Course Description

The topics of drug cartels, human trafficking, and drug consumption appear on the news and headlines of major newspapers. They are of concern to many law enforcement agencies and politicians in the U.S. This is notably happening in Texas, so this course is an opportunity to study, analyze, and understand the complexity of the organized crime world. This course will address several major themes concerning organized crime (OC), including, but not limited to:

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)

- Understand, define, and demonstrate knowledge of organized crime
- Describe and discuss the nature of organized crime in America
- Define and analyze the different characteristics, elements, and classification of major organized crime groups and their activities in the U.S.
- Employ different theoretical approaches and perspectives to do a critical assessment of organized crime
- Compare and contrast the different theoretical approaches to distinguish the dynamics of organized crime worldwide
- Discuss and understand the ethos of organized crime in America

This course is designed to give students a better understanding of criminal organizations that engage in legal or illegal activities for the sake of power and money.

We will analyze and discuss how these criminal organizations carry out their illegal activities while laundering money through legal enterprises and blurring the line between one and the other. We will also discuss what encourages people to belong to organized crime syndicates and why, despite the risks of death and imprisonment, some individuals ‘stick it out’ on this path. This last part is important in order to highlight the social justice perspective of the issue; this means that organized crime is more than just a law enforcement problem. One way or another, poverty, lack of education, social and economic inequalities, and the glorification of
capitalist ideology (money, power, fame, and greed) all intertwine together to produce and reproduce the phenomenon of organized crime.

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 evil situations. This is because organized crime uses these latter phenomena as tools to pursue its own goals. In particular, violence is one of the main resources utilized by criminal organizations because of its effectiveness in obtaining money, power, and respect. 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 in this course.

Course Overview

Please read through the syllabus and go through the new version of Blackboard to ensure that you are familiar with it and have access to everything. Because this is an online class, this course requires a considerable amount of reading, otherwise the whole purpose of studying and learning at the collegiate level would be defeated. An online class does not mean an easy course. All students are expected to be active participants by doing all of the assigned work. The best way to do well in this class (including on the quizzes and the three written assignments) is to spend time thinking about the material and asking questions as needed.

The readings vary between 50 to 90 pages per week, which is the typical amount for a 300 level online class. All required books are engaging and interesting to read so you will not be bored doing your homework. Just take the time and do it. Learning and having fun do not exclude each other.

Write due dates on your calendar and make sure you have an appropriate working computer and Internet connection when taking both quizzes. Technical difficulties such as, “my little brother dropped my computer in the toilet” or “my Internet connection and my hard drive failed” are the equivalent of the 20th century statement “my dog ate my homework.” Plan ahead, be responsible, and give your best effort.

Course Assignments and Grading Policy

There will be 3 quizzes during the course in week one, three, and five. There will be 2 assignments (short essays) in weeks two and four. Quizzes and instructions to assignments are found within folders corresponding to the assigned weeks under ‘Assignments’ on Blackboard. The idea is to have a combination of evaluations to make the course dynamic and pedagogical.

1. The quizzes will consist of 30 multiple choice questions and 2 short essay questions. They are designed to test your knowledge on the reading materials. In week one, three, and five the quiz will be available to you beginning at 12:00am Friday through Saturday at 11:59pm. You will have a 45 minutes limit on each of the quizzes and can complete the quiz anytime within the two and half days period during which it is available. However, each quiz can only be taken once. **If you pass the 45 minutes period to**
answer the quiz, I will take off a point for every minute of additional time, and after 20 minutes the grade will be zero. Quizzes are located under the Assignment folder on Blackboard, within corresponding week folders.

The quiz schedule is as follows:

QUIZ 1, week one: Available 06/06/14 12am through 06/07/14 midnight
QUIZ 2 week three: Available 06/20/14 12am though 06/21/14 midnight
QUIZ 3, week five: Available 07/04/14 12am though 07/05/14 midnight

2. The written assignments are geared to make you think about organized crime in a way that you can conceptualize the theoretical and substantive understanding of this topic using your own words, ideas and thoughts in a clear and concise manner. There will be a total of 2 written assignments and each assignment will consist of a short essay approximately 3 to 4 pages long. They must be typed, using 12-point font, standard margins, double-spaced, and proof read. They will be evaluated based on mastery of content, rigor of analysis, critical thinking skills, and quality of writing. You must properly cite; use APA style and be consistent. They must be submitted electronically by the due date, placed in the SafeAssignment folder. No grade will be provided otherwise (no grade equals a zero). The instructions of each written assignment will be located in the Assignment folder of Blackboard, as are the corresponding SafeAssignment link within corresponding week folders.

