

San José State University
Department of Justice Studies
JS189-04, Senior Seminar: Contemporary Problems, Spring 2021

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Greg Woods, J.D.
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Office Hours:	Wednesdays, 8:00 AM - 10:00 AM & 1:30 PM - 2:30 PM, and by email appointment; Invitations/Zoom links through Canvas under Announcements.
Class Days/Time:	Mondays & Wednesdays, 6:00 PM - 7:15 PM live streamed Zoom lectures; Recordings of all class sessions are on Canvas under Modules.
Classroom:	On Line; Invitations/Zoom links to live lectures through Canvas under Announcements.

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 completely online with no designated day/time meeting pattern. However, students are provided the opportunity to be virtually present and interact during regularly scheduled live streamed Zoom lectures and review questions and subject matter during regularly scheduled Office Hours on Zoom and via email.

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

Bohm, Robert M. and Walker, Jeffery T. (2013). Demystifying Crime & Criminal Justice (2nd Edition). OXFORD ISBN: 978-0-19-984383-1

Students may purchase texts in the bookstore and online.

Other Readings

Additional course materials will be found on Canvas under Files and Modules.

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 completely online with no designated day/time meeting pattern. However, students are provided the opportunity to be virtually present and interact during regularly scheduled live streamed Zoom lectures and review questions and subject matter during regularly scheduled Office Hours on Zoom and 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 **Wednesday** class session, or as instructed, and will consist of a two-to-three 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 using key terms and concepts from readings and class discussion consisting of short answer and essay based questions. (CLO 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5)

Faculty members are required to have a culminating activity for their courses, which can include a final examination, a final research paper or project, a final creative work or performance, a final portfolio of work, or other appropriate assignment.

Participation

Students are invited to participate on Zoom during live lectures in an informed, professional and respectful manner, check in during virtual office hours at least once during our semester, and consistently submit quality work in a timely manner. Participation credit will also be rewarded in response to student preparedness and politeness during online class sessions. (CLO 2, 3, 4 & 5)

Grading Policy

Final grades will be evaluated as follows:

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

Grading Scale

A = 90 to 100

B = 80 to 89

C = 70 to 79

D = 60 to 69

F = 59 and below.

Please Note: Extra credit will not be awarded, late assignments will not be accepted for credit.

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 in person no later than Week Eight (Wednesday, March 17th) and periodically throughout the semester** during office hours, and by appointment.

Passage of the Writing Skills Test (WST) or ENGL/LLD 100A with a C or better (C- not accepted), and completion of Core General Education are prerequisite to all SJSU Studies courses. Completion of, or co-registration in, 100W is strongly recommended. A minimum aggregate GPA of 2.0 in GE Areas R, S, & V shall be required of all students.

Classroom Protocol

Attendance/Punctuality

Our class is offered completely online live-streamed. Students are provided the opportunity to be virtually present and interact during regularly scheduled live streamed Zoom lectures, every Monday and Wednesday from 6:00-7:15 PM, and review questions and subject matter during regularly scheduled office hours on Zoom and via email. Regular attendance and punctuality are encouraged.

Late Assignments

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

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9 (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), 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.

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Course Schedule

Week 1	January 27	<p>Introductions/Course overview; Syllabus, Class, Project, Assignment & Examination formats; The Social Construction of Crime: Conflict & Consensus; 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 the COVID-19 pandemic related to the dark figure of crime?</i></p>
Week 2	February 1 & 3	<p>Assignment #1 (DUE 2/3); 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 Chapters 1, 2 & 3: The Myths of Accurate Crime Measurement, The Myth That "Criminals" Are Fundamentally Different from "Non-criminals" & Rational Choice as an Explanation for Criminal Behavior (pgs 3-36); Prepare, Submit and be ready to discuss Weekly Assignment #1: What is the most significant contemporary problem impacting the justice system in the United States today? & Profile: Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832); In-class 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>
Week 3	February 8 & 10	<p>Assign Project (DUE NO LATER THAN 5/17); 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 Chapters 4 & 5: The Myths That Violent Juveniles Will Become Adult Criminals & That of Black Crime (pgs 37-56) & Profile: Cesare Beccaria (1738-1794); In-class exercise: <i>In what ways is mental illness linked to the United States justice system?</i></p>

