CRIJ 3320.W01 Issues in Corrections

Course Description:
Issues in Corrections is an overview course designed to familiarize students with the reality of punishment in America and major issues in the American correctional system. The course will focus on a wide range of critical issues pertaining to the history and philosophy of punishment and the American correctional system, drawing on material from researchers, practitioners, and inmates. Students should gain an introductory understanding of past and present issues in American corrections as well as a critical understanding of the American correctional system through lectures, readings, videos, assignments and guest speaker presentations.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes:
1. Identify and discuss the various goals of punishment and the ways in which the United States punishes individuals who violate criminal laws.
2. Critically analyze and discuss the various American correctional theories, practices, and policies.
3. Discuss and examine the role of empirical research and its impact on the American Criminal Justice System and, in particular, correctional policies.
4. Discuss the origin, history, and development of the corrections in the United States with a particular emphasis on issues such as race, class, gender, and culture.
5. Identify and discuss historical and contemporary issues related to punishment in American society.
6. Discuss and analyze the social, psychological, and economic costs associated with incarceration.
7. Identify, analyze, and develop solutions to the problems associated with the administration of justice in the American Correctional System.

Major Course Requirements:

Exam

One exam will be administered in this course and will include FIVE essays worth up to 30 points each. The essay questions are listed below. The exam is due on the last day of the course (Thursday, August 4 by 11:59pm) and should be submitted via the EXAM link/dropbox. I encourage students to begin working on the exam no later than Week 2 so that responses to each
essay are thorough and substantive.

**ESSAY QUESTIONS**

Responses should be typed, double-spaced, one-inch margins, and in 12-point font. Use the book, slides, and handouts. The inclusion of outside research and information is encouraged. Make sure to include citations and references in APA if you use additional sources. Do NOT plagiarize or copy my notes or the PP slides verbatim. Make sure to write responses in your OWN words.

Respond to all FIVE questions. Responses are worth up to 30 points per question.

1. What are some characteristics indicative of the average male inmate? What are some characteristics indicative of the average female inmate? What are some of the primary differences between male and female inmates and prisons? What are some of the problems women may experience working as correctional officers in male prisons?

2. Give a detailed historical overview of the American prison system. Make sure to include information pertaining to the following: nation’s first prisoners, nation’s first prisons, early development (who/when/where), role of slavery, twentieth century developments, and major consequences associated with mass incarceration. Be sure to mention some of the costs associated with crime and punishment!

3. You are the chief budget analyst for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. The state legislature wants to cut the budget for the department and suggests reducing by 50 percent all funding for community and prison treatment programs. Create an argument that is as convincing as possible that this money should not be cut from the department’s budget.

4. You are in charge of planning for a correctional agency. You believe that challenges for correctional administration are usually influenced by the development of new correctional philosophies. You have been asked to speculate on the next era of correctional philosophy that will develop from the current “get tough” approach. What do you think is the “next era” of correctional philosophy? What changes would need to be made to implement this new philosophy?

5. You are the chief of mental health services for a state department of corrections. The director is under pressure from the governor and mental health advocates, who say that the department has ignored the needs of mentally ill inmates. You know their points have some validity because the department does not have many specialized mental health programs. This issue has been heightened by two mentally ill inmates who committed suicide by hanging themselves in the prisons over the past sixty days. In addition, a mentally ill inmate was raped in another prison. Also, an inmate suffering from mental illness murdered a staff member last week. How do you design an effective mental health program for inmates and what resources can you seek or consult to establish and implement the program?

**Discussion Posts (100 points)**
In Weeks 1-4, students are required to participate in class discussions. Participation in weekly discussions is very important as they make up 25% of your total grade in the course. You are required to post a response to the discussion question by Wednesday (11:59pm) each week and respond to at least two of your peers by Sunday (11:59pm) each week for a total of THREE posts minimum each week. The **quality of your posts and responses** will be evaluated to determine your weekly discussion grade (25 points possible each week).

Discussion posts and responses should be **thorough, critical, and well written**. Make sure to provide complete references (in APA) for authors you cite in the body of your response, including the textbook. Make sure references are correctly cited in APA, including websites. You need to provide the correct website link in APA so that it is easy for your classmates (and me) to locate. Whenever possible, apply textbook concepts to real world issues. I encourage you to provide examples and experiences from the real world; your own experiences, something you read in the news, etc. A more familiar, conversational tone is acceptable (unlike papers which require a more academic or professional tone). However, make sure to proofread your responses prior to posting. Look for spelling and grammatical errors. You are encouraged to critically examine what you read!

