

FALL 2005
JS 159, Sections 1 & 2.

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AJ159

SENIOR SEMINAR

Course Description

Identification, discussion and analysis of selected problems in the criminal justice system. Pre-requisites are: AJ105; 100W or equivalent; and senior standing.

Learning Objectives:

1. To undertake a critical analysis of
 - a. a contemporary problem in the criminal justice system and
 - b. to propose policies and practices that could be implemented to help solve the problem.

2. To provide oral and written presentations of the contemporary problem and its proposed solution in a manner that
 - a. gives a clear introduction, rationale and purpose, addressing the issues/questions,
 - b. uses an acceptable writing/speaking style and
 - c. uses APA editorial style.

3. To demonstrate reasoning and argumentation in each review that indicates
 - a. an accurate and complete understanding of the issues,
 - b. use of examples, data and references to support knowledge claims, and
 - c. logical presentation of ideas, drawing valid conclusions

Texts:

Walker, S. (2006). Sense and nonsense about crime and drugs. 6th Edition. Belmont, CA.: Wadsworth.

Fields, C.B. (1999). Controversial issues in corrections. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Course Requirements:

1. Policy paper = 50%
2. Participation
 - Class discussion = 15%
 - MITs = 15%
 - Debate = 15%
 - Presentation of paper = 5%

Students must make at least a C- to graduate.

In addition, all students are required to complete the plagiarism quiz online at <http://130.65.109.143/plagiarism/index.htm> or <http://tutorials.silibrary.org/plagiarism/index.htm> by October 5th. No draft of the final paper will be accepted without completing this quiz.

Policy Paper:

A policy paper on a justice-related topic will be required. Topics will be chosen within the first month of class in consultation with the instructor. The paper will review the empirical literature on the topic, and will formulate new or improved policies and/or programs based on the empirical evidence (see separate "Instructions for Final Paper"). Final papers must be submitted to the instructor in hard copy and electronically, by email.

Participation is made up of four (4) parts:

- a) Class discussion involves reading the assigned readings carefully prior to each class meeting and during class indicating knowledge of the subject matter and/or asking probing questions. Oral participation in class will be assessed on a daily basis. One point will be assigned for each intelligent or insightful comment made on the topic (maximum 3 per class).
- b) MITs require that you identify at least three (3) Most Important Theses that can be discussed in class from each of the chapter readings. These are knowledge claims that you believe to be particularly crucial and insightful. For each MIT you should write down key words that state the topic; a single sentence to summarize the general theses or knowledge claim; and data and cites to back-up the knowledge claim (this may include figures and tables). The purpose of the MITs is to help aid you in class discussions. MITs will be collected randomly in class. MITs will not be accepted unless you attend class on the day that the chapter is discussed.
- c) Debates involve signing up for one of the controversial topics in the Fields text and engaging in a ten (10) minute debate on that topic with another student during class, each taking opposite viewpoints. Each debate will be assessed in terms of your presentation style, content, and responsiveness to your opponent.
- d) A formal class presentation of the policy paper (for 10-15 minutes) will be made towards the end of the semester. A one page outline of your paper and reference list must be distributed to your classmates at that time. Note

cards and/or overheads/power point presentations are encouraged. Papers may not be read aloud.

In accord with departmental policy, acceptance of late papers (including drafts of papers) after the due date will be provided only in extreme cases and only where appropriate documentation is provided.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNED READINGS

Aug 24	Course overview: Assignment of topics for debate.
Aug 29, 31	Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 1, 2.
Sep 7, 12	Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 3, 4
Sep 12	Selection of topic for paper due.
Sep 14, 19	Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 5, 6
Sep 21, 26	Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 7, 8
Sep 26	Prepare statement of purpose of paper (200-300 words) with preliminary reading list due.
Sep 28	Debates, Fields, Chpts 1, 2
Oct 3	Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 9
Oct 5	Debates, Fields, Chpts 3, 4
Oct 10	Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 10
Oct 12	Debates, Fields, Chpts 5, 6
Oct 17	Draft of Part 1 of final paper with references due.
Oct 17	Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 11
Oct 19	Debates, Fields, Chpts 7, 8
Oct 24	Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 12
Oct 26	Debates, Fields Chpts 9, 10
Oct 31	Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 13

Nov 2 Debates, Fields Chpts 11, 12

Nov 7 Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 14

Nov 9 Debates, Fields Chpts 13, 14

Nov 14 Debates, Fields Chpts 15, 16

**Nov 16 Draft of Part 2 of final paper with references due
(include re-written draft of Part 1 when you hand this in)**

Nov 16 Class presentations of final paper

Nov 21, 23 NO CLASS

Nov 16, 28, 30, Dec 5, 7, 12

Class presentations of final paper

**Dec 12 Final paper due. Parts 1, 2, 3
(Include all previous drafts of the paper when you hand this in)**

Instructions for Final Paper

The paper should be approximately 12-15 pages or at least 3,000 words in length (not including references pages and appendices). It should be double-spaced, 12-point type, and written strictly in APA style (http://www.sjlibrary.org/services/literacy/info_comp/citing.)

