CRIJ 1301-002: Introduction to Criminal Justice
Spring 2014

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Days and Time: MW 3:30-4:45pm
Office Hours: TR 10:50-12:00pm
         MW 9:00-10:00am and by appointment

“This is a court of law, young man, not a court of justice.”

~Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.

I. Course Overview

This course will provide an introduction and overview of the American criminal justice system, including, but not limited to, its fundamental components: the nature of crime, the police, the judicial system, and the correctional system. The goal of this class is to develop the knowledge to critically assess and analyze justice and crime related issues in our society. The pedagogical approach of this course is presented from a criminological, legal, multidisciplinary, justice, and historical perspective in order for students to have a holistic understanding of the criminal justice system.

We will explore specific trends of crime in everyday life and examine the efforts made by federal, state, and local governments to both address crime and provide public safety. A justice approach will shape this course, taking into account a broader analysis that includes diverse perspectives using critical thinking and scientific facts as evidence of crime patterns. In addition, we will address the socio-cultural complexities surrounding criminal behavior to demystify the common stereotypes about people who break the law, the culture of punishment, and the reluctance to adopt alternative methods to deal with perpetrators besides doing prison time.

Most students probably come to this class with some preconceived ideas about crime in contemporary society, and many of you have drawn these ideas from TV series such as CSI and Law & Order, not to mention Hollywood action movies. However, unless you have been exposed to scientific knowledge, it is very likely that most of the information you know about crime and the criminal justice system is based upon your personal beliefs, experiences, and/or the media/government agencies. Chances are that you have very little empirical or scientific evidence upon which to support your views. The objective of this course is to expose you to some of the academic evidence surrounding the institutions, people, and policies that constitute the American criminal justice system. As a result, we will have the opportunity to examine the social, cultural, and political impact of crime and how society deals with it in contemporary American life.
**WARNING:** The subject matter of this class should come with a warning label. In America, the problem of crime is intertwined with highly charged emotional, social, cultural, political, and economic issues. Some information presented in this class will be very graphic and/or may be offensive to some students. Please beware of this. It is okay to disagree with one another. It is not okay to do so in a socially inappropriate manner. Disrespectful and/or socially inappropriate behavior in the context of this course will not be tolerated. If you have trouble being open to somebody else’s points of view, you should not take this course.

In addition, like it or not, we live in a violent world. In this course, students will be exposed to reading material and films presenting violence, death, and dramatic human situations. This is because violent crime is part of the phenomenon that institutions of the criminal justice system deal with every day. Therefore, if any student feels uncomfortable with these topics, he or she should consider dropping the class given that it is not possible to avoid the crudeness of violence and death associated with the main themes of this course.

II. **Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)**

Upon completion of this course, among other things student will be able to:

- Understand, define, and demonstrate knowledge of the structure and functions of the integral parts of the criminal justice system in the United States
- Describe and discuss the nature of crime in America
- Define and analyze the different characteristics, elements, and classification of major crimes in the U.S.
- Employ different theoretical approaches and perspectives to do a critical assessment of crime and the American criminal justice system
- Analyze and discuss critically the role of the police in American society and its socio-cultural perception by different ethnic groups
- Define and explain the criminal trial process in America
- Compare and contrast the different theoretical approaches to justify punishment for those who break the law
- Distinguish and discuss differences between parole and probation and their legal consequences for inmates and society as a whole
- Discuss and understand the ethos of prisons and corporal punishment in America
- Distinguish and evaluate the criminal justice policies and legal decisions that affect juveniles justice
- Understand, discuss, and describe contemporary challenges in criminal justice, such as terrorism, transnational crime, and the future of this discipline

One particular goal of this class is that each of you will possess an increased willingness and openness to ask the difficult, complex questions which the study of criminal justice presents regarding the nature of crime, its ubiquitous presence, and how the government approaches it. This ability to evaluate issues of justice and injustice will be based on a thoughtful examination of the strengths/weaknesses of each perspective - one that is supported by evidence and critical analysis, not simply one’s claims or ideology. If you are open-minded and willing to challenge your own assumptions, you will develop the skills needed to analyze different perspectives of criminal justice and to better understand and articulate your own.
III. Course readings

Required Book:


2. In addition, there will be newspaper and magazine articles/reports and scholarly manuscripts to read for some specific weeks. I will send you the link and/or where to find them one week before they are due. Check course schedule below for detailed information.

IV. Course requirements

Readings:

There will some readings and some writing required of each student. Because there is so much we could cover in an introductory class on ‘Criminal Justice,’ some of the content will be addressed in the readings but not in the lectures. You will need to read in order to help you prepare for the exams. Be aware that all required reading materials, films, lecture materials and class discussion elements are fair game for the exams. Do not rely on class lectures to get you through the course – they are only one part of the whole picture. You will be held accountable for all readings whether I have lectured on the material or not. TAKE NOTES during classes and read the assigned readings before coming to class.

