

## ADVANCED CRIMINOLOGY

FALL 2005

Dr. Ron Kramer  
2406 Sangren Hall  
387-5284  
E-mail: [ronald.kramer@wmich.edu](mailto:ronald.kramer@wmich.edu)

Office Hours: Mon 2-4;  
Tue and Wed 9:30-12:00;  
and by appointment

### COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Advanced Criminology is the capstone experience and designated writing intensive course in the criminal justice major. The purpose of the course is to help you pull together and integrate the knowledge you have acquired in the program regarding crime, criminological theory and the criminal justice system. In addition, you will have the opportunity to apply this knowledge in the critical evaluation of actual and proposed crime control policies. Consistent with this overall purpose, the course seeks to accomplish four objectives:

- \* Learn to recognize the connection between public policy on crime, political ideology, and criminological theory.
- \* Develop a critical understanding of the major crime control policy issues, debates over these issues, and their ideological and theoretical underpinnings.
- \* Develop writing skills in accordance with the WMU baccalaureate-level writing policy.
- \* Learn to work cooperatively in a group to accomplish common goals.

### RECOMMENDED PREREQUISITES:

Advanced Criminology is the final and highest-level course in the criminal justice major. Successful completion of the course requires substantial prior knowledge of the theoretical and empirical work on crime and criminal justice. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that you take this course in the final semester that you complete the requirements for your criminal justice major. You will be at a considerable disadvantage if you have not completed most of the core requirements before attempting this course.

### REQUIRED TEXTS:

1. Samuel Walker (2006). *Sense and Nonsense About Crime and Drugs: A Policy Guide*. Sixth Edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

2. Steven F. Messner and Richard Rosenfeld (2001). *Crime and the American Dream*. Third Edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
3. Katherine Beckett and Theodore Sasson (2004). *The Politics of Injustice: Crime and Punishment in America*. Second Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

SOC 466: p. 2

4. Elliott Currie (1998). *Crime and Punishment in America*. New York: Metropolitan Books.

#### COURSE OUTLINE:

- I. The Crime Problem in the United States
  - A. Crime in Historical and Comparative Perspective
  - B. America's Two Crime Problems
  - C. The Social and Personal Impacts of Crime
- II. Politics, Ideology, and Crime Control Policy
  - A. Conservative
  - B. Liberal
  - C. Progressive
- III. The History of Crime Control Policies in the United States
  - A. The Progressive Era 1900-1919
  - B. The Crime Control Decades 1920-1940
  - C. Conflicting Trends 1941-1963
  - D. National Crisis over Crime and Justice 1964-1974
  - E. The Conservative Era 1975-Present
  - F. The War on Crime and Drugs: News, Entertainment, and Public Opinion
- IV. Theoretical Perspectives in Criminology
  - A. The Behavioral and Definitional Paradigms
  - B. The Classical and Pathological Perspectives
  - C. Mainstream Sociological Traditions
    1. Social Disorganization/Control
    2. Cultural Deviance/Social Learning
    3. Anomie/Strain
  - D. Critical Criminology: Labeling, Conflict, Marxist and Feminist Perspectives
  - E. Coercion, Social Support, and Crime: An Emerging Theoretical Consensus
- V. Punitive Crime Control Policies
  - A. The Criminal Justice System
  - B. Imprisonment Policies
  - C. The Death Penalty

- D. Policing Policies
  - E. Closing Legal Loopholes
- VI. Alternative Approaches to the Social Problem of Crime
- A. Primary Prevention: Reducing Poverty and Inequality
  - B. Secondary Prevention: Early Intervention Programs
  - C. Restorative Justice
  - D. A Harm Reduction Approach to Drugs
  - E. Reaffirming Rehabilitation and Reintegration

SOC 466: p. 3

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS:

