CRIJ 1301-001: Introduction to Criminal Justice
Spring 2015

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Office Hours: MW 9:00-11:00am
T 8:00-9:15am and by appointment

Call Number (CRN): 41088
Location: Center for Instruction 127
Days and Time: MW 2:00-3:15pm

“A jury consists of twelve persons chosen to decide who has the better lawyer.”
Robert Frost, Poet

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
- Define and analyze the different characteristics, elements, and classification of major crimes in the U.S.
- 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
- 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:**

In addition, there will be newspaper and magazine articles/reports and scholarly manuscripts to read for some specific weeks as well as a couple of documentaries to watch. 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 4 exams –three midterms and the final. All four exams will consist of multiple choice 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 Assignment:

There will be only one written assignment in this course. This assignment will be a short essay 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. I will post on Blackboard detailed paper guidelines one month prior to the due date.

Essay will be 4-5 pages (no more than 5 and no less than 4) in length (not including the cover), 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 two scholarly sources (e.g. book or peer-reviewed journal article) must be included and cited in your essay in order to support your argument.
Essay should include the following:

- A cover with your name, date, class information, etc.
- A list of references (journal/magazine name, title of the article, author, and date)
- A summary of the article and main issue/problems at stake where you found the main information under discussion
- Include at least one academic source
- Make sure you also include theories, arguments, and scientific information on criminal justice from the textbook and lectures
- Your arguments and discussion must be supported by facts and evidence. Your particular opinion is not enough if it is not based on scientific evidence and/or facts.

Your essay is worth 10 points. 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 Date: **April 22nd, 2015.**

**Essay Rubric**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate criminal justice topic</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well-constructed argument—scientific-based facts/evidence</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readable/spelling/grammar</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correct citation format, using academic language</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One academic source</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>10 point each</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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 or make it available via Internet or Netflix.

**You must come to class on a regular basis.** I will take attendance every class and it will count 10% for your 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 2:00pm – please be on time or you will 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>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; participation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Essay Assignment (10 point)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four exams (at 20 point each)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

Class participation is mandatory and by doing so you will 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/professional behavior:

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

Statement of Civility:

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.
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 will need to keep a phone active.

**Dropping a Class:**

I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. April 10th is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

**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).

**Disability Services:**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance 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. 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 http://cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html . For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

Statement of Academic Continuity:

In case of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.
VII. Course Schedule

Week 1, Introduction, syllabus review, course overview
Jan/21 Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 1 (Crime and Criminal Justice)

Week 2: The Nature of Crime, Law, and Criminal Justice
Jan/26: Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 2 (The Nature and Extend of Crime)
Jan/28: Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 3 (Understanding Crime and Victimization)

Week 3: The Nature of Crime, Law, and Criminal Justice
Feb/02
Feb/04 Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 4 (Criminal Law: Substance and Procedure)

Week 4: The Police and Law Enforcement
Feb/09 First Exam
Feb/11 Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 5 (The Police: History and Contemporary Structure)

Week 5: The Police and Law Enforcement
Feb/16: Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 6 (The Police: Organization, Role, and Function)
Feb/18 Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 7 (Issues in Policing)

Week 6: The Police and Law Enforcement
Feb/23: Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 8 (Police and the Rule of Law)
Feb/25: Second Exam

Week 7: Courts and Adjudication
Mar/02 Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 9 (The Courts and the Judiciary)
Mar/04 Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 10 (The Prosecution and the Defense)

Week 8: Courts and Adjudication
Mar/09: Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 11 (Pretrial and Trial Procedures)
Mar/11: Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 12 (Punishment and Sentencing)

Week 9: Courts and Adjudication
Mar/16: Spring Break no classes
Mar/18:

Week 10: Corrections
Mar/23 Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 13 (Community Sentencing)
Mar/25 Third Exam

Week 11: Corrections
Mar/30 Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 14 (Corrections: History, Institutions, and Population)
April/01 Documentary: ‘Locked Up’

Week 12: Corrections
April/06: Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 15 (Prison Life: Living in and Leaving Prison)
April/08 Life without Parole (Life Imprisonment for Juveniles)
Week 13: Contemporary Challenges in Criminal Justice
April/13  Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 16 (Juvenile Justice)
April/15  Drug Trafficking in the Mexico-U.S. Border

Week 14: Contemporary Challenges in Criminal Justice
April/20:  Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 17 (Crime and Justice in the New Millennium)
April/22:  Written Assignment is Due Today!!!!

Week 15: Conclusions
April/27:  Siegel & Worrall, Chapter 18 (Terrorism, Homeland Security, & the Future of CJ)
April/29  Final comments and wrap up

Week 16: Last Class
May/04:   Final Exam! (If needed, we will have our final exam during the official time.
          Location: TBA)

The instructor reserves the right to make changes and or revisions to this syllabus as deemed necessary and appropriate; students will be notified via email or during class of these changes if any.

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Your Name, Signature, and Date Here