

CRMJ254 Introduction to Criminal Justice

SYLLABUS • SPRING 2021

Day/Time: Synchronous (Live) sessions on Wednesdays from 12:30pm to 1:45pm

Location: Zoom

Professor: Dr. Ashley Kilmer

Student Hours: Mondays: 1:00-2:00; Thursdays 3:30-4:30pm via Zoom or by appointment

Email: akilmer@towson.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The history, the present structure, the functions, and the contemporary problems of the police, prosecution, courts, corrections system, probation and parole. A brief introduction to law as an element of social control will be given.

This course provides an overview of the American criminal justice system, including the inter-related agencies and institutions that contribute to the structure and functions of the system. In particular, this course surveys the roles and relationships among the key actors within the system, such as police, courts, juries, prosecutors and corrections agencies and institutions. The course also examines the relationships between society, crime, and the criminal justice system. Since this is a survey course, you may not learn about any one topic in-depth, but you will receive a broad knowledge and foundation about the criminal justice system which will prepare you for more advanced courses covering specific aspects of the criminal justice system.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing this course students will be able to:

- Identify and describe the primary functions of the three branches of the criminal justice system: policing, courts, and corrections
- Describe the ways in which offenders and victims interact with the various agencies and institutions within the criminal justice system
- Describe the roles of actors involved in the CJ system such as police officers, prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges, correctional officers, and probation officers
- Analyze and critically evaluate the way we generate knowledge about the criminal justice system and how that knowledge informs criminal justice policies and practices
- Identify and analyze sources of inequality within the criminal justice system

REQUIRED READING

Instead of requiring a textbook, readings for the course will be assigned from a variety of sources including book chapters, research articles, news stories, court decisions, statutes, etc.

All readings will be available electronically on the class Blackboard site and a shared Google folder.

COURSE FORMAT

Class materials and assignments will be organized by week and located in folders within Blackboard. These materials and assignments will consist of pre-recorded lecture videos, links to YouTube videos, PowerPoint slides, assigned course readings, discussion boards, and course assignments. I will provide a checklist for each week with what you need to view, read, and complete so you can keep track of course requirements.

This class will be taught online using both synchronous and asynchronous learning. We will have live, synchronous class sessions on Wednesdays during our normally scheduled class time. The remainder of the course will be asynchronous which allows you to complete assigned material during days and times that works best for your schedule and technology access.

This class is using a “flipped” format. What this means is that instead of using our live class sessions as a time to lecture, you will be assigned to watch a lecture video and complete a related reading assignment BEFORE attending our live class. We will then use our live class session to answer questions, provide clarification on unclear concepts from the videos/reading, and engage in interactive discussions and class activities.

GRADING PROCEDURE

This course will have five graded requirements: 1) “3-2-1” assignments, 2) discussion boards, 3) quizzes, 4) homework assignments, 5) class presence and engagement, and 6) final assignment

Each of these requirements will be described in greater detail in the next section. Your grade in the course will be based on the total points awarded for these requirements. Specifically, your course grade will be calculated based on the following points allotted to each course requirement:

Course Requirements	Points
“3-2-1” Assignments (6)	30
Discussion Boards (6)	30
Quizzes (8)	80
Homework (4)	120
Class Presence and Engagement	30
Final Assignment	60
Total Points	350

Final course grades will be awarded based on the total earned points as follows:

328-350	A	268-278	C+
314-327	A-	244-267	C
304-313	B+	234-243	D+
293-303	B	209-233	D
279-292	B-	208 or below	F

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

“3-2-1” Assignments

Throughout the semester, you’ll complete six “3-2-1” assignments that will help determine the content of our live class discussion. Each assignment is worth 5 points for a total of up to 30 points. These assignments are a “pre-class” assignment and must be completed by TUESDAY at 11:59pm.

Discussion Boards

Throughout the semester you will have the opportunity to engage with your peers on topics we cover in class through the use of Blackboard’s Discussion Boards. These assignments will encourage you to apply course concepts to “real world” scenarios or policies and see the various perspectives of your peers. You will earn minimal points (3pts) for simply posting to the discussion board and replying to your peers as required, but will earn additional points for providing more engaged, thoughtful participation that demonstrates clear connections to course materials (readings, lecture videos) for a total of up to 5 points per assignment. You will be required to complete SIX discussion board assignments throughout the semester for a total of up to 30 points towards your final course grade. These assignments must be completed by Sunday at 11:59pm. While all assignments are due on Sundays, I encourage everyone to post your original discussion board threads earlier in the week so that there are enough posts to reply to by the weekend.