DATE	TOPIC	READING ASSIGNMENT
AUGUST 29	Introduction and Overview	None
SEPTEMBER 5	LABOR DAY-NO CLASS	
12	The Crime Problem in the U.S.	Beckett & Sasson, # 1 & 2; Messner & Rosenfeld, # 1 (pp. 1- 5) & 2; Walker, # 1 (pp. 3-8).
19	Political Ideology	Messner & Rosenfeld, # 5 (pp. 90-101); Walker, # 1 pp. 8-23).
26	History Lesson I	Beckett & Sasson, # 4
OCTOBER 3	History Lesson II	None
10	The Media and Public Opinion	Beckett & Sasson, # 5, 6, & 7
17	Criminological Theory I	Beckett & Sasson, # 3; Messner & Rose □ □nfeld, # (pp. 5-14), 3, and 4.
24	Criminological Theory II	Colvin, Cullen & VanderVen (Reserve)

	31	Punitive Policies I	Beckett & Sasson, # 8; Intro, # 1 & 2; 7, 9 &
Currie, Walker, # 2-4, 10.			
NOVEMBER	7	Punitive Policies II	Walker, # 6.
	14	Punitive Policies III	Walker, # 5 & 8.
	21	Alternatives I	Beckett & Sasson, # 9; Currie, # 3 & 4; Messner & Rosenfeld, #5 (pp.101-110); Colvin (Reserve); Cullen, Wright & Chamlin (Reserve).
	28	Alternatives II	Currie, # 5; Walker, # 11-14.
DECEMBER	5	Research Policy Paper Due	□ö

SOC 466: p. 4

#### COURSE PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS:

The major requirements of this course are to read the assigned material before we meet to discuss it in class, attend class regularly, participate in your base group on a full and equal basis, and complete a series of writing assignments you will be given. The reading material and your thoughts about it are an extremely important part of this course. Much class time will be devoted to base group meetings, and various types of discussion and debate on crime control issues. Thus, your active participation is essential to the learning experience of everyone in the class. My role is to provide the basic tools you will need to analyze current criminal justice policies and policy alternatives, to organize and facilitate the work of the base groups, to provide feedback on your writing assignments so you can experience growth and improvement in your writing skills, to promote discussion, and to raise critical issues.

#### Homework, Special Assignments and Attendance

Since this is the writing intensive course in the criminal justice major which seeks to develop your writing skills in accordance with the WMU baccalaureate-level writing policy, I want to provide you with multiple opportunities to write and get feedback on your work. Therefore, in addition to the research paper discussed below, each student in this class will write a series of five homework assignments. These assignments will be given to you in one class session and be due the next. All homework assignments should

be 1-2 pages long (no longer than 2) and must be typewritten. Each homework assignment is worth 50 points for a total of 250 points. The papers will be graded and returned to you to provide feedback on your grasp of the reading material and your writing skills.

In addition, during the first day of class, students will be randomly assigned to a base group of five or six persons each. Base groups are long-term cooperative learning groups with stable membership. Students will meet in their base groups on a regular basis to discuss reading assignments, debate crime policy issues, share information, provide support, and carry out special in-class assignments. Some of these special assignments will be to discuss the written homework of the basegroup members and report back to the class the conclusions that the base group has developed on that topic. Another form of these special assignments will involve a base group discussion, an oral report to the class, and a written report to me on a specific topic that will be assigned to the base group for that class session. These assignments are worth 10 points (for a total of 100 points) and each member of the group will receive the same grade given to the group as a whole.

Because attendance at each week class period is so important to the success of this course, I will also give you 5 points for each day you are in attendance for the full class period. If you leave at the break, a problem in one night a week classes, you also forfeit the special assignment points for the day.

### Research Policy Paper

Each student in the class will research and write an 8-10 page paper on a specific crime control policy or issue. I will provide you with a list of possible topics (I strongly encourage you to consider a policy which is an alternative to the traditional punitive policies that dominate in our society). You must inform me in writing of your topic choice no later than September 26. I will meet individually with you in class on either September 26 or October 3 to approve your topic and discuss the paper.

