University of Texas at El Paso  
CRIJ 4319: Street Gangs: Structure, Activity and Response  
CRN# 33912  
SUMMER, 2021 (Online)

Instructor: Scott Christopher Mann  
Department of Criminal Justice

Virtual Office: Discussions Forum link: 24/7 asynchronous (public view) / up to 48 hours to respond  
Mail Box link: 24/7 asynchronous (private) / up to 48 hours to respond

Cell Phone: (915)540-2295  
Email: scmann@utep.edu

Communication:

Instructor Virtual Office hours:

By appointment. You can schedule a one-one-one meeting with me through Blackboard Collaborate located in your course “Instructor Virtual Office” link, where we will have a virtual workshop on the first week of class to go over the course and syllabus. I will make an announcement on the course Home Page as to the date and time for the workshop. If you want a personal one-on-one virtual meeting with me, send me a course message in the “Mail Box” link to set up a time convenient for you.

Feedback:

Students will receive feedback in various ways, through the discussion forum, the grade book for exams and a grading rubric for the term paper and discussions. You may E-mail me using the Mail Box in Blackboard, or the instructor’s office in the Discussions forum. I will respond to all student communication to me within 24-48 hours. If in the case of an emergency, contact me by telephone/text. If texting, please let me know which class you are in.

Course Description:

This course introduces students to the factors that contribute to gang formation and membership, the structure and function of gangs, and patterns of gang crime. It will also focus on the various policy and programmatic response to gangs from the traditional law enforcement-based efforts to school-based initiatives.

Course Objectives:

- Identify the proper definitions and terms of criminal street gangs, membership roles, and criminality.
- Familiarize and appropriately apply current research and criminology to the individual, family, group, and community dynamics influencing criminal gang membership and anti-social deviance.
- Explain appropriate and inappropriate law enforcement responses to criminal street gangs in both tactical and social contexts through traditional methods and problem-oriented policing strategies.
• Identify various criminal justice and community responses to criminal street gangs from a systems perspective.

Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO 1: Demonstrate an applicable knowledge and ability of criminological theory to apply such theories to special types of criminality, and compare and contrast competing theoretical arguments in the context of urban criminal street gangs.

SLO 2: Demonstrate familiarity of existing criminal street gangs and the social structures which influence such deviant behaviors.

SLO 3: The ability to apply basic legal research skills to identify and compare current court rulings on criminal justice policy.

SLO 4: Workable knowledge of the process and application of academic research, and the ability to apply such research into criminal justice policy.

Required Text Book:


ISBN: 9781544300221

Supplemental Readings:


NOTE: This book is being provided to you free of charge in electronic format through the UTEP Library: http://lib.utep.edu

Your UTEP username / password required.

There is an Academic Research folder in each module focusing on the module topics. I have provided these article links to assist in your research paper and discussions. All research articles are open-sourced documents retrieved from Google Scholar, the Library and other locations on the Web.

Your Facilitator’s Educational Philosophy

My philosophy of teaching is based on a belief that learning needs to be student centered and that students need to be equal partners in the learning process. The goal of my teaching is active and cooperative learning. I
find that when I can convey my own enthusiasm for the criminal justice profession, it is often contagious enough that students become engaged in the learning process. Through academic research, I encourage students to tackle problems creatively, which helps them to learn to think outside conventional boundaries and to seek the deeper meaning of a concept or finding. These efforts foster personal and intellectual fulfillment. My emphasis is on helping the student to learn, rather than just dispensing knowledge to them. My role involves using my expertise to put the necessary information in the hands of students so they are well equipped to find and answer their own questions.

What you need to Do First

On week 1, you need to navigate through the system and get familiar with it. Technical problems need to be handled by the DE office and tech support. Also, there are graded assignments that you MUST complete on week one.

1) Look for the learning modules – you will only see Module 1.
2) Get your required book. You will start using it right away.
3) In the discussion forum, introduce yourself and begin meeting others in the class.
4) In the discussion forum, your module 1 graded group discussion opens on week 2 and requires an original response by WED of that week. Two responses to others required by SAT.
5) In your learning module 1, you have a module quiz due on SAT of week 2 (time to get your book), but The remainder of the modules will be weekly (SUN-SAT)
6) A new module will open each Sunday during this 7-week course.

Class CORE Assessments

7 Weekly Collaborative Group Discussion Board Questions (20 points per discussion = 140 points)

During this course, you will have 7 weekly collaborative group questions to answer in the Discussion Board. In each module – for one week only (SUN-SAT), a new discussion question will appear. Check your calendar at the end of this syllabus to see the dates. You will be required to respond substantively to the question by mid-week, and respond substantively to two others within the discussion forum by SAT (end of week). This requires a minimum of three substantive posts that must be spread out among two days during the week. You will not be able to see other posts in the forum until you have submitted your original response to the question.

