowing in forensic science and provide examples of high-profile cases.</li> </ul>
Week 13 (April 15-19)	Chapters 13 Ethics and Criminal Justice Research	Discussion Board  Exit Ticket	Wednesday 11:59pm  Friday 11:59pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the Tuskegee Experiment and the ethical issues it raised.</li> <li>Explain the role of science in human inquiry.</li> <li>Identify the steps in the research process.</li> <li>Explain the purposes of social scientific research and provide an example of each.</li> <li>Describe the key characteristics of the Nuremberg Code, Helsinki Declaration, and Belmont Report.</li> <li>Describe the major reasons scientists should care about research ethics.</li> <li>Identify and provide examples of issues in research ethics.</li> </ul>
Week 14 (April 22-26)	Chapter 14 The Future of Criminal Justice Ethics	Discussion Board  Exit Ticket  Quiz #7	Wednesday 11:59pm  Friday 11:59pm  Friday 11:59pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the organizational context of criminal justice ethics.</li> <li>Differentiate organizational policy from organizational procedure.</li> <li>Explain modeling ethics and its importance for enhancing ethical behavior by criminal justice practitioners.</li> <li>Identify proactive strategies for ethics training in criminal justice agencies and explain why they are important.</li> <li>Describe what hiring toward the community entails and how doing so can enhance ethical behavior by justice practitioners.</li> </ul>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain how performance evaluations can be used as part of a comprehensive strategy for improving the ethics of justice practitioners.</li> </ul>
Week 15 (April 29- May 3)		Final reflection	Friday 11:59pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflect on the prescription offered in the last chapter of the book for promoting ethical behavior among criminal justice practitioners.</li> </ul>