

SOC 274/PSC 274 – Criminal Justice System
Course Syllabus, Fall 2008
Washburn Hall, 132
M, W, & F: 11:00 – 11:50 a.m.

Instructor: Jill Doerner
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Office: 505 Chafee
Hours: MW 9:30-10:30, 3:30-4:30
or by appointment

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to familiarize you with the structure and the functioning of the American criminal justice system. We will explore three main issues. The first is the conflict between our desires for safety, on the one hand, and freedom, on the other. The second issue is the systematic nature of American criminal justice, that is, the degree to which the various agencies are interrelated and operate together to achieve common goals. As will be seen, the conflict between safety and liberty has significant implication for the degree to which criminal justice agencies form a system. Finally, a third issue is the extent to which the system operates to provide equal protection for all or to privilege some while disadvantaging others.

General Education Course Skills

As a general education course, we will emphasize three *skill areas*. First, the course is conceptually organized around the skill area of “examining human differences.” Second, you will have practice in “reading complex texts.” Third, you likewise will practice “writing effectively.”

Academic Honesty

The Community Standards of Behavior section in your student handbook outlines the University Policies and Regulations regarding honesty in all interactions and academic work. I take academic honesty VERY seriously. Students who violate this policy will be severely penalized. Please see the student handbook for a detailed description of the standards of behavior.

URI Student Handbook: <http://www.uri.edu/judicial/studenthandbook.pdf>

Students with Disabilities

Any student with a certified disability that is likely to affect their performance on any or all of the assignments should see me to arrange for accommodations, as should students whose primary language is not English. As part of this process, please be in touch with the Disability Services for Students office located at 330 Memorial Union or call (401) 874-2098.

Required Text

Samaha, Joel. (2006). *Criminal Justice* (7th edition). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.

Williams, Stanley (1998). *Life In Prison*. New York, NY: SeaStar Books.

Recommended Text

Lab, Steven P., Marian Williams, Jefferson E. Holcomb, William R. King, and Michael E. Buerger. (2004). *Explaining Criminal Justice*. Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury Publishing Company.

Course Requirements

Reading and Class Participation

You are expected to read the assigned reading before you come to class. Occasionally there will be a pop quiz or a minute paper on the reading to make sure you are keeping up. Reading, attendance, participation in class discussion through questions and comments, participation in group discussion and in-class activities, pop quizzes and minute papers will contribute to your class participation grade.

Keep in mind that although I will not take attendance during class, this course is a requirement for the Criminology and Criminal Justice major and as such, is very important to your education. In addition, attendance is necessary to participate in class, which is part of your grade (as well as providing you with information needed for the tests). You need to be in class to participate in discussions and ask questions. From time to time, I will ask you to take a minute (hence, the minute paper) at the end of class to write what you learned in class that day. This will help you to pay attention during class and to think about and reflect on what we have discussed, as well as to help me determine whether you understand the main points and whether there is any confusion or points of clarification that I need to address during the next class session. If you miss class, you need to get the notes from a classmate, please do not ask me what you missed. I do not give out my notes.

Examinations

There will be two in-class exams and a final exam. The first test is scheduled for Wednesday, October 1st; the second for Friday, November 7th. The tests will be a combination of multiple choice and short answer/essays that require you to recall important facts and concepts, integrate material and apply principles to new situations. The final exam will be at the time scheduled by the Registrar. It will be of the same format as the in-class tests. The final will be comprehensive but with an emphasis on the material covered after the second test. *Failure to take an exam will result in a zero! I do not give make-up exams unless there is an extreme circumstance and official documentation is provided. I must be notified in advance if a situation presents itself.*

*Book Review**

You will be reading *Life In Prison*, a book written by Stanley “Tookie” Williams, the co-founder of the Crips street gang. This book was written for adolescents, in an attempt to keep them from a life of crime, so it should be a quick read. Details of the assignment will be handed out in a few weeks. We will talk about the assignment in more detail then.

*For the writing assignment, I will only accept hard copies; NO email attachments will be accepted. All papers are to be typed in Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins, printed double-sided and stapled. You must have page numbers. Grammar, spelling, and punctuation count; points will be deducted for more than a few errors.

Calculation of Grades

Reading & Class Participation	10 %
Book Review	20 %
Exam 1	20 %
Exam 2	20 %
Final Exam	30 %

Grading Scale

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	0-59

Extra Credit

You may receive up to half a percentage point (.50 %) of extra credit added to your final grade by summarizing current news articles related to the field of criminal justice or criminology and presenting them in class. Simply find a news article (in the newspaper, in a magazine, on the Internet) and write a brief summary about that article. You will then present your summary to the class. Attach the original article to your summary and hand it in for credit. The summary must be turned in at the beginning of the same class period in which you present it. News summaries must be typed in order to receive credit. Handwritten summaries will NOT be accepted. You will also NOT receive credit if you do not attach a copy of the original article to your summary. You may do up to four of these summaries for extra credit.

Miscellaneous Information/Fine Print

I encourage you to utilize the resources offered by the Academic Enhancement Center, located on the fourth floor of Roosevelt Hall (www.uri.edu/aec). The center can provide tutoring, help with writing assignments, and a variety of other services that may help you succeed in this and your other courses.