Quizzes

There will be eight quizzes throughout the semester that are focused on key concepts and themes from the assigned course reading. They will be conducted online through Blackboard and you are allowed to use any notes you take on the readings during the quiz. The quizzes will be timed and the time limit should be more than enough if you are using your notes on the readings to answer quiz questions. However, if you are trying to find the answers in the readings themselves (especially if you haven’t already completed the assigned reading ahead of time) that takes far more time to do, and you will likely run out of time to complete your quiz. Therefore, I advise you to complete the assigned reading, take notes, and then use those notes when you take the quiz. Quizzes must be completed by Sunday at 11:59pm. Each quiz is worth 10 points for a total of up to 80 points towards your final course grade.

Homework Assignments

There will be 4 homework assignments throughout the semester, each worth 30 points for a total of 120 points towards your course grade. These assignments will range from guided reading questions and short reflection papers to research reviews and theory application. You will typically have a couple of options to choose from for each assignment. Homework assignments are submitted online through Blackboard on Sundays by 11:59pm. Late assignments will NOT be accepted *unless you discuss with me the need for an extension BEFORE the deadline.*

Class Presence and Engagement

Since our class only meets once per week, class attendance and participation are very important. Our live class sessions will be used to introduce topics or provide clarification on course topics and engage in class discussions and activities. It is also the best way to learn about the diverse perspectives on the topics we cover by listening and responding to your classmates’ comments and questions. **Class Presence is more than just turning on Zoom. It means being actively engaged in the class session by asking questions, contributing to discussion, responding to polls, and participating in class**

activities. Our class will be meet 15 times throughout the semester and you will earn 1 point for each class session you attend and participate in for a total of up to 15 points. You will also have the opportunity to earn up to 15 additional points through the following “class engagement” activities (each opportunity is worth up to 5 points):

- Attend office hours (or request a check-in meeting with me)
- Share a podcast, documentary, or book relevant to the course topics
- Share a news story or report about a current event that is relevant to course topics
- Share a crime-prevention policy or practice that relates to topics covered in class

You cannot earn more than 15 points in these “class engagement” activities and you cannot complete extra activities to “make-up” for missed live classes. Class presence and engagement will count for up to 30 points towards your final course grade.

Final Assignment

As your final assignment for this course, you will select a criminal justice topic of interest to you that we covered in class, conduct additional research, and create an infographic that provides information in a visually impactful, informative, and accessible way. You will also include an annotated bibliography of the information sources you used to research your topic and create your infographic. A detailed handout about the final assignment requirements and overview of the assignment will be provided towards the end of the semester. This final assignment will be worth up to 60 points towards your course grade.

COURSE POLICIES

Academic Integrity & Plagiarism

This is an incredibly important issue for you as students that can result in significant negative consequences including failing assignments, failing the course, or even disciplinary action by the university. The most common forms of plagiarism seen in college student work includes:

- A. Borrowing someone else’s ideas without proper citation or reference. Anytime you are using a direct quote from an information source or paraphrasing someone else’s ideas or arguments you **MUST** cite your information source. Otherwise, you are claiming the ideas/arguments as your own and that is plagiarism. Easy solution: If you did not come up with the idea yourself, cite it! This includes internet sources!
- B. Self-plagiarism. This form of plagiarism is often viewed as less serious, but is unethical and not appropriate in academic settings. Self-plagiarism is when you reuse written material or assignments for other courses. Instructors expect original work for their courses and taking old papers or assignments and recycling them for another course is considered plagiarism because you are taking previous work and trying to pass it off as new and original writing. Always ask your instructors about whether you can incorporate prior work into assignments or papers and what the expectations are for doing so.

Another form of academic dishonesty is the use of websites like CourseHero, StuDocu, Chegg, and similar that are repositories for completed student assignments, test questions/answers, and course materials. Most course materials are copyrighted and posting or downloading materials from these

websites is a direct violation of copyright law and University policy (in addition to being considered cheating). DO YOUR OWN WORK.

