Course Description:

This course will examine crime and public policy in the United States. We will examine a number of perennially controversial issues in criminal justice policy including firearms and violence, drugs and crime, mass incarceration, sex offending and offender re-entry. Special attention will be devoted to an examination of the role of research and empirical evidence in the policy making processes. The policy making process addresses different questions than are typically addressed by academic research and answering these questions can require different skills. Some of these questions and skills will be familiar and others less so. One purpose of this course is to introduce you to these questions and skills. A second goal of this course is to increase your familiarity with specific policy responses to enduring problems in crime and criminal justice. You have been introduced to many of these issues in CCJS 600 and how they have affected the evolution of the criminal justice system. This course will address more specific and contemporaneous policy responses. Finally, we will discuss the challenges and benefits to institutionalizing evidence based criminal justice policy in the United States.

Required Readings:


Specific readings are designated from either M or W&P below. Supplemental readings are also listed and are available on ELMS.
Course Requirements:

You will be required to make one seminar presentation, and take a midterm exam in class and a final exam which will be a take home. The seminar presentation will critically assess the empirical evidence supporting a particular policy addressing one of the policy questions presented in the seminar. This assessment should reflect familiarity with the issues raised by Mears and other readings assigned in the first section of the course. A list of potential topics will be distributed in the third week of class and a choice made by the fourth week of class. This presentation will count for 30 percent of your final grade.

A mid-term examination will be given in class on October 24. This exam will count for 30 percent of the final grade. More details regarding the specific exam format will be provided in class.

The final take home exam (approximately 15 pages) will focus on a critical evaluation of criminal justice policy. This paper will count for 30 percent of your final grade. More details regarding this final exam will be provided in class.

I expect students to come to class prepared to participate in class discussions and critique of assigned materials. Class participation will count for 10 percent of your final grade.

Academic Dishonesty and Honor Pledge:

The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit http://www.shc.umd.edu. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Any student suspected of academic dishonesty will be referred to the Honor Council.

To further exhibit your commitment to academic integrity, remember to sign the Honor Pledge on all examinations and assignments: “I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment/examination.”

Religious Observances:

The University System of Maryland policy provides that students should not be penalized because of observances of their religious beliefs. Students shall be given an opportunity, whenever feasible, to make up within a reasonable time any academic assignment that is missed.
due to individual participation in religious observances. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor of any intended absences for religious observances in advance.

**Students with Disabilities:**

Any student with a documented disability who wishes to discuss academic accommodations, please contact me by September 19, 2019.

**Meeting Time and Location:**

This class meets on Wednesday, 4:00 to 6:45 in LeFrak Hall 2207.

**Tentative Course Outline:**

**Week One (8/28)  Introduction and Overview of the Course**
Reading: M, Chapter 1 and W& P, Chapter 1

**Week Two (9/4)  The Role of Evidence in the Policy Making Process: Needs Evaluation, Research and Statistics**
Reading: M, Chapters 2, 3, 4

**Week Three (9/11)  Theory and Implementation Evaluation**
Reading: M, Chapters 5, and 6
*Suggested list of presentation topics distributed.*

**Week Four (9/18)  Output, Outcome and Impact evaluation**
Reading: M, Chapters 7

Donald T. Campbell and Julian Stanley *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research.* Houghton and Mifflin pp. 1-71
Choice of presentation topic submitted.

**Week Five (9/25)  Cost Benefit**


Week Six. (10/2) Midterm

Week Seven (10/9) Firearms and Violence
Reading: W&P, Chapter 10
(First Presentations)

Limiting Access


Project Ceasefire

Week Eight (10/16) Race and the Administration of Justice
Reading: W&P, Chapters 4, 9
(Second Presentations)

Evidence of Bias
Andrew GELMAN, Jeffrey FAGAN, and Alex KISS An Analysis of the New York City Police Department’s “Stop-and-Frisk” Policy in the Context of Claims of Racial Bias


Policies to Combat Bias

Week Nine (10/23)  Drugs and Crime
Reading: W&P, Chapter 13
Third presentations

Kilmer “Policy Designs for Cannabis Legalization: Starting with the Eight Ps” The American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse.

Rueter, Peter “Why Has US Drug Policy Changed So Little over 30 Years? “ Crime and Justice. Drop the marijuana section (pp.11-21), which overlaps analytically what the Kilmer paper provides and is otherwise outdated.


Harold A. Pollack “Efficacy Is More Effective Than It Seems.” Criminology and Public Policy 2017

Jessica Saunders, Michael Robbins, and Allison Ober “Moving From Efficacy to Effectiveness Implementing the Drug Market Intervention across Multiple Sites.” Criminology and Public Policy 2017

Peter Reuter “Learning from Replication Failure.” Criminology and Public Policy 2017

Week Ten (10/30)  Mass Incarceration
Reading: W&P, Chapters 14 & 18 (Fourth Presentations)

Incarceration and crime reduction


Incarceration and Collateral damage


The Growth of Incarceration in the United States: Consequences for Communities, Chapter 10.

The Growth of Incarceration in the United States: Broader Consequences Chapter 11
Week Eleven (11/6) Police, Legitimacy and Crime


Week Twelve (11/13)—ASC class Cancelled

Week Thirteen (11/20) Offender Re-entry and De-incarceration
Reading: W& P, Chapters 11, 17 (Fifth Presentations)

Justice Reinvestment


Risk Assessment


Note: No Class on 11/27, Thanksgiving Holiday
Week Fourteen (12/4) Challenges and Benefits to Institutionalizing Evidence Based Policy

Reading: M, Chapter, 9 and W& P, Chapters 20, 21 (Sixth Presentations)
Take Home Final Distributed

Week Fifteen (12/17) Take Home Final Due