

**San José State University**  
**Justice Studies Department**  
*Senior Seminar: Contemporary Problems*  
**JS 189 (section 01) #22816**  
**Spring 2015**

<b>Instructor:</b>	Alessandro De Giorgi
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<b>Office Hours:</b>	MON: 10:30am – 1:30pm WED: 7pm – 8pm (online)
<b>Class Days/Time:</b>	MON-WED: 3pm – 4.15pm
<b>Classroom:</b>	MH 520
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	(JS 100W; JS 101; JS 114; Senior standing)

#### **CATALOGUE 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; JS 101; JS 114 or JS 117; (2) Senior standing. A minimum grade of “C” in JS 189 is required for graduation.

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The main objective of this seminar is to engage students to identify, discuss, and critically analyze criminal justice policies in the US. Students will read, reflect, write, and give in-class presentations about controversial topics in the field of penal politics, such as the war on drugs, the war on crime, the persistence of the death penalty, mass-incarceration, electronic surveillance, urban policing, gun control, community corrections, and more.

On each of these major issues, students will:

- 1) Read the relevant literature assigned by the instructor;
- 2) Complete *in-class tests* (see section below: “Course Requirements”);
- 3) Offer *in-class presentations* (see section below: “Course Requirements”);
- 4) Prepare a final *research paper* (see section below: “Course Requirements”) to be presented in class during WEEKS 11-16, and submitted on the last day of instruction (5/13/2015).

## **STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

In order to successfully complete JS 189, students should:

### **SLO 1:**

Demonstrate their ability to complete a formal research paper that (a) synthesizes relevant scholarly sources; (b) reflects professional formatting and writing standards (APA format); (c) addresses relevant policy needs (such as necessary reforms) to solving tangible social problems; (d) somehow contributes to our collective understanding of concepts and approaches to “justice” however defined (social justice, criminal justice, community justice, and so forth).  
[RELEVANT ASSIGNMENT: **“RESEARCH PAPER” DUE ON 5/13/2015**]

### **SLO 2:**

Demonstrate their ability to present scholarly work to an audience of their peers.  
[RELEVANT ASSIGNMENT: **“CHAPTER PRESENTATION” DUE DURING WEEKS 2-8**]

### **SLO3:**

Demonstrate a working understanding of “evidence-based” approaches to social problems and public policy. As a culminating skill set in our program, students should demonstrate their ability to apply social scientific (and otherwise rational) forms of reasoning, argumentation, research, and support in forming any particular worldview or position in the pursuit of “justice” and addressing social problems in our communities/societies.  
[RELEVANT ASSIGNMENT: **“RESEARCH PAPER” DUE ON 5/13/2015**]

**SLO 4:** Demonstrate their ability to undertake a critical analysis of a contemporary problems relevant to justice studies.

[RELEVANT ASSIGNMENT: **“IN-CLASS TESTS” DUE ON 2/11/2015 – 3/2/2015 – 3/18/2015**]

**SLO 5:** Read, write, and contribute to discussion at a skilled and capable level that appropriately reflects the cumulating experience of their justice studies major.

[RELEVANT ASSIGNMENT: **“PAPER PRESENTATION” DUE DURING WEEKS 11-16**]

## REQUIRED READING

- Walker, S. (2014). *Sense and Non-Sense About Crime, Drugs, and Communities*. (8<sup>th</sup> Edition) Cengage Learning: Independence, KY. (ISBN 978-1-285-45902-8) (Available at Spartan Bookstore).
- Any other readings distributed in class or electronically by the instructor.

## 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 for each session.

PLEASE NOTE: active participation to in-class discussion is crucial for the successful completion of JS 189.