Out of consideration for me and for your classmates, please only leave class if you really need to – leaving in the middle of class and coming back a few minutes later is distracting to others and it sends the message that being there isn't important to you.

Also out of consideration, please make sure to turn off all cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices that you may have brought with you to class. **Take Note:** If I hear or see a device during a quiz or test I will assume that you are cheating and will take your quiz or test from you and you will receive a zero.

Make sure you save all exams, and written assignments that are returned to you in case there is an error in your grade, and so you know where you stand in the course. Keep a copy of all written assignments you hand in, and back up computer files regularly. "My computer crashed" will not be accepted as a valid excuse for late papers. I do not accept emailed assignments.

Finally, do not hesitate to see me if you are not doing as well as you would like to in the course, or if you have questions about anything. I am available outside of regularly scheduled office hours – you can make an appointment to see me, or you can just stop by anytime. I'm also very good about answering email.

A note about emails: Please send proper emails. Make sure to put SOC 274/PSC 274 in the subject line and to include your full name in the text. Also, use proper capitalization and punctuation. Emails should come from your URI account (this is for my protection in case of viruses – emails from other accounts will not be opened).

Schedule of Classes

The following schedule of classes is only a tentative outline, and may be revised throughout the semester. Any changes to reading assignments or other assignments, exams, etc. will be announced in class, and you are responsible for knowing the schedule even if you have missed class (get in touch with a classmate or with me to be sure you know what to prepare for our next meeting).

Week 1

Wednesday, September 3rd

Introduction to the course – Review Syllabus

First Day Activity

Handout: Book Review Assignment

Friday, September 5th

Criminal Justice in the United States

Reading Assignment: Samaha, Chapter 1

Week 2

Monday, September 8th

Criminal Justice in the United States

Wednesday, September 10th

Crime, Criminals, and Victims

Reading Assignment: Samaha, Chapter 2

Friday, September 12th

Crime, Criminal, and Victims

Week 3

Monday, September 15th

Explanations of Criminal Behavior

Reading Assignment: Samaha, Chapter 3

Wednesday, September 17th

Explanations of Criminal Behavior

Friday, September 19th

Explanations of Criminal Behavior/Criminal Justice & Law

Reading Assignment: Samaha, Chapter 4

Week 4

Monday, September 22nd

Criminal Justice and the Law

Wednesday, September 24th

Criminal Justice and the Law

Class Discussion: Are Battered Women Justified in Killing Their Batterers? (p. 130)

Friday, September 26th

Missions and Roles of the Police

Reading Assignment: Samaha, Chapter 5

Week 5

Monday, September 29th

Missions and Roles of the Police

Wednesday, October 1st

EXAM # 1 – Chapters 1 - 5

Friday, October 3rd

OUT OF TOWN – NO CLASS!!!

Please take this time to start working on your book reviews!!!

Week 6

Monday, October 6th

Policing Strategies

Reading Assignment: Samaha, Chapter 6

Wednesday, October 8th

Policing Strategies

Friday, October 9th

Police and the Law

Reading Assignment: Samaha, Chapter 7

Week 7

Monday, October 13th

COLUMBUS DAY – NO CLASS!!!

Wednesday, October 15th

Police and the Law

Friday, October 17th

Police and the Law

Class Discussion: Did Ethnicity Infect the Decision to Stop?

Week 8

Monday, October 20th

Courts and Courtroom Work Groups

Reading Assignment: Samaha, Chapter 8

Wednesday, October 22nd

Courts and Courtroom Work Groups

Friday, October 24th

Proceedings before Trial

Reading Assignment: Samaha, Chapter 9

Week 9

Monday, October 27th

Proceedings before Trial

Wednesday, October 29th

Conviction by Trial and Guilty Plea

Reading Assignment: Samaha, Chapter 10

Friday, October 31st

Convicted by Trial and Guilty Plea

Class Discussion: Should Plea Bargaining Be Banned?

Week 10

Monday, November 3rd

Sentencing

Reading Assignment: Samaha, Chapter 11

Wednesday, November 5th

Sentencing

Friday, November 7th

EXAM # 2 – Chapters 6 – 11

Week 11

Monday, November 10th

Community Corrections

Reading Assignment: Samaha, Chapter 12

Wednesday, November 12th

CRIMINOLOGY MEETING – NO CLASS!!!

Friday, November 14th

CRIMINOLOGY MEETING – NO CLASS!!!

Week 12

Monday, November 17th

Community Corrections

Wednesday, November 19th

Prisons, Jails, and Prisoners

Reading Assignment: Samaha, Chapter 13

Friday, November 21st

Prisons, Jails, and Prisoners/Prison Life

Class Discussion: Does Sending More People to Prison Reduce Crime Rates?

Reading Assignment: Samaha, Chapter 14

Week 13

Monday, November 24th

Prison Life

Wednesday, November 26th

Juvenile Justice

Reading Assignment: Samaha, Chapter 15

Friday, November 28th

THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASS!!!

Week 14

Monday, December 1st

Juvenile Justice

Wednesday, December 3rd

Assignment Due: Book Review on *Life In Prison*

Movie – Redemption

Friday, December 5th

Movie – Redemption

Week 15

Monday, December 8th – Last Day of Class

Question & Answer for Final Exam

Final Exam

Friday, December 12th, 11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.