**Week 1 Discussion Question:** Drawing from the PP Slides related to the goals of punishment, which of the goals of punishment do you think are the most important for our criminal justice system? Does our correctional system do a “good” job of achieving these goals? Explain your responses.

**Week 2 Discussion Question:** Click on the following link: [http://sentencingproject.org/doc/publications/inc_Trends_in_Corrections_Fact_sheet.pdf](http://sentencingproject.org/doc/publications/inc_Trends_in_Corrections_Fact_sheet.pdf) In your discussion post this week, discuss three major trends in U.S. Corrections. What did you learn and did anything surprise you?

**Week 3 Discussion Question:** Researchers estimate that more than 25% of inmates are mentally ill and approximately 16% are severely mentally ill. One survey found that there are more mentally ill people in jail or prison than hospitals. In your opinion, is our correctional system equipped to effectively manage and treat people with mental illnesses. Who should be responsible for housing and treating people with mental illness, particularly if a crime or crimes were committed?

**Week 4 Discussion Question:** Privatization of prisons has increased in recent years. What are some of the pros and cons of prison privatization? In your opinion, should prisons be run by the government or by private corporations?

**Assignments (100 points)**

Assignment 1 is due by Sunday, July 17 (11:59pm). Click on the Assignments tab to submit the assignment. Go to a good search engine (I would suggest [http://www.google.com](http://www.google.com)) and type in ‘prison survival guide’. Find a good and reasonably comprehensive one. Summarize the information and tips contained in the guide. List any questions and/or disagreements you had with the advice given. This assignment is worth up to 20 points.
Assignment 2 is due by Sunday, July 24 (11:59pm). Click on the Assignments tab to submit the assignment. Go to [http://www.justdetention.org/](http://www.justdetention.org/). Click on Fact Sheets under Publications. Write a 2-3 page paper reviewing one of the fact sheets. Provide a brief overview of the fact sheet. What did you learn? Please make sure to provide a citation to the work you review in this paper. This assignment is worth up to 40 points.

Assignment 3 is due by Sunday, July 31 (11:59pm). Select a country (any country except the United States). Provide an overview of crime and punishment in that country. What is the crime rate in the country you selected? How are people punished in the country you selected? Discuss interesting facts and information you learned while researching crime and punishment in the country you selected. Please make sure to provide citations and references in APA. This assignment is worth up to 40 points.

**Chapter Questions (50 points)**

Responses to Chapter Questions are due on Sunday each week (11:59pm), Weeks 1-4. Click on the Assignments tab to submit assignments each week.

Week 1: Chapters 1 and 7 (10 points)
Week 2: Chapter 2 and 8 (10 points)
Week 3: Chapters 4, 5, and 6 (20 points)
Week 4: Chapters 9 and 11 (10 points)

**Week 1: Chapters 1 and 7 due by Sunday, July 10 (11:59pm)**

**Chapter 1**

1. Approximately how many people in the United States are under some type of community supervision?

2. What problems can overcrowding cause?

3. Is overcrowding the primary cause of a decline in prison conditions?

4. What were the major findings from Useem and Kimball (1989)?

5. Research on overcrowding tends to focus on three main areas: what are they?

6. According to practitioners, who are responsible for prison policies which usually leave correctional administrators out of the process?

7. What is the purpose of the study presented in the practitioner perspective?

8. What were the major findings from the study?
9. What types of studies should lawmakers conduct BEFORE enacting stiffer criminal penalties?

10. Which inmates should be eligible for alternatives to incarceration according to correctional administrators?

11. Describe the impact of overcrowding from the inmate perspective.

Chapter 7

1. What are some common assumptions versus the realities of Supermax prisons?

2. Which prison housed the nation’s most dangerous and disruptive inmates (federal) from 1932-1963?

3. What are some other names for Supermax prisons?

4. How many hours per day are inmates required to be in their cells?

5. How many inmates are in Supermax prisons? What percent of felony offenders does this represent?

6. From 1991-1995, did the number of assaults on staff increase or decrease?

7. The academic perspective describes which prison? What is the physical appearance of this prison?

8. What is the inmate experience in a Supermax (i.e. typical day)?

9. What are some of the psychological consequences of life in a Supermax?

10. What are some of the psychiatric disorders that emerge as a result of life in a Supermax?

11. According to the academic perspective, what are some solutions or alternatives to Supermax prisons?

12. What is the definition of a Supermax according to the practitioner perspective?

13. What are the three elements of a Supermax as discussed by King (1999)?

14. What were the major findings in the NIC (1998) study?

15. Describe the prisoner perspective of life in a Supermax.

Week 2: Chapters 2 and 8 due by Sunday, July 17 (11:59pm)
Chapter 2

1. Is the increase in women’s imprisonment the result of a change in women’s crime or a shift in the criminal justice system’s response to female offenders? Explain.

