

**San José State University**  
**Justice Studies Department**  
**Senior Seminar: Contemporary Problems**  
**JS-159 (section 05) #26864**  
**Spring 2010**

<b>Instructor:</b>	Alessandro De Giorgi
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<b>Office Hours:</b>	MON: 2.15pm-5.15pm WED: 7pm-8pm (online)
<b>Class Days/Time:</b>	MON: 5.30pm-8.15pm
<b>Classroom:</b>	MH-520
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	(JS-100W; JS-105)

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is based on the identification, discussion, and critical analysis of contemporary problems and controversies in the field of criminal justice. A major term paper on a selected topic is required. Mandatory prerequisites for enrollment include: 1) completion of JS-100W or equivalent; 2) completion of JS-105; 3) senior standing. A minimum grade of "C-" in JS-159 is required for graduation.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The main objective of this seminar is to engage students to identify, discuss, and critically analyze major issues concerning contemporary criminal justice policies in the US. Students will read, reflect, write, and offer in-class presentations about controversial topics in the field of criminal justice, such as the war on drugs, the war on crime, the persistence of the death penalty, mass-incarceration, electronic surveillance, zero-tolerance policing, selective incapacitation, gun control, community corrections, etc.

On each of these major issues, students will be:

- 1) Reading the relevant literature assigned by the instructor;
- 2) Preparing weekly *reading responses* (see section below: "Course Requirements");
- 3) Giving weekly *in-class presentations* (see section below: "Course Requirements");
- 4) Preparing a final *research paper* (see section below: "Course Requirements") to be presented in class and submitted on the final day of instruction (05-17-2009).

## REQUIRED READING

Walker, S. (2006). *Sense and Non-Sense About Crime and Drugs. A Policy Guide*, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth (ISBN 0-534-61654-2)

## OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES

Bureau of Justice Statistics: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/>  
National Criminal Justice Reference Service: <http://www.ncjrs.gov/index.html>  
The Sentencing Project: <http://www.sentencingproject.org>  
MLK Library Database: <http://www.sjlibrary.org/research/databases/index.htm>  
MLK Library Journal Index: <http://www.sjlibrary.org/research/ejournals/index.htm>  
Criminal Justice Abstracts: HV60001.C67 (online: <http://mill1.sjlibrary.org/search~S1>)  
Justice Studies Reference Librarian: Nyle Monday ([Nyle.Monday@sjsu.edu](mailto:Nyle.Monday@sjsu.edu))  
APA guidelines: <http://slisweb.sjsu.edu/resources/apa/APAREShome.html>  
SJSU Writing Center: (408-924-2308): [www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter)

## CLASSROOM PROTOCOL

This is a seminar based on the student's active involvement and participation. Each topic will be analyzed, presented, and thoroughly discussed in class during each meeting. Students are expected to come to class having done the assigned readings, and to bring to class their *reading responses* according to the weekly schedule (see section below: "Weekly Schedule and Assignments"). Please note: active participation, consistent attendance, and competent debate is crucial for a successful completion of JS-159.

## DROPPING AND ADDING

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc. [Information on add/drops are available at http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/soc-fall/rec-298.html](http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/soc-fall/rec-298.html). [Information about late drop is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/sac/advising/latedrops/policy/](http://www.sjsu.edu/sac/advising/latedrops/policy/). Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for adding and dropping classes.

## ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING POLICY

### 1) **Reading Responses (ongoing, WEEKS 2-10): 10% of final grade**

From WEEK 2 through WEEK 10, all students are expected to come to class with a 1-page (computer typed) reading response about each chapter due for that class. In their reading responses, students are expected to:

- 1) Describe the reading's main topic
- 2) Raise two questions to be debated in class.

During each meeting (from WEEK 2 through WEEK 10) four randomly selected students will be asked to illustrate their own reading response to the class, in order to get the debate started. These reading responses must be submitted to the instructor, and will receive a grade ranging from 0 to 10 points (10% of final grade). Please note: failing to illustrate and/or submit the reading response for two or more times will result in a failing grade for this course assignment.

### 2) **Chapter Presentations (ongoing, WEEKS 2-10): 20% of final grade**

From WEEK 2 through WEEK 10, students will offer *in-class presentations* about the chapters due for that class. Each presentation should last 10/15 minutes and should consist of:

- 1) Description of the reading's main topic
- 2) Explanation of its relevance
- 3) Critique of the topic from the perspective of policy effectiveness and social justice/injustice.

Each presentation will receive a grade ranging from 0 to 20 points (20% of final grade).

The detailed calendar of chapter presentations will be available during the first week of instruction. Please note: make-up presentations will not be allowed.

### 3) **Paper Presentations (ongoing, WEEKS 11-16): 30% of final grade**

From WEEK 11 through WEEK 16, students will offer 15/20 minutes *in-class presentations* about their *research papers*. Before each presentation, presenters will distribute a 1-page outline of their presentation to the class. The presentation/outline must include the following:

- 1) Introduction describing the topic in general
- 2) Analysis of at least three empirical studies
- 3) Critique of current policies in terms of their effectiveness and social justice/injustice

Each presentation will receive a grade ranging from 0 to 30 points (30% of final grade).