Towson's official policy: "All acts of academic dishonesty violate standards essential to the existence of an academic community. Most offenses are properly handled and remedied by the faculty member teaching the course in which they occur, or by an academic department or college. Other violations will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct & Civility Education for sanctions listed in the Code of Student Conduct"— excerpted from the Student Academic Integrity Policy.

Late or Missed Assignments

I understand that sometimes things come up (illness, personal emergencies, work commitments, etc.) that make completing assignments on time difficult or impossible. What I ask of students is that you communicate with me **BEFORE** a deadline about needing an extension. I will gladly offer an extension if asked ahead of time. I will NOT accept late or missed assignments after a deadline has passed except in very rare circumstances.

Accessibility and Disability Services

Students must register with the [Accessibility and Disability Services](#) (4-2638). Students will provide faculty with a memorandum from ADS listing appropriate accommodations (e.g., extended testing time, distraction free testing area, note takers, audio recorder, etc.). Section XIII. Policies, Procedures and Guidelines Affecting Students (Division of Student Affairs) Student rights of privacy, expression, nondiscrimination, and non-harassment must not be violated, but there are limits on those rights. Contact the Student Affairs Office for additional information.

PROFESSOR ASHLEY'S HELPFUL ADVICE!

Emailing professors

It is extremely helpful when you email a professor to provide the class name or number as well as section (or at least the day/time your class meets). This helps us address your question much more quickly and know exactly which assignment/grade/issue/etc. you are asking about. Also, consider the emails you send professors as part of your professional development training-use respectful language, complete sentences, and always provide an appropriate greeting and closing line. An email with no subject line and begins with "hey, can u tell me..." is not professional or appropriate.

Always save your work!

I know that Blackboard sometimes allows you to submit work within a textbox, but I would advise you to always make a word document of your written work and either attach that document to your assignment or keep it as a backup. Sometimes Blackboard has problems and it would be a shame to lose your work due to Blackboard not saving or submitting it properly.

Relatedly, PDFs are amazing

Everyone uses different operating systems and software to complete assignments. That's great, but not every program (including Blackboard) can open all those different extensions, especially operating system-specific files. Always convert a final version of your written assignment to a PDF

and submit that. PDF files can be opened on any operating system and the formatting will not get messed up either.

Talk to professors about problems BEFORE they become bigger problems!

Most of us are pretty nice people who want to help you succeed in our classes. Please talk to us if something is going on where you are struggling with completing class assignments so we can figure out a solution. Once the semester ends, there really isn't much we can do. Come to us early and often if you need some extra support!

Be your own advocate

College can be demanding, stressful, or just plain confusing. Luckily, there are many campus resources to provide information and support for students. Never be afraid or embarrassed to ask for help, information, or referrals from faculty, or to email or visit any of the support services and help centers available to you.

Resources include:

[Tutoring and Learning Center](#) (aka Academic Achievement Center)

[Writing Center](#)

[Academic Advising Center](#)

[Office of Disability Support Services](#)

[Counseling Center](#)

[Student Life Site](#)

[Health Center](#)

[Rainbow Lounge](#)

WELLNESS STATEMENT

As your professor, I value your health and wellbeing and want to support your success in my class. While I intend to challenge you in this course through rigorous reading and writing assignments on difficult theoretical concepts, I also recognize the importance of finding a balance between work, rest, and attention to your health. Working until exhaustion is NOT a badge of honor in college or in your future career; it is a symptom of being out of balance.

I know our class is taking place during an incredibly stressing time and that people's lives may not look anything close to "normal" right now. This is why I allow students to ask for extensions on assignment deadlines whenever they need it and encourage you to reach out to me or seek other resources on campus when you need that extra support.

(note: statement was inspired by the wellness statement written by Dr. Gonzalez Van Cleve at Brown University).

WEEKLY COURSE STRUCTURE

As mentioned earlier, this course will consist of a mix of synchronous (live) online class sessions and asynchronous learning (reading, videos, assignments).

Each week you will have select reading and lecture assignments that you will be required to complete BEFORE our live class on Wednesdays, along with the 3-2-1 assignment. The remaining readings, lecture videos, and assignments you can completed on your own time and schedule.

Our live class sessions on Wednesdays will typically begin with a review of questions and clarifications that are taken directly from the submitted 3-2-1 assignments. I may also introduce additional context or information to supplement what you read/watched before attending class. We will engage in small- and large-group discussions and class activities to critically evaluate and apply course concepts. I will usually provide a brief overview of the class topics and assignments for the remainder of the week.

