

San José State University
Department of Justice Studies
JS189-04, Senior Seminar: Contemporary Problems, Spring 2023

Course and Contact Information

Instructor: Greg Woods, J.D.
Office Location: MacQuarrie Hall 508
Telephone: (408) 924-1840
Email: greg.woods@sjsu.edu
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM, via Zoom and Thursdays, 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, in person on campus by email appointment; Zoom links available by email request.
Class Days/Time: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 12:00 PM - 1:15 PM
Classroom: MacQuarrie Hall 523

Course Description

Identification, discussion and analysis of selected problems in justice studies. A major term paper on a selected topic is required. Prerequisite: 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. 3 Units.

Course Format

Our class is offered on campus and in person. Students are encouraged to review questions and subject matter during class, regularly scheduled Office Hours on Zoom and in person, and/or via email. Supplemental video materials are available through Canvas Modules. Other than our textbook, all other course materials available through Canvas Files.

Justice Studies Department 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.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

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

- 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).*
- 2. Demonstrate their ability to present scholarly work to an audience of their peers.*

3. *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.*
4. *Demonstrate their ability to undertake a critical analysis of a contemporary problems relevant to justice studies.*
5. *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 Textbook

Kappelar, Victor E. and Potter, Gary W. (2018). *The Mythology of Crime and Criminal Justice* (5th Edition). Waveland Press, ISBN: 978-1-4786-0260-6

Students may purchase textbooks in the Spartan Bookstore and online.

Other Readings

Additional course materials will be found through Canvas Files.

Other technology requirements / equipment / material

Internet, computer, microphone & camera.

Library Liaison

Nyle Monday, Nyle.Monday@sjsu.edu, (408) 808-2041

<http://libguides.sjsu.edu/justicestudies>

Course Requirements and Assignments

Our class is offered on campus and in person. Students are encouraged to review questions and subject matter in class, during regularly scheduled Office Hours in person or on Zoom, and/or via email. 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 but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

Weekly Assignments

Students will be assigned **eight (8)** weekly reading and writing assignments in class and as reflected below. Weekly Assignments are due during every other **Thursday** class session, or as instructed, and will consist of a **three-to-five** paged double spaced typed analysis in 12-point font. (CLO 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5)

Project

Projects will require students to conduct independent research and craft a thesis paper specific to significant contemporary problems impacting the system of justice in the United States, in the form of a **fifteen-to-twenty-page** written analysis, due during the last scheduled day of instruction as reflected below. Reliable sources for all assertions should be cited in the American Psychological Association (APA) format. (CLO 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5)

Final Examination

Students will complete a cumulative final examination (**5/18**) using key terms and concepts from readings and class discussion consisting of short answer and essay based questions. (CLO 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5)

Participation

Students are invited to participate during class in an informed, professional and respectful manner, check in during Office Hours at least once throughout the semester, and consistently submit quality work in a timely manner. Participation credit will be rewarded in response to student presence, preparedness and politeness during class sessions. (CLO 2, 3, 4 & 5)

Grading Information

Final grades will be evaluated as follows:

Weekly Assignments (8)	30%
Project	30%
Final Examination	30%
Participation	10%

Determination of Grades:

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>A plus</i>	<i>960 to 1000</i>	<i>96 to 100%</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>930 to 959</i>	<i>93 to 95%</i>
<i>A minus</i>	<i>900 to 929</i>	<i>90 to 92%</i>
<i>B plus</i>	<i>860 to 899</i>	<i>86 to 89 %</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>830 to 859</i>	<i>83 to 85%</i>
<i>B minus</i>	<i>800 to 829</i>	<i>80 to 82%</i>
<i>C plus</i>	<i>760 to 799</i>	<i>76 to 79%</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>730 to 759</i>	<i>73 to 75%</i>
<i>C minus</i>	<i>700 to 729</i>	<i>70 to 72%</i>
<i>D plus</i>	<i>660 to 699</i>	<i>66 to 69%</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>630 to 659</i>	<i>63 to 65%</i>
<i>D minus</i>	<i>600 to 629</i>	<i>60 to 62%</i>

Please Note: Extra credit will not be awarded, late assignments will not be accepted for credit without prior agreement.

Students have the right, within a reasonable time, to know their academic scores, to review their grade-dependent work, and to be provided with explanations for the determination of their course grades. **Students are encouraged to review their progress during Office Hours or by appointment no later than Week Eight**

(Thursday, March 16th) and periodically throughout the semester during office hours and/or by email appointment.

Classroom Protocol

Attendance/Punctuality

Regular attendance and punctuality are encouraged. Students who are routinely inattentive, discourteous or who choose not to contribute to classroom discussion and activities, will be noted and may result with up to 10% (one letter grade) deducted from the final grade.