Week 4	February 15 & 17	Assignment #2 (DUE 2/17); 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 Chapters 6 & 7: The Myths That Mental Illness Causes Crime & Drug Decriminalization (pgs 57-79); Prepare, Submit and be ready to discuss Weekly Assignment #2: Review Questions #3 (p 12), #1 (p 23), #2 (p 35), #3 (p 46), #2 (p 56), #3 (p 66), #2 (p 79) & Profile: Sir Robert Peel (1788-1850); In-class 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>
Week 5	February 22 & 24	Review Assignment #2; Criminal Profiling: Stop & Frisk; Reasonable Suspicion & Probable Cause; Pretexting & Metadata collection analysis; Read Chapters 8 & 9: The Myths about Drug Use and Violent Offending & That White-Collar Crime Is Only about Financial Loss (pgs 81-101) & 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>
Week 6	March 1 & 3	Assignment #3 (DUE 3/3); Recidivism: Restoration & Crisis Intervention Training; Read Chapters 10 & 11: The Myths that Gun Control Policies Reduce Crime & Sex Offenders are Beyond Redemption (pgs 103-125); Prepare, Submit and be ready to discuss Assignment #3: Review Questions #3 (p 92), #1 (p 101), #1 (p 113), #1 (p 125) & 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>
Week 7	March 8 & 10	Review Assignment #3; Legislative Intent: Mandatory Minimum Sentencing & the “Three Strikes” sentence enhancement law of California; Proposition 47 and California’s Realignment Policy; Read Chapters 14 & 15: The Myths The Role of Police Is to Fight Crime & That Science Solves Crimes (pgs 147-165) & 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>
Week 8	March 15 & 17	Assignment #4 (DUE 3/17); Security: Surveillance, Pit Bulls & Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design; Broken-Windows and Labeling Theories; Read Chapters 16 & 17: The Myths Surrounding Policewomen on Patrol & That Police Use of Force Is Widespread (pgs 166-183); Prepare, Submit and be ready to discuss Assignment #4: Review Questions #1 (p 156), #2 (p 164), #3 (p 176), #2 (p 183) & Profile: Emile Durkheim (1858-1917); In-class 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>

Week 9	March 22 & 24	Review Assignment #4; Fear: Budget Priorities & the Fear-Victimization Paradox; Sanctuary Policy Jurisdictions & Scapegoating the Undocumented; Pelican Bay & Solitary Confinement; Read Chapters 18 & 19: The Myths of Racial Profiling & The Best Police Response to Domestic Violence Is to Arrest the Offender (pgs 185-201) & 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>
Week 10	March 29 & 31	SPRING RECESS. NO CLASSES IN SESSION!
Week 11	April 5 & 7	Assignment #5 (DUE 4/7); Engagement: Amber Alerts, Neighborhood Watch, Flash Mobs, Social Media & Foot Patrol; Community Policing & Cultivating Credibility; Read Chapters 20 & 21: The Myths That the Exclusionary Rule Allows Many Criminals to Escape Justice & That Punishment Reduces Crime (pgs 205-229); Prepare, submit and be ready to discuss Weekly Assignment #5: Review Questions #2 (p 201), #2 (p 213), #3 (p 228) & Profile: Dollree Mapp (1924-2014); In-class 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>
Week 12	April 12 & 14	Review Assignment #5; Expungement: Incarceration rates, Recidivism, Release & Community Integration; Confidential Informants, Witness Intimidation & Snitches Get Stitches; Exceptions to Warrants; Read Chapters 22 & 23: The Myths That Imprisonment Is the Most Severe Form of Punishment & The Death Penalty Is Administered Fairly (pgs 230-253) & Profile: Chief August Vollmer (1876-1955); In-class 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>
Week 13	April 19 & 21	Assignment #6 (DUE 4/21); Self-Incrimination: Confessions, Miranda & Contemporary Custodial Interrogation; Good Cops, Bad Cops & The Thin Blue Line; Read Chapters 24 & 25: The Myths of Closure and Capital Punishment & Prisons as Country Clubs (pgs 254-277) & Profile: Chief Penny E. Harrington (1943 -); In-class exercise: <i>What does “exoneration” mean? Why has the United States of America “set a record” in regard to exonerations?</i>

Week 14	April 26 & 28	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 Chapters 26 & 27: The Myths Prisons Can be Self-Supporting, Correctional Privatization & Inherent Efficiency (pgs 278-295) & Profile: Bass Reeves (1838-1910) ; In-class exercise: <i>What specific problems could be eliminated through community policing?</i>
Week 15	May 3 & 5	Assignment #7 (DUE 5/5) ; Challenging Presumptions, Critical Analysis & Meritorious Debate; Compulsory Registration: Public Disclosure & California Penal Code Section 290; Read Chapters 28 & 29: The Myths That Correctional Rehabilitation Does Not Work & That Rehabilitation Is the Focus of Community Corrections (pgs 296-319) ; Prepare, submit and be ready to discuss Weekly Assignment # 7: Review Questions #1 (p 284), #3 (p 295), #3 (p 309), #3 (pg 319) & Profile: Dorothea Lynde Dix (1802-1887) ; Exercise: <i>Is capital punishment a sustainable solution? Why?</i>
Week 16 Project Due (5/17)	May 10, 12 & 17	Assignment #8 (DUE 5/17); Project Due (5/17) ; 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; Prepare, Submit and be ready to discuss Assignment #8: Profile of choice OR What are the three most significant concepts you learned in our class this semester? Review for Final Examination; Final Thoughts.
Final Examination (5/19)	May 19	Prepare and Submit Final Examination by no later than 7:30 PM on Wednesday, May 19 , the day and time our Final Examination is scheduled to conclude.