Exams:

There will be 3 exams – two midterms and the final. All three exams will consist of multiple choice, short answers, and short essay questions, which will be developed from readings, lectures, films, assignments, discussions, exercises, and other class work. The final exam may be somewhat cumulative. It will cover the material from the last section of the class, and may include some basic information which you should have learned from other sections. I will provide a study guide at least one class period before the exams.

I will allow for a make-up exam only with a documented medical excuse or other documented family emergency. “Over sleeping” on the day of the exam is not a legitimate excuse and you will not be given the opportunity for a make-up.

If you are having problems, academically, socially or emotionally, etc., please talk to me if your grades are affected.

Written Assignments:

There will be two written assignments throughout the course of the semester. These assignments will be short essays to addressed criminal justice controversial issues, such as the death penalty, drug use, mass incarceration, prison overcrowding, life imprisonment for juveniles, serial killers, miscarriages of justice, gun rights, and the like.
Each essay will be 3-4 pages (no more than 4 and no less than 3) in length (typed, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point font, stapled). The criminal issues to be discussed may be taken from newspapers, magazines, television, news shows, the Internet, or any other credible news source. However, at least one scholarly source (e.g. book or peer-reviewed journal article) is needed for each essay in order to support your argument. You will need to cite and use at least one academic source (peer-reviewed article, book chapter, scientific report, etc.) for each essay and use academic language and APA citation format.

Each short essay should include the following:

- Your name, date, class information, and number of essay (e.g. 1/2 or 2/2)
- Source information (journal/magazine name, title of the article, author, and date)
- A summary of the article and main issue/problems at stake
- Comparisons/contrasts/arguments from the textbook and lectures
- And student's arguments and discussion comments supported by facts and evidence. Your particular opinion is not enough if it is not based on scientific evidence and/or facts.

Each essay is worth a total of 10 points for total essay points: 20. The essay completion schedule has two parts: 1. Upload and electronic copy of your essay on Blackboard (I will provide detailed instructions prior to the due day) 2. Turn in a hard copy at the essay at the beginning of the class when is due. Due Dates:

a) The 1st essay is due March 5th, 2014.
b) The 2nd essay is due April 9th, 2014.

Essay Rubric

Appropriate criminal justice topic 1 point
Well-constructed argument—scientific-based facts/evidence 4 point
Readable/spelling/grammar 2 point
Correct citation format, using academic language 2 point
One academic source 1 point

Total 10 point each

Attendance:

Please be aware that I will often lecture on certain topics for which I have assigned no readings. The class will be augmented by several in-class videos or documentaries and at least one guest lecture. I will try to put most films on reserve in the media resources library.

You must come to class on a regular basis. I will take attendance every class and it will count for you final grade.

Please, do not e-mail me and ask to explain a class you missed! Call one of your fellow classmates for that. However, I will be happy to answer your specific questions and try to clarify ideas either during office hours or by e-mail.

Classes will begin promptly at 3:30pm – please be on time or you’ll miss announcements. Unless you have an emergency, please do not come and go during lecture – it is distracting to all of us! Also, do not be late to class!!
V. Grades

Final grades will be determined based on student performance throughout the course as follows. Final grades will be on a standard scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>5 points</th>
<th>5%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two assignments (at 10 point each)</td>
<td>20 points</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three exams (at 25 point each)</td>
<td>75 points</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100 points</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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Grading Scale: There is a possible 100 points in this class. I will not bump you up. Do the work to get the grade you want.

90 – 100 ....... A
80 – 89 ....... B
70 – 79 ....... C
60 – 69 ....... D
59 or below..... F

VI. Academics

Class Participation:

If you participate enough so that I get to know who you are, you improve your chances of getting your grade bumped up if your point total is on the borderline. Do not expect an automatic increase just because you have an 89.45%; you have to deserve the upgrade for some academic reason.

Classroom Behavior:

All members of the class are expected to behave with courtesy and respect toward others. Should behavioral disruptions interfere with the business of the classroom and the ability of class members to learn, they may be reported to the Office of Student Services as outlined in TAMUCC General Academic Policies and Regulations (http://catalog.tamucc.edu/mime/media/7/803/UG+13-14+Full+Catalog+PDF.pdf).

