1. Course Description

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 laundring money through legal enterprises and blurring the line between one and the other. We will 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.

The topics of drug cartels, human trafficking, and drug consumption appear on the news and headlines of major newspapers every day. 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.

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 extreme crime scenes. This is because organized crime uses these latter phenomena as tools to pursue its criminal enterprises. 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.
This course will address several major themes concerning organized crime (OC), including, but not limited to:

2. 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

3. Communication

E-mails from students will be replied within 24 hours Monday thru Friday. During weekends or holidays students should expect a reply by the end of the next school business day. I encourage you to talk or discuss any issue with me via email. I will not be on my computer 24/7. I will reply to you email or communication within a reasonable time. REMEMBER, you should make it a habit to check for emails using your Islander email account. If you need to contact me do so through my university email not Blackboard.

4. Course Overview

Please read the entire syllabus and go through the current 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 and Internet interaction, otherwise the whole purpose of studying and learning at the university 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 and engaging actively through Blackboard. The best way to succeed in this class is reading all the material, doing critical analyses, and asking questions as needed.

The amount of reading varies between 50-90 pages per week, which is the typical amount for an upper division online class such as this one. The best part is that all required books, newspaper articles, and media assignments are engaging and interesting 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 in your calendar and make sure you have an appropriate working computer and Internet connection when taking quizzes. Technical difficulties such as, “my little
brother dropped my computer and broke it” 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.

5. Course Readings

Required Books:


In addition there will be some reports, and newspaper and magazines articles posted on Blackboard under Course Content weeks one, three, and five. They will be found in folders corresponding to the weeks in which they are assigned.

6. Access, Navigation, and Technology Requirements

Since this is an online class all the content will be accessed online through Blackboard. You must be familiar with the Blackboard program and must know how to navigate it. If you are not, please contact IT help for students at this address: https://iol.tamucc.edu/student_resources.html

To ensure your computer runs properly in Blackboard on either PC or MAC. I strongly recommend you to perform a “Browser Test” prior to the start of this course. Carefully read TAMUCC Blackboard technical requirements here: https://iol.tamucc.edu/techreq.html

Also, if you have any technical problem or need technical support using Blackboard, contact the IT helpdesk. Information is located in the above web address.

Once on Blackboard, students can access course information by clicking on the ‘Course Content’ icon of the course and then opening the weekly unit content area identified as ‘Week 1’, ‘Week 2,’ etc. (this corresponds to the course schedule listed at the end of this syllabus). Each unit/week contains the material needed to work on the written assignments and quizzes.
7. Course Requirements

There will be 3 quizzes in the course in weeks one, three, and five. In addition, there will be 2 written assignments (short essays) in weeks two and four, and some Blackboard interaction throughout the five weeks. Quizzes and instructions to assignments are found within folders corresponding to the assigned weeks under ‘Course Content’ on Blackboard.

1. All quizzes will consist of 26 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 12:30am Friday through Saturday at 11:59pm. You will have a 55 minutes limit on each of the quizzes and can complete the quiz anytime within the two days period during which it is available. However, each quiz can only be taken once. **If you pass the 55 minutes allowed time Blackboard will shut off the quiz automatically.**

The quiz schedule is as follows:

- QUIZ 1, week one: Available 06/02/17 12:30am through 06/03/17 midnight
- QUIZ 2, week three: Available 06/16/17 12:30am through 06/17/17 midnight
- QUIZ 3, week five: Available 06/30/17 12:30am through 07/01/17 midnight

2. The short essays 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.

Short essays must be submitted electronically by the due date, placed in the SafeAssignment folder. No grade will be provided otherwise (no grade equals a zero). **Late assignments will not be accepted.** The instructions for each written assignment will be located in the ‘Course Content’ folder of Blackboard. In the same folder you will find the SafeAssignment link to upload your essay electronically.

- Short essay #1 week two: due Saturday 06/10/17 by 11:59pm
- Short essay #2 week four: due Saturday 06/24/17 by 11:59pm
3. Blackboard interaction will consist of two activities:

a) **Introduction assignment**: Two short paragraphs providing your personal Bio using the following questions: 1. Who are you? 2. What is your major? 3. Where you are at while taking this course? 4. Why are you taking this class? And, 5. What are your expectations of this online class? (Assignment is worth 1 point).

This Intro must be posted on Blackboard under the Discussion Forum within 72 hours (3 days) after the semester begins (due date is Thursday June 1st, 2017 by 11:59pm.).

b) **Two discussion posts**: In weeks two and three, students are expected to engage in an ongoing discussion/debate with your classmates. Every contribution to the discussion forum will be graded in terms of content (quality), timeliness of the contribution, and critical thinking analysis presented where theory (readings) and practice (real life examples) meet. I will provide the guidelines for every discussion forum at the beginning of each week. *First post is due Sunday June 11th, 2017 by 11:59pm. Second one is due on Sunday 18th, 2017 by 11:59pm.*

Your posts should be a minimum of 150 words in length (the equivalent of two medium size paragraphs). Remember that all posts must be substantive and meaningful. Merely agreeing with or disagreeing with a classmate is not an academic contribution. A meaningful post is when the discussion moves forward in an academic way by providing one’s perspective—including facts and evidence—and assessing both or multiple sides of the issue at stake. Then framing or reframing the debate in new and dynamic ways.

