



Department of Justice Studies

JS-189 Senior Seminar

Fall 2019

Instructor:	Dr. Mark Barash
Office Location:	HB 216
Telephone:	408-924-5513
Email:	mark.barash@sjsu.edu (preferred method of contact)
Office Hours:	Tuesdays & Thursdays: 11:00am to 12:00pm; Wednesdays: 3:00pm to 4:00pm; Online (Zoom): by appointment
Class Days/Time:	Tuesdays/Thursdays 1:30pm-2:45pm
Classroom:	Dwight Bentel Hall 202
Canvas Course Website:	https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1323802 Login using your Tower ID Card and Password → Courses → JS189
Prerequisites:	Senior standing in final semester; Justice Studies or Forensic Science major; JS 100W and JS 114 with a "C or better"; Department Consent. Note: A grade of "C" or better is required for Justice Studies majors.
FS Library Liaison:	Silke Higgins silke.higgins@sjsu.edu
FS Lib Guide:	http://libguides.sjsu.edu/content.php?pid=57768&sid=2450175
FS Program Website:	http://www.sjsu.edu/justicestudies/degrees/fs-program/

Course Description

This senior seminar course provides an in-depth study of a number of selected issues in justice studies and forensic science disciplines through their analysis and discussion. In particular, students will focus on identifying issues presented in various journal publications, formulate sound arguments using their critical thinking skills, and articulate their conceptualizations of subject matters through group-lead discussions,

research papers and digital media project on a relevant topic. Topics to be explored include: understanding capabilities and limitations of the forensic science, contemporary and emerging forensic technologies and associated ethical and legislative considerations; error and its meaning in forensic contexts, principles and concepts relating to quality in Forensic Science and other.

Course Format

This senior seminar is designed with the structure, rigour, and spirit of a graduate level course. In a seminar, students meet regularly to report and discuss an area of research under the guidance of a course coordinator. The coordinator's role in this course is to guide your conversations, steer your thinking in intellectually sound directions, and to evaluate your work. The students should approach this course with the mentality that the group has the burden of educating itself. Since participation is a key element in this class, I would advice not taking this course if you anticipate missing class.

These students are to conduct additional research on any topic related to the theme/thesis/argument of the work assigned on that day and present their findings to the class for 15-20 minutes each. For example, a student may read an article, book chapter, or official report, and discuss its relevance to the readings for the day. In addition, students who will be assigned 'Discussion Leaders' are expected to generate a set of discussion questions that underscore critical themes or issues associated with the assigned readings (5 questions will suffice) and are intended to facilitate the discussion for the day.

Students assigned the readings for the day must discuss with the class: (1) the thesis of the assigned reading, (2) additional/outside research directly related to the thesis/main argument/theme of the assigned reading, (3) policy recommendations, and (4) up to five discussion questions. The additional research that you present to the class must be directly related to the thesis or main argument or theme of the book. You must discover the main argument/thesis/theme of the assigned reading and make a strong connection to what you will be presenting in class.

The mode of instruction for this course is in person with online supplements. Reliable access to a computer and the internet will be required. Copies of course materials will be posted on Canvas as *.pdf files, while some course materials may need to be accessed via internet links. You are responsible for regularly checking your e-mail and Canvas regarding announcements, reminders, and any additional course materials. All written assignments will be also submitted via Canvas, and must be in either Microsoft Word (*.doc or *.docx) or Adobe Acrobat (*.pdf) format. If you do not currently own Microsoft Office, the software (both PC and Mac) is available for free to students: <http://its.sjsu.edu/services/software/microsoft-students/index.html>. The Adobe Acrobat Reader is available for free from: <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>. You can also use any other text – processing software to generate these files if you prefer.

Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives (CLO)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 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) and forensic science.
- Demonstrate their ability to present scholarly work to an audience of their peers.
- 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.
- Demonstrate their ability to undertake a critical analysis of a contemporary problems relevant to justice studies and forensic science.
- Students should read, write, and contribute to discussion at a skilled and capable level that appropriately reflects the cumulating experience of their justice studies major.

Required Texts

- **Links to required resources will be posted on Canvas. Check the site frequently!**

Outlines will be provided or made accessible via Canvas for each lecture pertaining to the topic that will be discussed.

Note the following, detailed **prerequisites** for:

- **Justice Studies Majors:** JS 100W and JS 114 or instructor consent,
- **Forensic Science Majors:** JS 100W, FS 161, FS, 162, Biology 30, CHEM 1A and CHEM 1B
 - **Note-** *JS 114* is *waived* as a prerequisite for *forensic science majors*.
- **Both majors:** senior standing or by instructor consent, graduation application submitted and major form filled out and signed.

