San José State University

College of Social Sciences / Department of Justice Studies
JS 156-80, Gangs, Criminal Syndicates & Justice, Spring 2022

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Natalie Birthelmer
Office Location:	HB 125
Telephone:	(408) 924-2753 x42753 – email is the best way to reach me!
Email:	natalie.birthelmer@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	M/W 10:20-11:40AM online – email me for a Zoom invite
Class Days/Time:	Online
Classroom:	Canvas
Prerequisites:	100W; Upper Division Standing

Course Format

Technology Intensive, Hybrid, and Online Courses

This course adopts an online delivery format. All course work will take place on Canvas Leaning Management System course login website. See University Policy F13-2 for more details.

Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on Canvas Leaning Management System course login website. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through MySJSU on Spartan App Portal to learn of any updates.

Course Description

A socio/historical examination of the emergence, evolution, persistence, activities and social structure of gangs and mobs, the effects of social factors, e.g., politics, law, technology and the economy, and consequences for communities and social institutions.

Pre- / Co-requisite: Any 100W

Note: Must achieve a grade of "C" or better to fulfill Justice Studies major requirements.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

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

1. Confidently discuss the historical context of and contemporary issues with gangs and criminal syndicates. (CLO1)

2. Understand and explain theories of gang formation. (CLO2)

3. Make critical assessments of and draw logical conclusions about the influence of socioeconomic factors and political climate on gangs and criminal syndicates. (CLO3)

4. Students should read, write, and contribute to discussion at a skilled and capable level. (CLO4)

Required Texts

Howell, J.C. & Griffiths, E. (2019). *Gangs in Americas Communities (3rd Ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
(ISBN: 9781544300221)

Consider investing in an APA style guide, there are many different formats including a pocket size one, that are very affordable (e.g. ISBN: 9781433805608)

Other Readings

Additional readings will be posted on Canvas Leaning Management System course login website.

Library Liaison

Nyle Monday, nyle.monday@sjsu.edu

Course Requirements and Assignments

1. Late work will not be accepted. Missing, late, or plagiarized work will receive a grade of zero points.
2. Assignment will be submitted to Canvas unless otherwise directed.
3. E-mailed assignments will not be accepted. Assignments will be submitted to Canvas unless otherwise directed. If you have issues uploading to Canvas, it is your responsibility to contact the IT department and resolve the issue. I will not accept technical issues as an excuse for late or missing assignments.
4. Quality of writing must be appropriate for university level education and must include proper APA citation. Refer to an APA style guide or the Online Writing Lab (OWL) from Purdue University at if unclear about APA guidelines on in-text citations and reference pages.
5. To ensure compliance with academic integrity policies, all work in this class must be turned in through Turnitin.com on Canvas, a plagiarism detection service with which San José State University contracts. Turnitin.com is integrated into all Canvas assignments, but students are responsible for ensuring their work is accepted and evaluated by Turnitin.com. Inability to do so will lead to an incomplete grade for affected assignments.

Discussions & Small Projects (CLO1, CLO2, CLO4, CLO5)

This class should be engaging for everyone, and therefore relies on student participation. All students will be expected to have read all assigned readings and completed any assignments every week, to be able to successfully participate in class discussions. Be ready to engage, debate, and discuss!
You will be required to respond to weekly discussion boards, as well as engage with your peers by responding to their posts at least twice on separate days. Additionally, some discussion boards will require small research or creative projects. Detailed information will be provided on Canvas.

Reading Responses (CLO1, CLO 2, CLO3, CLO4)

Students will write weekly reading responses to the required readings. You will choose one of the discussion questions listed at the end of the assigned chapter to reflect on the reading.
Reading responses are due as listed on the Course Schedule (below) on Canvas. Late work will not be accepted. Reading responses should be no less than one (1) page and no more than two (2) pages long, and must be written in formal English, in Times New Roman, 12pt. font, and double-spaced.

You must cite the chapter at least three (3) times in your reading response and show that you have read and understood the material through informed discussion. All citations and references must be in APA-style formatting.

Midterm (CLO1, CLO2, CLO3, CLO4)

The midterm will cover weeks 1-8 and include multiple choice, short and long answer questions. The midterm will cover materials from the textbook, assigned readings, and class activities. The midterm will be taken on Canvas.