2. How many women were under correctional supervision in 1980? 1990? 2001?

3. The U.S. has the highest incarceration rate in the world which has sparked two trends. What are these two trends?

4. What crimes are women being arrested for most often?

5. Are increases in female imprisonment directly explained by increases in female crime? Explain.

6. Provide a detailed profile of women in prison.

7. Why is our criminal justice system more willing to incarcerate women than ever before?

8. Chesney-Lind offers some recommendations for addressing female offending. What are some of her suggestions?

9. What is the impact of incarceration on women and children?

10. How has Bedford Hills tried to less the negative impacts of incarceration of women and children?

11. Why do women use drugs? How are they involved in the drug trade?

12. What are the costs of drug treatment versus incarceration/foster care?

13. What are the primary differences between male and female inmates in doing time? Who visits men in prison? Who visits women in prison?

14. How has the prison system tried to make women “equal” and why is this problematic?

15. What issues, stories, and/or statements stood out to you the most while reading the ex-prisoner perspective?

Chapter 8

1. Why were women finally allowed to work as correctional officers in male prisons?

2. In what year were women allowed to work as correctional officers at United States Penitentiaries?
3. In 1999, what percent of correctional officers were women?

4. According to the research, why might female correctional officers be beneficial to male institutions?

5. Women officers often face more resistance from male officers than male inmates. Why is there so much resistance from male officers?

6. Describe the study and major findings presented in the practitioner perspective.

7. Who are the authors of the ex-prisoner perspective?

8. What are common words used by inmates to denote correctional officers?

9. Describe the social world of the male prison.

10. How do male prisoners talk about sex?

11. How do male prisoners react and interact with female correctional officers?

12. Can female correctional officers provide a measure of civility in male prisons?

Week 3: Chapters 4, 5, and 6 due by Sunday, July 24 (11:59pm)

Chapter Four

1. Why is prison health care such a HUGE issue?

2. Why do so many inmates have such poor health?

3. How do the HIV/AIDS rates of inmates compare to the general population?

4. How do people contract HIV/AIDS? What is the primary risk factor for transmission of AIDS among prisoners?

5. What percent of inmates have HIV/AIDS (by race/gender)?

6. What are the arguments FOR mandatory HIV/AIDS testing?

7. What are the arguments AGAINST mandatory HIV/AIDS testing?

8. What are the arguments FOR segregation of inmates with HIV/AIDS?

9. What are the arguments AGAINST segregation of inmates with HIV/AIDS?
10. Discussion: Does the distribution of condoms encourage sexual activity?

11. Which Supreme Court case held that inmates are entitled to “adequate medical care”? 

12. It is estimated that 40-60% of intravenous drug users with HIV also have this disease?

13. What are some of the recommendations given by Lipton with respect to HIV/AIDS in prison?

14. The female inmates described by Dr. De Groot not only suffer with HIV/AIDS, they suffer from a wide range of horrors. What are some of their tragedies?

15. What is the phrase used by Texas prisoners to describe the ritual of sexual conquest?

16. Free Associate: What emotions did you feel when you read the practitioner perspective?

17. Free Associate: What emotions did you feel when you read the prisoner’s perspective?

Chapter 5

1. Where did prison gangs first originate/organize?

2. What is the term used by correctional practitioners to refer to gangs and other groups which earn a profit through intimidation, violence, etc.?

3. Why do we have such limited knowledge of prison gangs?

4. What are the opposing academic views with respect to prison gangs?

5. What was the first CA prison gang and what year did they form? Which gang formed to challenge them?

6. What are some of the most prominent prison gangs?

7. What strategies and policies are utilized to control gangs in prison?

8. What are the three reasons that prison guards may allow gangs to develop and continue?

9. What is the term used to officially note in an inmate’s file that he is a suspected gang member?

10. What are “snitches” and how are they treated in the system?

11. Why do we have such limited information about newer gangs?
12. How do new gang members differ from older gang members?

13. Describe the practitioner perspective on prison gang tattoos.

Chapter 6

1. What are the two primary types of prison violence?
2. When and where did the first major prison riot occur?
3. How many prison riots occurred between 1900 and 1985?
4. What is instrumental violence?
5. What is expressive violence?
6. What are the primary sources of prison violence?
7. Does overcrowding contribute to prison violence?
8. Where did the two most deadly prison riots occur?
9. What are some strategies for reducing prison violence?
10. According to the “prisoner perspective”, what was the primary reason for the murder of so many inmates in the NM prison riot?

