



Northwest Career & Technical Academy

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

2026-2027 COURSE SYLLABUS

Learn. Do. Lead.

Instructor	Phone	Course Hours	Location
George Burnette	(360) 848-0706	Session 1: 8:00-10:30 AM Session 2: 11:30 AM-2:00 PM	NCTA Mount Vernon Campus
Email	Website	CIP Code / Framework	School Year
gburnette@nwtech.k12.wa.us	nwtech.k12.wa.us	43.0107 - Criminal Justice / Public Safety	2026-2027

Welcome to Criminal Justice

NCTA Criminal Justice is a hands-on career and technical education program that introduces students to criminal justice, public safety, and related public-service careers while developing the professional habits employers value. Students learn through classroom instruction, practical skills, scenarios, projects, presentations, guest professionals, career exploration, physical activity, and authentic industry-connected experiences.

This is not a police academy. The program is designed for students interested in a wide range of pathways, including law enforcement, courts, corrections, investigations, forensics, social services, emergency services, and other public-service careers. Our goal is to help students become capable, ethical, communicative, resilient, and highly sought out candidates for whatever comes next.

High School Credit

Credit Area	Credit
Technical English	1.0
Occupational Education	1.0
Civics - Semester 1	0.5
Physical Education - Semester 2	0.5

CTE Dual Credit / Articulation

The year-long Criminal Justice course is articulated with Whatcom Community College (WCC) for CTE Dual Credit. Eligible students may earn up to 8 college credits during the school year.

Institution	College Course	Credits	Registration / Notes
Whatcom Community College	CJ 101 - Introduction to Criminal Justice	5	Register through the Whatcom CTE Dual Credit process during the same school year.
Whatcom Community College	CJ 275 - Patrol Procedures	3	Register through the Whatcom CTE Dual Credit process during the same school year.

Dual-credit Eligibility: Students must earn a final grade of B (3.0) or higher in the courses required by the articulation agreement and complete applicable skills/competencies. Eligible students will receive registration instructions. Students are responsible for completing the online registration process within the communicated timeline; credit cannot be awarded retroactively.

Earning dual credit is free and there is no cost for the student or family.

The following steps will be done in class with assistance from NCTA instructors:

YEARLONG COURSE CTE DUAL CREDIT TASKS & DEADLINES	
On or before October 30, 2026	Apply to WCC via CTCLink or CTESERS
On or before January 7, 2027	Enroll in Dual Credit Class(es)

Course Description & Learning Outcomes

The program follows the NCTA Criminal Justice framework (CIP 43.0107). Through technical instruction and applied learning, students will build knowledge and skills in criminal justice systems and law, career development, crime-scene management, traffic and collision investigation, arrest and trial procedures, emergency incident management, hazardous-materials awareness/operations, physical fitness, and government/civic issues.

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Explain the roles and relationships of law enforcement, courts, corrections, and related public-safety systems.
- Apply legal, ethical, constitutional, and professional principles to criminal-justice scenarios and decisions.
- Communicate effectively in writing, speaking, teamwork, interviews, presentations, and professional interactions.
- Demonstrate safe, organized, and methodical approaches to investigations, evidence, traffic, emergency incidents, and practical scenarios.
- Use critical thinking, problem solving, de-escalation, empathy, and sound decision-making in realistic situations.
- Develop career-readiness skills, leadership, physical wellness, resilience, and professional habits aligned with NCTA expectations.
- Connect criminal justice to government, civic responsibility, public policy, and service to the community.

Books, Materials & Course Resources

Resource / Material	Required?	Provided By	Notes
NCTA Criminal Justice uniform	Required daily	Student purchase	Program T-shirt with Scales of Justice logo and polo with Criminal Justice badge design; produced through NCTA Money & Business.
Chromebook / course technology	As directed	NCTA	Used for Canvas, research, assignments, and approved activities.
Paper, pens, pencils	Required	Instructor	Provided in class; students may bring their own preferred writing materials.
Canvas	Required	NCTA	Assignments, resources, announcements, and course materials.
Skyward	Required	District / NCTA	Grades and student information.
ParentSquare	Recommended for students/families	District / NCTA	School-to-home announcements, reminders, events, and updates.
Training / safety equipment	As directed	NCTA	Use only with permission and according to instructor directions.