The remainder of our class will be asynchronous (self-paced). I strongly encourage you to use the time on Monday when we would normally have class to sit down and read/watch/complete course assignments since that is what that time is meant for, but you can also complete the required assignments during days/times that best fit your schedule.

All course assignments (discussion boards, quizzes, homework, etc.) are always due at the end of the week they are assigned on Sundays at 11:59pm. The only exception to this are the "3-2-1" assignments which are due on Tuesday nights so I can incorporate your responses into our live class on Wednesday. I encourage you to complete assignments throughout the week versus allowing them to pile up until the last minute, but again, how you structure your time is up to you and your schedule.

A typical week may look something like the following:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Weekend
Read assigned reading for Topic 1 Watch assigned lecture video for Topic 1	Complete and submit "3-2-1" assignment	Attend live class session Begin readings and videos assigned for remainder of week	Finish readings and videos assigned for remainder of week Participate in discussion board and/or complete quiz	Complete and submit any remaining weekly assignments.	Complete and submit any remaining weekly assignments.

Note: This is only a suggestion for how to manage your time and course requirements. You can develop your own schedule based on your unique class schedule and non-academic responsibilities. I encourage you to develop a weekly routine of what you need to get done each day so it is easier to manage your workload.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week		Topics and Learning Materials	Assignments
1	01/25	<p>Introduction to Course; Introduction to Criminal Justice System</p> <p><u>Before Wednesday's Class:</u> Explore the course Blackboard site and syllabus</p> <p><u>Rest of Week:</u> 1. Fagin, J.A. (2018). Introduction to criminal justice</p>	Discussion Board
2	02/01	<p>Defining Crime; Measuring & Researching Crime; crime myths</p> <p><u>Before Wednesday's Class:</u> 1. Fichtelberg, A. (2020). Defining, classifying, and measuring crime 2. Lecture video on Defining and measuring crime</p> <p><u>Rest of Week:</u> 1. Kappeler, V. E., & Potter, G. W. (2017). The social construction of crime myths. 2. Lecture video on crime myths</p>	3-2-1 Quiz
3	02/08	<p>Crime Victimization; <i>The Hunting Ground</i></p> <p><u>Before Wednesday's Class:</u> 1. Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2020). <i>Criminal Victimization, 2019</i>. 2. Documentary: <i>The Hunting Ground</i></p> <p><u>Rest of Week:</u> 1. National Center for Victims of Crime. (2008). The trauma of victimization. 2. Lecture video on crime victimization and victim-blaming</p>	3-2-1 Discussion Board
4	02/15	<p>Causes of Crime</p> <p><u>Before Wednesday's Class:</u> 1. Wright, W. (2016). Causes of crime. 2. Lecture video on Causes of Crime</p> <p><u>Rest of Week:</u> 1. Boman, J. H., & Gallupe, O. (2020). Has COVID-19 changed crime? Crime rates in the United States during the pandemic</p>	Quiz Homework 1
5	02/22	<p>History of Policing in the United States; Law & Ethics in Policing</p> <p><u>Before Wednesday's Class:</u> 1. Mallicoat, S. L. (2016). Policing organizations and practices. 2. Lecture video on history and roles of policing</p> <p><u>Rest of Week:</u></p>	3-2-1 Quiz

