Course Description

The primary purpose of the class is to identify, discuss and analyze selected problems in the criminal justice system. Prerequisites include: 1). AJ 105, 2). 100 W or equivalent, and 3). senior standing. A selected criminal justice topic will be explored through the preparation of a policy paper. Three units.

Course Objectives

To provide the student with an opportunity to critically analyze contemporary problems and policies regarding the criminal justice system through in-class discussion of assigned readings, and the preparation and presentation of a policy paper.

Text


Course Requirements

1. Participation: come to class prepared to discuss and critique assigned readings; prepare a Most Important Topics (MITs) list of four or five critical topics per chapter.

2. Policy paper: prepare a literature review/policy analysis paper of an approved criminal justice topic; must not have been previously written or researched.

3. Presentation: a formal class presentation of the policy paper, including topic outline and reference page.

Student Evaluation

Policy paper= 50%
Participation = 40%
Paper Presentation= 10%

Note: A grade of C- must be earned to fulfill this course requirement.

Class Participation

In order to participate, one must be in attendance. Attendance per se, however, is not considered to be participation, and cannot factor into the grade. Actual discussion indicating knowledge of the subject matter and/or asking probing questions is considered to be participation. This means that assigned materials must be read and "digested" prior to each class meeting.

A participation requirement is that as you read each chapter you identify at least three (3) Most Important Topics (MITs) that can be discussed in class; these are topics that you believe to be particularly crucial and insightful. For each MIT you should write down key words and/or a single sentence which helps describe the topic (be sure to refer to figures and tables as well). The purpose of the MITs is to help aid you in class discussions. MITs will be collected randomly in class; that is, if you are not in class on that day you cannot turn them in. Keep each chapter's MITs on a separate page. Overall, MITs will be used to enhance the participation grade.

Participation will be assessed on a daily basis and a final participation grade will be determined at the end of the class. Points will be assigned as follows:
4 points= at least two intelligent or insightful comments on the topic.
2 points= at least one intelligent or insightful comment on the topic.
0 points= absent from class or no comments.

Policy Paper

A policy paper on a justice-related topic (on which you have not previously written) will be required. You, in consultation with the instructor, will choose an appropriate topic. The paper will review the empirical literature on the topic, and will formulate new or improved policies based on the empirical evidence.

The goal of the paper is to establish relationships between and among important variables and to draw policy implications based on these empirical relationships. This can only be accomplished by reviewing research-oriented journals.

Paper Requirements

1. 12 to 18 pages in length (not including reference pages and appendices). Note: A page is considered to be 250 words in length; thus, the paper must be a minimum of 3,000 words.

2. Include a minimum of five (5) references including a minimum of two (2) of which must be empirical in nature; that is from research articles/journals that explore significant relationships between and among variables. The articles must be contemporary in nature; since the mid-1990s. It is strongly suggested that the empirical references be selected from the CJ Abstracts. These are minimum requirements; higher paper grades will include three (3) empirical cites. The maximum number of total references is ten (10).

Note: Internet references may not be used (i.e., they will not be counted).

3. American Psychological Association (APA) citation style is to be used. This includes a References Cited section at the end of the paper containing all the sources used in the paper.

4. The paper must be organized according to the Paper Format (i.e., Parts I, II, and III) described on the last page.

5. The paper must also be written in formal English (i.e., avoid contractions such as can't, don't, won't, and abbreviations such as vs.), using proper punctuation, tenses and so on. Spelling and grammar are also considered important; too many of these errors will lead to a mandatory grade point deduction. Based on these criteria, it is imperative that you Proofread the paper (more than once) prior to handing it in.

6. No plagiarism or prior work on topic (this will result in a failing grade).

7. Paper Grade: Meeting minimum requirements 1 through 6 means that the paper is at least at the C level. Grade Point Deductions: A failing grade will be assigned if requirements 1, 2, or 6 are not met. Grade point deductions will be assigned if the other requirements are not met.

When in Doubt: Review the above criteria.

Paper Presentation

A formal presentation of approximately 20 minutes is also required (in order that others may share in the knowledge you have gained) and will be graded (10% of grade). Note Cards MUST be used, along with your outline, and the presentation will be from the podium (you may not have your paper at the podium.). A brief outline (1-2 pages) and reference page of sources used will be distributed to the class prior to the presentation. The purpose of the presentation is to describe the research reviewed with respect to methodology, findings, limitations and policy implications.
A question and answer period will follow the presentation; queries regarding the research and policy implications will be asked by the class and instructor (note: these queries also count toward one's participation grade).