Policy Presentation (CLO1, CLO2, CLO3, CLO4)

Individually or in groups of up to three (3), you will sign up to present a topic related to gangs, criminal syndicates & justice by completing a series of tasks, including: (1) summarizing the issue (2) discussing past approaches/attempts to resolve the issue, (3) presenting ideas of policy changes to resolve the issues presented, (4) evaluate your policy goals and obstacles, and (5) generating discussion questions. You will create a power point to guide your presentation. Your discussion of the material should be thoughtful and analytical, and invite participation by all students. Further instructions and expectations will be discussed.

Final Examination or Evaluation (CLO1, CLO2, CLO3, CLO4)

The final exam will cover weeks 9-16 and include multiple choice, short, and long answer questions. The midterm will cover materials from the textbook, assigned readings, and class activities. The final exam will be taken at the time of the scheduled in-class final on Canvas.

Technical difficulties during exams

- Internet connection issues:

Canvas autosaves responses a few times per minute as long as there is an internet connection. If your internet connection is lost, Canvas will warn you but allow you to continue working on your exam. A brief loss of internet connection is unlikely to cause you to lose your work. However, a longer loss of connectivity or weak/unstable connection may jeopardize your exam.

- Other technical difficulties:

Immediately email the instructor a current copy of the state of your exam and explain the problem you are facing. Your instructor may not be able to respond immediately or provide technical support. However, the copy of your exam and email will provide a record of the situation. Additionally, you must contact IT services immediately and include a case number in your email to the instructor.

- Contact the SJSU technical support for Canvas:

Technical Support for Canvas
Email: ecampus@sjsu.edu
Phone: (408) 924-2337
https://www.sjsu.edu/ecampus/support

"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 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities including but not limited to internships, labs, clinical practice. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus."

Grading Information

Department of Justice Studies Course Grade Determination

Total Points	Grade	Total Points	Grade	Total Points	Grade
98.0 to 100	**A plus**	**84.0 to 87.99**	**B**	**71.0 to 73.99**	**C minus**
94.0 to 97.99	**A**	**81.0 to 83.99**	**B minus**	**68.0 to 70.99**	**D plus**
91.0 to 93.99	**A minus**	**78.0 to 80.99**	**C plus**	**64.0 to 67.99**	**D**
88.0 to 90.99	**B plus**	**74.0 to 77.99**	**C**	**61.0 to 63.99**	**D minus**

Determination of Grades

Discussions	100 pts / 20%
Reading Responses	100 pts / 20%
Presentation	100 pts / 20%
Midterm	100 pts / 20%
Final	100 pts / 20%
Total	500 pts / 100%

Classroom Protocol

Students are expected to:

1. Come to class prepared and participate
2. Complete all readings and assignments as scheduled on the syllabus
3. Check canvas and mysjsu regularly and be aware of any changes in the class schedule
4. Be respectful to their classmates in discussions and debates

Late work will not be accepted. Assignments will be submitted to Canvas unless otherwise directed. E-mailed assignments will not be accepted. If you have issues uploading to Canvas, it is your responsibility to contact the IT department and resolve the issue. I will not accept technical issues as an excuse for late or missing assignments. *General questions (format, deadlines, etc.) should be posted on the course Q&A Board on Canvas.*

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' Syllabus Information web page at http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/.

Academic Integrity / Plagiarism

Your commitment as a student to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The University Academic Integrity Policy F15-7 [pdf] requires 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. Visit the Student Conduct and Ethical Development website for more information.

- **Plagiarism:** San José State University defines plagiarism as the act of representing the work of another as one's own without giving appropriate credit, regardless of how that work was obtained, and submitting it to fulfill academic requirements. Plagiarism includes:
    - 1.2.1 Knowingly or unknowingly incorporating the ideas, words, sentences, paragraphs, or parts of, or the specific substance of another's work, without giving appropriate credit, and representing the product as one's own work;

    - 1.2.2 Representing another's artistic/scholarly works such as musical compositions, computer programs, photographs, paintings, drawing, sculptures, or similar works as one's own.
- **Sanctions:** There shall be two major classifications of sanctions that may be imposed for violations of this policy: Academic and Administrative. Academic sanctions are actions related to the coursework or grades determined by the faculty member. Administrative sanctions are actions that address a student's status on campus and are determined by the Office of Student Conduct & Ethical Development. Academic sanctions and Administrative sanctions may be imposed simultaneously.