Assignments and Grading Policy

The course requirements consist of five assessment tasks:

1. Being efficient discussion leaders (5%)
2. Participation in weekly discussions (5%)
3. Two oral presentations during the course (15% each)
4. One research paper (30% each)
5. Presentation of the research paper (30%)

Total: 100%

There is no final exam for this course.

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus. More details about student workload can be found in University Policy S12-3 at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>

Assessment tasks 1-3: Oral Presentations, Discussion Lead and participation in weekly discussions

Each student will be responsible for offering **two** in-class **presentations** based on the weekly topics (**assessment task 1**). The presentation should be relatively short (between 5 to maximum 10 minutes) but comprehensive and must include the following section:

1. Introduction: Description of the specific topic, its importance and the primary thesis
2. Literature review: concise and balanced coverage of the discussed topic, based on the relevant literature;
3. Conclusions
4. References

The presentations will be graded based on the level of competency and flow, knowledge of the subject, ability to engage the audience and conclusions. It is highly recommended that students practice their presentations several times (preferably in front of someone who will provide constructive feedback, e.g. not your mom or dad). Following each presentation, the discussion leaders should be prepared to pose

questions to the class to facilitate class discussion (**assessment task 2**). While the instructor will moderate discourse, students are largely responsible for engaging in inquiry and discussion. **The presenters will be required to submit their Power Point (*.ppt) file immediately after the in-class presentation or any time earlier.**

Each presentation will receive a grade ranging from 0 – 15 points based on the fulfillment of requirements (**assessment task 1**).

Weekly presentations will account for 30% of the final course grade. Please note that make-up presentations will not be allowed, except under extreme circumstances, which can be substantiated (documentation will be required).

The **discussion leaders** will receive a grade ranging from 0 – 5 points, based on their ability to facilitate the discussion and engage the students (**assessment task 2**). The students will receive a grade ranging from 0 – 5 points, based on their **pro-active participation** in the discussion (**assessment task 3**). Each of these activities will account for 5% of the final course grade.

Assessment task 4: Research paper

This is an individual task. The students will be required to write **one** 10 page paper (not including the cover page or references) analyzing a justice – related or forensic science – related topic as a requirement for this course. The paper should be written in a 12-point font (e.g. Times New Roman, Arial, etc.), with 1.5 point space lines in a paragraph. The papers should be submitted via Canvas at their respective due dates (to be announced).

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 the chosen topic from the point of view of their effectiveness and social justice/injustice
- 4) Summary of findings and suggestions for alternative policies
- 5) Accurate citation of all the references used, according to APA formatting

Using an automatic citation software (e.g. [Endnote](#), [Refworks](#) or [Mendeley](#)) is strongly encouraged.

Students will be graded on their ability to synthesize course materials and provide a critical analysis of the course content. Students can choose their topic based on their own research interests or from a proposed list. In any case, the topic must be communicated with the instructor. No paper will be accepted without

previous communication and approval. The purpose of the paper is not only to test knowledge on a specific topic, but more so to force critical thinking about an aspect of a chosen topic.

Students are prohibited from writing on a topic that has been used for previous course, or currently being used for another course. Any attempt to violate this requirement will result in an automatic “F” for the paper, which ultimately will result in failing the course. Such an attempt would constitute a violation of the Academic Integrity policy.

Grading Policy

Written assignments will primarily be graded on the content, relevance, clear annotation and professional layout . However, poor writing mechanics and APA formatting will result in a moderate point deduction. Assistance with APA can be found at: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

In order to demonstrate comprehension of the course material, one must be able to write in a clear and effective manner. Always carefully proofread your assignments before submitting them.

Due date: submission dates for this assignment will be announced during the semester. Late submissions **will not be accepted** unless a valid, documented, and verifiable reason is provided.

Assessment task 5: presentation of the research paper

Students will be required give a 15 minute formal presentation of their research papers (as per task 4).

The presentation must include the following:

1. Introduction: Description of the specific topic, importance of the topic, and thesis
2. Literature Review: Relatively concise coverage of your literature review
3. Topic’s Critique and Implications: an objective presentation of various opinions on the disputed topic, based upon the literature, in terms of various pros and cons of the current approach, implications of their effectiveness/ineffectiveness, and suggestions about alternative solutions. This critique should pull upon findings in the literature to support the presenter’s point of view.

Paper Presentation Grading

The presentation will be graded based on the level of competency and flow, knowledge of the subject, and conclusions. It is highly recommended that students practice their presentations several times (preferably in front of someone who will provide constructive feedback). The presentations will be held to strict time limits. Failure to complete a presentation within the allocated time frame (i.e., 20 minutes), or too brief of a presentation, will result in a loss of points.

