

Sweeney 411 M / W 1.30 – 2.45  
Office Hours: 9.00am – 1.00pm

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Office: BT 454

## **JS 159 – Senior Seminar: Study in Contemporary Justice Issues**

### **Catalog Description**

Identification, discussion and analysis of selected problems in justice studies. A major term paper on a selected topic is required. Prerequisite: Senior standing, JS 105 and JS 100W or instructor consent.

Note: A *minimum* grade of "C-" in JS 159 is required for graduation.

### **Prerequisite**

Upper Division Standing. Registration in ranked priority for 1) Spring Graduating Seniors, 2) Fall Graduating Seniors, 3) Other Seniors.

### **Preferred Method of Communication**

I prefer that you communicate with me by e-mail: [ptimmons99@gmail.com](mailto:ptimmons99@gmail.com).

### **Office Hours: W 9.00am – 1.00pm, BT 454**

My office hours are for *you*. Please ***do not hesitate*** to visit with me. If you cannot make my office hours, please do consider making an appointment. (Please give 24 hours notice for appointments outside of normal office hours.)

### **Course Description**

The Justice Studies Department's Senior Seminar represents the culminating educational experience of a degree in Justice Studies at San José State University. The seminar's purpose is to create knowledge through research which can be applied to society through changes to policymaking. These suggestions come from the seminar's members. The seminar's participants—mostly graduating seniors—examine an area of burning, intense interest which has arisen from their contemplation on issues related to justice over years of study. A seminar participant takes this particular area of interest, subjects it to rigorous study, assessment, and research using primary and secondary sources, and writes a paper which has implications for contemporary policymakers concerned with issues of justice. (Please note that your research does not have to deal with the justice system *per se* but on issues that relate to the search for justice.)

Seminar participants are required to present their research to the class in a presentation which explains the connection of their research to policymaking at local, state, national, or international levels, and the recommendations they would make were they crafting policy.

The seminar's chief objective is to reinforce the importance of any university's foundational purpose—that is, the student becomes an agent of change in contemporary society, crafting a strategy of action informed by thorough, scholarly research.

The seminar participants have other objectives too. Seminar members will hone their scholarly research potential and writing abilities, and their professional skills of presentation. The professor structured the class to incorporate these several different objectives.

The first part of the class involves the instructor modeling a piece of original research in progress (in this case from the instructor's specialization in Mexican nationals

condemned to die in Texas), demonstrating the ways in which scholars use primary and secondary sources. To facilitate seminar participants' evaluation of sources, the first part of the class includes regular in-class writing assignments, and continuous discussion and debate.

The second and third parts of the class enable seminar participants to practice and develop some of the skills which have been modeled, debated, and discussed in the first part of the class. Seminar members will confer with each other on their paper proposals in a round table format. In the final part of the class seminar members will present their papers and suggest ways in which their research can help inform, shape, and/or change current policy on the topic which they have researched.

### **Required Reading**

As marked on syllabus. The final paper must be based on a significant number and variety of sources. (Researchers never stipulate a maximum number of sources. Scholarly researchers frown upon work that does not examine various and multiple sources.)

### **Graded Work**

<b>8 In-Class Assignments</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Proposal</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Proposal Responses</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Presentation</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>First Draft of Paper</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Final Version of Paper</b>	<b>30%</b>

*Please note that you will fail this class if any piece of work is missing. I remind you that I do not accept late work.*

## Calendar of Class Meeting, Assignments and Activities

### Course Introduction

#### Wk 29 Jan

- M Requirements for JS 159  
W The Importance of Scholarly Research & Criticism for Policy Debates  
Watch: Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger et al., Press Conference on Prison Reform, Sacramento, CA, 21 December 2006  
Examine: California Crime Index, 1950 – 2005, Attorney General's Office.

### A Window onto Justice Research: Mexican Nationals under Sentence of Death in Texas, 1991 - 2006

- Wk 5 Feb Secondary Sources: Creating Scholarly Context of a Political Debate  
M Research Articles: Where to find them... What are their limits?  
W Research Articles: Establishing Contexts, Posing Questions, Finding Sources.  
Reading: Benjamin Fleury-Steiner and Victor Argothy, "Lethal 'borders': Elucidating jurors' racialized discipline to punish in Latino defendant death cases," *Punishment and Society* 6:1 (2004): 67-84.  
Due: Statement of Research Topic, Research Question, Title and Two Copies of 2 Scholarly Articles on this Subject. One article must be photocopied from a scholarly journal. The other article must be from an online scholarly journal available through a reputable database such as CJAabstracts, JSTOR, Project Muse, or other similar origin.

### Creating a Working Bibliography for Research

#### Wk 12 Feb

- M Professor Compilation of Secondary and Primary Sources on Mexican Nationals condemned to die in Texas.  
W In Class Students Compile Working Bibliography of Secondary and Primary Sources Using a Scholarly Article.  
Assignment: In-Class Working Bibliography.