Evaluation & Grading

Students receive separate grades for the credit areas connected to Criminal Justice. Occupational Education is graded 60% on technical skills and 40% on employability/professional expectations. Technical English is graded 60% on summative assessments and 40% on assignments.

Credit Area	Category	Weight
Occupational Education	Skills	60%
Occupational Education	Employability / Professional Expectations	40%
Technical English	Summative Assessments	60%
Technical English	Assignments	40%

Civics is a separate 0.5-credit grade during Semester 1. Physical Education is a separate 0.5-credit grade during Semester 2. Those grades are based on activities and assignments aligned to the standards for each credit area. Some Criminal Justice work may be used as evidence in more than one credit area when the same activity genuinely addresses multiple standards.

Grade	Percent	Grade	Percent
A	93% or above	C	73-77.9%
A-	90-92.9%	C-	70-72.9%
B+	88-89.9%	D+	68-69.9%
B	83-87.9%	D	60-67.9%
B-	80-82.9%	NC	59.9% and below
C+	78-79.9%		

Major Units, Assignments & Assessments

Framework Unit	Examples of Major Learning / Assessment
Introduction to Criminal Justice	System/career analysis, discussions, presentations, applied scenarios
Criminal Justice Law	Legal analysis, case/scenario application, written and oral assessments
Career Development in Criminal Justice	Career research, professional communication, interviews, guest-speaker engagement
Crime Scene Management	Scene documentation, evidence handling, fingerprinting/forensic labs, investigation scenarios
Vehicle Collision Investigation	Collision-scene concepts, documentation, applied exercises
Traffic Control	Traffic safety/control concepts and practical application
Arrest and Trial Procedures	Search/seizure, arrest, courtroom/trial procedure, mock or scenario-based assessments
Emergency Incident Management	Incident command, first aid/emergency response, scenario based teamwork and decision-making
Hazardous Materials Awareness	Recognition, safety, protective actions, incident-management concepts
Hazardous Materials First Responder Operations	Operational awareness, safety, response concepts, applied scenarios
Physical Fitness	Fitness, wellness, teamwork, injury prevention, resilience, personal growth

Leadership and work-based learning are embedded throughout the program. Students may lead activities, present to peers, help coordinate guest speakers or projects, interact with industry professionals, participate in field experiences, and collaborate with other NCTA programs. Specific opportunities depend on scheduling, community partnerships, safety requirements, and availability.

Attendance & Professional Expectations

The Northwest Career & Technical Academy (NCTA) views attendance much like business and industry: students are professionals-in-training and are expected to show up every day, on time, and ready to participate. Criminal Justice is a hands-on, career-connected program. Arriving late or missing class can mean missing labs, demonstrations, scenarios, work-based learning, team projects, guest speakers, certifications, and other experiences that may be difficult or impossible to recreate. Regular, punctual attendance also builds the reliability and stamina expected in the workplace. Students are expected to miss no more than five days per semester, not including home-high-school-related absences such as state testing, athletics, and other school-sponsored activities. An excused absence is still missed instructional and professional training time.

Families must notify NCTA directly when a student is absent. Reporting an absence to the sending high school does not automatically notify or excuse the absence at NCTA. Call (360) 848-0706, option 1 after language selection, or email attendance@nwtech.k12.wa.us. In addition, students must email Mr. Burnette before class whenever they know they will be absent or late. The family notification handles official attendance; the student email practices the professional responsibility of communicating with a supervisor.

NCTA attendance indicators for a full year: 1-5 absences = Highly Sought Out ; 6-10 = Employable; 11+ = Not Meeting Professional Expectations.

