

Interview and Report Writing for Criminal Justice Professionals (CJLE 1327)



Credit: 3 semester credit hours (3 hours lecture)

Prerequisite/Co-requisite: None

Course Description

Instruction and skill development in interviewing, note-taking, and report writing in the criminal justice context. Development of skills to conduct investigations by interviewing witnesses, victims, and suspects properly. Organization of information regarding incidents into effective written reports.

Required Textbook and Materials

1. *Report Writing for Criminal Justice Professionals: A Complete Text from English Composition to Interviews and Investigations* by Joseph N. Davis and Rick Vander Kam.
 - a. ISBN number is 978-1-93378-06-8.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate techniques for conducting interviews in support of incident investigations
2. Collect information admissible in court using interview techniques
3. Demonstrate appropriate note-taking skills
4. Create reports that convey all pertinent information

Course Outline

1. Syllabus
 - a. Introduction of Faculty and students
2. Chapter 1: Introduction to Report Writing
 - a. Definition of a Report
 - b. Uses and Purposes of Reports
 - c. Characteristics of a Good Report
 - d. Note Taking
 - e. Writing the Narrative
 - f. Proof Reading
3. Chapter 2: Chronological Order and Report Formats
 - a. Formats and Styles
 - b. Special Paragraphs
 - c. Evidence
 - d. Suspect Descriptions
4. Chapter 3: Clear and concise Writing Style
 - a. Active Voice Writing
 - b. Word Choice
 - c. First vs. Third Person Style
5. Chapter 4: Composition for Report Writing
 - a. Understanding Sentence Structure
 - b. Controlling the Flow of the Meaning

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- c. Shaping Sentence to Your Meaning
- 6. Chapter 5: Custody and Corrections Reports
 - a. Principles of a Good Report
 - b. Essentials for All Good Reports
 - c. Note Taking
- 7. Chapter 6: Computers and Report Writing
 - a. History of the Uniform Crime Reports
 - b. National Incident Based Reporting System
 - c. Crime Analysis
- 8. Chapter 7: Introduction to Interview and Interrogation
 - a. Definitions
 - b. Acquisition of Skills
 - c. Public and Private Sectors
- d. Legal Concerns
- 9. Chapter 8: Communications Theory
 - a. Distractions
 - b. Vocabulary
 - c. Cultural Differences
 - d. Modes of Speech
- 10. Chapter 9: The Report as an Investigative Tool
 - a. Probable Cause – Stop, Detention, Arrest
 - b. Probable Cause – Search and Seizure
 - c. Corpus Delicti
 - d. Miranda
 - e. Modus Operandi
 - f. Investigation Check List
 - g. Specific Crime Check List

Grade Scale

90 – 100	A
80 – 89	B
70 – 79	C
60 – 69	D
0 – 59	F

Course Evaluation

Final grades will be calculated according to the following criteria:

1. 2 Unit Tests	75%
2. Comprehensive Final Exam	15%
3. Course Project	10%

Course Requirements

- 1. Students will demonstrate techniques for conducting interviews in support of incident investigations and collecting information admissible in court using interview techniques.
- 2. Students will demonstrate appropriate note-taking skills.
- 3. Students will create reports that contain all pertinent information regarding an incident.
- 4. Students will satisfactorily prepare and present a written report on a subject assigned by the course instructor.

Course Policies

1. Proper classroom decorum must be maintained at all times.
2. NO DISRUPTIONS will be tolerated in the classroom, we will respect one another's right to learn.
3. No food, drinks, or use of tobacco products in class.
4. Cell phones, headphones, and any other electronic devices must be turned off while in class.
5. Do not bring children to class.
6. Do not walk out of class early without talking to the instructor before the class begins.
7. **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY WILL BE DEALT WITH MOST STRICTLY!** – An automatic "F" for the semester, plus a report will be filed.
8. No late assignments will be accepted.
9. Makeup exams will not be given, unless arranged for in advance. If you miss an exam (including the final) for any reason, without making arrangements with the instructor prior to the exam, you will not be allowed to take it.
10. Exams (including the final) will begin on time. If you are more than 5 minutes late for the exam, you will not be allowed to take it.
11. If you wish to drop a course, the student is responsible for initiating and completing the drop process. If you stop coming to class and fail to drop the course, you will earn an "F" in the course.
12. Attendance is expected and required.
13. Additional class policies as defined by the individual course instructor.

Disabilities Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1992 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are federal anti-discrimination statutes that provide comprehensive civil rights for persons with disabilities. Among other things, these statutes require that all students with documented disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodations for their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Special Populations Coordinator at (409) 880-1737 or visit the office in Student Services, Cecil Beeson Building.

Student Code of Conduct Statement

It is the responsibility of all registered Lamar Institute of Technology students to access, read, understand and abide by all published policies, regulations, and procedures listed in the *LIT Catalog and Student Handbook*. The *LIT Catalog and Student Handbook* may be accessed at www.lit.edu or obtained in print upon request at the Student Services Office. Please note that the online version of the *LIT Catalog and Student Handbook* supersedes all other versions of the same document

Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Reference
Week 1	Course Introduction Chapter 1: Introduction to Report Writing Readings, Discussion, Questions to answer and written assignment	pp. 1-34
Week 2	Chapter 2: Chronological Order and Report Formats	pp. 35-56
Week 3	Chapter 3: Clear and Concise Writing Style Writing assignment	pp. 57-89
Week 4	Chapter 4: Composition for Report Writing Writing assignment Exam 1 review (Chapters 1,2,3,4)	pp. 89-130
Week 5	Writing Assignment 1 Writing Assignment 2 EXAM 1	
Week 6	Chapter 5: Custody and Corrections Reports Questions and answers in reference to corrections reports Correctional Officer guest lecturer	pp. 131-150
Week 7	Practical application exercise	
Week 8	Discipline Report Writing Procedures Discussion Crossword Puzzle Assignment	pp. 139-145
Week 9	Chapter 6: Computers and Report Writing Research assignment	pp. 151-174
Week 10, 11	Chapter 7: Introduction to Interview and Interrogation	pp. 175-192
Week 12	Class exercises in interviewing suspects, victims, witnesses, and persons of interest Exam 2 Review	
Week 13	Discussion of Guidelines for Interviews Regarding International Terrorism Guest speaker from U.S. Attorney Anti- Terrorism Task Force, Beaumont, Texas	pp. 185-192
Week 14	Chapter 8: Communications Theory	pp. 193-212

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Week	Topic	Reference
EXAM 2		
Week 15	Chapter 9: The Report as an Investigative Tool Probable Cause – Stop – Detention Probable Cause – Search and Seizure Miranda Elements of the Crime M.O., Specific Crime Lists	pp. 213-232
Week 16	Final Exam (Chapters 1-9)	