**Criminal Justice Essentials**

**2025-2026**

**Instructor:**

Lucinda Lessington, MSCJ

lessilu@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us

Room Number: 803

**Course Description and Objectives:**

Criminal Justice Essentials provides an overview of the criminal justice system. Starting with historical perspectives of the origin of the system, the course reviews the overall structure. Students will become immersed in criminal and constitutional law and will review basic law enforcement skills. The course ends with a mock trial to provide participants with a first-hand experience of the criminal justice system. The course will also provide in-depth competencies and components for the co-curricular Skills USA student organization that should be incorporated throughout instructional strategies of the course. Participation in additional student organizations that align with Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security pathways (i.e. mock trial) is encouraged to enhance standards addressed in the curriculum. The prerequisite for this course is Introduction to Law, Public Safety, Corrections and Security. NOTE: Criminal Justice Essentials is designed to provide students with career-focused educational opportunities in various criminal justice fields.

**Objectives:**

1. Develop a basic knowledge about historical and current issues as they relate to law and public safety.
2. Develop the ability to perform skills that are associated with the required competencies of the law enforcement and public safety industry.
3. Develop and enhance employability skills required to seek, apply, and accept employment.
4. Develop a more realistic understanding of the course content using research methods, hands-on projects, and creating a portfolio for an LPSCS career.
5. Broaden students’ awareness of the wide variety of opportunities in the law, public safety, corrections, and security career cluster.

**Textbook:**

Criminal Justice Today – An Introductory Text for the 21st Century – 15th Edition

**Unit/Concept Names:**

Unit 1 Careers in Law and Justice

Unit 2 The History and Structure of the American Court System

Unit 3 Federal and Georgia Criminal Courts

Unit 4 Constitutional Law

Unit 5 Criminal Procedures

Unit 6 Pre-Trial Procedures

Unit 7 Juries, Trial Procedures and Examinations

Unit 8 Civil Law

Unit 9 Community Emergency Response Team

Unit 10 Advanced Police Skills and Tactics

**Evaluation (Schoolwide Grading Policy):**

* *Minor Grades* = 60% (quizzes, labs, and graded assignments to assess certain standards in a unit of study)
* *Major Grade*s = 40% (unit tests, essays, research papers, project-based assignments, and culminating assessments to measure mastery of standards that comprise a unit of study)

**Classroom Procedures & Expectations:**

You represent the Law and Public Safety Education at this school. Your actions inside this classroom, as it would in an LPSCS career, must be appropriate. Any misconduct will be handled in accordance with Richmond County’s code of conduct policies including dismissal from the program.

* Have respect for yourself, others, and the equipment at all times.
* Be on time, prepared, and ready to work.
* Treat others the way you want to be treated.
* Use of any type of lab equipment requires the instructor’s permission.
* Inappropriate talking during lecture is disruptive to other students; raise your hand if you have a question.
* Participate in class discussions and all assignments.
* **NO CELLPHONES IN THE BUILDING/CLASSROOM.**

**Consequences for Inappropriate Behavior/Cellphone Non-compliance:**

1st Offense: Student/teacher conference and documentation in Infinite Campus

2nd Offense: Phone call or email to the parent and documentation in Infinite Campus

3rd Offense: Referral to grave level AP

**Safety:**

This course will involve hands-on activities. Appropriate safety procedures and techniques will be discussed prior to each activity. Deviance from these procedures at any time will result in automatic exclusion from that practical session, and an alternate assignment will be given

**Course Materials:**

\* 3” 3-ring Binder \* 1 - Composition Notebook

\* Highlighters \* Loose Leaf Paper

\* Pencil \* Pens

**Resources:**

Media Outlets

Scenario Videos

YouTube Videos

Court Cases

**Modes of Communication:**

Remind messages

To sign up for class reminders, please visit:

[www.remind.com](http://www.remind.com)

Code: @d4dfgeg

**Parent Information**

Please read over this entire syllabus. I like to have open communication with parents. I know you want to hear about everything going on and I know your child tells you *everything* (being they are teenagers)! I want to stress up front that I am a very approachable instructor. If you ever feel the slightest need to contact me, please do so at [lessilu@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us](mailto:lessilu@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us) and I will contact you if needed at my earliest convenience.

Our class addresses three main areas: Corrections, Law Enforcement, and Judiciary. I hope to prepare these young adults for careers ranging from lawyers to S.W.A.T. officers and everything in between. Even if your child does not go into a career in criminal justice, he/she will leave this class with a greater appreciation of law enforcement officers, an understanding of the judicial system, and better knowledge of constitutional rights. **The very nature of public safety, at times, is not pleasant. Some of the stories and movies will be graphic. If for any reason you wish for your child to not see graphic material please email me.** Your child will be exposed to some of the “true experiences” of public safety through guest speakers and movies.

Your signature documents understanding of the course requirements.

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Student Name Parent Name Date

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Students Signature Parents Signature

Parents email:

Parents contact number(s):

**Disclaimer: This syllabus is subject to change.**