## 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.

## RESEARCH PAPER TOPICS

PLEASE NOTE: *What follows is not a list of titles for your research paper, but only a selection of general topics on which research papers can be focused. The specification of a particular object for your paper—as well as of its theoretical perspective, methodological approach, historical and/or geographical context—should be part of the research process itself.*

- 1) PRISON PRIVATIZATION
- 2) ORDER-MAINTENANCE/QUALITY OF LIFE POLICING
- 3) GANG INJUNCTIONS/CURFEWS
- 4) DRUG COURTS/REENTRY COURTS
- 5) PRISONER REENTRY
- 6) THE TRANSFORMATIONS OF PAROLE IN CALIFORNIA
- 7) RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IN THE USA
- 8) VICTIMS' RIGHTS AND VICTIM IMPACT STATEMENTS
- 9) TRUTH IN SENTENCING
- 10) THE AMERICAN DEATH PENALTY
- 11) FELON DISENFRANCHISEMENT LAWS
- 12) WELFARE BANS FOR DRUG OFFENDERS
- 13) THE USE (AND MISUSE) OF PLEA BARGAINING
- 14) HEALTH CARE IN CALIFORNIA PRISONS
- 15) JUVENILE TRANSFER TO CRIMINAL COURT
- 16) RACIAL PROFILING IN POLICING/STOP & FRISK
- 17) GANGS (STREET/PRISON)
- 18) EFFECTS OF IMPRISONMENT ON THE LABOR MARKET
- 19) THE GUN CONTROL CONTROVERSY
- 20) PRISON REALIGNMENT IN CALIFORNIA

## ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING POLICY

### 1) *In-class Tests (2/11/15 – 3/2/15 – 3/18/15)*—30% of grade (10%+10%+10%)

These tests will be done in class. Each test will consist of 2 short-answer questions covering the readings assigned since the previous test. Each question will receive a grade ranging between 0 and 5, for a maximum of 10 points for each test. You are kindly requested to come to class with your own bluebook on the dates the tests are due. Please remember that *writing skills* (i.e., *correct use of grammar, syntax, and structure*) are relevant elements of your grade: students should always proofread their assignments before submitting them.

**PLEASE NOTE:** during the tests, no notes, books, open laptops, mobile phones will be allowed. Dictionaries are welcome.

### 2) *Chapter Presentations (WEEKS 2-8)*—20% of grade

From WEEK 2 through WEEK 8, all students will offer *in-class presentations* (individually or in groups) on the readings assigned for each class. Each presentation should consist of:

- 1) *Summary* of the reading's content;
- 2) *Analysis/critique* of its relevance to contemporary social issues;
- 3) *Three questions* about the chapter's content, to be discussed in class.

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

*The detailed calendar of chapter presentations will be circulated during the first week of class.*

**PLEASE NOTE:** make-up presentations will not be allowed.

### 3) *Paper Presentations (WEEKS 11-16)*—20% of grade

During WEEK 11 to WEEK 16, students will offer *in-class presentations* (individually or in groups) about their *research paper*. Each presentation should include the following:

- 1) *Introduction* describing the paper's topic and its relevance
- 2) *Analysis* of at least five scholarly sources
- 3) *Critique* of current policies from the point of view of their *effectiveness* and *social justice/injustice*
- 4) *Elaboration* of alternative policies on the issue

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

*The calendar of paper presentations will be circulated during the first week of class.*

**PLEASE NOTE:** make-up presentations will not be allowed.

### 4) *Research Paper (Approval: Week 10; Draft: 4/22/15; Due: 5/13/15)*—30% of 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/approved in class with the instructor during week 10 (3/30/15 and 4/1/15).*

Students are also required to submit a *draft* of their paper in class on April 22, 2015.

The *final paper* must be submitted in class on May 13, 2015.

**PLEASE NOTE:** no paper will be accepted without previous approval and/or without submission of the draft.

IN THEIR PAPER, STUDENTS SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- 1) *Introduction* describing the paper's topic and its relevance
- 2) *Review* of the relevant literature on the issue (minimum of five scholarly sources)
- 3) *Critique* of current policies from the point of view of their *effectiveness* and *social justice/injustice*
- 4) *Summary* of findings and suggestions for *alternative policies*

## 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

**PLEASE NOTE:** Extra credit opportunities might be available throughout the semester upon the exclusive discretion of the instructor.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Students should know that the University's Academic Integrity Policy is available at: [http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/docs/Student\\_Conduct\\_Code.pdf](http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/docs/Student_Conduct_Code.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.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/>.

