

JS 159

Senior Seminar

Spring, 2008

Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:00 am – 10:15 am

Instructor: Danielle A Harris

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:45 am – 12:45 pm and Thursdays 12 pm – 3 pm.

#### Course Description:

The Justice Studies Department's Senior Seminar represents the culminating educational experience of the degree in Justice Studies at San Jose State University. The seminar's purpose is to create knowledge from research which can be applied to society through changes to policymaking. 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 primary purpose of the class is to identify, discuss and analyze selected problems in the criminal justice system period. **This semester, the class will focus on relevant Criminal Justice public policies in the US using sex offender public policy as a case study.** While this topic will be used as an example, your policy papers may be about any relevant social or criminal justice policy you choose.

#### Course Prerequisites:

Upper division standing is required to participate in the course. Students have to have passed JS 105 and JS100W or its equivalent. Preference will be given to graduating seniors.

**Required Reading:** All readings will be distributed in PDF format via email.

***Important:*** Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities register with the Disability Resource Center (924-6000) to establish a record of their disability. Please meet with me to confirm that you have done this if you need course adaptation or accommodations because of a disability. If you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please see me during office hours.

#### Course Add/Drop:

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. Such policies and procedures can be found at: [http://sa.sjsu.edu/student\\_conduct](http://sa.sjsu.edu/student_conduct)

#### Academic Integrity:

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 or 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 of 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)

Faculty is required to report all infractions to the Office of Judicial Affairs. Cheating in JS159 may include, among other things, plagiarism. Adhere to the SJSU code prohibiting plagiarism. **Plagiarized work in JS159 will receive no credit and may not be resubmitted.** Plagiarism may also result in disciplinary action by the Department or the University. It is your responsibility to read and understand SJSU's policy on academic integrity, which is located at: <http://www2.sjsu.edu/leap/plagiar.htm>.

## Course Requirements

### 1. Participation

Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss and critique assigned readings. 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. In-class comments indicating knowledge of the subject matter and/or asking probing questions is considered to be participation. This means that assigned readings must be read and "digested" prior to each class meeting. Participation will include the preparation of four MIT papers throughout the semester.

MIT papers require students to identify three "Most Important Topics" from any assigned reading. Each chapter or article's MIT should not exceed two pages (double spaced) and should consist of the following three parts:

- a. Describe the topic itself (utilizing keywords and phrases),
- b. Explain why you believe the topic to be important (in terms of impact/practice)
- c. Discuss what you have learned, or "taken away" from this reading.

### 2. Policy Paper

Students are required to prepare a 20 page literature review/policy analysis paper of an approved justice related policy. Possible topics include, but are not limited to: gun control, "No Child Left Behind", food stamps, Megan's Law, "Broken Windows", the "war on drugs" etc. Students may select any relevant US or international public policy that interests them. The topic must not have been previously written about or researched by the student.

The goal of the paper is to review research oriented journals for empirical articles which establish relationships between and among independent and dependent variables, and to draw policy implications based on these empirical relationships. The paper should:

- Be written in Times New Roman, 12 font, double spaced.
- Adhere to strict APA style (including in-text citations and reference list)
- Include 5+ scholarly sources (including at least 3 empirical research articles)
- Include sources beyond those included in the assigned reading for the class.
- Be written in formal English (avoid contractions, abbreviations, slang)
- Use proper punctuation, spelling and grammar.
- Be written in third person, past tense

### 3. Presentation

Students are required to give a formal class presentation of their policy paper. The presentation should take about 15-20 minutes. Students will also be required to provide a topic outline and reference page to the instructor. Presentations will be prepared using PowerPoint and can be emailed to the instructor prior to the in-class presentation, or brought to class on a flash drive.

#### Course Grading

Participation and MIT papers	40%
Policy paper	30%
Presentation of paper	30%.

#### Extra Credit:

THERE IS NO EXTRA CREDIT IN THIS COURSE

No really, THERE IS NO EXTRA CREDIT IN THIS COURSE!!

#### Class Schedule

Date	Class Title	Discussion Topics
Week 1 1/24	Introductions	Introductions, Greensheet, brainstorm on policy topics
Week 2 1/29; 1/31	Public policy Introduction	policy definition, characteristics, policy formation process
	<i>Reading:</i>	<i>The study of public policy The public policy process in the US Anatomy of the heroin problem</i>
Week 3 2/5; 2/7	Policy in theory	CJS review, ideological foundation of crime control in the US, punishment philosophy.
	<i>Reading:</i>	<i>Putting justice back Public policy and criminology Policy relevance and the future Reiman introduction and ch 1 and ch 4</i>
Week 4 2/12; 2/14	Policy in context	crime myths, culture of fear, scaring the community, "Bowling for Columbine."
	<i>Reading:</i>	<i>Media, moral panics Social construction of crime myths Missing children, misleading statistics</i>
Week 5 2/19; 2/21	Policy in practice	effects of past and current policy on CJS, public, media, government. Knee-jerk reactions.
	<i>Reading:</i>	<i>Why governments don't do what they could</i>
Week 6 2/26; 2/28	Sexual offending	review of sex offender literature, rape myths, what do we know? How do we know?
	<i>Reading:</i>	<i>TBA/Brainstorm</i>
Week 7 3/4; 3/6	Sexual offender policies	civil commitment, memorial legislation, SVP, moral panic, "To Catch a Predator"
	<i>Reading:</i>	<i>Megan's Law A&amp;B</i>

		Civil Commitment A&B Resident Restrictions A&B
Week 8 3/11; 3/13	Integration	Putting it all together. Plus APA style discussion and paper do's and don'ts.
	<i>Reading:</i>	TBA
Week 9 3/18; 3/20	Policy Evaluation	How do we tell if it's working?
	<i>Reading:</i>	<i>no child left behind commentary</i>
Week 10 3/26; 3/28	SPRING BREAK	
Week 11 4/1; 4/3	In-class preparation for presentations and peer review of policy papers	
Week 12 4/8; 4/10	Individual presentation of papers. <b>***PAPERS DUE***</b>	
Week 13 4/15; 4/17	Individual presentation of papers.	
Week 14 4/22; 4/24	Individual presentation of papers.	
Week 15 4/29; 5/1	Individual presentation of papers.	
Week 16 5/6; 5/8	Individual presentation of papers.	
Week 17 5/13	Review. Return all assessment	

Grade Breakdown:

A+	97-100%
A	93-96%
A-	90-92%
B+	87-89%
B	83-86%
B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	73-76%
C-	70-72%
D+	67-69%
D	63-66%
D-	60-62%
F	<60%