

CJ 4310: Special Problems in the Criminal Justice System

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Class Hours: Asynchronous
Class Room: Zoom

Overview

Course Catalog Description: This course is a study of contemporary problems in the administration, management, organization and operation of criminal justice agencies.

Prerequisites: CJ 2310 and CJ 2350 and CJ 2355 and CJ 2360 all with grades of "D" or better.
Corequisite: CJ 3346 with a grade of "D" or better.

Required Textbook: Mays, G. L., & Ruddell, R. (2019). Making sense of criminal justice: Policies and practices. Oxford University Press. - No cost, PDF available.

Additional Readings/ Resources:

- Required articles will be provided by the instructor in PDF format on Canvas.
- Additional videos will be provided by the instructor on Canvas.
- Access to reliable Internet, Canvas, and Microsoft Word/ some other word processing software.

Course Rationale: This class will broadly cover crime control strategies. The primary focus will be on how the Criminal Justice System attempts to control criminal activity. Specifically, we will look at how police, courts, and corrections attempt to control crime. We will also cover how the community, environment, labor market, and technological innovations can be utilized to control crime.

Course Objectives:

- Understand important contemporary issues and problems concerning crime and criminal justice.
- Be able to critically examine criminal justice policies and their evidence base.
- Ability to discuss policies that are evidence-based.
- Synthesize research materials and integrate what they have learned into undergraduate-level writing

Format of Class: This class is entirely asynchronous online. Students are responsible for reading the text materials and other required materials.

Assignments and Evaluation

Summary of Assignments

Below are the assignments and their points for the class:

Assignment	Points	Percentage
Discussion Questions (DQs)	6.25 per (x12) = 75	12.5%
Discussion Boards	20 per (3x) = 60	10%
Paper Topic	40	6.7%
Paper Outline	75	12.5%
Final Paper	100	16.7%
Midterm Exam	125	20.8%
Final Exam	125	20.8%
Total	600	100%

Discussion Boards: There will be three total discussion boards throughout the course. You will be responsible for a discussion board post and peer response worth 10 points each. The initial post should be at least 200 words in length and adequately addresses each part of the given prompt. Second, there should be one classmate response post that should be at least 100 words in length and related to the substance of the classmate's post. These will be due Sunday by midnight.

Assigned Readings: Unless otherwise specifically assigned, reading assignments are taken from the required resources specified in this syllabus. The reading assignments listed for each class are those readings that a student must complete before reviewing the corresponding module's lecture or completing corresponding module assignments. Not all of the assigned readings will be discussed in lectures; however, all assigned readings may be covered on exams. See the course schedule for reading assignments.

Discussion Questions: Each week you will submit a question to me via Canvas. This question should be directed towards the readings for that week. For example let the following questions guide you in coming up with your questions that you will submit: What caught your eye in the readings? What are you not understanding? Are you curious about a certain policy's mechanics? How might a certain policy be perceived? This should help you think critically about the content and in return, help you with your discussion boards and your writing assignments.

Paper Topic: In preparation for the paper outline and final paper, you will submit a paper topic to me via Canvas. The paper topic should be a criminal justice policy or topical area that we cover in class. You will indicate whether you plan to write a policy paper or literature review (see below for details). Ideally this will be a short and sweet one sentence paper topic but it can be two or three sentences. You can look ahead in the course readings to generate a paper topic. It is entirely up to you but must be within the confounds of the course topics. If it is a related topic but not covered in the class, let me know and we can discuss.

Paper Outline: To help facilitate the development of your final paper, you will submit a paper

outline via Canvas. This outline should be no more than three pages. It should include section and subsection headers, potential evidence to bring in, citations, and arguments to be made. It should serve as the scaffolding for your final paper. This is not a set in stone outline, if you deviate, you will not be penalized. However, if you change your paper topic after the outline is submitted, please notify me. Be sure to include a reference page (not included in the approximately 3 page limit).

Final Paper: You have two options for your final paper: a **Policy paper** or **Literature review**.

The final paper should be approximately 8-10 pages (double spaced), with 5 different references from the class readings and 5 external references that were not covered in class. You should be using APA formatting for all of your writing assignments.¹ Be sure to include a reference page (not included in the 8-10 page requirement).