Late Assignments

Late assignments will not be accepted for credit without prior agreement.

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9](#), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on Syllabus Information web page (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>). Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Additional Information

All sources of information to support written assertions must be cited in the American Psychological Association (APA) Format. PLEASE NOTE: Detection of plagiarism will result with NO CREDIT.

JS189-04/Senior Seminar: Contemporary Problems, Spring 2023

Students are assigned reading, writing and research assignments during class and as reflected below.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	January 26	<p>Introductions/Course overview; Syllabus, Class, Project, Assignment & Examination formats; The Social Construction of Crime: Conflict & Consensus; Profile: Immanuel Kant (1724 - 1804) & The Enlightenment Outlook; Natural Law & Limits of the Criminal Law; In a Time Before Cops; Felonies & Misdemeanors; Criminalizing Thought; Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program; Exercise: <i>What is the most significant contemporary problem impacting the justice system in the United States today? In what ways is gun violence related to the dark figure of crime?</i></p>
2	January 31 & February 2	<p>Assignment #1 (DUE 2/2); Policy & Control: Bloody Codes & Traditional Notions of Liberty; Laws as Legislative Solutions to Society's Problems resulting in Criminalized, Restricted Behavior for all; We the People & the Cross-examination of Evidence; Act & Intent; Malice, Capital Offenses & Limitations on Criminal Liability; Criminalizing Expression, Hate Speech & Obscenity; Read Chapter 1: The Social Construction of Crime Myths (pgs 1-40); Prepare, Submit and be ready to discuss Weekly Assignment #1: Identify and explain three significant concepts presented in Chapter 1. Also, What is the most significant contemporary problem impacting the justice system in the United States today? & Profile: Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832); Exercise: <i>How is our crime rate calculated? Is this calculation flawed in any way? How might such data impact gun sales in the United States?</i></p>
3	February 7 & 9	<p>Assign Project (DUE NO LATER THAN 5/11); Review Assignment #1; Sovereignty: Constitutions, Statutes & Case Law; Jurisdictional Structures; Sources of Authority; Oscar Grant and the Duty to Protect and Serve; Criminalizing Behavior; Read Chapter 2: Crime Waves, Fears, and Social Reality (pgs 41-62) & Profile: Cesare Beccaria (1738-1794); Exercise: <i>In what ways is mental illness linked to the United States justice system?</i></p>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
4	February 14 & 16	<p>Assignment #2 (DUE 2/16); Retribution: Discretionary Application; The Death Penalty, Due Process, Tookie Williams & The Mercy Seat; Justification & Excuse; The Civic Duty to Respond to Crime; The Absence of Crime is the Greatest Indicator; Read Chapter 3: The Myth and Fear of Missing Children (pgs 63-91); Prepare, Submit and be ready to discuss Weekly Assignment #2: Identify and explain three significant concepts presented in the Chapters 2 and 3. & Profile: Sir Robert Peel (1788-1850); Exercise: <i>Is Buck v. Bell, 274 U.S. 200 (1927), relevant in regard to current policy specific to criminalization of the chronically homeless, mentally ill or immigrant communities?</i></p>
5	February 21 & 23	<p>Review Assignment #2; Criminal Profiling: Stop & Frisk; Reasonable Suspicion & Probable Cause; Pretexting & Metadata collection analysis; Read Chapter 4: Stalkers <i>Spreading Myth to Common Crime</i> (pgs 93-114) & Profile: John Augustus (1785-1859); Exercise: <i>What challenges are inherent to the bail system in the United States? What solutions do you propose to improve the bail system?</i></p>
6	February 28 & March 2	<p>Assignment #3 (DUE 3/2); Recidivism: Restoration & Crisis Intervention Training; Read Chapter 5: Organized Crime <i>The Myth of an Underworld Empire</i> (pgs 115-150) Prepare, Submit and be ready to discuss Weekly Assignment #3: Identify and explain three significant concepts presented in Chapters 4 and 5, & Profile: Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909); Exercise: <i>What is the worse problem, recidivism or the lack of rehabilitation? Why? What are the primary differences between Retributive and Restorative models of justice?</i></p>
7	March 7 & 9	<p>Review Assignment #3; Legislative Intent: Mandatory Minimum Sentencing & the “Three Strikes” sentence enhancement law of California; Proposition 47 and California’s Realignment Policy; Read Chapter 6: Corporate Crime and Higher Immorality”(pgs 151-191) & Profile: Megan Kanka (1986-1994); Exercise: <i>Is gender inequality still a problem in the third decade of the twenty-first century? If so, in what three ways should this problem be solved?</i></p>