Final papers must be submitted to the instructor in hard copy and also electronically, by email. In addition, a one-page summary together with the reference list must be distributed to the class for the oral presentation.

A different topic must be chosen by each student that does not replicate prior work completed, nor replicate current topics of others in the class. *All final papers will be subject to a scan for plagiarism. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade.*

All papers need to be delimited and clearly focused on a particular issue or contemporary unresolved problem in the criminal justice system (e.g. overcrowding in prisons; recruitment of women to high status administrative/managerial positions; domestic violence recidivism, violent crimes committed by children, racial disparities in the justice system etc.) and propose evidence-based solutions to the problem.

Part 1.

Begin with a brief non-technical introduction to the problem and argue why it is important to study. Document the extent of the problem using the literature.

Survey the literature and select prior review articles and any recent articles (during the past decade) that address the causes and correlates of the problem. Summarize the authors' subjects, method and findings for each study. Evaluate and critique the methodology and limitations of the findings. Make an attempt to conclude what are the overall general findings. Also note what appear to be contradictory or ambiguous findings, or gaps in knowledge. On the basis of this review, conclude what is the best general approach to managing or ameliorating the problem.

Part 2.

Based upon Part 1 above, describe specific new or improved policies and practices that could be implemented to solve the problem. Provide evidence (theory, data and cites) to back up your claims for the effectiveness of the solutions you have proposed. In this discussion, be cognizant of political, economic, and practical impediments to instituting the proposed solutions and how these can be overcome.

Part 3.

List of references used in the paper (mandatory) and appendix (optional).

Include at least seven (7) total references of which a minimum of three (3) 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 i.e. since the 1990s. These are all minimum requirements.

It is strongly suggested that empirical references be selected from the *CJ Abstracts*. Note that some research is more valid and reliable than other research and should receive the bulk of your attention. For instance, academic journals such as *Criminology*, *Crime and 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. Include only reference to articles that have been published in peer-reviewed journals. This means beware of internet references, and newspaper and magazine articles that have not been subjected to this peer-review process.

Scoring Rubric for AJ159

Level of Achievement	General Presentation	Reasoning/ Argumentation
Excellent (9-10 pts) A grade	Provides clear & thorough introduction, rationale, & purpose of paper.	Demonstrates accurate, complete understanding of the issues
	Addresses the issues/questions throughout the paper	Uses relevant empirical literature; examples, data & references to support claims
	Uses acceptable writing style & grammar	Presents ideas in logical order; draws valid conclusions
Good Quality (7-8 pts) B grade	Mostly clear introduction, rationale, purpose, background etc.	Accurate but less detailed/in-depth understanding of issues
	Mostly focused on issues	
	Writing/grammar less Thorough (1-2 errors)	Uses few empirical studies, or insufficient data & references to back claims
	1-2 errors in APA style	

		Generally logical but conclusions are loose
Needs Improvement (5-6 pts)	Unclear purpose, rationale Does not address issue/question explicitly but does so tangentially;	Demonstrates minimal understanding of issues Lacks appropriate literature, data, references to support claims. States somewhat relevant arguments.
C grade	Problems with style & grammar 3 + APA errors	Presents some arguments in logical order. Small subset of data support argument.
Inadequate (3-4 pts)	No clear purpose to paper. Does not address question/issues	Fails to demonstrate understanding of issues/questions, inaccurate.
F grade	Inadequate style & grammar Little evidence of APA editorial style	Does not provide evidence (empirical literature, data) to support assertions/arguments States no relevant arguments. Not clearly or logically organized

Directions for using Scoring Rubric

The paper will be rated according to the two dimensions outlined in the scoring rubric above: *general presentation, and reasoning-argumentation*. Each dimension will carry equal weight.

Final grades will be assigned according to the following scales:

A+ = 95%+, A = 90%+, A- = 85%+, B+ = 80%+, B = 75%+, B- = 70%+, C+ = 65%+, C = 60%+, C- = 55%+, D+ = 50%+, D = 45%+, D- = 40%+, F = <40%.