

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, COLLEGE PARK

HONR 278P

Crime and Public Policy

Fall 2014

Professor and Chair James P. Lynch

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Office Hours: Tuesday, 10:00-12:00 and Thursday, 10:00-12:00, or by appointment

Course Description:

This course will examine crime and public policy in the United States. Drawing on our recent experiences leading the Department of Justice's research and evaluation unit (the National Institute of Justice) and statistical unit (the Bureau of Justice Statistics), we will address several "hot button" issues relating to crime and criminal justice policy including firearms and violence, drugs and crime, trends in crime and violence, sex offenders, policing, courts and sentencing, mass incarceration, and offender re-entry. Special attention will be devoted to an examination of the role of research and empirical evidence in the policy and grant making processes within the federal government. Finally, we will discuss the challenges and benefits to institutionalizing evidence based criminal justice policy in the United States.

Required Readings:

Daniel P. Mears. 2010. *American Criminal Justice Policy: An Evaluation Approach to Increasing Accountability and Effectiveness*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

James Q. Wilson and Joan Petersilia, editors. 2011. *Crime and Public Policy*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Specific readings are designated from either M or W&P below. Supplemental readings will be provided as needed throughout the semester.

Course Requirements:

Our plan is to require two reaction papers (three to five pages), a midterm examination (all essay questions), and a final paper (10 to 15 pages). All of these assignments require the student to write critically about the issues relating to our understanding of crime and public policy.

The two reaction papers (three to five pages each) will consist of a critical assessment of the topics covered in the required books. These two papers will count for 15 percent each (30 percent total) of your final grade. More details regarding these reaction papers will be provided in class.

A mid-term examination will be given on October 23. This exam will count for 30 percent of the final grade. Please note that make-up exams are discouraged. In the event that an exam is missed (providing a legitimate and documented excuse [defined by University] plus notification to us prior to the exam), the exam must be made up within one week of the missed examination. More details regarding the specific exam format will be provided in class.

The final paper (10 to 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 paper will be provided in class.

We expect students to come to class prepared to participate in class discussions of assigned materials. We will also ask specific students to serve as discussion leaders for particular classes. Class participation will count for 10 percent of your final grade. More details regarding this assignment will be provided in class.

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 us by September 18, 2014.

Meeting Time and Location:

This class meets on Thursday, 2:00 to 4:30 in LeFrak Hall 2165E.

Tentative Course Outline:

Week One (9/4)	Introduction and Overview of the Course Reading: M, Chapter 1 and W& P, Chapter 1
Week Two (9/11)	Policy and Grant Making Processes: Research and Statistics Reading: M, Chapters 2 and 3
Week Three (9/18)	Types of Evaluation Reading: M, Chapters 4, 5, and 6
Week Four (9/25)	Types of Evaluation continued Reading: M, Chapters 7 and 8 Paper #1 due at the start of class
Week Five (10/2)	Crime and its Prevention and Control in the U.S. and Abroad Reading: W& P, Chapters 2, 4, and 19
Week Six (10/9)	Firearms and Violence Reading: W&P, Chapter 10
Week Seven (10/16)	Drugs and Crime Reading: W&P, Chapter 13
Week Eight (10/23)	Mid-Term Examination
Week Nine (10/30)	Policing with special emphasis on Race and Crime Reading: W&P, Chapter 9

Week Ten (11/6) Prosecution and Sentencing
Reading: W& P, Chapters 15 and 16

Week 11 (11/13) Mass Incarceration
Reading: W& P, Chapters 14 and 18

Week 12 (11/20) Offender Re-entry
Reading: W& P, Chapters 11 and 17
Paper #2 due at the start of class

Note: Class is canceled on 11/27, Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 13 (12/4) Sex Offenders
Reading: W&P, Chapter 12

Week 14 (12/11) Challenges and Benefits to Institutionalizing Evidence Based Policy
Reading: M, Chapter, 9 and W& P, Chapters 20 and 21

Week 15 (12/18) **Final Paper Due by 2:00 pm**