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/).

**JS 189 Senior Seminar:  
Contemporary Problems**

MON/WED: 3pm – 4.15 pm  
(MH 520)

**SCHEDULE OF CLASSES**

WEEK	DATE	TOPICS, READINGS, ASSIGNMENTS, DEADLINES
1	M: 1/26/15	INTRODUCTION/SYLLABUS/ASSIGNMENTS/CALENDARS
	W: 1/28/15	<u>Reading:</u> Walker, <i>Crime and Policy: A Complex Problem</i> (Ch. 1)
2	M: 2/2/15	<u>Reading:</u> Walker, <i>Models of Criminal Justice</i> (Ch. 2)
	W: 2/4/15	<u>Reading:</u> Walker, <i>The Going Rate</i> (Ch. 3)
3	M: 2/9/15	<u>Reading:</u> Walker, <i>The Prediction Problem</i> (Ch. 4)
	W: 2/11/15	<u>Reading:</u> Walker, <i>Unleash the Cops!</i> (Ch. 5) <b>IN-CLASS TEST 1 (10% OF FINAL GRADE)</b>
4	M: 2/16/15	<u>Reading:</u> Walker, <i>Deter the Criminals</i> (Ch. 6)
	W: 2/18/15	<u>Reading:</u> Walker, <i>Lock 'Em Up</i> (Ch. 7)
5	M: 2/23/15	<u>Reading:</u> Walker, <i>Close the Loopholes</i> (Ch. 8)
	W: 2/25/15	<u>Reading:</u> Walker, <i>Protect Crime Victims</i> (Ch. 9)
6	M: 3/2/15	<u>Reading:</u> Walker, <i>Control Gun Crimes</i> (Ch. 10) <b>IN-CLASS TEST 2 (10% OF FINAL GRADE)</b>
	W: 3/4/15	<u>Reading:</u> Walker, <i>Treat 'Em!</i> (Ch. 11)
7	M: 3/9/15	<u>Reading:</u> Walker, <i>Gain Compliance with the Law</i> (Ch. 12)
	W: 3/11/15	<b>NO CLASS: ANN LUCAS LECTURE (3PM-5PM)</b>
8	M: 3/16/15	<u>Reading:</u> Walker, <i>Sense and Nonsense About Drugs and Crime</i> (Ch. 13)
	W: 3/18/15	<u>Reading:</u> Walker, <i>Crime and Community: Putting It All Together</i> (Ch. 14) <b>IN-CLASS TEST 3 (10% OF FINAL GRADE)</b>
9	M: 3/23/15	NO CLASS: SPRING RECESS
	W: 3/25/15	NO CLASS: SPRING RECESS

WEEK	DATE	TOPICS, READINGS, ASSIGNMENTS, DEADLINES
10	M: 3/30/15	<b>DISCUSSION/APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PAPER TOPICS</b>
	W: 4/1/15	<b>DISCUSSION/APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PAPER TOPICS</b>
11	M: 4/6/15	<u>Paper presentations</u> (see calendar)
	W: 4/8/15	<u>Paper presentations</u> (see calendar)
12	M: 4/13/15	<u>Paper presentations</u> (see calendar)
	W: 4/15/15	<u>Paper presentations</u> (see calendar)
13	M: 4/20/15	<u>Paper presentations</u> (see calendar)
	W: 4/22/15	<u>Paper presentations</u> (see calendar) <b>RESEARCH PAPER DRAFT DUE</b>
14	M: 4/27/15	<u>Paper presentations</u> (see calendar)
	W: 4/29/15	<u>Paper presentations</u> (see calendar)
15	M: 5/4/15	<u>Paper presentations</u> (see calendar)
	W: 5/6/15	<u>Paper presentations</u> (see calendar)
16	M: 5/11/15	<u>Paper presentations</u> (see calendar)
	W: 5/13/15	<u>Paper presentations</u> (see calendar) <b>RESEARCH PAPER DUE (IN CLASS)</b>