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 the role of the police, courts, and corrections in reducing offending. We will also cover how the community, environment, labor market, technological innovations, and legislation 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 distinguish between evidence-based and non-evidence-based policies.

- 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
Tweet Summaries	6.25 per (x12) = 75	11.5%
Discussion Boards	20 per (3x) = 60	9.2%
Paper Topic	40	6.2%
Paper Outline	75	11.5%
Final Paper	100	15.4%
Midterm Exam	150	23.1%
Final Exam	150	23.1%
Total	650	100%

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.

Tweet Summaries: Each week you will submit a brief summary -no more than 280 words- to me via Canvas (Yes, this is the max limit of characters on X). This will be a summary of the readings for that particular week. The key point here is to be concise. Yes, this is a challenge but it is important to be able to synthesize research and disseminate it in ways that can be easily digested by readers. This assignment will help you think critically about the content, what should be included, and how to perfect your virtual "elevator pitch."

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 250 words in length and adequately addresses each part of the given prompt. Second, there should be two classmate response posts 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.

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 also indicate whether you plan to write a policy paper or literature review (see below for details). Ideally this will be a short and sweet ~1-3 sentence submission indicating (1) your topic and (2) the paper style. 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 a minimum of two pages (double spaced). It should include section and subsection headings, 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 2 page minimum).

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 (or will not) address the issue you identified. You should be sure to provide information related to the issue and evidence for the policy you are discussing. This should be a hybrid paper between expository and persuasive. You want to provide the audience with ample information about the policy (the good and bad) but if the policy is evidence-based, you want to highlight this fact and suggest that the policy be adopted. If the policy is not evidence-based, you should explain why and that it is best not to be adopted.

- *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 policy/intervention. this paper should be structured as an expository article.

Midterm Exam: Your midterm exam will consist of 100 multiple choice questions. The midterm will cover the first 7 weeks of content. These will be online in Canvas and will be due Friday night by midnight. Once the exam is accessed you will have 2 hours and 30 minutes to complete the exam.

Final Exam: Your final exam will consist of 100 multiple choice questions. The final exam will cover the final 6 weeks of content. These will be online in Canvas and will be due Friday night by midnight. Once the exam is accessed you will have 2 hours and 30 minutes to complete the exam.

Exam Requirements

You will be required to install the Proctorio extension for your midterm and final exams. Please visit the following link to enable the Proctorio extension for your browser: https://getproctorio.com/. You will be erquired to have your camera and audio enabled.

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[1]See 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

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.

Missed Exams: Exams are open to be taken during the whole week that it is due. Because it is open for an extended period of time, makeup exams will not be accepted unless there are extenuating circumstances that you email me about ASAP. Makeup exams will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

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 you 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 legitimate 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	Media	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)		Summary 1
3	Sep 8-14	Police I: Crime Control Agents	Kelling & Moore (1988); Chalfin (2022)		Summary 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)	Summary 3
5	Sep 22-28	Police III: Focused Deterrence	Braga et al. (2018)	Reducing Crime Podcast Ep. #18 (Thomas Abt)	Summary 4; Discussion Board #1
6	Sep 29-Oct 5	Courts: Prosecutors & Sentencing	Textbook: Ch. 7		Summary 5
7	Oct 6-12	Corrections: Prisons & Community Supervision	Textbook: Ch. 11, 12, & 13		Summary 6; Discussion Board #2
8	Oct 13-19	Midterm Exam			Midterm Exam; Paper Topic due
9	Oct 20-26	Community-based I: CPTED	Welsh & Farrington (2008); Cozens & Love (2015)		Summary 7
10	Oct 27-Nov 2	Community-based II: Public Health Approaches	Butts et al. (2015); Cornell University et al. (2023)		Summary 8
11	Nov 3-9	Technology & Surveilance	Connealy et al. (2024), Piza et al. (2024)		Summary 9; Paper Outline due
12	Nov 10-16	Employment and Crime	Savolainen et al. (2019); Ludwig & Schnepel (2024)	Probable Causation Podcast: Sara Heller	Summary 10; Discussion Board #3
13	Nov 17-23	Guns, Policy, & Crime	Smart et al. (2023) RAND Summary; Cook (2018)		Summary 11
14	Nov 24-Nov 30	AI, Criminal Justice, & Crime	Johnson et al. (2024); Ezeh et al. (2025)	Police In-Service Podcast, Episode #7: Artifical Intelligence in Policing	Summary 12
15	Dec 1-7	Final Exam			Final Exam; Final Paper due