

**San José State University  
Justice Studies Department  
JS 159, Senior Seminar, Fall 2009**

**Instructor:** William Armaline (Will or Bill please ☺)  
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**Office Hours:** Mondays and Wednesdays 2:00-4:00 p.m.  
**Class Days/Time:** Mondays and Wednesdays 12:00-1:15 p.m.  
**Classroom:** MH 526

### **Course Description**

This course is based on the identification, discussion, and critical analysis of contemporary problems and controversies in the field of criminal justice. More broadly, we will critically approach the concept of “justice” as applied in criminal justice policy, practice, and scholarship. A major term paper on a selected topic is required. Mandatory prerequisites for enrollment include: 1) completion of JS-100W or equivalent; 2) completion of JS-105; 3) senior standing. *A minimum grade of “C-” in JS 159 is required for graduation.*

### **Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives**

Students will have the opportunity to critically examine, reflect upon, and conduct scholarship on contemporary criminal justice policies and practices, and the definition and struggle for *social justice* more broadly. Though the central text in this course is a relatively standard review of scholarship in “criminal justice,” students will be encouraged and required to conduct research outside of the central text to supplement *and critique* dominant scholarship and practice. Substantive topics covered will likely include: the war on drugs, the war on crime, death penalty, torture, mass-incarceration, surveillance, zero-tolerance policing, racism/capitalism/patriarchy and criminal/social justice, and so forth.

Throughout the course, students will be expected to:

- 1) Conduct readings as assigned
- 2) Give and/or participate in weekly *in-class presentations*
- 3) Prepare a final *research paper* to be presented in class and submitted on the final day of instruction (12/7/09).

## Required Texts/Readings

### Textbook

Walker, S. (2006). *Sense and Non-Sense About Crime and Drugs. A Policy Guide*, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

(All additional readings will be provided by the instructor as PDF files via email.)

### Other Useful Resources

Bureau of Justice Statistics: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/>

National Criminal Justice Reference Service: <http://www.ncjrs.gov/index.html>

The Sentencing Project: <http://www.sentencingproject.org>

Human Rights Watch: <http://www.hrw.org>

Amnesty International: <http://www.amnesty.org>

Youth Truth Institute: <http://www.youthfacts.org>

MLK Library Database: <http://www.sjlibrary.org/research/databases/index.htm>

MLK Library Journal Index: <http://www.sjlibrary.org/research/ejournals/index.htm>

Criminal Justice Abstracts: HV60001.C67 (online: <http://mill1.sjlibrary.org/search~S1>)

Justice Studies Reference Librarian: Nyle Monday ([Nyle.Monday@sjsu.edu](mailto:Nyle.Monday@sjsu.edu))

APA guidelines: <http://slisweb.sjsu.edu/resources/apa/APAREShome.html>

SJSU Writing Center: (408-924-2308): [www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter)

## Classroom Protocol

- 1) Foster an environment that encourages participation, rather than silencing other students (be respectful, considerate, etc.)
- 2) Complete readings and assignments by dates indicated on syllabus
- 3) Show up for and participate in class
- 4) STUDENTS are responsible for any and all notes and materials missed in their absence. You may want to make a friend or two in class...☺.
- 5) Students are expected to make an honest effort to stay informed on current events so that our class discussions can relate to the world beyond SJSU. In the words of C.W. Mills, we will be helping each other to develop a “sociological imagination.”
- 6) Students are expected to contribute to and participate in class discussions and activities to the best of their abilities and comfort levels. For those students with special needs, several other avenues and measures of participation can be pursued to ensure an equitable environment. (For instance, alternative avenues can be used in lieu of verbal participation.)
- 7) Take some risks, make this a class of your own, and enjoy yourself!

## Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc. [Information on add/drops are available at http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/soc-fall/rec-298.html](http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/soc-fall/rec-298.html). [Information about late drop is available at](#)

<http://www.sjsu.edu/sac/advising/latedrops/policy/>. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for adding and dropping classes.

