

FALL 2006
JS 159, Section 1.
MW 9 – 10:15am

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JS159

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 Outcomes:

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 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.sjlibrary.org/plagiarism/index.htm> by the due date (see class schedule below). 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 i) key words that state the topic; ii) a single sentence to summarize the general theses or knowledge claim; iii) data and cites using APA style 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 a) presentation style, b) content, and c) responsiveness to your opponent (equally weighted)

- d) A formal class presentation of the policy paper (for 10-15 minutes) will be made towards the end of the semester. Note cards and/or overheads/power point presentations are encouraged. Papers may not be read aloud.

Late submissions: In accord with departmental policy, homework assignments and final research papers (including drafts of papers) submitted after the due date will be considered for full credit only in extreme cases and only where appropriate documentation is provided. The instructor has the discretion to deduct ½ grade for each day late OR refuse to accept the late assignment altogether. Make-up or re-takes of the mid-term exam can only be done at the time of the final exam.

Course Add/Drop Statement

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.*

You, the student, are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, withdrawal, etc. found at:

http://sa.sjsu.edu/student_conduct

Academic Integrity Statement

Academic integrity is essential to the mission of San José State University. As such, students are expected to perform their own work (except when collaboration is expressly permitted by the course instructor) without the use of any outside resources. Students are not permitted to use old tests, quizzes when preparing for exams, nor may they consult with students who have already taken the exam. When practiced, academic integrity ensures that all students are fairly graded. Violations to the Academic Integrity Policy undermine the educational process and will not be tolerated. It also demonstrates a lack of respect for oneself, fellow students and the course instructor and can ruin the university's reputation and the value of the degrees it offers. We all share the obligation to maintain an environment which practices academic integrity. Violators of the Academic Integrity Policy will be subject to failing this course and being reported to the Office of Student Conduct & Ethical Development for disciplinary action which could result in suspension or expulsion from San José State University. The policy on academic integrity can be found at: http://sa.sjsu.edu/student_conduct

To better understand plagiarism and to aid you in making sure that you are not plagiarizing, please see me and/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.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNED READINGS

Aug 23	Course overview. (Checking eligibility to take the course).
Aug 28, 30	Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 1, 2 (Assignment of debate topics)
Sep 6, 11	Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 3, 4
Sep 11	Selection of topic for paper due.
Sep 13,18	Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 5, 6
Sep 20,25	Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 7, 8
Sep 25	Prepare statement of purpose of paper (200-300 words) with preliminary reading list due.
Sep 27	Debates, Fields, Chpts 1, 2
Oct 2	Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 9
Oct 4	Debates, Fields, Chpts 3, 4
Oct 9	Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 10
Oct 11	Debates, Fields, Chpts 5, 6
Oct 11	Plagiarism quiz due
Oct 16	Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 11
Oct 18	Debates, Fields, Chpts 7, 8
Oct 18	Draft of Part 1 of final paper with references due.
Oct 23	Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 12
Oct 25	Debates, Fields Chpts 9, 10

- Oct 30 Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 13
- Nov 1 Debates, Fields Chpts 11, 12
- Nov 6 Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 14
- Nov 8 Debates, Fields Chpts 13, 14 or 15,16
- Nov 13 Draft of Part 2 of final paper with references due
(include first draft & re-written draft of Part 1 when you hand this in)**
- Nov 13,15, 20,27,29, Dec 4, 6
 Class presentations of final paper
- Nov 29 Final paper due. Parts 1 & 2 with references
(Include all previous drafts of the paper if you want a re-grade)
All final papers also must be submitted by email.**

Instructions for Final Paper

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

All final papers must be submitted electronically, by email. *All final papers will be subject to a scan for plagiarism. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade.* Hard copies of the final paper must also be submitted to the instructor with all previous drafts only if you want to have it re-graded.

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 papers need to be delimited and clearly focused on a particular contemporary unresolved problem in the criminal justice system (e.g. police brutality; overcrowding in prisons; recruitment of women to high 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.

Sometimes the problem you have chosen will be an existing social policy (e.g. three-strikes laws; the death penalty) that ARE the problem. In these cases you will need to describe what the problematic social policy was trying to solve in the first place, how it has become a problem in the way it is implemented, and then propose how you will improve or solve the problems it has caused.

Part 1. Document the Problem

Begin with a brief introduction to the problem and argue why it is important to study. Then, in one paragraph describe the thesis or purpose of your paper, and give a brief overview of your paper showing how you will accomplish your purpose or prove your thesis. This will be a roadmap for your reader to follow.

Survey the literature and select prior review articles and any recent articles (during the past decade) that a) documents the extent of the problem and b) addresses the causes and correlates of the problem. (When reporting prior research, summarize the authors' subjects, method and findings for each study and be critical of 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. Solutions

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 critically aware of political, economic, and practical impediments to instituting the proposed solutions and how these can be overcome.

References in APA style must accompany every draft that is submitted.

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. 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 & policy implications
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/policy implications are loose
Needs Improvement (5-6 pts) C grade	Unclear purpose, rationale Does not address issue/question explicitly but does so tangentially; Problems with style & grammar 3 + APA errors	Demonstrates minimal understanding of issues Lacks appropriate literature, data, references to support claims. States somewhat relevant arguments. Presents some arguments in logical order. Small subset of data support argument. Weak conclusions/policy.

Inadequate	No clear purpose to paper.	Fails to demonstrate
(3-4 pts)	Does not address question/issues	understanding of issues/questions,
D or F grade	Inadequate style & grammar	inaccurate.
	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; lacks conclusions or policy implications.
