

CCJS600: SEMINAR IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE
Fall 2024

PROFESSOR

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OFFICE HOURS

Wednesday 1:00PM - 4:00PM
By Appointment

MEETING TIME

Wednesday 4:00PM – 6:45PM

MEETING LOCATION

Lefrak 2165E

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a required course in the MA and Ph.D. Program. It is intended to introduce you to contemporary issues in criminal justice, including current and historical concepts of criminal justice, interrelationships among different components of the system, and the role and function of the justice system in society. The course will be divided into four broad areas that include philosophies of punishment, contemporary policing issues, research on courtroom decision making, and modern trends in corrections.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Students will be expected to attend class in person and should be prepared to discuss assigned readings. The course will rely on student participation in addition to class lectures. Students will be expected to gain a deeper understanding of the historical emergence and contemporary issues surrounding police, courts and corrections. The goal of the course is to provide the student with a solid foundation for understanding current issues in criminal justice, and to encourage them to think critically about the role that the criminal justice system, and its constituent parts, plays in the exercise of social control in society.

COURSE READINGS

Reading requirements for this course include several texts as well as a variety of additional sources. You are responsible for obtaining copies of the texts. Articles will be provided on elms.umd.edu.

Required Course Texts:

Beccaria C. (1764). *An Essay on Crimes and Punishments*. Branden Books c. 1983.
Walker. S. (1998). *Popular Justice: A History of American Criminal Justice*. Oxford University Press.
Wilson, J.Q. and Petersilia, J. (2011). *Crime and Public Policy*. Oxford University Press. New York: NY

Recommended Course Texts:

Dunham and Alpert. (2021). *Critical Issues in Policing*. 8th Ed. Waveland. (recommended)
Spohn, C. (2009). *How Do Judges Decide?* 2nd Ed. Sage. (recommended)
National Academies of Science (2015). *The Growth of Incarceration*. Available at: www.nap.edu.

COURSE GRADING

Grades for this course will be determined by class participation in conjunction with two examinations and several short writing assignments. Final grades will be assigned according to the final grading scheme:

Participation	10%	A	90 or higher
Exam I	30%	B	80-90
Exam II	30%	C	70-80
Writing Assignments	30%	D	60-70
		F	below 60

**Pluses and Minuses will be assigned for grades within ± 2 percentage points from grading cutoffs*

CLASS DISCUSSION

You will be expected to attend all lectures in person at the scheduled class time. I expect that you will have read and critically thought about each of the required readings. Your discussion grade will result from your ability to intelligently identify, introduce and discuss interesting questions and insightful comments from the readings. This part of your grade is inherently subjective, but I will do my best to fairly assess your effort and participation in the class.

EXAMINATIONS

Two examinations will account for 50% of your final grade. These exams will be written essay exams covering major concepts from class lectures, readings, and discussion. Their purpose is to evaluate your ability to think critically about major concepts surrounding the administration of criminal justice in society. They will cover all of the major concepts covered in class lectures and class readings.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

In addition to the examinations, you will also be expected to write several short “research” papers including three assignments based on scholarly research published in one of the following academic journals: *Criminology*, *Criminology and Public Policy*, *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, or *Justice Quarterly*. For these assignments, you will select a scholarly article that is relevant to one of the main topics discussed in class, and then write a short (up to 3 pages) paper describing how the research you have chosen adds to and extends current knowledge on police, courts, or corrections. In other words, your job will be to integrate the article of your choice into our current discussion of contemporary criminal justice issues, critiquing its strengths, weaknesses and general contribution to the discipline.

GRADUATE COURSE POLICIES AND GRADUATE STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Graduate School provides a guide to information about graduate course policies, other policies related to graduate study, and relevant on-campus resources. The guide at the following link applies to your graduate coursework and experience at UMD: <https://gradschool.umd.edu/course-related-policies>. If you have a documented disability, please contact Professor Johnson as soon as possible so that any special arrangements can be made.

ONLINE COURSE MANAGEMENT

Online course resources will be provided through the university course management system available at elms.umd.edu. Students can access weekly reading assignments, the course syllabus, and other relevant class materials through this online system.

The course will be taught in person. However, if at some point during the semester it becomes necessary to move to an online environment, then course lectures would be delivered synchronously through weekly classroom Zoom Meetings. This means that you would log into Zoom during our scheduled class time. In case this becomes necessary (hopefully it will not), a Zoom link is provided below.