## Assignments and Grading Policy

1) *Chapter Presentations* [ongoing (WEEKS 2-8): 20% of final grade]:

From WEEK 2 through WEEK 8, two students for each meeting will offer *in-class presentations* about the readings assigned for each class. Each presentation should last 10-15 minutes and should consist of:

- 1) *Description* of the reading's main topic
- 2) *Explanation* of its relevance
- 3) *Critique* of the topic/readings from the perspective of policy *effectiveness* and *social justice/injustice*

Each presentation will receive a grade ranging from 0 to 20, for a maximum of 20 points (20% of final grade). The detailed calendar of chapter presentations will be available during the first week of instruction. Please note: *make-up presentations will not be allowed, except for documented serious reasons (e.g. certified medical conditions, etc.).*

2) *Paper Presentations* [ongoing (WEEKS 10-16): 20% of final grade]:

From WEEK 11 through WEEK 16, students will offer 15/20 minutes *in-class presentations* about their *research papers*. Before each presentation, presenters will distribute a *1-page outline of their presentation to the class*. The presentation must include the following:

- 1) *Introduction* describing the topic in general
- 2) *Analysis* of at least three empirical studies
- 3) *Critique* of current policies in terms of their *effectiveness* and *social justice/injustice*

3) *Research Paper* [due 12/07/09: 60% of final grade]

A 3000-3500 words (12-14 pages) *research paper* analyzing a justice-related topic is required for this course. Students can choose their topic based on their own research interests, but *the topic must be discussed with the instructor (during office hours) for approval before October 14th, 2009*.

Please note: *no paper will be accepted without previous discussion and approval*.

In their paper, students should include the following:

- 1) *Introduction to the issue* of their choice, explaining its relevance
- 2) *Review the relevant literature* on the issue (minimum of 3 scholarly articles)
- 3) *Critical analysis of current policies* about the issue (based on the reviewed literature)
- 4) *A summary of findings* and elaboration of alternative *policy proposals*

Papers will receive a grade ranging from 0 to 40, for a maximum of 40 points (40% of final grade). Please note: *no late submissions will be accepted*.

### DETAILED PAPER REQUIREMENTS:

1) The *research paper* for this course should be a 3000/3500 (12-14 pages) long essay, typed in "Word" (12 font). Students are required to follow the American Psychological

Association style of citation (APA guidelines can be found at the following web address: <http://slisweb.sjsu.edu/resources/apa/APAREShome.html>).

2) Any extent of *plagiarism* will result in a failing grade on this assignment. For a detailed definition of plagiarism and important information on how to avoid it, please consult the following website: [http://www.sjlibrary.org/services/literacy/info\\_comp/plagiarism.htm](http://www.sjlibrary.org/services/literacy/info_comp/plagiarism.htm)

3) In this paper students should review/analyze/criticize at least *three research articles* on a specific topic (chosen by the student with the instructor's approval). The discussion about the topic (and the articles chosen for the literature review) must be take place during office hours, before *October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009*.

Please note: *the three research articles must be turned in with the paper.*

4) In writing their paper, students should organize their work according to the following structure:

- 1) *Introduction*: (relevance of the topic/current policies/brief history, etc.)
- 2) *Literature review*: (analysis of the three articles/evaluation of findings/critiques)
- 3) *Critical analysis of current policies*: (evaluation of current policies/social justice issues/etc.)
- 4) *Summary of findings & alternative policies*: (main arguments presented/what can be done?)

5) The evaluation and grading of the research papers will be based on the following elements:

- 1) *Originality* (relating ideas to issues; reflexivity and critique, etc.)
- 2) *Comprehension* (use of concepts; knowledge of theoretical perspectives, etc.)
- 3) *Structure* (appropriate use of sources; internal consistency, etc.)
- 4) *Clarity* (presentation of ideas; proof-reading; correct use of APA format, etc.)

