Contemporary Issues in Criminal Justice  
Fall 2005

Professor: Mary Maguire, Ph.D.  
Office: Alpine 104  
Lecture: TR 12:00–1:15, Alpine Room 153  
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

As stated in the CSU catalog description, this course provides an examination of current issues in criminal justice with an emphasis on the application of law, management, practice, and ethics to the analysis of contemporary criminal justice policy. This course is the culminating event for criminal justice majors with an emphasis on written and oral communication, research, and analytical thinking. By the end of the semester the students will have:

1) demonstrated their knowledge of the spectrum of academic Criminal Justice curricula;  
2) demonstrated their fluency with the current literature and trends in criminal justice theory, research, and practice;  
3) examined the issues and influences of/on criminal justice;  
4) examined the history, currency and future of criminal justice; and  
5) articulated a critical understanding/appreciation of criminal justice in contemporary society.

REQUIRED BOOKS:


Criminology, 6E. Dushkin McGraw Hill. (see in schedule as “M”)


At the discretion of the instructor, additional readings may be assigned throughout the course of the semester.

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

(1) Debate  20%
(2) Examinations  30%
(1) Papers/Presentations  35%, (divided into 5 smaller papers with 4 graded)
Participation  15%

Examinations

There are two exams in this course. There will be no make-up mid-term exams unless you advise me ahead of the exam day of a valid need to reschedule. There will be no make-up final exams.

Students are expected to take the exams when they are scheduled. Those who are more than 15 minutes late for a regularly scheduled examination, or those who are excused from a regularly scheduled examination must take a make-up exam. Make-up exams, whether necessitated by an excused or non-excused absence, will be docked ten points to compensate for the additional study time the late exam allowed.

Debates

There are five class periods scheduled for debates in this course. Each student will prepare at least one side of one debate during the term. Additional debates can be scheduled and/or topics of debate might be altered to fit the scholarly needs/interests of the students involved in a particular debate. If you miss your debate you will receive a zero on the assignment. If time allows and there is an opening for you to participate in another debate, you may do so. Your two grades will be averaged. A description of the debate assignment can be found at the end of this syllabus.
There is one research paper requirement for this course which is broken down into five (four graded) smaller papers. The parameters for each small paper are listed below. The paper will be written from the perspective of your major interest; in this program the major areas of content are theory, police/law enforcement, jurisprudence/law/courts, corrections and leadership/management. You will choose a focused topic of interest (topic options and examples will be discussed in class) and explore the topic through the perspective of each of the program interest areas. Using short paper two as an example, if you are writing from a policing perspective, you might write a brief contextual history of policing and continue with future trends in a particular area of policing. From a criminal law perspective, you might write about laws of policing or particular changes in laws impacting law enforcement. From a corrections perspective you might write about the interface of police discretion and parole decisions. These are only suggestions (and only for paper two); the possibilities are limitless. The small paper parameters and grade distribution are as follows:

Short Paper One: A draft paper proposal to include your area of interest, thoughts on a theoretical framework, your ideas on how your topic will interface with policing, the courts, and corrections.
Not graded

Short Paper Two: A literature review of theory and practice of your interest area. This paper should include a strong theoretical component. It is essentially a short theory paper.
5%

Short Paper Three: A short literature review of the interface of your topic with policing. This should refresh your memory on issues of policing and strengthen your understanding of the correlates of your interest area and policing.
5%

Short Paper Four: A short literature review of the interface of your topic with the courts/law/policy. This should refresh your memory on issues of our court system and strengthen your understanding of the correlates of your interest area and jurisprudence and the courts.
5%

Short Paper Five: A short literature review of the interface of your topic with the corrections system. This paper should have all previous papers synthesized into one final research paper. It should include smooth connections between sections and provide a final conclusion to include policy/practice implications.
20%
GRADING SCALE:

A  = 93-100  B+ = 87-89  C+ = 76-79  D+ = 66-69  F = below 60
A- = 90-92  B  = 83-86  C  = 73-75  D  = 63-65
B- = 80-82  C- = 70-72*  D- = 60-62

*IMPORTANT NOTE: CRJ 194 is a core course so CRJ majors must earn a grade of C- or better to avoid having to re-take it.

Grading Rubric: Written work will be graded on both substance and quality of writing. The following grading rubric is generally followed:

A grades are awarded by work that goes above and beyond the required assignment. This includes work that has been carefully edited and contains no grammatical errors, work that uses multiple sources outside of assigned course material, and that provides a solid analysis and synthesis of material in a well organized manner.

B grades are awarded to work of excellent quality. This includes work that is well organized, has few grammatical errors, and that provides a strong analysis of the material studied.

C grades are awarded to average work. This includes work that meets the requirements of the assignment, is organized in a cohesive and acceptable manner and that illustrates a command of the material studied.

D grades are awarded to below average work but work that indicates an attempt was made at a C grade. This includes work in which minimal assignment requirements were almost, but not quite met. This work is completed on time but it appears there was no attempt to edit, leaving it difficult to read.

F grades are awarded for assignments that are not completed; that are not close to meeting the assignment requirements or are not coherent.

