

SPRING 2005
JS 159, Section 1
MonWed 1:30-2:45pm
Room MH526

Dr. Jan Johnston
Office: MacQuarrie Hall Rm 508
Office Phone: 408 924-2942
johnston@email.sjsu.edu
Office Hours: Mo & Wed 8:30-10:30am;
Mon & Wed 3-5:30pm
(except for committee meetings).
Other times by appointment.

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:

Students will critically analyze contemporary problems and policies regarding the justice system through in-class discussion of assigned readings, and the preparation and presentation of a policy paper.

Texts:

Walker, S. (2001). Sense and nonsense about crime and drugs. 5th 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 = 10%
 - Debate = 15%
 - Presentation of paper = 10%

Students must make at least a C- to graduate.

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").

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.
- b) MITs require that you identify at least three (3) Most Important Topics that can be discussed in class from each of the readings. 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 to summarize the topic (and 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. Keep each chapter's MITs on a separate page.
- 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.
- d) A formal class presentation of the policy paper (for 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.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNED READINGS

Jan 26 Course overview: Assignment of topics for debate.

Jan 31, Feb 2 Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 1, 2.

Feb 7, 9 Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 3, 4

Feb 14, 16 Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 5, 6

Feb 21, 23 Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 7, 8

Selection of topic for paper due on Feb 23.

Feb 28, Mar 2 Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 9, 10

Prepare statement of purpose of paper (200-300 words) with preliminary reading list. Due Mar 2.

Mar 7, 9 Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 11,12

Mar 15, 16 Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 13, 14.

March 21, 23 NO CLASS

Visits to library to complete plagiarism tutorial & learn how to do in-depth library search for materials for research paper

March 28, 30 SPRING BREAK

Draft of Part 1 of final paper with references due April 4

Apr 4, 6 Debates, Fields Chpts 1, 2, 3, 4

Apr 11, 13 Debates, Fields Chpts 5, 6, 7, 8

Apr 18, 20 Debates, Fields Chpts 9, 10,11, 12

Apr 25, 27 Debates, Fields Chpts 13, 14, 15, 16

**Draft of Part 2, 3 & 4 of final paper due Apr 27
(include re-written draft of Part 1 when you hand this in)**

May 2, 4, 9, 11, 16
Class presentations of final paper

May 11 Final paper due. Parts 1, 2, 3 & 4

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. 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. ***Plagiarism will result in a failing grade.*** All papers need to be delimited and clearly focused on a particular issue or problem.

The paper should consider a 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.)

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 years 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.

Part 2.

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 3.

Based upon Part 2 above, describe specific new or improved policies and practices that could be implemented. In this discussion, be cognizant of political, economic, and practical impediments to institution of the proposed solutions and how these can be overcome.

Part 4.

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

Include at least five (5) total references of which a minimum of two (2) 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 mid-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 that have not been subjected to this 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. Addresses the issues/questions throughout the paper Uses acceptable writing style & grammar Uses APA editorial style | Demonstrates accurate, complete understanding of the issues Uses relevant empirical literature; examples, data & references to support claims Presents ideas in logical order; draws valid conclusions |
| Good Quality (7-8 pts) B grade | Mostly clear introduction, rationale, purpose, background etc. Mostly focused on issues Writing/grammar less Thorough (1-2 errors) 1-2 errors in APA style | Accurate but less detailed/in-depth understanding of issues Uses few empirical studies, or insufficient data & references to back claims Generally logical but conclusions are loose |

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Needs Improvement (5-6 pts) | Unclear purpose, rationale | Demonstrates minimal understanding of issues |
| | Does not address issue/question explicitly but does so tangentially; | Lacks appropriate literature, data, references to support claims. States somewhat relevant arguments. |
| C grade | Problems with style & grammar | Presents some arguments in logical order. Small subset of data support argument. |
| | 3 + APA errors | |
| 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 | Does not provide evidence (empirical literature, data) to support assertions/arguments |
| | Little evidence of APA editorial style | 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. Oral participation in class will be assessed on a daily basis and a final participation will be determined at the end of the class. One point will be assigned for each intelligent or insightful comment made on the topic (maximum 3 per class). MITs that are randomly collected will also receive one point for each intelligent or insightful comment. Debates will be graded on a five-point scale.

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%.