We also live in a highly electronically mediated and interconnected world where we seem to be “on call” 24/7. Consequently, I am guessing that most if not all of you regularly pack a cell phone as standard operating equipment for helping you navigate through your daily lives. These seem to have become a new form of a musical instrument and have a very disruptive potential in certain settings. **TURN THEM OFF WHEN YOU ARE IN CLASS: NO CHATTING, TEXTING, OR ANGRY BIRDS, PLEASE.** As a sidebar... some of you may find it necessary at some point in the semester to keep a cell phone on during class because of a sick child or other immediately pressing matter. If so, please let me know before class starts that you’ll need to keep a phone active.
**Academic Dishonesty:**

Students are expected to be above reproach in scholastic activities. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties. Such scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an exam for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. If you have any questions about this (especially what constitutes plagiarism), please stop by my office and I would be happy to discuss it. Refer to TAMUCC Academic Honesty for further details on definitions of academic dishonesty and the judicial procedure associated with allegations thereof (http://catalog.tamucc.edu/mime/media/7/803/UG+13-14+Full+Catalog+PDF.pdf).

**TAMUCC Students with Disabilities:**

If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible. Also, please have your accommodation letter from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Disability Services (DS) Office with you when you come see me. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact the Disability Services Office (located in Corpus Christi Hall 116) at 361.825.5816.

**Emergency Management Statement:**

In case of an emergency, the University’s Emergency Notification System (ENS) will be activated. Students are encouraged to maintain updated contact information using the link on the homepage of the University’s website. In addition, students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Emergency Response Protocols posted in each classroom. Detailed information about the University’s emergency management plan can be found at: http://safety.tamucc.edu/S/EMP.pdf

**HEOA Compliance Statement:**

HEOA Compliance statement: The sharing of copyrighted material through peer-to-peer (P2P) file sharing, except as provided under U.S. copyright law, is prohibited by law. Detailed information can be found at http://www2.ed.gov/policy/highered/leg/hea08/index.html

**E-mail Accounts:**

The Department of Social Sciences communicates through emails via Blackboard and the Islander’s web service. You can set up your accounts to be forwarded to your personal email account. A TAMUCC email account is the only account our main office uses to initiate contact with students. These emails include information about cancellation of classes or an event, student activities and general information. Your student account also is part of the Blackboard communication system and may be the best way for me to get in touch with you if I need to. Be sure you have your account set up!
Grade Appeal Process:

Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of the proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal.

A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website:


For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean.

VII. Course Schedule

Week 1, Introduction, syllabus review, course overview
Jan/22 No readings assigned

Week 2: The Nature of Crime, Law, and Criminal Justice
Jan/27: Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 1 (Crime and Criminal Justice)
Jan/29: Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 2 (The Nature and Extend of Crime)

Week 3: The Nature of Crime, Law, and Criminal Justice
Feb/03 Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 3 (Understanding Crime and Victimization)
Feb/05 Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 4 (Criminal Law: Substance and Procedure)

Week 4: The Police and Law Enforcement
Feb/10 Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 5 (The Police: History and Contemporary Structure)
Feb/12 Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 6 (The Police: Organization, Role, and Function)

Week 5: The Police and Law Enforcement
Feb/17: Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 7 (Issues in Policing)  First Exam
Feb/19

Week 6: Courts and Adjudication
Feb/24: Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 8 (Police and the Rule of Law)
Feb/26: Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 9 (The Courts and the Judiciary)

Week 7: Courts and Adjudication
Mar/03 Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 10 (The Prosecution and the Defense)
Mar/05 Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 11 (Pretrial and Trial Procedures)  1st Written Assignment is Due Today!!!! (Short Documentary: America Law, How It Works?)

Week 8: Courts and Adjudication
Mar/10: Spring Break No classes
Mar/12:
Week 9: Courts and Adjudication  
Mar/17: Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 12 (Punishment and Sentencing)  
Mar/19: **Second Exam**  

Week 10: Corrections  
Mar/24: Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 13 (Community Sentencing)  
Mar/26: Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 14 (Corrections: History, Institutions, and Population)  

Week 11: Corrections  
Mar/31: Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 15 (Prison Life: Living in and Leaving Prison)  
April/02: *Documentary: The House I Live In*  

Week 12: Contemporary Challenges in Criminal Justice  
April/07: Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 16 (Juvenile Justice)  
April/09: Life without Parole (Life Imprisonment for Juveniles)  
**2nd Written Assignment is Due Today!!!!**  

Week 13: Contemporary Challenges in Criminal Justice  
April/14: Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 17 (Crime and Justice in the New Millennium)  
April/16: Drug Trafficking in the Mexico-U.S. Border  

Week 14: Contemporary Challenges in Criminal Justice  
April/21: Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 18 (Terrorism, Homeland Security, & the Future of CJ)  
April/23: September 11th and its Aftermath  

Week 15: Conclusions  
April/28: The Snowden Case: Do we live in ‘the Big Brother Surveillance Society’?  
April/30: Final comments and wrap up  

Week 16: Last Class  
May/05: **Final Exam!** (If needed, we will have our final exam during the official time, Time: TBA)  

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Your Name, Signature, and Date Here