

Soc 326: The Criminal Justice System
University of La Verne
Department of Sociology & Anthropology
Fall 2015 Online

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Welcome to the Course

Welcome to "The Criminal Justice System" online course from the University of La Verne! I hope that you enjoy the course and I will do everything that I can to make it enjoyable.

Good news and bad news:

First the good news - you don't have to maneuver through traffic after your busy days to come to class and then try to stay awake through long lectures.

Now the bad news - this is not the "easy way" to do university classes, although it will likely be more convenient (see good news above). The point is that an online class requires more work, and especially more independent work, from students because there are no classroom lectures.

You should be prepared to spend between six and ten hours a week on this course since reading/working on your own along with weekly writing assignments replace lectures. You should start early each week on the assignments and keep up with the schedule.

I have tried to organize the course such that the "good news" outweighs the "bad news."

Welcome to the course!

Course Description

In this course, we will explore the effectiveness of the legal system as what sociologists call an "agent of social control." The practical focus will be on the operation of the "criminal justice system" (CJS) as it responds to "street crime."

Using Samuel Walker's popular book Sense and Nonsense About Crime and Drugs, we will examine how political viewpoints shape (and often distort) ideas about crime and how to deal with crime, why both "conservative" and "liberal" approaches to the crime/violence problem are fundamentally unworkable, and why the CJS is inherently unable to do much about the problems of crime and violence in our society.

Course Objectives

This course will provide students with:

- 1. an introductory overview of CJS components and processes, including an introduction to the history and problems of policing, the operations of the criminal court system, and the history and uses of punishment/imprisonment.*
- 2. an introduction to and evaluation of basic approaches to crime by the CJS.*
- 3. an introduction to the relationships between drugs, guns and crime, and an evaluation of the response by the CJS to these problems.*
- 4. a review of some realistic proposals for reducing crime and violence in America.*

Textbooks

Sense and Nonsense About Crime and Drugs (8th Edition), Samuel Walker, Wadsworth, 2015.

Introduction to Criminal Justice (15th Edition), Larry J. Siegel John L. Worrall, Cengage, 2016.

Please make sure you get the correct editions of the text

Required texts can be purchased through the ULV Campus Bookstore.

Texts can also be ordered online (Amazon.com, etc.)

Be sure to order early so that work can be turned in on time.

Grading and Exams

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| Critical Thinking Questions (16 @10 points each) | 160pts |
| Discussion Boards (10 at 20 points each) | 200pts |
| Mid Term | 100 pts |
| Current Events/Discussion Board (5@20 points each) | 100 pts |
| Class Project: | 50pts |
| Final Exam | 100 pts |
| Total Points | 710 pts |

Grade Scale

100-98 = A+ 89-88 = B+ 79-78 = C+ 69-68 = D+

97-94 = A 87-84 = B 77-74 = C 67-64 = D

93-90 = A- 83-80 = B- 73-70 = C- 63-60 = D- 59=F

*Note: There is total of 710 points possible for this class. In order to calculate your grade, add up the total points you receive and divide that by 710.

Exams

A mid-term and a final exam are required for the course.

The dates of the exams will be announced later.

Exams will be on-line via Blackboard).

Exams will consist of multiple choice, true/false, etc. and short answer items. A course announcement as well as an email will be sent out when the midterm and final dates will be scheduled.

Class Project

Information on this task can be found under Course Assignments in Blackboard. The Power-Point will be submitted on to the db area as there is a discussion component part of this assignment that is required.

Discussion Boards

Each week of the course you will be required to respond to the discussion board question, by Thursday midnight PST, you will also need to post at least 2 responses to your fellow classmates by Sunday at 12 midnight PST. The use of sources and Proper APA format should be used for your main discussion board responses. Main Discussion boards posts are not accepted for credit after the db closes out on Sunday, if they are turned in after Thurs but by Sunday they will still count but will be marked down for being late.

Discussion board main post should be about 400-600 words.

Current Events

*Current Events: About Every 2 weeks you will post on the discussion board (see discussion board area) in the correlating current event area in regards to a current event of your choice that has to do with a topic in Criminal Justice.. Please note: you will be discussing the current event, not just merely reposting the information. Like your regular discussion boards this is also due, by Thursday midnight PST, you will also need to post at least 2 responses to your fellow classmates by Sunday at 12 midnight PST in regards to the current event. Please provide a link to the current event of your choice along with your work. Please See Assignments section of the course for a more detailed explanation. **The Main current Event posts are not accepted for credit after the current event area closes out on Sunday, if they are turned in after Thurs but by Sunday they will still count but will be marked down for being late.** Current Event main post should be about 400-600 words, excluding the actual current event*

Participation/Attendance

In order to make this class interesting and worthwhile it is essential that you add to it. A good part of your grade depends on participation. Offering your opinion while being respectful to others, answering questions, posting to the discussion board and adding to the overall learning environment are what I look at. Don't be left out, this is your education, so participate!

Participation in course discussions is a large part of your weekly grade. Discussion boards and discussion board responses must be completed the week they are due. Late discussion board posts and late responses to fellow classmates are not accepted for credit. Please make sure you are actively participating in weekly course discussions. Failure to participate in the class can lead to a failing grade in the course.

Academic Honesty

It is expected that you will maintain academic integrity at all times. This means doing your own work on discussion boards, exams, and class projects. Proper credit must be given to sources (which are required on all discussion boards and class projects) through the use of APA/ASA format in written work (avoiding plagiarism). Is it never okay to copy and paste information off a website or a source and pass it off as your own work. Sources are meant to bolster your views, they are not meant to be your views. Plagiarism and cheating will result automatically in a grade of F in the course. Please refer to the university catalog on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity.

Please note that sources like Wikipedia are not academic sources as much of the information on such sites is either incorrect or plagiarized from other sources are not accepted source information for this course.

ULV Email

Please make sure to use or check your ULV email accounts this is where I will be sending all course information and correspondence too.

Classroom Etiquette

Be respectful to one another in the discussion boards.

Incompletes. I do not allow students to take an "Incomplete" for this course. If you do not believe you will be able to finish the course, you should withdraw early to get any refund of your tuition that you are due.

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the Syllabus at any time