

Dr. R. Roberg
MH 512
924-2941

Spring 2002
Office Hours:

AJ 159 Senior Seminar

Course Description

The identification, discussion and analysis of selected problems in the criminal justice system. Prerequisites are AJ 105 and 100 W or equivalent, and senior standing. A selected criminal justice issue 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

Walker, S. (2001). *Sense and Nonsense About Crime and Drugs*, 5th ed. (Belmont, CA.: Wadsworth).

Course Requirements

1. Participation: come to class prepared to **discuss** and **critique** assigned readings; prepare a Most Important Topics list (see below) describing three critical topic areas 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/Presentation = 60%
Participation/MITs = 40%

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. 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.

As noted above, a requirement is that as you read each chapter that you identify and describe three (3) most important topics (MITs) that can be discussed in class. The description of each MIT will be approximately one paragraph (approximately 3 to 4 sentences). In this way, you will always be able to participate on any given day. The MITs will be collected periodically, and factored in as a part of your participation grade (up to one-fifth).

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:

5 points= several intelligent or insightful comments on the topic.

3 points= at least one general comment on the topic.

1 point= present in class.

0 points= absent from class.

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 the topic. The paper will briefly review the literature on the topic, and will analyze the topic from a "what works"/policy perspective.

Paper Requirements

1. 12 to 18 pages in length (not including reference pages and appendices). Note: A typical page is considered to be 250 words in length; thus, the paper must be no less than 3,000 words.
2. Include at total of least five (5) total references; at least two (2) of which must be scholarly in nature; that is, empirical or theoretical from a research journal (you are looking for empirical relationships between and among variables). The articles should be relatively recent (since the early '90s). Generally, these will be found in the *CJ Abstracts*. Internet references may not be used except from government sources like the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), and these may not count as scholarly references; generally, government sources are used for descriptive purposes.
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 format described on the last page. The paper must also be written in proper English (i.e., avoid contractions such as can't, don't, won't, and so on). Spelling and grammar are also considered important; it is common practice for formal papers to be written in third person (This paper will report on . . .) rather than in first-person (I will report on . . .).
5. No plagiarism or prior work on topic (this results in failing grades).
6. Proofread the paper (more than once) prior to handing it in. It is mandatory that each of the above criteria be met. Grade points will be deducted if requirements 2 through 4 are not met; a failing grade may be assigned if the paper does not meet requirements 1 and 5.

Paper Presentation

A formal presentation of approximately 20 minutes is also a requirement (so that others may share in the knowledge you have gained). Note cards will be used and the presentation will be from the podium. A brief outline (1-2 pages) and reference page of sources used will be distributed to the class prior to the presentation.

A question and answer period will follow the presentation; queries regarding the paper (e.g., research studies and findings, new policies and programs, etc.) will be asked by the class and instructor. The presentation and discussion is considered an extension of the paper and is not normally graded; however, in extreme cases (either good or bad), it may impact the overall paper grade by one-half point. Also, discussion at this time is considered to be an important part of class participation and will contribute to the overall participation score.

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.

It is **strongly encouraged** that you turn in a partial paper (up to 5 pages) for **early review** (see schedule); contents should include some literature review and references). The paper will be critiqued and handed back for final completion.

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). In general, each empirical study will be described with respect to:

- Study Design (survey, experimental, observation)
- Sampling Method (50 inmates, randomly chosen)
- Variables Measured:
 - *Independent* (recidivism) and *Dependent* (treatment program)
 - *Control* (age, race, gender, IQ, crime) and *Intervening* (motivation, officer style)
- Results or Findings (between recidivism and treatment program)
- Limitations (variables for which study did not control, generalizability)

In this section, each study reviewed (i.e., design, sampling, variables, results and limitations) should 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, and these should receive the bulk of your attention. For instance, academic journals such as *Justice Quarterly*, *Policing*, or the *Journal of Criminal Justice* generally include empirical research while practitioner journals such as *Federal Probation* and *Police Chief* generally include program descriptions.

Part III Conclusions and Policy Implications

Overall conclusions of the studies reviewed are drawn. From these conclusions the need for change and revisions with respect to new or revised policies are made. Such changes and revisions should be based on a realistic assessment of what can be accomplished with respect to budget, time, and resource constraints.

Class Schedule

<u>Meeting</u>	<u>Activity</u>
Jan. 24	Introduction: class prerequisites, participation, and policy paper. Putting the paper together: literature review, CJ Abstracts; Internet; and APA.
Jan. 29 & 31	Introduction continued Topic discussion: delimiting subject; research methods; CJ Abstracts Walker: Preface; Chap. 1
Feb. 5 & 7	Paper Discussion and Examples Walker: Chaps. 2-3
Feb. 12 & 14	Walker: Chaps. 4-5 Topic Description due on 14th; returned on 19th Required: working title; one paragraph description; one empirical reference
Feb. 19 & 21	Walker: Chaps. 6-8 Individual Progress Meeting Dates Determined
Feb. 26 & 28	Walker: Chaps. 9-10 Individual Progress Meetings Begin on 28th (Required: revised title; two empirical references; description of empirical relationships)
March 5 & 7	Individual Progress Meetings
March 12 & 14	Individual Progress Meetings
March 19 & 21	Individual Progress Meetings
March 26 & 28	Spring Break
April 2 & 4	Walker: Chaps. 11 & 12
April 9 & 11	Walker: Chaps. 13 & 14 Determine Presentation Order
April 16 & 18	Drop In: Paper Qs and As (16th) Paper Presentations Begin (18th) (Outline & Reference pages distributed)
April 23 & 25	Paper Presentations Early Review Papers Due (25th)
Apr 30/May 2	Paper Presentations Early Review Papers Returned (30th)
May 7 & 9	Paper Presentations
May 14	Paper Presentations Papers Due