NCTA Professional Expectations

The NCTA Professional Expectations Rubric is used to evaluate employability in Occupational Education. Our goal is to help every student develop from Employable toward becoming a Highly Sought Out Candidate.

Attribute	NCTA Focus	What It Looks Like in Criminal Justice
Communicative	Be Proactive	Keep in touch, ask for help, solve problems, and use professional language.
Motivated	Be Valued	Do your best, volunteer, manage time, participate, and meet deadlines.
Reliable	Be Present	Attend, be punctual, be consistent, engage fully, and take initiative with industry professionals.
Responsible	Be Caring	Keep spaces orderly, stay focused, follow dress/PPE expectations, and care for the learning environment.
Team Member	Be Inclusive	Work with all members, be friendly, know when to lead, know when to follow, and follow procedures.
Trustworthy	Be Ethical	Care for equipment/property, use technology appropriately, act intentionally, honestly, and with integrity.
Coachable	Be Open	Accept feedback, ask questions, make adjustments, use resources, and keep improving.

Late Work Policy

Students may submit late work until the instructor's final deadline. Work submitted by that date will be graded for credit based on the assignment's quality and the program's standards. After the final deadline, assignments will not be accepted unless the instructor has approved an extension due to documented circumstances. Deadlines, including final submission dates, will be communicated. Students are responsible for checking timelines, staying on track, and reaching out for help when needed.

Industry / Course-Specific Expectations

Safety & Training Equipment

Safety is the highest priority during labs, scenarios, physical activity, field experiences, and use of training equipment. Students must follow instructor directions, use required protective equipment, report hazards or injuries promptly, and use tools/equipment only as instructed and for their intended educational purpose. Horseplay, unsafe behavior, or misuse of equipment may result in removal from an activity.

Uniform

The NCTA Criminal Justice uniform is required every day. Students are responsible for purchasing their program uniform through NCTA. Uniforms are produced by NCTA's Money & Business program and include a Criminal Justice T-shirt featuring the Scales of Justice logo and a polo shirt featuring the program's badge design. Students are expected to arrive each day in the appropriate uniform and maintain a clean, professional appearance. Additional clothing or personal protective equipment may be required for certain labs, physical activities, field trips, or other program activities.

Technology / Personal Electronics

Personal electronics are not permitted without instructor permission. This includes cell phones, AirPods, headphones/earbuds, smart devices, and similar personal electronics. When technology is needed for instruction, students will be told when and how it may be used. Unauthorized photographing, recording, or posting of classroom activities, training equipment, guest speakers, training sites, or other students is not permitted.

Attitude, Empathy & Professional Mindset

Attitude matters. Students are not expected to enjoy every assignment, activity, topic, or decision made in this program, but they are expected to approach the program with a professional mindset. That means participating, giving an honest effort, trying new or unfamiliar things, accepting feedback, contributing positively to the team, and avoiding behavior that negatively affects the learning environment. You may have a bad day, feel frustrated, or disagree; how you respond in those moments is part of professionalism.

Professionalism also requires empathy. Criminal justice professionals often meet people on some of the most difficult days of their lives. Students are expected to listen, remain curious, avoid unnecessary assumptions, consider perspectives and experiences different from their own, and treat every person with dignity and respect.

Respect for All NCTA Staff

Every staff member at NCTA is an educator and deserves the same level of respect. This includes instructors, administrators, office staff, custodians, paraeducators, counselors, substitutes, support staff, and other NCTA employees. Students are expected to speak to all staff professionally and respectfully. When an NCTA staff member gives a reasonable direction related to safety, behavior, school procedures, facilities, or student expectations, students are expected to follow the direction promptly and without argument. If you disagree or believe there has been a misunderstanding, follow the direction first and then address the concern respectfully with the appropriate staff member or Mr. Burnette. A person's job title does not determine how much respect they deserve.