Due Dates

Final papers are due on the last class meeting (see schedule). Papers can only be late if excusable (e.g., sickness, tragedy, etc.); otherwise, one grade point per day late will be deducted.

Paper Format

The paper MUST be ORGANIZED according to the following format:

Part I Introduction

This section includes a relatively brief introduction to the topic; may include history of subject, relevance, concepts, definitions, and current policies.

Part II Review of Literature

This section primarily describes the research on the subject, and focuses on defining the major relationships (statistical) between and among important study variables (e.g., the relationship between a treatment program and recidivism). Each empirical study must be described with respect to:

Study Design

- List study title (abbreviated)
- Type of study (survey, experimental, observation)
- Sample (random, snowball, questionnaire, personal interview)
- Variables Measured (independent, dependent, control)

Findings (statistically significant relationships between and among study variables).

Limitations (variables for which study did or did not control)

In this section, each empirical study will be described separately.

It should also be noted that some research is more valid and reliable than other research; that is, the better controlled studies, which will receive the bulk of your attention. For instance, academic journals such as Criminology, Crime & Delinquency, Justice Quarterly, Police Quarterly, or the Journal of Criminal Justice include empirical research while practitioner journals such as Federal Probation and Police Chief tend to include only program descriptions.

Part III Policy Implications

From the research results, the need for new and/or improved policies will be described. These policy changes and revisions must be based on a realistic assessment of what can be accomplished with respect to budget, time, resource constraints, and politics. This suggests that the policies should be aimed specifically at program developments with respect to the research reviewed.

Class Schedule

Meeting Activity
Jan. 29  Introduction: class prerequisites; participation; MITs; and policy paper.
       Delimiting topic; use of CJ Abstracts; paper format.
Feb. 3 & 5  Introduction continued (collect names, phone number, and e-mail address)
           Walker: Preface; Chap. 1
Feb. 10 & 12 Walker: Chaps. 2, 3 & 4
Feb. 17 & 19 Walker: Chap. 5 & 6
       Discussion: Paper Topics (be prepared to describe your topic in class)
       Determine Individual Topic Meetings (19th)
Feb. 24  Walker: Chap. 7
       Discussion: Paper Topics
Feb. 26  Individual Topic Meetings Begin
       REQUIRED: Working title and one empirical reference.
March 2 & 4  Individual Topic Meetings
March 9 & 11 Individual Topic Meetings
March 16 & 18 Individual Topic Meetings
March 23 & 25 Walker: Chaps. 8, 9 & 10
March 30/April 1 SPRING BREAK
April 6 & 8  Walker: Chaps. 11 & 12
April 13 & 15 Walker: Chap. 13 & 14
       Determine Presentation Order (13th)
       Paper Questions (15th)
April 20 & 22 Paper Presentations Begin
       Outline & Reference page Distributed
April 27 & 29 Paper Presentations
May 4 & 6  Paper presentations
May 11 & 13 Paper Presentations
May 18  Paper Presentations
       Final Papers Due

AJ 159 Policy Paper: Things to Know

1). Abstracts—2nd floor
CJ Abstracts: HV6001.C67

Social Sciences Index H1s64x

2). Most Recent Journals
   This Year Only—4th floor

3). Older Journals
   Previous Years—Lower Level

4). Interlibrary Loan
   ILL—no direct access; must use online
   www.sisulibrary.org
   808-2000

5). AJ Reference Librarian
   Susanne Liu

Criminal Justice Website and Library Information
The following internet websites may provide valuable reference materials for use in crime and justice research papers.

**NCJRS**

Recent publications

Phone number to order materials: 1-800-851-3420

www.ncjrs.org/justinfo/

**National Institute of Justice**

www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij

**Bureau of Justice Statistics**

CJ data, including: crime, victims, criminals, police, jails and prisons

www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/

**Bureau of Justice Statistics Update**

Publications and Abstracts

Update additions to BJS Website

www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/gbjsws.htm

**CJ Reference Librarian**

Susanne Liu
Clark Library