Zoom Meeting (only if it becomes necessary)

<https://umd.zoom.us/j/7780278652>

Or you can manually type in the Zoom Meeting ID number and password below:

Meeting ID: 778 027 8652

Passcode: CCJS600

If we do need to switch to online lectures, all Zoom meetings would be recorded. Your participation in class is tantamount to consent to be recorded. The recordings will not be made public and will only be used if extenuating circumstances arise that prevent some students from completing the course in person.

IMPORTANT: As long as the class is taught in person, all current university policies will be followed regarding the use of face coverings or other safety precautions.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The COVID-19 pandemic has reminded all of us how unexpected events can shake up our lives. I want you to know that I will do my best to be flexible should life events arise that make it difficult for you to keep up with the class. In return, I ask that you notify me immediately of any such concerns. If you are having personal or family problems, please know that I want to support you, but to do this effectively, I need to know about these issues before they impact your class performance. Letting me know sooner rather than later is paramount to being able to make accommodations that are both appropriate and fair to other students in the class.

WEEKLY READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Note: This is a tentative schedule subject to necessary adjustments. Additional Readings/Assignments may be given throughout the semester.

SECTION 1: OVERVIEW OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM Readings/Assignments

The mood and temper of the public with regard to the treatment of crime and criminals is one of the most unfailing tests of the civilization of any country.

~Winston Churchill~

Week 1 (8/28): Course Introduction

Course Readings and Expectations
On Crimes and Punishments – Context

Week 2 (9/4): The Meaning of Justice

On Crimes and Punishments – Content

Beccaria, All Chpts.

Week 3 (9/11): The Purposes of Punishment

Theories of Punishment
Philosophies of Punishment
The Creation of Law in Society

**Walker, Ch. 1-3
W&P Ch. 14
Spohn Ch. 1**

Week 4 (9/18): The Emergence of Modern Justice

Historical Perspective on Criminal Justice
International Perspective on Criminal Justice
An Overview of the System
Crime Rates and Crime Statistics

**Walker, Ch. 4-7
W&P Ch. 2
W&P Ch. 19**

SECTION 2: POLICE: GATEKEEPERS OF THE SYSTEM Readings/Assignments

Police are the most visible face of government, one that people recognize and encounter with frequency

~Wes Skogan~

Week 5 (9/25): The Idea of Police

The Role of Police in Society
Historical Perspectives on Policing
Policing Research and Experimentation
Police Discretion and Decision-Making

**Dunham, Ch. 1, 2, 24, 31
1st Writing Assignment Given**

Week 6 (10/2): Innovations in Policing

Modern Policing Innovations
Community Oriented Policing
Problem Oriented Policing
Broken Windows & Hot Spots
COMPSTAT

**Dunham Ch. 4, 5, 6, 8
W&P Ch. 20
1st Writing Assignment Due**

Week 7 (10/9):

Examination I

SECTION 3: CRIMINAL COURTS: AGENTS OF PUNISHMENT

Readings/Assignments

Deciding how much to punish is an agonizing process in which conflicting aspirations compete.

~Andrew von Hirsch~

Week 8 (10/16): The Development of Criminal Courts

The Rise of the Prosecutor
Historical Perspective on the Criminal Court
The Age of Sentencing Reform
Sentencing in Comparative Perspective

Spohn Ch. 6 (p. 225-242)
W&P Ch. 15
MacKenzie
2nd Writing Assignment Given

Week 9 (10/23): NO CLASS

Week 10 (10/30): Sentencing Guidelines

Sentencing Commissions and their Guidelines
State Sentencing Guidelines
Federal Sentencing Guidelines
Research on Sentencing Guidelines

Spohn Ch. 7 (p. 271-314)
W&P Ch. 16
2nd Writing Assignment Due

SECTION 4: CORRECTIONS: PENOLOGY AND PRISON

Readings/Assignments

It is said that no one truly knows a nation until one has been inside its jails. A nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens, but its lowest ones.

~Nelson Mandela~

Week 11 (11/6): The Prison Community

History of Corrections in America
The Emergence of the Prison
Comparative Rates of Incarceration

NAS, Ch. 2
W&P Ch. 18
3rd Writing Assignment Given

Week 12 (11/13): NO CLASS – ASC MEETINGS

Week 13 (11/20): Prison Administration

Prison Administration and Prisoner Reentry
Collateral Consequences of Imprisonment
Death Penalty Disparities
Quiet Rage

NAS, Ch. 3, 4
W&P Ch. 17
3rd Writing Assignment Due

Week 14 (11/27): NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 15 (12/4):

EXAMINATION II