### Primary Sources 1: Creating Political and Social Context

#### Wk 19 Feb

- M News Reports  
W Statistical Data & its Limits  
Assignment: In-Class Responses.

### Primary Sources 2: Creating Legal and Policing Context

#### Wk 26 Feb

- M Legal Records: State, National, International Courts  
W Policing Strategies: TX Attorney General on Vienna Convention  
Assignment: In-Class Responses.

### Primary Sources 3: Opinion

- Wk 5 Mar M US Opinion: Newspaper Editorials, the Blogosphere  
W Mexican Opinion: Polling Data, Editorial Cartoons, Interviews  
Assignment: In-Class Responses

### Bringing the Sources Together: The Art of Proposal Writing

- Wk 12 Mar M Professor Models Proposals  
W Practice  
To Do: Draft One Page Paper Proposals (due Wk 19 March)

### **Proposal Presentations**

Wk 19 Mar M First Half of Class Presents Proposals  
W Second Half of Class Presents Proposals  
Due: One Page Paper Proposals  
To Do: Write Responses to Two Assigned Proposals.

### **Wk 26 Mar *Spring Recess***

### **Paper Conferences**

Wk 2 Apr  
M Six Conferences, Round Table Format  
W Six Conferences, Round Table Format  
Due: Typed Responses to Two Assigned Proposals from Wk of 19 March.

### **Paper Conferences**

Wk 9 Apr  
M Six Conferences, Round Table Format  
W Six Conferences, Round Table Format

### **Presentations**

Wk 16 Apr  
M 3 Presentations  
W 3 Presentations

### **Presentations**

Wk 23 Apr  
M 3 Presentations  
W 3 Presentations  
Due First Draft of Paper

### **Presentations**

Wk 30 Apr  
M 3 Presentations  
W 3 Presentations

### **Presentations**

Wk 7 May  
M 3 Presentations  
W 3 Presentations

### **Conclusion**

Wk 14 May Submission of Final Papers

**Final** **Culminating Activity:** What now? How does research become policy? Do policy makers ignore research? Do policy makers incorporate research?

### ***Grading Scale for All Assignments***

By letter. Percentage amounts.

A 90 - 100

Excellent, demonstrates original thought, superior command of written and classroom material, clarity and erudition in a structured presentation in all forms of work..

B 80 - 89

Above average, some originality of thought, solid command of written and classroom materials, developed structure in all pieces of work.

C 70 - 79

Below average, little or no originality of thought, faltering command of written and classroom materials, awkward structure in some pieces of work.

D 60 - 69

Well below average. No creative response. cursory attention to detail. No appreciation for scholarship.

F 59 or below

Does not meet minimum expectations for this course.

### ***Late Work***

No work will be accepted after the due date. Please adhere to all stipulated due dates which have been established in order to facilitate grading. If you are in any doubt about due dates and times please check with the instructor.

### ***Makeup Exams***

There are no exams in this class.

## **University Policies**

### *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](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](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.

### *Student Rights and Responsibilities*

"The classroom is the essential part of any university. Both freedom to teach and freedom to learn should flourish in the classroom. The professor has the right and responsibility to control the classroom; however, as this control is exercised, the rights of students as set forth in this document should not be denied.

A. Students have the right to consistent and judicious evaluation by the instructor.

B. Students are free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in courses of study. They may be required to know the material set forth by the instructor, but they are free to reserve personal judgment as to the truth or falsity of what is presented.

C. Students have the right to have faculty meet their classes at the scheduled times and make presentations appropriate to the course. When circumstances require cancellation of a class, the instructor shall make an effort to notify students.

D. While faculty and administrators have primary responsibility in curricular matters, students shall have opportunity for participation in revising and improving the curriculum by serving on operational curriculum committees.

E. Students are responsible for meeting standards of academic performance established for each course. Performance in the course shall be the sole criterion by which students are measured and the professor shall take no action to penalize students because of their opinions or because of their conduct outside the classroom in matters unrelated to the class. Students have the right to a course grade which is a just measurement of performance in the course.

F. Information about a student's performance, views, beliefs, and political association which professors acquire in the course of their work as instructors, advisers, and counselors is considered confidential.

G. Students enrolled in a class may be denied admission to the classroom or may be expelled for the remainder of a class period only for considerations relevant to the educational purposes of the class. A faculty member may recommend to the Dean of Student Services that a student be permanently withdrawn from a course if after suitable warning a student's disruptive actions are determined to be in violation of the University policy on "Student Discipline Relating to Conduct on State University Campuses".

H. Students have the right to have instructional faculty schedule a reasonable number of office hours for student conferences."

The full statement on Student Rights and Responsibilities may be found at:  
<http://www2.sjsu.edu/senate/s90-5.htm>