Instructional Time, Transitions & Resets

NCTA sessions are 2.5 hours of instructional time. There is no designated break built into the session. Instruction will intentionally include transitions and opportunities to reset through changes in activity, movement, labs, equipment setup, collaboration, scenario work, and other instructional strategies while remaining within instructional time.

Guest Speakers, Field Trips & Work-Based Learning

Students are expected to represent themselves, the Criminal Justice program, and NCTA professionally when interacting with guest speakers, agencies, worksites, and community partners. Follow host rules and instructor directions, arrive prepared, remain engaged, ask thoughtful questions, and follow all transportation, permission, safety, and supervision requirements.

Communication / Help

Students may email Mr. Burnette at any time at gburnette@nwtech.k12.wa.us. He will respond as soon as possible. Students are encouraged to ask for help early rather than waiting until a problem becomes difficult to solve.

Academic Integrity & Generative AI

Students are expected to submit only their own work and avoid cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, or other academic dishonesty. This includes submitting answers that are not your own on quizzes or exams, using unauthorized devices or materials, unauthorized communication during testing, or helping another person engage in academic dishonesty. Use of another person's work, ideas, research, or writing without attribution may result in academic consequences consistent with NCTA and district expectations.

Generative AI tools (for example, ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, or similar tools) may be used to generate ideas and organize thoughts when permitted by the instructor, but they should not replace student work. Students are responsible for analyzing and fact-checking AI-generated results. AI use should be minimal, appropriate to the assignment, and cited when required. Using AI to replace student work, using it for the majority of an assignment without permission, or failing to cite AI use when required will be treated as plagiarism.

Criminal Justice-specific expectation: Students must be able to explain and defend the work, reasoning, decisions, reports, or conclusions they submit. AI may never be used during an assessment, scenario, report, or assignment when the instructor has prohibited it.

Accessibility & Participation

NCTA is committed to providing students access to learning and participation. Students with an IEP, 504 Plan, disability, injury, medical restriction, or other access need should use the applicable school/district process and communicate with the instructor or appropriate support staff so approved accommodations can be implemented. Students are never required to disclose personal experiences during discussions of sensitive criminal-justice topics.

Sensitive Course Content

Criminal justice involves real people and difficult events. Course content may include violent crime, death, sex crimes, child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, substance use, mental-health crises, discrimination, traumatic events, autopsies, and other potentially sensitive subjects. Students may encounter case studies, photographs, videos, reports, or other educational materials related to these topics. These subjects will be addressed for legitimate educational purposes and with an expectation of professionalism, dignity, and respect. When appropriate, students will be given advance notice before particularly sensitive or graphic material is presented. Students are never required to disclose personal experiences as part of a class discussion or assignment. Students who have concerns about particular course content are encouraged to speak privately with the instructor.

Changes to the Syllabus

I have attempted to make this syllabus as comprehensive and accurate as possible, and I may occasionally need to make small adjustments during the term. I will announce any changes in class or notify students in writing with an updated syllabus posted to the NCTA website.

What Success Looks Like at NCTA

Success in Criminal Justice is more than a grade. Students should leave the program better able to communicate, work with others, think critically, accept feedback, make ethical decisions, lead and follow appropriately, manage responsibility, care for their own wellness, and understand the opportunities available in criminal justice and public service.

You are welcome here. You matter. You belong at NCTA.

Become highly sought out. • Learn. Do. Lead.

Student / Parent-Guardian Acknowledgment

We have reviewed the NCTA Criminal Justice syllabus and understand the course expectations, including attendance and punctuality, professional expectations, daily uniform requirements, appropriate use of technology and personal electronics, safety and training-equipment rules, academic integrity, grading practices, and student responsibilities. We understand that students are expected to follow NCTA, district, and Criminal Justice program expectations throughout the school year. We also understand that questions or concerns should be communicated with the instructor as early as possible. Signing below confirms that we have reviewed and understand these expectations.

Student Name	Student Signature / Date
Parent/Guardian Name	Parent/Guardian Signature / Date