1. Course Description

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.

### 2. 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.

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 will be one chapter per week and in some weeks visual material such as a documentary, TED talk, etc., which is the typical amount for an upper division online class such as this one. The best part is that all required book, 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 exams. 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:

2. In addition, there will be newspaper and magazine articles/reports to read for some specific weeks as well as a couple of documentaries to watch. I will post on Bb the links where to find them one week before they are due. Check course schedule below for detailed information.

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: http://it.tamu.cc.edu/
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.tamu.cc.edu/bb_resources_students.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

a) Exams:

There will be 5 (exams) exams –each will cover three chapters from our textbook and additional material assigned during the corresponding weeks. All 5 exams will consist of multiple choice questions which will be developed from readings, films, assignments, and other class work. I will provide a general study guide before each exam at least one week prior to taking it. If you are having problems, academically, socially or emotionally, etc., please talk to me if your grades are affected.
All exams will consist of multiple choice questions. They are designed to test your knowledge on the reading materials. In weeks 3, 6, 10, 13, and 16 the exams will be available to you beginning at 12:30am Thursdays through Saturday at 11:59pm. You will have a 45 minutes limit on each of the exams and can complete them anytime within the three days period during which it is available. However, each exam can only be taken once, the exams will be timed by the computer and once students begin they cannot save the file and return later. Do not wait until the final hour of the due date to take the exam in case of technical glitches or computer failures. **If you pass the 45 minutes allowed time Blackboard will shut off the quiz automatically.**

Students are not allowed to use their books while taking exams. Be aware, there will be many questions and little time to spend flipping through the class material to find the answers. Eventually you will run out of time. Also, exam questions are randomly scrambled by Blackboard, if two students take the exam at the same time, they will not be answering the same questions and time will expire. All exams will be posted on Bb with instructions and you will take them on your computer. Make sure you have a reliable Internet connection and do not take them in your cell phones. Avoid coffee shops and instead go to the library or a place where is quiet and easy to concentrate. The exams are scheduled as follows:

EXAM 1, week three: Available 01/31/19 12:30am through 02/02/19 midnight  
EXAM 2, week six: Available 02/21/19 12:30am though 02/23/19 midnight  
EXAM 3, week ten: Available 03/21/19 12:30am though 03/23/19 midnight  
EXAM 4, week thirteen: Available 04/11/19 12:30am though 04/13/19 midnight  
EXAM 5, week sixteen: Available 05/02/19 12:30am though 05/04/19 midnight

b) Written Assignment:

There will be **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 which is Saturday April 20th, 2019 by 11:59pm.

The short assignment 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 under ‘Announcements’ on Blackboard. In the folder ‘Course Content’ you will find the SafeAssignment link to upload your essay electronically. Assignments due dates are:
c) Blackboard interaction will consist of two activities:

a) **Introduction assignment post**: Two short paragraphs providing your personal Bio This Intro must be posted on Blackboard under the Discussion Forum within 72 hours (3 days) after the semester begins. Due date is Thursday Jan 17\textsuperscript{th}, 2019 by 11:59pm. Assignment is worth 2 point.

b) **Two discussion posts**: In weeks five and twelve 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 Saturday February 16\textsuperscript{th}, 2019 by 11:59pm. Second one is due on April 6\textsuperscript{th}, 2019 by 11:59pm.** I will post detailed guidelines of these assignments the week they are due. **Each post is worth 4 points.**

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

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Exams (5): 15 point each</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75%</td>
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<tr>
<td>One Written Assignment: 15 point each</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bb Discussion Posts: Intro (2) Two Forum Posts (4 each)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100%</td>
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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 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 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).

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.

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 your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course.** 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 5th, 2019 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).

Disabilities Accommodations:
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 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.

Statement of Academic Continuity:
In the event 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.