Week Two, written Assignment 1: due Saturday 06/14/14 by 11:59pm
Week Four, written Assignment 2: due Saturday 06/28/14 by 11:59pm

I am aware of the many issues related to Blackboard (BB) and contemporary technology. However, it is your responsibility to be familiar with BB and with any issue related to it. DO NOT E-MAIL ME ASKING ME QUESTIONS ABOUT TECHNOLOGICAL ISSUES ON BB. Rather contact TAMUCC IT department or help desk to ask them about it.

**Evaluation**

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<th>Quizzes (3 quizzes): 20 points each</th>
<th>Written Assignments (2 assignments): 20 points each</th>
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<td>Written Assignments</td>
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Required Books


In addition, there will be articles, essays, book chapters, and magazine articles posted under Course Documents on BB every week. They will be found in folders corresponding to the weeks in which they are assigned. Students can download the reading material every Sunday of each week.

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
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.

Course Outline

Week 1, Defining and understanding organized crime
June 2-8

- Partington & Violet, parts (chapters) 1 to 5 available on BB.
- Finckernauer, J.O. Foreword and Chapter 1.
- Saviano, R. The Port, Angelina Jolie, and The system sections.
- Quiz one available from Friday June 6th at 12am thru Saturday June 7th at midnight.
Week 2, The sociology of organized crime: demystifying the myth of organized crime
June 9-15
- Partington & Violet, parts (chapters) 6 to10.
- Saviano, R. The Secondigliano war, Women, and Hollywood sections.
- Movies: Goodfellas, The Godfather I, Scarface (choose one among these three, and obtain a copy for your own viewing – you can use Netflix, Blockbuster, the library, or whatever source to obtain your copy, but it is your responsibly to obtain it)
- Written assignment one, 3-4 pages, due on June 14th by midnight.

Week 3, The faces of organized crime
June 16-22
- Finckenauer, J.O Chapter 4.
- Partington & Violet, parts (chapters) 11 to 15.
- Saviano, R. Kalashnikov and Cement sections.
- Quiz two available from Friday June 20th at 12am thru Saturday June 21st at midnight.

Week 4, Business and typical activities of organized crime
June 23-29
- Finckenauer, J.O. Chapter 5.
- Saviano, R. Aberdeen, Mondragone and Lands of fires sections.
- Partington & Violet, parts (chapters) 16 to 20.
- Movies: Donnie Brasco, The Godfather II, Traffic (choose one among these three and obtain a copy for your own viewing – you can use Netflix, Blockbuster, the library, or wherever you want to obtain your copy, but it is your responsibly to obtain it)
- Written assignment two, 3-4 pages, due on July 28th, 2014 by midnight.

Week 5, Fighting organized crime
June 30-July 6
- Finckenauer, J.O. Chapter 7.
- Partington & Violet, parts (chapters) 21 to 25.
- Saviano, R. Don Peppino Diana section.
- Van Koppen, M. Vere. Criminal Trajectories in Organized Crime, 16 pages. Post it on BB
- Quiz three available from Friday July 4th at 12am thru Saturday July 5th at midnight.
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.

97 – 100 ........ A+
94 – 96 ........ A
90 – 93 ........ A-
87 – 89 ........ B+
84 – 86 ........ B
80 – 83 ........ B-
75 – 79 ........ C
70 – 74 ........ D
69 and below is an E.

I understand that this is a short summer course and some students work full-time during the summer. But you are responsible for doing all the readings, quizzes, and assignments in a timely and on-time manner. The most important part of this course is that you do your work and we collaborate together to make it a learning and fun experience. If there is anything I can do to assist you, please do not hesitate to contact me.