8	March 14 & 16	<p>Assignment #4 (DUE 3/16); Security: Surveillance, Pit Bulls & Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design; Broken-Windows and Labeling Theories; Read Chapter 7: Apocalypse Now <i>The Lost War on Drugs</i> (pgs 193-234); Prepare, Submit and be ready to discuss Assignment #4: Identify and explain three significant concepts presented in Chapters 6 and 7, & Profile: Emile Durkheim (1858-1917); Exercise: <i>Does social media perpetuate or prevent criminal behavior? How might Emile Durkheim explain the phenomenon of contemporary social media in the United States?</i></p>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
9	March 21 & 23	Review Assignment #4; Fear: Budget Priorities & the Fear-Victimization Paradox; Sanctuary Policy Jurisdictions & Scapegoating the Undocumented; Pelican Bay & Solitary Confinement; Read Chapter 8: Juvenile Superpredators <i>The Myths of Killer Kids, Dangerous Schools, and a Youth Crime Wave</i> (pgs 235-269) & Profile: Carmen Best (1955-); Exercise: <i>Does social media perpetuate or prevent criminal behavior? In ways will a commitment to education increase the access to justice?</i>
10	March 28 & 30	SPRING RECESS. NO CLASSES IN SESSION!
11	April 4 & 6	Assignment #5 (DUE 4/6); Engagement: Amber Alerts, Neighborhood Watch, Flash Mobs, Social Media & Foot Patrol; Community Policing & Cultivating Credibility; Read Chapter 9: Battered and Blue Crime Fighters <i>Myths and Misconceptions of Police Work</i> (pgs 271-312) Prepare, submit and be ready to discuss Weekly Assignment #5: Identify and explain three significant concepts presented in Chapters 8 and 9, & Profile: Dollree Mapp (1924-2014); Exercise: <i>What is the exclusionary rule? How does the exclusionary rule address the problem of Fourth Amendment violations by law enforcement? Does the exclusionary rule allow criminals to escape justice?</i>
12	April 11 & 13	Review Assignment #5; Expungement: Incarceration rates, Recidivism, Release & Community Integration; Confidential Informants, Witness Intimidation & Snitches Get Stitches; Exceptions to Warrants; Read Chapter 10: Order in the Courts <i>The Myth of Equal Justice</i> (pgs 313-349) & Profile: Chief August Vollmer (1876-1955); Exercise: <i>Do you believe raising education standards could be the key to better policing? If so, should law enforcement agencies only hire police officers who have earned college degrees?</i>
13	April 18 & 20	Assignment #6 (DUE 4/20); Self-Incrimination: Confessions, Miranda & Contemporary Custodial Interrogation; Good Cops, Bad Cops & The Thin Blue Line; Read Chapter 11: Cons and Country Clubs <i>The Mythical Utility of Punishment</i> (pgs 351-381) Prepare, submit and be ready to discuss Weekly Assignment #6: Identify and explain three significant concepts presented in Chapters 10 and 11, & Profile: Chief Penny E. Harrington (1943-2021); Exercise: <i>What does “exoneration” mean? Why has the United States of America “set a record” in regard to exonerations?</i>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
14	April 25 & 27	Review Assignment #6; Fair Trial: Right to Counsel, Peers as Jurors & Impartial Judges; Richmond, CA: Homicide Rates, Officer Involved Shootings & Black Lives Matter; Mens Rea, Expert Witnesses, Diminished Capacity & The Twinkie Defense; Read Chapter 12: The Myth of a Lenient Criminal Justice System (pgs 383-412) & Profile: Bass Reeves (1838-1910) ; Exercise: <i>What specific problems could be eliminated through community policing?</i>
15	May 2 & 4	Assignment #7 (DUE 5/4) ; Challenging Presumptions, Critical Analysis & Meritorious Debate; Compulsory Registration: Public Disclosure & California Penal Code Section 290; Read Chapter 13: Capital Punishment <i>The Myth of Murder as Effective Crime Control</i> (pgs 413-442) ; Prepare, submit and be ready to discuss Weekly Assignment #7: Identify and explain three significant concepts presented in Chapters 12 and 13, & Profile: Dorothea Lynde Dix (1802-1887) ; Exercise: <i>Is capital punishment a sustainable solution? Why?</i>
16 Project Due (5/11)	May 9 & 11	Assignment #8 (DUE 5/11); Project Due (5/11) ; Review Assignment #7, A Game That Moves As You Play, A Work Forever in Progress; No Justice, No Peace; It's just us: Laws as Expressions of Community Demand; Read Chapter 14: Merging Myths and Misconceptions of Crime and Justice (pgs 443-462) ; Prepare, Submit and be ready to discuss Assignment #8: Identify and explain three significant concepts presented in Chapter 14 OR What are the three most significant concepts you learned in our class this semester? Review for Final Examination; Final Thoughts.
Final Examination	Thursday, May 18	MacQuarrie Hall 523 9:45 AM - 12:00 PM