

SPRING 2006
JS 159, Section 1.

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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 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.

Academic Integrity Statement:

“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 are required to report all infractions to the Office of Judicial Affairs. The policy on academic integrity can be found at <http://www2.sjsu.edu/senate/S04-12.pdf>

In accordance with University policy this course strives to uphold academic honesty. Page 40 of the University catalogue clearly details University policies regarding cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes copying, submitting work previously graded in another course or submitting work simultaneously in two courses (unless otherwise approved), altering or interfering with grades, and use of surrogates for examinations. Plagiarism involves “representing the work of another as one’s own without appropriate credit.” (S98-1, p2). If a student is suspected of academic dishonesty, the student will be instructed to meet for a mandatory conference with the instructor. Further academic and administrative sanctions will be considered based on the infraction. Academic honesty is taken very seriously and any violations of university policy will not be tolerated.

Americans with Disabilities Act

Campus Policy in compliance with the Americans 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 my office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires students with disabilities register with DRC to establish a record of their disability.”

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 March 15th. 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 you’re 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.

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

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| Jan 25 | Course overview: Assignment of topics for debate. |
| Jan 30, Feb 1 | Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 1, 2. |
| Feb 6, 8 | Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 3, 4 |
| Feb 8 | Selection of topic for paper due. |

- Feb 13,15 Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 5, 6
- Feb 20,22 Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 7, 8
- Feb 22 Prepare statement of purpose of paper (200-300 words) with preliminary reading list due.**
- Feb 27 Debates, Fields, Chpts 1, 2
- Mar 1 Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 9
- Mar 6 Debates, Fields, Chpts 3, 4
- Mar 8 Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 10
- Mar 13 Debates, Fields, Chpts 5, 6
- Mar 15 Plagiarism quiz due**
- Mar 15 Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 11
- Mar 20 Debates, Fields, Chpts 7, 8
- March 22 Draft of Part 1 of final paper with references due.**
- Mar 22 Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 12
- Apr 3 Debates, Fields Chpts 9, 10
- Apr 5 Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 13
- Apr 10 Debates, Fields Chpts 11, 12
- Apr 12 Class discussion: Walker, Chpt 14
- Apr 17 Debates, Fields Chpts 13, 14 or 15,16
- Apr 17 Draft of Part 2 of final paper with references due
(include first draft & re-written draft of Part 1 when you hand this in)**
- Apr 17,24,26, May 1,3,8,10
Class presentations of final paper
- May 8 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 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
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) 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.

Inadequate (3-4 pts) F grade	No clear purpose to paper. Does not address question/issues	Fails to demonstrate understanding of issues/questions, inaccurate.
	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%.