

**JS 159
Senior Seminar**

Course Description

The primary purpose of the class is to identify, discuss and analyze selected problems in the criminal justice system. **Mandatory prerequisites** for the class include include: 1). JS 105, 2). 100 W or equivalent, and 3). senior standing; 2nd semester seniors may be given preference. 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

Walker, S. (2006). *Sense and Nonsense About Crime and Drugs*, 6th ed. (Belmont, CA.: Wadsworth).

Course Requirements

1. **Participation:** come to class prepared to discuss and critique assigned readings; prepare a *Most Important Topics (MITs)* discussion of three (3) topics for each chapter you consider the most important.
2. **Policy paper:** prepare a literature review/policy analysis paper of an approved criminal justice topic; the topic must not have been previously written on or researched.
3. **Presentation:** a formal class presentation of the policy paper, including topic outline and reference page.

Student Evaluation

Policy paper= 45%

Paper presentation= 5%

Participation = 30%

MITs= 20%

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

Participation and MITs (50%)

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. Class participation will be evaluated on a per meeting basis 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.

Part of the participation grade is that as you read each chapter you identify three (3) Most Important Topics (MITs) that may be discussed in class; these are topics that you believe to be the **most** crucial and insightful. For each MIT you will: (1) **describe** the topic itself (utilizing key words and phrases), (2) **explain** why the topic is important (impact or practice), (3) provide **support** for the topic (with empirical data, information, or logical argument, and (4) **cite the** supporting evidence (APA style).

Each MIT will be typed, double spaced, identified by chapter, and stapled together to be handed in at the end of the class. Keep each chapter's MITs on a separate page. They will be collected **randomly**; that is, you must be in **attendance** to hand them in (no exceptions). The purpose of the MITs is to aid you in class discussion; therefore, in each class you **will be chosen** to discuss your MITs.

Policy Paper and Presentation (50%)

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. Once chosen, a topic may not be changed without instructor consent. 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 15 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** and a maximum of 3,750. **Required font:** Times New Roman with a 12 font.

2. Include a **minimum of five (5)** total references with a **minimum of two (2)** which must be **empirical** in nature; that is, articles from research journals that identify significant relationships between and among variables. These are minimum requirements; **higher grades** will include three (3) empirical cites. Note: Internet references may not be used as one of the required cites.

3. **No plagiarism or prior work** on topic.

4. The research must be **described in your own words**; not **paraphrased** using the author's words or thoughts, or through the use of lengthy quotes from the articles authors (of course, direct quotes—which should be few and short—must be in quotation marks).

5. The two or three **empirical research articles** must be turned in with the paper.

6. The articles must be contemporary in nature and published within the last **ten years**. The empirical articles **must** be selected from the **Criminal Justice Abstracts** or the **Social Sciences Index**.

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

8. The paper **must** be organized according to the **Paper Format** section; see Parts I, II, and III described on the last page.

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

Paper Grading: Meeting minimum requirements 1 through 9 means that the paper is at least at the C level. A **failing paper** grade will be assigned if requirements 1-5 are not met. Grade point deductions will be taken if requirements 6-9 are not met. A **failing class** grade will be assigned if requirements 3 or 4 are not met; in addition, your name will be turned into the **Judicial Affairs Office** for possible further action.

Common paper errors include: (1) APA format not followed (in paper or reference section); (2) cites in the paper do not match those in the reference section; (3) inadequate description of studies; (4), weak policy implications; and (5), policy implications not matching the research reviewed.

Presentation

A **formal** presentation of approximately 15-20 minutes is required (in order that others may share in the

knowledge you have gained) and will be graded. Your presentation will be from **note cards**, assisted only by the possible use of charts or graphs, and presented from the podium (i.e., you may not use your paper or outline at the podium). **Note:** Directly reading your presentation, or being significantly disorganized, will result in a **failing** presentation grade.

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 **Q & A** 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, and research articles, are due on the last class meeting (see schedule). Papers can be late only if **excusable** (i.e., documented sickness, tragedy, etc.), and **accepted** by the instructor. **One grade point** per work day late will be deducted; there are **no exceptions** to this policy.

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, current policies, and so on.

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). An introduction sentence to each empirical study should precede discussion of the study, and each study will be described separately. Each empirical study will be described with respect to:

Study Design:

Type of study (e.g., survey, experimental, observation, interview)

Sample (number of subjects and how chosen—random, snowball)

Variables Measured (independent, dependent, and control variables--age, race, gender, education)

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

Limitations: (variables for which the study did not control)

Each study will be described separately.

