Master of Arts in Criminal Justice

Who pursues this program?
- Individuals currently employed within the field who seek advancement to supervisory positions within an agency.
- Those who are interested in federal employment where a graduate degree is either a formal or informal entry-level requirement.
- Individuals who are focusing on the years beyond retirement and are preparing for the possibility of teaching at a community college.
- Recent graduates of undergraduate programs who recognize the value of entering the job market with higher credentials.

How does the program work?
- This is a forty-two hour program with thesis and non-thesis tracks.
- Typically, two seminars are offered each semester and two during the summer.
- Most students are able to complete the degree in two years and a summer.
- Program objectives:
  - Demonstrate critical thinking about criminal justice problems, that is, to define a problem, to generate appropriate data, to conduct appropriate analysis, and to propose logical solutions.
  - Be able to undertake empirical research appropriate for the master’s level, using various qualitative and quantitative methodologies and appropriate statistical measures.
  - Demonstrate an awareness and understanding of contemporary policies, practices, and issues in and surrounding the criminal justice system.

How will this degree benefit me?
Because the program’s students are diverse in terms of employment and in the mix of newly-minted baccalaureate graduates and professionals, students have the opportunity to network. That opportunity is complemented by the guest lectures by professionals within the community. Potential future financial rewards include the possibility of promotion, the achievement of credentials for transfer to a federal agency, or for careers beyond retirement. An additional benefit is for personal satisfaction.

Recent graduates include a county judge, lawyers, Department of Public Safety troopers, chief deputies in sheriff’s offices, officers of the Amarillo Police Department, and probation and parole officers.

What courses will I take?
- Remaining thirty hours may include six hours of thesis, other criminal justice classes, and a maximum of twelve hours in a related field as a minor.

What sets this program apart from other programs?
This program is the only face-to-face graduate criminal justice program within 250 miles of Amarillo. Students have the opportunity to interact with the professors in small classroom settings and to participate in research projects with local law enforcement agencies. For example, a graduate student authored the policy manual for a unique rehabilitation program for the Randall County Sheriff’s Office during the summer of 2011. Others have had the opportunity to work on special projects for area agencies or to complete internships at various agencies. Also, faculty led trips to Mexico involve students in study and analysis of the criminal justice system of Mexico.
Admission Criteria and Application Guidelines

Full Admission
- Undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher
- Official transcripts from all colleges and universities attended

Conditional Admission
Any applicant who does not meet the above requirements will be reviewed for possible conditional admission.

Application Deadline
- August 1 for Fall admission
- December 1 for Spring admission
- May 1 for Summer admission

Program Contact Information
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