The detailed calendar of paper presentations will be available during the first week of instruction.

### 4) **Research Paper (due on 05/17/2010): 40% of final grade**

A 3000-3500 words *research paper* analyzing a justice-related topic is required for this course. Students can choose their topic based on their own research interests, but the topic must be discussed with the instructor (during office hours) for approval before March 22, 2010.

Please note: no paper will be accepted without previous discussion and approval.

In their paper, students should include the following:

- 1) Introduction to the issue of their choice, explaining its relevance
- 2) Review the relevant literature on the issue (minimum of 3 scholarly articles)
- 3) Critical analysis of current policies about the issue (based on the reviewed literature)
- 4) A summary of findings and elaboration of alternative *policy proposals*

Papers will receive a maximum of 40 points (40% of final grade).

Please note: no late submissions will be accepted.

## GRADING SYSTEM

POINTS	GRADE
98-100	A+
94-97	A
91-93	A-
88-90	B+
84-87	B
81-83	B-
78-80	C+
74-77	C
71-73	C-
68-70	D+
64-67	D
61-63	D-
<60	F

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students should know that the University's [Academic Integrity Policy is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial\\_affairs/Academic\\_Integrity\\_Policy\\_S07-2.pdf](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial_affairs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_S07-2.pdf).

Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University's integrity policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The website for [Student Conduct and Ethical Development is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial\\_affairs/index.html](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html).

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person's ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU's Academic Policy F06-1 requires approval of instructors.

### CAMPUS POLICY IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE AMERICAN DISABILITIES ACT

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make 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 that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the DRC (Disability Resource Center) to establish a record of their disability.

## **STUDENT TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES**

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of Clark Hall and on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library.

A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include digital and VHS camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm, slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

## **LEARNING ASSISTANCE RESOURCE CENTER**

The Learning Assistance Resource Center (LARC) is located in Room 600 in the Student Services Center. It is designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to motivate them to become self-directed learners. The center provides support services, such as skills assessment, individual or group tutorials, subject advising, learning assistance, summer academic preparation and basic skills development. [The LARC website is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/larc/](http://www.sjsu.edu/larc/).

## **SJSU WRITING CENTER**

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. [The Writing Center website is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/).

## **PEER MENTOR CENTER**

The Peer Mentor Center is located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of Clark Hall in the Academic Success Center. The Peer Mentor Center is staffed with Peer Mentors who excel in helping students manage university life, tackling problems that range from academic challenges to interpersonal struggles. On the road to graduation, Peer Mentors are navigators, offering “roadside assistance” to peers who feel a bit lost or simply need help mapping out the locations of campus resources. Peer Mentor services are free and available on a drop –in basis, no reservation required. [Website of Peer Mentor Center is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/muse/peermentor/](http://www.sjsu.edu/muse/peermentor/).

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WEEK	DATE	TOPICS, READINGS, ASSIGNMENTS
1	02/01/2010	Introduction/Syllabus/Requirements/Calendar
2	02/08/2010	Walker, <i>Crime and Policy: A Complex Problem</i> (Chapter 1) Walker, <i>Models of Criminal Justice</i> (Chapter 2)
3	02/15/2010	NO CLASS: INSTRUCTOR ON FURLOUGH
4	02/22/2010	Walker, <i>The Going Rate</i> (Chapter 3) Walker, <i>The Career Criminal</i> (Chapter 4)
5	03/01/2010	Walker, <i>Unleash the Cops!</i> (Chapter 5) Walker, <i>Deter the Criminals</i> (Chapter 6)
6	03/08/2010	Walker, <i>Lock' Em Up</i> (Chapter 7) Walker, <i>Close the Loopholes</i> (Chapter 8)
7	03/15/2010	Walker, <i>Protect Crime Victims</i> (Chapter 9) Walker, <i>Control Gun Crimes</i> (Chapter 10)
8	03/22/2010	Walker, <i>Treat'Em!</i> (Chapter 11) Walker, <i>Gain Compliance with the Law</i> (Chapter 12) <b>[DEADLINE: DISCUSSION ABOUT RESEARCH PAPER]</b>
9	03/29/2010	NO CLASS: SPRING RECESS
10	04/05/2010	Walker, <i>Sense and Nonsense About Drugs</i> (Chapter 13) Walker, <i>Crime and Community: Putting it All Together</i> (Chapter 14)
11	04/12/2010	In-class Paper Presentations/Outline due to Class/Discussion
12	04/19/2010	In-class Paper Presentations/Outline due to Class/Discussion
13	04/26/2010	In-class Paper Presentations/Outline due to Class/Discussion
14	05/03/2010	In-class Paper Presentations/Outline due to Class/Discussion
15	05/10/2010	In-class Paper Presentations/Outline due to Class/Discussion
16	05/17/2010	In-class Paper Presentations/Outline due to Class/Discussion <b>[DEADLINE: FINAL PAPER DUE]</b>