		<p>1. Life Kit (2020). If You're Stopped By Police, You Have Rights To Protect You. Here's What To Remember <i>Note: Can listen to podcast episode or read transcript of it</i></p> <p>2. Lecture video on Law and Ethics in Policing</p>	
6	03/01	<p>Contemporary Issues in Policing (Racism in policing, defunding the police)</p> <p><u>Before Wednesday's Class:</u></p> <p>1. Ward, G. (2018). Living histories of white supremacist policing: Towards transformative justice</p> <p>2. Lecture video on racism and law enforcement</p> <p><u>Rest of Week:</u></p> <p>1. Herzing, R. (2015). Big Dreams and Bold Steps Toward a Police-Free Future</p>	<p>3-2-1</p> <p>Discussion Board</p>
7	03/08	<p>Drug Policy in the United States; Court System and Structure</p> <p><u>Before Wednesday's Class:</u></p> <p>1. Sacco, L. N. (2014). Drug enforcement in the United States: History, policy, and trends.</p> <p>2. DEA Schedule of Drugs</p> <p>3. Lecture video on history of drug policy in the U.S.</p> <p><u>Rest of Week:</u></p> <p>1. Mallicoat, S. L. (2016). Courts and Crime.</p> <p>2. Lecture video on Courts: System and Structure</p>	Homework 2
8	03/15	SPRING BREAK	
9	03/22	<p>Pre-Trial, Bail, and Plea Bargaining; Going to Trial</p> <p><u>Before Wednesday's Class:</u></p> <p>1. Payne, B.K., Oliver, W.M., & Marion, N.E. (2015). The Judicial Process.</p> <p>2. Lecture video on Pre-trial, Bail, and Plea Bargaining</p> <p><u>Rest of Week:</u></p> <p>1. Lecture video on Trial Process</p>	<p>3-2-1</p> <p>Quiz</p>
10	03/29	<p>Juvenile Justice System; Contemporary Issues in Courts</p> <p><u>Before Wednesday's Class:</u></p> <p>1. Bates, K. & Swan, R.S. (2017). Why a separate juvenile justice system.</p> <p>2. Lecture video on Juvenile Justice System</p> <p><u>Rest of Week:</u></p> <p>1. Alldredge, J. (2015). The "CSI Effect" and Its Potential Impact on Juror Decisions.</p> <p>2. John Oliver video on forensic evidence</p>	<p>Discussion Board</p> <p>Quiz</p>

11	04/05	<p>Sentencing and Goals of Punishment; Privatization</p> <p><u>Before Wednesday’s Class:</u> 1. Miethe, T. D., & Lu, H. (2005). Philosophies of Punishment. 2. Lecture video on History of Punishment in the United States</p> <p><u>Rest of Week:</u> 1. NYPL Podcasts. (2019). Shane Bauer's Undercover Reporting from Inside a Private Prison, Ep. 262 <i>Note: You can listen to podcast or read the transcript of it</i> 2. Lecture video on privatization of punishment</p>	<p>Quiz</p> <p>Homework 3</p>
12	04/12	<p>Mass Incarceration; Types of Punishment</p> <p><u>Before Wednesday’s Class:</u> 1. Sentencing Project. (2019). Trends in U.S. corrections 2. Lecture video on Mass Incarceration in the United States</p> <p><u>Rest of Week:</u> 1. Stohr, M.K. & Walsh, A. (2015). Community corrections: Probation and intermediary sanctions. 2. Lecture video on community corrections, jail, and prison</p>	<p>Discussion Board</p> <p>Quiz</p>
13	04/19	<p>Solitary Confinement; Juvenile Life without Parole Sentences</p> <p><u>Before Wednesday’s Class:</u> 1. Pizarro, J., & Stenius, V. M. (2004). Supermax prisons: Their rise, current practices, and effect on inmates. 2. Lecture video on Solitary Confinement</p> <p><u>Rest of Week:</u> 1. Sentencing Project. (2020). Juvenile life without parole: An overview 2. Lecture video on Juvenile Life without Parole (LWOP)</p>	<p>3-2-1</p> <p>Quiz</p>
14	04/26	<p>The Death Penalty; Reentry and Collateral Consequences;</p> <p><u>Before Wednesday’s Class:</u> 1. Death Penalty Information Center. (2020). Facts about the death penalty. 2. Streib, V. (2009). Classic Arguments for and against the Death Penalty 3. Lecture video on the Death Penalty</p> <p><u>Rest of week</u> 1. Mauer, M. (2002). Invisible punishment. 2. John Oliver video on Reentry</p>	<p>Homework 4</p>
15	05/03	<p>Alternatives and Abolition</p> <p><u>Before Wednesday’s Class:</u></p>	<p>Discussion Board</p>

		1. Benko, J. (2015). The Radical Humaneness of Norway's Halden Prison: The Goal of the Norwegian Penal System is to Get Inmates Out of It. <u>Rest of Week:</u> 1. Davis, A. Y., & Rodriguez, D. (2000). The challenge of prison abolition: A conversation 2. Video clip of Angela Davis discussing prison abolition	
16	05/10	<i>Optional: Final Assignment Support on Wednesday 05/12</i>	
		Final Assignment must be Submitted on Sunday, May 16th at 11:59pm NO EXTENSIONS	Final Assignment

Note: Syllabus is subject to change based on current events, school closings, or instructor's discretion.

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