- *Policy paper:* This is narrowly tailored to a practitioner audience such as the local municipal police department, city counsel, local community groups, etc. You should identify a problem (issue covered in this course), and provide a well structured paper that highlights an evidence-based policy that will address the issue you identified. You should be sure to provide information related to the issue and evidence for the policy you are suggesting.
 - EX: Police departments do not have the capabilities to review body-worn camera footage (issue). Artificial intelligence can review 100% of the footage produced in real time (solution). The early evidence on the integration of AI into body-camera review suggests that it meets the goal of reviewing 100% of the footage produced and can provide useful information to line-level officers (evidence; be sure to include both strengths and weaknesses). You will, of course, expand on these and add other sections such as concerns related to the policy and conclusions.
- *Literature review:* Broad in scope and intended for an academic audience. This should be a paper that synthesizes the research of your chosen topic, providing the background, examples, strengths and weaknesses, and a conclusion on the efficacy of your chosen topic.
 - EX: Police departments do not have the capabilities to review body-worn camera footage (issue). Why is this an issue? Body-cameras are a tool for transparency and accountability. If footage is not reviewed then this hinders the achievement of these goals (background). Examples of how much footage goes unreviewed. You then dive into the research and synthesize the evidence for the particular policy - strengths and weaknesses. Identify the concerns (e.g., civil rights and privacy concerns with AI). Identify areas of consensus and disagreement. Conclude with a summary of what we know and don't know.

Midterm Exam: Your midterm exam will consist of 50 multiple choice questions. The midterm will cover the first 7 weeks of content (e.g., politics and policy, evidence-based policy, police, courts, corrections). These will be online in Canvas and will be due Friday night by midnight. Once the exam is accessed you will have 1 hour and 30 minutes to complete the exam.

Final Exam: Your final exam will consist of 50 multiple choice questions. The final exam will cover the final 6 weeks of content (e.g., community-based approaches, technology, employment, "what works"). These will be online in Canvas and will be due Friday night by midnight. Once the exam

¹See the following link for a guide to APA formatting: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/index.html

is accessed you will have 1 hour and 30 minutes to complete the exam.

Course Policies

Calendar and Due Dates: In addition to the information located in each week's module in Canvas, a master calendar of due dates will be made available under the 'Calendar' section of the course homepage in Canvas. Should any adjustments be needed to original due dates, I will post an announcement to the 'Announcements' section and will adjust the calendar to reflect the modified timeline. This is NOT a self-paced or correspondence course.

Late Work: Written assignments are to be submitted by the due date by the times specified (Central Time). In extreme cases, as approved by the instructor, late work will be accepted by an agreed upon alternate due date. Work submitted late for other reasons will be penalized 10% for each day late. Notify the instructor BEFORE an assignment is due if an urgent situation arises and the assignment will not be submitted on time. Published assignment due dates are firm.

Grade Records: To the extent possible, I will try to make sure that grades for the assignments are posted within approximately three days after its due date. On occasion, some assignments require intermediate feedback in which a longer turnaround should be expected. Once the assignment is evaluated, its grades will be placed into the Canvas gradebook and will be available to you. Exam/quiz grades will be posted upon completion of the exam/quiz. Individual reports will not be sent apart from the information recorded in Canvas, so you should periodically monitor the gradebook to assure your assignments have been received and graded.

Academic Dishonesty: All students taking classes in Criminal Justice must subscribe to the Texas State University Honor Code (<http://www.txstate.edu/honorcodecouncil/Academic-Integrity.html>) and Code of Student Conduct (<http://www.dos.txstate.edu/handbook/rules/cosc.html>). Failure to adhere to any component of these documents may entail consequences ranging from serious (e.g. unexcused absences, zero points assigned for exam grades, etc.) to severe (a course grade of "F" or even dismissal from the University).

Artificial Intelligence: In this course, you are welcome and encouraged to use artificial intelligence platforms such as **ChatGPT ONLY** for pre-writing, brainstorming, and locating sources, unless otherwise specified in assignment instructions. You should not use AI to produce your own assignments or otherwise perform tasks that you are expected to be able to do or learn to do on your own. In short, ChatGPT isn't taking this course; you are. You are here to learn, not to cut corners. Please take that responsibility seriously.

Your instructor will make every effort to be transparent in describing why you should complete each assignment, what skills you will develop, and when/ how it is appropriate to use AI as a tool for completing the assignments.

Avoiding Plagiarism: Some students truly do not understand what plagiarism is, and therefore plagiarize unwittingly or unintentionally. But ignorance is not an excuse for unethical academic conduct.

Moreover, read the following rules that apply regardless of the citation form or style you may be using.

1. *Direct Quotations* – Whenever you directly quote someone else, you must provide a citation

to the source of the material from which you are quoting. Moreover, you must put the material in quotation marks or otherwise set it off in an indented quote so the reader knows what words are yours and what words are quoted. It is unacceptable to use the words of others and only partially quote the original source. This is true even if you provide citation to the source both in text and in your references section!