SOC 466: p. 5

Once your topic is approved you should begin to research the topic. Please use both the internet and the library to carry out your research. However, do not rely entirely on the internet. Make good use of the books and journals available at Waldo library as well. Document your sources of information by citing them in the text and include all cited sources in the bibliography. The formats for citations and the bibliography are provided. You must use a minimum of five acceptable sources. Acceptable sources include books, articles in scholarly journals (such as *Criminology*, *Social Problems*, *Justice Quarterly*), articles in major newspapers, government reports, and research monographs.

Once your research is complete and you start writing, you **MUST** structure your paper in the following way:

1. Describe the Policy: Provide a full and complete description of the policy or program you have selected. Provide as much of the history and background of the policy as you can. Describe the policy or program in as much detail as possible.
2. Theoretical and Ideological Underpinnings: Why has this policy or program been developed? What theoretical ideas is it based on? What political ideology does the policy or program reflect?
3. Research Evidence: Assess the research evidence on the effectiveness of the policy or program. Is there empirical support for it? How effective has the policy or program been in meeting its original goals or objectives?
4. Critical Evaluation: Has the policy or program worked? What effects, if any, has it had? What are its strengths and weaknesses? What recommendations would you have for policymakers (explore possible alternatives to the policy or program based on different theories or ideologies)?

The final paper is worth 200 points and takes the place of a comprehensive final examination. All papers must be typewritten and double-spaced. Please proof carefully concerning grammar and spelling. I encourage you to give me a rough draft of your paper at some point to get feedback before you write the final version.

#### Final Semester Grade

Your final semester grade will be determined as follows:

Special Assignments	100 points
Homework Assignments	250 points
Final Research Policy Paper	200 points
Attendance	50 points
Total	600 points

The final grade will be determined by the following scale:

558-600	=	A	438-467	=	C
528-557	=	BA	408-437	=	DC
498-527	=	B	360-407	=	D
468-497	=	CB	below 359	=	E

SOC 466: p. 6

The success of this course depends on each one of you to do the reading and to come to class prepared to discuss what you have read. It also depends on the quality of your background participation. I hope you will be able to draw on your previous criminal justice coursework during our discussions. I will try to create a supportive environment in the class for discussion and debate and try to stimulate you to do some critical thinking

about important criminological issues. I hope that you enjoy the course and find it to be a rewarding and challenging experience.

## POSSIBLE RESEARCH POLICY PAPER TOPICS

### PUNITIVE

#### IMPRISONMENT

Preventive Detention  
Selective Incapacitation  
Three Strikes Laws  
Mandatory Sentences  
Truth in Sentencing Laws

#### DEATH PENALTY

#### POLICING

More Cops/Faster Response Time  
Broken Windows/Quality of Life Approach  
Controlling Excessive Force  
Ending Racial Profiling

#### CLOSE THE LOOPHOLES

Eliminate Miranda and the Exclusionary Rule  
Ban Plea Bargaining  
Ban the Insanity Defense

#### GUN CONTROL

Ban Handguns  
Regulate the Sale and Possession of Guns  
Restrict the Use of Guns  
Regulate Guns as a Consumer Product

#### JUVENILE JUSTICE

Wavier Laws  
Boot Camps

### ALTERNATIVE

#### DRUG PROBLEM

Decriminalization  
Drug Courts  
Drug Education (DARE)  
Treatment

#### PRIMARY PREVENTION

Reduce Poverty and Inequality  
Full Employment/Living Wage

#### SECONDARY PREVENTION

Early Intervention Programs  
Prevent Child Abuse  
Early Education/Head Start

#### RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Community Conferencing

#### REHABILITATION

Prison Programs: Education,  
Vocational Training, Counseling  
Probation/Parole  
Diversion  
Substance Abuse Treatment  
Mental Health Treatment  
Community Service Sanctions

#### GENDER AND JUSTICE

Changes in Rape Laws  
Stalking Laws  
Arrest for Domestic Violence  
Ban Pornography