To ensure compliance with academic integrity policies, all work in this class must be turned in through Turnitin.com, a plagiarism detection service with which San José State University contracts. Students are responsible for ensuring their work is accepted and evaluated by Turnitin.com. Inability to do so will lead to an incomplete grade for affected assignments. In case plagiarism is detected once, the plagiarized assignment will receive a failing grade. If plagiarism is detected multiple times, students will receive a failing grade for the course.

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 inform me immediately by emailing me or by making an appointment with me as soon as possible. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Accessible Education Center (AEC) to establish a record of their disability.

Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material

University Policy S12-7, http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf, requires students to obtain instructor's permission to record the course and the following items to be included in the syllabus:

- "Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor's permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material."
    - In classes where active participation of students or guests may be on the recording, permission of those students or guests should be obtained as well.
- "Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent."

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

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The following schedule is subject to change; advance notice of any changes will be posted as early as possible on Canvas.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	1/26 – 1/28	**Discussion 1** Introduction & Review of Syllabus
2	1/31 – 2/4	**Reading Response 1** **Discussion 2** Chapter 1: History of Gangs in the US Chapter 3: Defining Gangs and Gang Members Canvas: Armaline, W.T., Vera Sanchez, C.G. & Correia, M. (2014). 'The biggest gang in Oakland': re-thinking police legitimacy.
3	2/7 – 2/11	**Reading Response 2** **Discussion 3** Chapter 4: General Macro Level Theories and Modern-Day Applications Canvas: Patton, D.U., et al. (2017). Gang violence on the digital street: Case study of a South Side Chicago gang member's Twitter communication
4	2/14 – 2/18	**Reading Response 3** **Discussion 4** Chapter 5: Micro-Level Theories: Developmental Life-Course Pathways and Other Micro-Level Explanations for Gang Involvement Canvas: Harris, M.G. (1994). Cholas, Mexican American Girls, and Gangs.
5	2/21 – 2/25	**Reading Response 4** Canvas: Blakely, G.R. (1967). Organized Crime in the United States Canvas: Britz, M.T. (2008). A New Paradigm of Organized Crime in the United States: Criminal Syndicates, Cybergangs, and the Worldwide Web.
6	2/28 – 3/4	**Reading Response 5** **Discussion 5** Chapter 8: Urban Gangs and Violence Canvas: Cureton, S.R. (2009). Something Wicked This Way Comes
7	3/7 – 3/11	**Discussion 6** Zatz, M.S. & Portillos, E.L. (2000). Voices from the Barrio: Chicano/a gangs, families, and communities.
8	3/14 – 3/18	**Midterm**
9	3/21 – 3/25	**Reading Response 6** **Discussion 7** Canvas: Joyce, K.L. (2016). Stars, Dragons, and the Letter "M": Consequential Symbols in California Prison Gang Policy.

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
		Canvas: Winterdyk, J. & Ruddell, R. (2010). Managing prison gangs: Results from a survey of U.S. prison systems.
10	3/28 – 4/1	Spring Break
11	4/4 – 4/8	**Reading Response 7** **Discussion 8** Chapter 6: Girls and Gangs Canvas: Peterson, R.D. & Howell, J.C. (2013). Program Approaches for Girls in Gangs: Female Specific or Gender Neutral?
12	4/11 – 4/15	**Reading Response 8** **Discussion 9** Chapter 7: National Gang Problem Trends: 1996 to 2012 Canvas: Pyrooz, D.C. & Decker, S.H. (2011). Motives and methods for leaving the gang: Understanding the process of gang desistance.
13	4/18 – 4/22	**Reading Response 9** **Discussion 10** Chapter 9: What Works: Prevention
14	4/25 – 4/29	**Reading Response 10** Chapter 10: What Works: Intervention and Suppression
15	5/2 – 5/6	**Presentations due 5/6**
16	5/9 – 5/13	Final Review
Final Exam	**T – 5/19**	**On Canvas**