Incomplete grades will not be given unless there is a legitimate reason why the student cannot complete the required work during the semester. A failing grade is not considered a legitimate excuse.
CLASS POLICIES AND MISCELLANEOUS SURVIVAL SKILLS:

ATTENDANCE; PARTICIPATION; BEING ON TIME: This course is designed to promote a learning community. To this end, we will strive to build a cohesive learning group in which everyone’s perspective is not only welcome but needed. Therefore, it is important that all members of the class can express their ideas in a respectful environment. Any actions that might tend to limit freedom of expression are highly discouraged and come back to haunt you in your final grade. Please be considerate of your fellow classmates. Fifteen percent of your grade will be based on your participation during class. If you miss class, please see a friend to get what you missed.

LATE WORK: Papers must be turned in on or before their due date. If you are going to miss class on an assignment due date it is your responsibility to turn in your paper early. Late papers will be docked five points for every day they are late. On time constitutes the beginning of the class the paper is due.

AMERICAN DISABILITIES ACT: Students with any form of disability requiring academic accommodation must register with the Services to Students with Disabilities, and speak with me about special needs within the first week of class. Official documentation will be required to verify any necessary accommodations. The SSWD web address is: http://www.csus.edu/sswd/ and the phone number is 916-278-6955.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: All materials submitted in fulfillment of course requirements must conform to the Academic Integrity Code and to the usual academic standards governing appropriate testing behavior . . . but here’s the Reader’s Digest version: Don’t cheat. It will end in tears. If you are caught cheating, you will automatically receive a failing grade for this course, among other possible consequences.

TENTATIVE TOPICS AND READING SCHEDULE:

| Week 1: | Aug 30 | Welcome and Introductions |
|         | Sept 1 | Debate assignments; Group discussion |

| Week 2: | Sept 6 | Paper Proposal Due; Thinking theoretically, K preface |
|         | Sept 8 | The micro framework, K6 (art13), K2 (art 1) |

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Week 3:
- Sept 13: The macro framework, K5
- Sept 15: K8

Week 4:
- Sept 20: Debates (prepare questions)/Discussion; M2, M3, M15
- Sept 22: Second Paper Due; Paper Presentations

Week 5:
- Sept 27: Policing: two historical perspectives on deterrence; W6, B&B1
- Sept 29: The working personality and other theories of policing; B&B 2, 3, 4, 5

Week 6:
- Oct 4: Impact on social control: the good, bad and ugly; W5
- Oct 6: Changing policy, changing practice; B&B: read ONE of either 10, 11, 12 or 13

Week 7:
- Oct 11: Debates/Discussion; M16, M5, M4
- Oct 13: Third Paper Due; Paper Presentations

Week 8:
- Oct 18: Jurisprudence/Courts/Law: where are we now?; W1, 2, 8
- Oct 20: Is it true that the only justice in the halls of justice is in the halls?; W3

Week 9:
- Oct 25: Debates/Discussion; M17, M8, M9
- Oct 27: Midterm Exam

Week 10:
- Nov 1: Is Sentencing a precursor to a growing social problem or not?; W7
- Nov 3: Fourth Paper Due; Paper Presentation

Week 11:
- Nov 8: Corrections; K7, R Intro and 2
- Nov 10: Is reform really needed, and if so, what will it look like?; K9

Week 12:
- Nov 15: ASC – No Class; R, Read TWO chapters between 4-10
- Nov 17: ASC – No Class; R, Read TWO chapters between 11-16

Week 13:
- Nov 22: Debates/Discussion; M11, M12, M13
- Nov 24: Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class

Week 14:
- Nov 29: Final Paper Due; Paper Presentations
- Dec 1: Debates/Discussion; M10, M18, M19
DEBATES

TAKING SIDES

It is better to debate a question without settling it than to settle a question without debating it. Kathleen Johnson, Keene State College

Criminology has a complex array of social, environmental, and theoretical problems that challenge our understanding of practice and policy. This assignment requires each person to organize and participate in a debate during one class period. This assignment will help you to be more knowledgeable about a criminological issue and more skilled in making arguments to support your own claims and beliefs.

During the debate, the class will need to know the dimensions of the problem. Who is concerned by it or affected by it? It is not sufficient that panelists merely assert his or her position on the topic. Participants are to present views on the basis of good evidence and reason. The position you take does not necessarily have to reflect your personal views on the issue. Remember, the degree to which we understand any opposing viewpoint is directly related to the level of confidence we can justifiably have in our own convictions.

AUDIENCE ROLE: Everyone plays a role in making debates engaging. To that end, everyone is expected to come to the debate with prepared questions for the panelists. Prepared questions can be developed by reading the debate and/or doing minimal research on the subject. Listen attentively; show respect for the speakers. Take part in the discussion. Anyone, including panel members, can challenge another on matters such as the definition of terms, unstated value premises, the lack or misuse of evidence, reliance on authorities whose expertise is questionable, the pertinence, reliability and validity of evidence and the adequacy of logic.

Grading for debates:

You will be given an evaluation form that will be used for grading each debate. The following questions will be considered in evaluation: How effective was your initial presentation of the problem; how well did you defend your position; did you use outside sources or educational tools during the course of the debate?

In general, the evaluations will be based on the following criteria: 1) substance or content
(reflected in the position on the issue), 2) creativity and resourcefulness, and, 3) form and style (articulation, length, organization, and preparedness).