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.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she 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.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals. These documents are accessible online at:
http://academicaffairs.tamu.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal in CLA, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html

10. Course Schedule

| Week 1 | Jan 14 – Jan 18 | - Introduction to Criminal Justice  
- **Introduction Post due on Th Jan 17** by midnight | -Payne, Oliver, and Marion Chapter 1 |
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Jan 22 – Jan 25</td>
<td>-Perspectives on Crime and Criminal Justice Research</td>
<td>-Payne, Oliver, and Marion Chapter 2</td>
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| Week 3 | Jan 28 – Feb 01 | - An Introduction to Measuring Crime and Crime Patterns  
1st Exam: From Jan 31 (12:30am) to Feb 02 (11:59pm) | -Payne, Oliver, and Marion Chapter 3 |
| Week 4 | Feb 04 – Feb 08 | - An Introduction to Crime Typologies  
-Watch documentary: *Into the Abysm* (link on Bb) | -Payne, Oliver, and Marion Chapter 4 |
| Week 5 | Feb 11 – Jan 15 | - An Introduction to Criminological Theory  
-1st Discussion Post due on Sat Feb 16 by midnight | -Payne, Oliver, and Marion Chapter 5 |
| Week 6 | Feb 18 – Feb 22 | An Introduction to Policing: History and Structure  
2nd Exam: From Feb 21 (12:30am) to Feb 23 (11:59pm) | -Payne, Oliver, and Marion Chapter 6 |
<p>| Week 7 | Feb 25 – March 1 | - Police Strategies | -Payne, Oliver, and Marion Chapter 7 |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>March 4 – March 8</td>
<td>Issues in Policing</td>
<td>Payne, Oliver, and Marion Chapter 8</td>
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<td>- Watch documentary: <em>The Central Park Five</em> (link on Bb)</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>March 11 – March 15</td>
<td>No Classes Spring break</td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
<td>March 18 – March 22</td>
<td>Introduction to the Courts: History, Structure, and Actors</td>
<td>Payne, Oliver, and Marion Chapter 9</td>
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<td>3rd Exam: From Mar 21, 12:30am to Mar 23, 11:59pm</td>
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<td>Week 11</td>
<td>March 25 – March 29</td>
<td>The Judicial Process</td>
<td>Payne, Oliver, and Marion Chapter 10</td>
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<td>- Watch TED Talk: <em>Suffolk District Attorney Adam Foss</em> (link on Bb)</td>
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<td>Week 12</td>
<td>April 1 – April 5</td>
<td>Issues in the Courts</td>
<td>Payne, Oliver, and Marion Chapter 11</td>
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<td>- 2nd Discussion Post due on Sat April 6th by midnight</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 13</td>
<td>April 8 – April 12</td>
<td>An Intro to Corrections: History, Structure, and Actors</td>
<td>Payne, Oliver, and Marion Chapter 12</td>
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<td>4th Exam: From April 11 12:30am to April 13, 11:59pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 14</td>
<td>April 15 – April 19</td>
<td>Punishing Offenders in Prisons, Jails, and the Community</td>
<td>Payne, Oliver, and Marion Chapter 13</td>
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<td>- Short Written Essay due on April 20 by 11:59pm on Bb.</td>
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<td>Week 15</td>
<td>April 23 – April 26</td>
<td>Issues in Corrections</td>
<td>Payne, Oliver, and Marion Chapter 14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 16</td>
<td>April 29 – May 1</td>
<td>Current and Future Criminal Justice Issues</td>
<td>Payne, Oliver, and Marion Chapter 15</td>
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<td>5th Exam: From May 02 12:30am to May 04 11:59pm</td>
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**Disclaimer:** This syllabus constitutes an agreement between the instructor and the student in accordance with TAMUCC policy and is subject to terms and conditions set forth herein. This syllabus is tentative and subject to revision in whole or in part, in writing at my discretion. Course content may also vary from this syllabus to meet the needs of this particular class. Each revision shall be subject to the terms and conditions set forth above. It is your responsibility to keep up with changes to the syllabus. Any changes will be posted on Blackboard and discussed via email.

Students must be responsible for doing all the readings in a timely manner, taking exams on schedule, and turning the essay 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. Instructor reserves the right to make changes and or revisions to this syllabus as deemed necessary and appropriate; students will be notified via email and/or Blackboard announcement of these changes.