It should be noted that some research is more valid and reliable than other research; that is, the better controlled studies should 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 or non-scientific research.

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

<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Activity</i>
Jan. 26	Introduction: prerequisites for class; participation requirements and MITs. Policy paper overview, including delimiting topics; and use of CJ Abstracts.
Jan. 31	Introduction continued, focusing on policy paper requirements; collect phone numbers and e-mails. Syllabus: Read policy paper/presentation requirements for discussion.
Feb. 2	Overlap from Introduction Walker: Preface; Chap. 1
Feb. 7 & 9	Walker: Chaps. 2, 3 & 4
Feb. 14 & 16	Walker continued Paper Topic Descriptions: be prepared to describe your topic in class (16 th) Paper Q & A
Feb. 21 & 23	Walker: Chaps. 5 & 6 Determine Individual meeting times (23rd) Paper Examples Reviewed
Feb. 28	Walker: Chaps. 7 & 8
Mar. 2	Individual Topic Meetings Begin Requirements for meeting: Delimited title and one empirical reference. (Note: There will be no meeting if the requirements are not met).
Mar. 7 & 9	Individual Topic Meetings
Mar. 14 & 16	Individual Topic Meetings
Mar. 21 & 23	Individual Topic Meetings
Mar. 28 & 30	SPRING BREAK
Apr. 4 & 6	Walker: Chaps. 9, 10 & 11
Apr. 11 & 13	Walker: Chaps. 12 & 13 Determine Presentation Order (13th)
Apr. 18	Walker: Chap. 14 Paper/Presentation Q & A
Apr. 20	Paper Presentations Begin Outline & Reference page distributed by presenters
Apr. 25 & 27	Presentations Continue
May 2 & 4	Presentations Continue
May 9 & 11	Presentations Continue

May 16 Presentations Continue
 Final Papers Due

Policy Paper Subject Searches

1). Abstracts—2nd floor

CJ Abstracts: HV6001.C67
(Current references on-line)

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

5). JS Reference Librarian

Susanne Liu

6). APA Style.org

Electronic References

Course Add/Drop Statement

For information regarding adding and dropping a course, please refer to the Schedule of Instructions, Policies, and Procedures:

<http://info.sjsu.edu/cgi-bin/socfiles?command=ftok&arg=soc-spring-narrative>

Instructors are permitted to drop students who fail to attend the first scheduled class meeting and who fail to inform the instructor prior to the second class meeting of the reason for any absence and their intention to continue in the class. Some instructors will drop students who do not meet the stated course prerequisites. However, instructors are not required to drop a student from their course. ***It is the student's responsibility to make sure classes are dropped.***

Academic Integrity Statement

In accordance with University policy this course strives to uphold academic honesty. "Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University, and the University's Academic Integrity Policy requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the Office of Judicial Affairs." A student may be reprimanded, receive a failing grade on their evaluation instrument (exam, paper, etc.), have their grade lowered, or receive an "F" in the course, and referred to administrative sanctions if they are suspected of plagiarism or cheating. The policy on academic integrity can be found at:

<http://www2.sjsu.edu/senate/S04-12.pdf>

To better understand plagiarism and to aid you in making sure that you are not plagiarizing, please see me or visit:

<http://tutorials.sjlibrary.org/plagiarism/index.htm>

American with Disabilities Act

"If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need 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 students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with DRC to establish a record of their disability."

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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 (MITs)* list of three (3) topics per chapter that you consider the most important.
2. **Policy paper:** prepare a literature review/policy analysis paper of an approved criminal justice topic; the topic must not have been previously written on or researched.
3. **Presentation:** a formal class presentation of the policy paper, including topic outline and reference page.

Student Evaluation

Policy paper= 40%

Paper presentation= 10%

Participation = 30%

MITs= 20%

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

Participation and MITs

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 three (3) Most Important Topics (MITs) that will be discussed in class; these are topics that you believe to be particularly crucial and insightful. Each MIT will be one to two paragraphs in length in which you must: (1) **describe** the topics utilizing key words and phrases, and (2) **explain** (i.e., defend) why you chose the topics--in factual terms-- as the most important in the chapter. 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 account for 20% of the class grade. The purpose of the MITs, however, is to aid you in class discussion; therefore, in each class you **will be chosen** to discuss your MITs.