Grading Policy

Overall assessment of this project will be done **jointly** by the students (**20%** of the total mark) and the course coordinator (**80%** of the total mark), accounting to the 30% of the final course grade.

Specifically, the students will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- Disciplinary knowledge (35%)
 - Accuracy and completeness of information
- Professional skills (35%)
 - Understanding and explanation of underlying principles of the topic
- Communication skills (15%)
 - Presentation of information
 - Use of digital media principles (layout design, fonts, colour, graphics and video principles) to enhance communication of topic
 - Creativity (how presentation approach enhances topic)
- Enquiry and innovation (15%)
 - Research using available resources (e.g. textbooks, peer-reviewed papers, online resources)

Assessment feedback will be provided in the form of marks and comments. Additional information may be sought from the relevant assessor, or the subject coordinator.

Length: you will have approximately 4 to 6 weeks to prepare this presentation.

Due date: this task will be due on the last few weeks of the course (according to the syllabus, with potential adjustments based on students' progress).

Presentation tips

Here is some advice to help you with the preparation of your final presentation:

- Put a title at the top of each slide that states the slide's main point
- Use large, easy-to-read font (e.g., Arial) throughout
- Font size: 18 point minimum, 24 point recommended, 36 point or larger for a title
- Don't use too much text. Bullet points are generally better than full sentences or paragraphs. Try to avoid reading the slide to the audience.
- Don't forget to include references in your slides

- Use primary colors for the font and background when possible, especially red and blue. Don't use colors which are hard to read (e.g. too bright/dark).
- Speak loudly and clearly. Face forward as much as possible. Try not to rush.
- Practice what you will say about each slide so that you present the essential points as clearly and efficiently as possible.
- Practice your presentation with a timer to make sure that you are at or under 20 minutes.

Overall grading scale for all assignments

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Percent</u>
A plus (+)	97-100	C plus (+)	77-79.9	F	<60
A	94-96.9	C	74-76.9		
<u>A minus (-)</u>	<u>90-93.9</u>	<u>C minus (-)</u>	<u>70-73.9</u>		
B plus (+)	87-89.9	D plus (+)	67-69.9		
B	84-86.9	D	64-66.9		
<u>B minus (-)</u>	<u>80-83.9</u>	<u>D minus (-)</u>	<u>60-63.9</u>		

Note: A grade of C or better is required for all Justice Studies major and minor coursework, and desirable for students enrolled in the Forensic Science majors and/or minor.

Department of Justice Studies Reading and Writing Philosophy

The Department of Justice Studies is committed to scholarly excellence. Therefore, the Department promotes academic, critical, and creative engagement with language (i.e., reading and writing) throughout its curriculum. A sustained and intensive exploration of language prepares students to think critically and to act meaningfully in interrelated areas of their lives—personal, professional, economic, social, political, ethical, and cultural. Graduates of the Department of Justice Studies leave San José State University prepared to enter a range of careers and for advanced study in a variety of fields; they are prepared to more effectively identify and ameliorate injustice in their personal, professional and civic lives. Indeed, the impact of literacy is evident not only within the span of a specific course, semester, or academic program but also over the span of a lifetime.

Classroom Protocol

- Students are expected to: attend all class meetings, arrive on time, stay for the duration of the class period, complete all readings and assignments in accordance with the dates on the course schedule.
- Students are responsible for all missed notes, materials and announcements due to absence. You are encouraged to exchange contact information with someone in class just in case.

The use of a laptop, tablet or other mobile devices is strictly limited to learning purposes (e.g. note taking, presentation etc.). Students caught using such items for other non-class purposes may be prohibited from bringing them back to class, and will likely be dismissed from class for the day.

University Policies

University Policies: Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs maintains university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. You may find all syllabus related University Policies and resources information listed on GUP's Syllabus Information web page at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

Student Resources

Forensic Science Student Group (FSS)

Forensic Science Students is a campus group open to all students interested in forensic science. The group meets biweekly during the semester and offers friendship, forensic science-related activities, networking opportunities, and mentorship. Members of the FSS participate and assist at conferences, CSI camps, guest speaking events, and other extra-curricular activities. FSS Peer Mentors assist forensic science students in navigating the major, understanding requirements and prerequisites, and making wise choices in their college careers. Mentors may also offer limited tutoring, and facilitate educational and professional opportunities. Contact sjsu.fss@gmail.com for more information, or to get an application for membership.

Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and on the 2nd 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) located in Room 600 in the Student Services Center assists students in the development of their full academic potential and motivates them to become self-directed learners. The center provides support services, such as skill assessment, individual or group tutorials, subject advising, learning assistance, summer academic preparation and basic skills development. <http://www.sjsu.edu/larc/>

SJSU Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center located in Room 126 in Clark Hall offers a variety of resources to help students become better writers, including one-on-one tutoring sessions and numerous writing workshops. All services are free for SJSU students. <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/>

CASA Student Success Center

The Student Success Center in the College of Applied Sciences and Arts (CASA) provides advising for undergraduate students majoring or wanting to major in programs offered in CASA Departments and Schools. All CASA students and students who would like to be in CASA are invited to stop by the Center for general education advising, help with changing majors, academic policy related questions, meeting with peer advisors, and/or attending various regularly scheduled presentations and workshops. If you are looking for academic advice or even tips about how to navigate your way around SJSU, check out the CASA Student Success Center. Location: MacQuarrie Hall (MQH) 533. Contact information: [408.924.2910](tel:408.924.2910) Website: <http://www.sjsu.edu/casa/ssc/>. The CASA Student Success Center also provides study space and laptops for checkout.

JS 189, Senior Seminar, Fall 2019, Tentative Course Schedule

Notes about the course schedule: The order of the discussed topics might slightly change, based on students' progress. I reserve the right to change the due dates listed above, but only in a manner that benefits students (e.g., due dates can only be pushed back, never moved forward).

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	08/22/19	Course introduction Overview of assignments and expectations Reading for today: Syllabus
2	08/27/19 08/29/19	Policy discussion Current Controversy (1.2) Is the media a credible source on crime? Current Controversy (2.1) Should marijuana be legalized? Current Controversy (4.1) Is there are relationship between race, class, and criminal behavior?
3	09/03/19 09/05/19	Current Controversy (4.2) Does mental illness cause crime? Current Controversy (6.1) Are laws requiring sex offender registries effective? Current Controversy (6.2) Should the United States increase its laws about gun control? Current Controversy (7.1) Is targeted policing a good policing strategy? Current Controversy (8.2) Does police discretion help or harm our criminal justice system? Current Controversy (9.2) Should we limit the use of plea bargains?
4	09/10/19 09/12/19	Current Controversy (10.2) Should we abolish the death penalty? Current Controversy (11.1) Should we use solitary confinement to control violent and disruptive behaviors? Current Controversy (12.2) If parole an effective correctional strategy? Current Controversy (13.1) Have zero-tolerance policies made schools safer? Current Controversy (14.2) Does immigration impact crime?
5	09/17/19 & 09/19/19	Discussing the research paper requirements and its presentation
6	09/24/19 09/26/19	Overview of the forensic science section of the course and a quick intro to forensic DNA analysis Topic for reading and discussion: 'Reliability of forensic science'
7	10/01/19 10/03/19	Topic for reading and discussion: Implications of secondary and tertiary DNA transfer, low – level DNA testing Topic for reading and discussion: DNA databases

8	10/08/19	Topic for reading and discussion: Familial / partial profile searches
	10/10/19	Topic for reading and discussion: Wrongful Convictions and DNA Exonerations; The Innocence project
9	10/15/19	Allocation of a research topic (assessment task 4)
	10/17/19	Forensic genetics: a brief overview
10	10/22/19	Topic for reading and discussion: Forensic molecular phenotyping: ethical and legislative issues
	10/24/19	Brainstorming and writing session (helping with the research paper writing up – Assessment task 4)
11	10/29/19	Forensic genealogy: a brief overview
	10/31/19	Topic for reading and discussion: Forensic genealogy and extended familial searches: ethical and legislative issues
12	11/05/19	DNA manipulation and authentication; gene editing: a brief overview
	11/07/19	Topic for reading and discussion: Fake DNA and gene editing: ethical and legal questions.
13	11/12/19	Topic for reading and discussion: Behavioral genetics in criminal justice
	11/14/19	Mass shootings in the US – is there a way to stop this? Please submit the <u>draft</u> of your research paper by the 11/15/19 to receive feedback
14	11/19/19	Summary and discussion
	11/21/19	Personal feedback from instructor on the research paper draft
15	11/26/19	Peer – review of the research papers (group activity)
	11/28/19	Public holiday – no classes. Research paper (Assessment task 4) due on the 12/1/19
16	12/03/19	Research paper presentations and discussions (Assessment task 5)
	12/05/19	Research paper presentations and discussions
Main exam or a similar activity	12/16/19 12:15 - 14:30	Research paper presentations and discussions