Proper grammar and word usage are required. These are formal assignments and will be graded accordingly. Each of these two posts is worth 2 point each.

**Discussion Forum (Posts) Etiquette:**

1. Respect your classmates
   - Be careful of informal tone
   - Avoid public ridicule of others
   - Allow others a voice
   - Only say online what you would also say in person
2. Be straightforward in your language and write what you mean.
3. Be honest, open, and keep it brief
4. Make meaningful and engaging contributions only
I am aware that sometimes there are issues related to Blackboard (Bb) and contemporary technology. However, it is your responsibility to be familiar with Bb and learn how to deal with potential technological problems related to it. DO NOT E-MAIL ME ASKING ME QUESTIONS ABOUT TECHNOLOGICAL ISSUES ON BB. Rather contact the university IT department or help desk to ask them about it.

8. Evaluation

Quizzes (3 quizzes): 15 point each  
Two Written Assignments: 25 point each  
Blackboard Interaction [Intro (1 point) 2 posts (4 point)]

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Grading Scale: There is a possible 100 points in this class. I will not make a curve. Do the work to get the grade you want to earn!

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

9. Academics

Virtual 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 drop the class.

Statement of Civility:

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the demographics of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from ideology and repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the
University, city, state and federal government. The University expects 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 this online class 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).

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. June 16th, 2017 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).

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.

TAMUCC Students with Disabilities:

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:**
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that she or he has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of 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, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, (available at [http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C2.01_student_grade_appeal_procedure.pdf](http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C2.01_student_grade_appeal_procedure.pdf)). For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, [http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html](http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

**13. Course Outline**

**Week 1, Organized Crime and Mafia**
**May 30- June 3**
- Finckernauer, J.O. Read: Foreword and Chapters 1 & 2.
- Saviano, R. Read: *The Port, Angelina Jolie, The system* and *The Secondigliano war* sections.
- **Introduction Post** due on Thursday June 1st, 2017 (see guidelines above in page 5)
- **Quiz one** available from Friday June 2th, 2017 at 12:30am thru Saturday June 3rd, 2017 by midnight.

**Week 2, Theoretical approaches on organized crime and its many faces**
**June 5-10**
- Finckenauer, J.O. Read: Chapters 3, 4, and 5.
- Movies: Black Mass, Goodfellas, The Godfather I, Scarface (choose one among these four and obtain a copy for your own viewing – you can use Netflix, Amazon Instant
Video, the Internet, the library, or whatever source to obtain your copy, but it is your responsibly to obtain it

- **Short Essay # 1**, 3-4 pages, due on Saturday June 10th 2017 by midnight.
- **First Discussion Forum Post** due Sunday June 11th, 2017 by 11:59pm.

**Week 3, Organized crime is what organized crime does**
**June 12-17**
- Saviano, R. *Aberdeen, Mondragone, Lands of fires, and Don Peppino Diana* sections.
- **Quiz two** available from Friday June 17th, 2016 at 12:30am thru Saturday June 17th, 2017 by midnight. The content of this quiz will include readings from weeks 2 and 3.
- **Second Discussion Forum Post** due Sunday June 18th, 2017 by 11:59pm.

**Week 4, Business and typical activities of organized crime**
**June 19-24**
- Finckenauer, J.O. Read: Chapters 6 and 7.
- Partington, J. & Violet, A. Read: Prologue, parts (chapters) 1 to 15.
- Movies: Donnie Brasco, Traffic, Sicario, Los Sopranos—first season (choose one among these four and obtain a copy for your own viewing – you can use Netflix, Amazon Instant Video, the library, or any other source; however, it is your responsibly to obtain it)
- **Short Essay # 2**, 3-4 pages, due on Saturday June 24th, 2017 by midnight.

**Week 5, Fighting organized crime**
**June 26-July 1**
- Partington, J. & Violet, A. Read: Parts (chapters) 16 to 25.
- Keefe, P.R. ‘*The Hunt for El Chapo*’ The New Yorker: [http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2014/05/05/140505fa_fact_keefe?currentPage=all](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2014/05/05/140505fa_fact_keefe?currentPage=all)
- **Quiz three** available from June 30th, 2017 at 12am thru Saturday July 1st, 2017 at midnight. The content of this quiz will include readings from weeks 4 and 5.

I understand that this is a short summer course and some students work full-time during the summer. However, students must be responsible for doing all the readings in a timely manner, taking quizzes on schedule, and turning in essays on due dates. 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.