#### GRADING SYSTEM

<i>Grading System</i>	<i>Grade</i>
98-100	A+
94-97	A
91-93	A-
88-90	B+
84-87	B
81-83	B-
78-80	C+
74-77	C
71-73	C-
68-70	D+
64-67	D
61-63	D-

## University Policies

### Academic integrity

Students should know that the University's [Academic Integrity Policy is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial\\_affairs/Academic\\_Integrity\\_Policy\\_S07-2.pdf](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial_affairs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_S07-2.pdf). Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University's integrity policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The website for [Student Conduct and Ethical Development is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial\\_affairs/index.html](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html).

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person's ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU's Academic Policy F06-1 requires approval of instructors.

### Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the DRC (Disability Resource Center) to establish a record of their disability.

## Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of Clark Hall and on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library.

A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include digital and VHS camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm, slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

## Learning Assistance Resource Center

The Learning Assistance Resource Center (LARC) is located in Room 600 in the Student Services Center. It is designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to motivate them to become self-directed learners. The center provides support services, such as skills assessment, individual or group tutorials, subject advising, learning assistance, summer academic preparation and basic skills development. [The LARC website is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/larc/](http://www.sjsu.edu/larc/).

## **SJSU Writing Center**

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers.

[The Writing Center website is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/).

## **Peer Mentor Center**

The Peer Mentor Center is located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of Clark Hall in the Academic Success Center. The Peer Mentor Center is staffed with Peer Mentors who excel in helping students manage university life, tackling problems that range from academic challenges to interpersonal struggles. On the road to graduation, Peer Mentors are navigators, offering “roadside assistance” to peers who feel a bit lost or simply need help mapping out the locations of campus resources. Peer Mentor services are free and available on a drop –in basis, no reservation required. [Website of Peer Mentor Center is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/muse/peermentor/](http://www.sjsu.edu/muse/peermentor/).

## JS 122, Senior Seminar, Spring 2009, Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to change by instructor with fair notice to students via email. Please make sure that your university (“mysjsu”) email account is active and accurate.

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	8/24 8/26	Review Syllabus Introduction to course and seminar experience
2	8/31 9/2	Crime and Punishment in the US; <i>Read Walker Chap 1</i> <i>Read Walker Chapter 2</i>
3	9/7 9/9	LABOR DAY HOLIDAY (NO CLASSES) Reforming Criminal Justice?; <i>Read Walker Chap 3</i>
4	9/14 9/16	<i>Read Walker Chap 4</i> “Tough on Crime” Approaches; <i>Read Walker Chap 5</i>
5	9/21 9/23	<i>Read Walker Chap 6</i> <i>Read Walker Chap 7</i>
6	9/28 9/30	<i>Read Walker Chap 8</i> Gun Control and Violence in the US; <i>Read Walker Chap 9</i>
7	10/5 10/7	<i>Read Walker Chap 10</i> Scrutinizing the supposed “liberal agenda”; <i>Read Walker Chap 11</i>
8	10/12 10/14	<i>Read Walker Chap 12</i> Drugs and the Drug War; <i>Read Walker Chap 13</i> ; <b>PAPER TOPICS DUE!</b>
9	10/19 10/21	UNIVERSITY MANDATED FURLOUGH DAY (NO CLASSES) INSTRUCTOR FURLOUGH DAY (NO CLASS)
10	10/26 10/28	Film (to be announced) Film (to be announced)
11	11/2 11/4	Paper Presentations Paper Presentations
12	11/9 11/11	Paper Presentations VET’S DAY HOLIDAY (NO CLASSES)
13	11/16 11/18	Paper Presentations Paper Presentations
14	11/23 11/25	INSTRUCTOR FURLOUGH DAY (NO CLASS) INSTRUCTOR FURLOUGH DAY (NO CLASS)
15	11/30 12/2	Paper Presentations Paper Presentations
16	12/7	Paper Presentations READING DAY (NO CLASSES)