2. *Paraphrasing/Indirect Quotations* – Whenever you indirectly quote someone else (i.e., you paraphrase the work of another), you must provide a citation to the source of the material from which you are paraphrasing. Simply changing the structure of a sentence, or a few words in a sentence so that the sentence you write is not an exact quote from the original source does not mean a citation is not needed. This is because the idea you are expressing is not your own, but rather someone else's.
3. *Using Other's Ideas* – Even if you compose an entire paragraph of writing in your own words (i.e., neither quoted nor paraphrased), if the idea you are expressing in that paragraph is not your own, original idea, you must provide a citation to the source from which you obtained this idea.
4. *Collaborative Work* – If you collaborate on any work with someone else and fail to acknowledge that collaboration, you are guilty of plagiarism. If you have received permission from your professor to collaborate on some assignment, be sure that all of the contributor's names appear on the submission.
5. *Altering or Revising Another's Work* – If you alter or revise the work done by someone and submit that work as your own, you have plagiarized. Similarly, if you allow someone else to alter or revise work that you have done and then allow that person to submit it as his or her own work, you are both guilty of plagiarism. Work that is not entirely your own must be credited by citation, both in text and in your references page.
6. *Altering or Revising Your Own Prior Work* – You should also be aware that reusing or revising your own work that was prepared for another class or another professor, and not bringing it to the attention of the professor to whom you are submitting the revised work is also academic dishonesty. If, for example, you have two classes that require a term paper, and you can write one paper that meets the requirements of both classes, you may not submit that paper to both professors unless you get permission to do so in advance from both professors. Similarly, if you wrote a paper several semesters ago that can be revised and submitted in satisfaction of a paper requirement for a course in which you are currently enrolled, doing so is academic dishonesty unless you get the advanced permission of your professor to do so. The reason this is dishonest is that it is not an original work prepared in satisfaction for the requirements on the course you are currently taking. Contact your instructor for written approval if you are seeking an exception for unique cases.

Canvas: Along with this syllabus, all grades in this course will be posted to CANVAS. I will do my best to post the grades within a week of an exam. To access CANVAS, you can follow the following link: <https://canvas.txstate.edu>. Should you need a laptop, the library loans them out to students. For more information, please contact the library or go to: <http://www.library.txstate.edu/about/departments/circ/laptop>.

Disability: Students with a documented disability and/or those that believe they have a legiti-

mate disability, are strongly encouraged to arrange a meeting with me to ensure they receive appropriate accommodations as set forth by the Office of Disabled Students. Students must contact the instructor within the first two weeks of the semester. If accommodations are needed, please contact the Office of Disabilities Services, as follows:

- Office of Disability Services Suite 5-5.1, LBJ Student Center 601 University Drive San Marcos TX 78666 Phone: 512.245.3451 Fax: 512.245.3452 Office
- Hours: Monday to Friday 8am -5pm Website: <http://www.ods.txstate.edu/>

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
1	Aug 25-31	Politics and Criminal Justice Policy	Syllabus; Textbook: Ch. 1, 2, & 3	
2	Sep 1-7	Evidence-Based Policy	Welsh & Farrington (2011)	DQ 1
3	Sep 8-14	Police I: Crime Control Agents	Kelling & Moore (1988); Chalfin (2022)	DQ 2
4	Sep 15-21	Police II: Hot Spots & Problem Oriented Policing	Braga et al. (2019); Hinkle et al. (2020); Reducing Crime Podcast Ep. #66 (David Weisburd)	DQ 3
5	Sep 22-28	Police III: Focused Deterrence	Braga et al. (2018); Reducing Crime Podcast Ep. #18 (Thomas Abt)	DQ 4; Discussion Board #1
6	Sep 29-Oct 5	Courts, Prosecutors, & Sentencing	Textbook: Ch. 7	DQ 5; Paper Topic due
7	Oct 6-12	Corrections: Prisons & Community Supervision	Textbook: Ch. 11, 12, & 13	DQ 6; Discussion Board #2
8	Oct 13-19	Midterm Exam		Midterm Exam
9	Oct 20-26	Community-based I: CPTED	Welsh & Farrington (2008); Garvin, Cannuscio, & Branas (2013)	DQ 7; Paper Outline due
10	Oct 27-Nov 2	Community-based II: Public Health Approach	Butts et al. (2015) Cure Violence	DQ 8
11	Nov 3-9	Technology & Surveillance	Textbook: Ch. 15; Connealy et al. (2024), Piza et al. (2024)	DQ 9
12	Nov 10-16	Employment and Crime	Heller (2014), Apel & Horney (2017)	DQ 10; Discussion Board #3
13	Nov 17-23	Evaluating What Works I	Sherman et al. (1997); Reducing Crime Podcast Ep. #17 (Lawrence Sherman)	DQ 11
14	Nov 24-Nov 30	Evaluating What Works II	TBD	DQ 12; Final Paper due
15	Dec 1-7	Final Exam		Final Exam