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. Once chosen, a topic may not be changed **without instructor consent**. 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 15 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** and a maximum of 3,750.

Required font: Times New Roman with a 12 font.

2. Include a **minimum of five (5)** total references with a **minimum of two (2)** which must be empirical in nature; that is, articles from research journals that identify significant relationships between and among variables. These are minimum requirements; **higher grades will include three (3)** empirical cites. Note: Internet references **may not** be used as one of the required cites. Internet cites must follow the APA format.

3. The articles must be contemporary in nature and published within the last **seven years**. It is **strongly suggested** that you use the *CJ Abstracts* to find your sources.

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

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

6. The paper **must 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 one grade point deduction. Based on these criteria, it is imperative that you **proofread** the paper (more than once) prior to handing it in.

7. **No plagiarism** or prior work on topic.

8. The research must be **described in your own words**; not simply paraphrased or through the use of lengthy quotes from the articles authors (of course, direct quotes—which should be few—must be in quotation marks).

9. **Paper Grade: Meeting minimum requirements 1 through 8** means that the paper is at least at the C level. **Grade Point Deductions:** A failing grade will be assigned if **requirements 1, 2, 7, or 8** are not met. Grade point deductions may be assigned if the other requirements are not met.

10. **Common errors include:** (1) APA format not followed (in paper or reference section); (2) cites in the paper do not match those in the reference section; (3) inadequate description of studies; (4), weak policy implications; and (5), policy implications not matching the research reviewed.

Presentation

A *formal* presentation of approximately 15-20 minutes is required (in order that others may share in the knowledge you have gained) and will be graded (10% of grade). Your presentation will be from note cards, assisted only by the possible use of charts or graphs, and presented from the podium (i.e., you may not use your paper or outline at the podium). **Note:** Directly reading from your presentation will result in a failing presentation grade. 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 **Q & A** 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 be late only if **excusable** (i.e., documented sickness, tragedy, etc.), and **accepted** by the instructor. **One grade point per work day late** will be deducted; there are no exceptions to this policy.

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 will be described with respect to:

Study Design:

Authors last names

Type of study (e.g., survey, experimental, observation)

Sample (e.g., random, snowball, questionnaire, personal interview)

Variables Measured (e.g., independent and dependent variables.; control variables; for example, age, race, gender, education, etc.)

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 be noted that some research is more valid and reliable than other research; that is, the better controlled studies should 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 or simplistic/unscientific research.

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

<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Activity</i>
Aug. 25	Introduction: class prerequisites; participation; and MITs. Policy paper review; delimiting topic; use of CJ Abstracts; and paper format.
Aug 30/Sep 1	Introduction continued (collect names, phone number, and e-mail address) Walker: Preface; Chap. 1 (1st)
Sep 6 & 8	Walker: Chaps. 2, 3 & 4
Sep 13 & 15	<i>Paper Topic Descriptions:</i> be prepared to describe your topic in class (15 th)
Sep 20 & 22	Walker: Chaps 5 & 6 <i>Determine Individual meeting times</i> (22nd)
Sep 27	Walker: Chaps 7 & 8
Sep 29	Individual Topic Meetings Begin <i>Requirements for meeting: Delimited title and one empirical reference.</i> (Note: Meeting will be very short if the requirements are not met).
Oct 4 & 6	Individual Topic Meetings
Oct 11 & 13	Individual Topic Meetings
Oct 18 & 20	Individual Topic Meetings
Oct 25 & 27	Walker: Chaps 9, 10 & 11
Nov 1 & 3	Walker: Chaps 12 & 13 <i>Determine Presentation Order</i> (3rd)
Nov 8	Walker: Chap. 14 Summary and Conclusions (1 page) Q & A: Paper/Presentation
Nov 10	<i>Paper Presentations Begin</i> Outline & Reference page Distributed
Nov 15 & 17	Presentations Continue
Nov 22 & 24	22nd No Class; 24th Thanksgiving
Nov 29 & Dec 1	Presentations Continue
Dec 6 & 8	Presentations Continue Final Papers Due (8th)

Policy Paper Subject Searches

1). Abstracts—2nd floor

CJ Abstracts: HV6001.C67
(Current references on-line)

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.sjsulibrary.org

5). JS Reference Librarian

Susanne Liu

6). APA Style.org

Electronic References