Week 4: Chapters 9 and 11 due by Sunday, July 31 (11:59pm)

Chapter 9

1. What has led to the dramatic increase in the prison population?
2. When did prison privatization begin?
3. Should a private entity profit from the punishment of law-breakers?
4. What are some of the various services that are contracted out?
5. What is the largest private prison company?
6. What are some of the arguments which lend support for privatization of prisons?
7. What types of studies have been conducted with respect to private prisons?
8. What were the major results of the study comparing job satisfaction for public versus private sector employees?

Chapter 11

1. Who was Gary Gilmore? Describe his background and what happened to him.


3. What did the author find when he studied a particular deathwatch team?

4. Thigpen, a correctional practitioner, has observed over eight executions. What are his views on the subject?

5. What procedures occurred over the course of Walker’s last day?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exam</th>
<th>150 points</th>
<th>Due on Thursday, August 4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Posts</td>
<td>100 points</td>
<td>Main post due by Wed; responses due by Sunday each week; Weeks 1-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Questions</td>
<td>50 points</td>
<td>Due on Sunday each week; Weeks 1-4</td>
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<td>Assignments (3)</td>
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<td>Due on Sunday each week: Weeks 2, 3, 4</td>
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A = 90-100% 360-400 points
B = 80-89% 320-359 points
C = 70-79% 280-319 points
D = 60-69% 240-279 points
F = 59% and below 239 and below

Required Readings:


Week 1: Chapters 1 and 7 and PP Slides
Week 2: Chapters 2 and 8 and PP Slides
Week 3: Chapters 4, 5, and 6 and PP Slides
Week 4: Chapter 9 and 11 and PP Slides
Week 5: PP Slides

Website:

Your online class will be using the Blackboard platform. You cannot get access to the course until the summer II term begins on Tuesday, July 5. To access Blackboard and get around in the course beginning July 5, follow the steps below:
Office Hours: I will not hold on campus office hours; please e-mail me and send me your phone number if you need to speak with me by phone. I will respond to emails within 24 hours.

Follow the link to TAMUCC Island Online: https://iol.tamucc.edu/

On the lower right hand side of the screen you will see a log-in for Blackboard. Click on Blackboard and then enter your log-in information. Your log-in is your Banner ID (A number) and PIN. If you have trouble with your log-in, please contact Island Online Support;

- By Phone:
  - 361-825-2825 (Local)
  - 1-866-353-2491 (Long Distance)
- By E-mail: islandonline@tamucc.edu
- Hours of Operation:
  - 8:00 A.M. to 10:00 P.M. Everyday (U.S. Central)

Once in Blackboard, all of the classes you are currently taking will be listed in the middle of the screen. Look for Issues in Corrections CRIJ-3320-W01.

The first thing you will see in Blackboard is a welcome announcement from your instructor.

The course content is found by clicking on the tabs on the left hand side of the screen.

Some of the most important tabs are:

Syllabus: Click on this link in order to access the syllabus.

Announcements: I will post announcements frequently throughout the course.

Discussions: You are required to participate in weekly discussions. The discussion questions are listed under this link as well as in the Learning Modules.

EXAM: Click on this icon to access and submit the exam in the course.

Course Policies:

Late work and Make-up Exams
Late exams, papers, and discussions will result in an automatic 5-point reduction per day.

Extra Credit
No extra credit will be given. No exceptions!!!
**Academic Integrity/Plagiarism.**

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a zero for that assignment or test.

**ACADEMIC ADVISING**

The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call (361) 825-3466.

**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.

**GRADE APPEALS 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, cla.tamu.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.
Syllabus

Course Outline

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, do not hesitate to give me a call/send me an e-mail. I am available to assist you with information pertaining to this course and to the criminal justice system in general.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assigned Readings</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Punishment History Supermax</td>
<td>PowerPoint slides Chapter 1 Chapter 7</td>
<td>Wed/Sun Discussion Posts and Responses Sunday: Chapter 1 and 7 Questions</td>
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<td>Gender Race</td>
<td>PowerPoint slides Chapter 2 Chapter 8</td>
<td>Wed/Sun Discussion Posts and Responses Sunday: Chapter 2 and 8 Questions and Assignment 1</td>
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<td>Chapter 4 Chapter 5 Chapter 6</td>
<td>Wed/Sun Discussion Posts and Responses Sunday: Chapters 4, 5, 6 Questions and Assignment 2</td>
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<td>Chapter 9 Chapter 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Future of Corrections</td>
<td>PowerPoint slides</td>
<td>Exam due on Thursday</td>
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