Each weekly discussion will be worth up to 20 points. Your collaborative group discussions are theoretical in nature and mostly related to the issues to be covered in your academic research paper. Please note that both quantity and quality are important considerations when it comes to participation, and substantive posts need to move the discussion forward. For example, a message that restates the post to which you respond, or that essentially says, "I agree," and repeats another’s comments do not constitute participation because it does not add anything new of substance to the discussion. Likewise, off-topic posts do not constitute participation because they do not relate to the original discussion. Discussion posts need to have a ‘meaty’ combination of your insights on the topics and objectives, specific examples from your experience, and support from the course readings or other scholarly sources. Think of substantive like a formula: **Your Insight (Example from your Experience or opinion) + Research Support = Substantive**
All weekly discussions will open on Sundays (12am) and close on Saturdays (11:59pm). Since discussions are used as a gauge of one’s participation and attendance, there are no make ups for prior week’s missed discussions. Please do not notify me that you did not know, or were mistaken. Print the syllabus and keep it next to your computer if you need to. Please review the Discussion Board Rubric to see how I will be grading this assignment.

7 module quizzes (150 points)

You will be complete a quiz due at the end of each module (SAT). You will be given two attempts for each module quiz. The system will record the highest of the two scores. Each quiz is timed. If your internet fails during the quiz, log back in and continue. If you are not happy with your score, take it again. I will not reset a quiz for you. All quizzes are multiple choice. Time to complete each quiz varies on the amount of questions.

Mod 1 quiz = 15
Mod 2 quiz = 30
Mod 3 quiz = 15
Mod 4 quiz = 15
Mod 5 quiz = 30
Mod 6 quiz = 30
Mod 7 quiz = 15

Two Multiple-Choice Exams (100 points each = 200 points)

Exam 1 (Modules 1-4) = 100
Exam 2 (Modules 5-7) = 100

There will be a timed multiple-choice exam worth 100 points at the end of modules 4 and 7 (See Calendar). The exam questions will be drawn directly from your quiz questions.

Academic Research Paper (110 points)

Your research paper is due on Sunday of week 7 (See syllabus calendar). You will submit the paper by attaching it as a Microsoft Word file to the Assignment forum. I will not accept any late research papers. After the due date, the submission link will close. I encourage you to turn it in early. If it is not submitted through the Blackboard Paper Assignment forum as an attached file as instructed, I will not grade it. In other words, do not email it to me, or submit it in any other manner as required.

PAPER TOPIC AND TITLE: The Street Gang Phenomenon

One of the common policing problems with a common street gang is the juvenile membership within the gang. Due to lack of culpability, society generally believes juveniles should not be processed through the criminal justice system in the same manner. This encourages recruitment of adolescents into a street gang more
attractive. Although there are various reasons for someone to join a gang, there are similar social environments that allow for a criminal street gang to thrive. Your research paper will discuss some of the common problems and trends associated with criminal street gangs. In your paper, cover all of the following issues:

- Legal issues and other problems the criminal justice system faces in dealing with street gangs;
- Juvenile issues;
- Minorities;
- Compare and contrast at least two criminological theories related to street gangs; and,
- Current methods of prevention and intervention, to include some promising strategies for the future.

The paper will be formatted and written in APA 6th Edition with a title page and reference page. All research and sources will be cited within the body of the paper with the appropriate use of in-text citations. The paper will be no less than 1500 words and have a minimum of 6 academic quality references. The grading rubric for this assignment may be viewed in the Research Paper submission link in Blackboard.

Websites such as Wikipedia, blogs, and social networking forums (e.g., Facebook) are not to be used. Depending on your topic, they may be good places to start. However, there is nothing authoritative about these websites and therefore should not be cited in an academic paper. Information obtained from official websites, such as state/federal governments or government agencies, is acceptable and may be used as sources sparingly. I have provided you with an APA formatted paper shell and a presentation on citing and references in your research paper assignment link. Please review the Research Paper Rubric to see how I will be grading this assignment.

Extra Credit:

There will be no extra credit offered in this course. I encourage quality, not quantity, so please do not ask.

Course Requirements:

Seven graded weekly collaborative group discussions 140 points
7 module quizzes 150 points
Two multiple-choice exams 200 points
One academic research paper 110 points

Grading: 500-point scale

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>540-600</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>480-539</td>
<td>B</td>
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</tbody>
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NOTE: Grades are assigned according to the total points earned. There will be no rounding, curving, or extra credit.

Online Netiquette:

No Yelling please. Typing IN ALL CAPS IS INAPPROPRIATE. Sarcasm can (and will) backfire on you. Attempt to find your own answers. Always make an effort to use proper punctuation, spelling and grammar. Don’t get cute with text colors. Last and most importantly, be kind. Even though other students cannot see you, your name is attached to that comment and your classmates and instructors will remember it if you’ve been rude.

Class participation and due dates:

This online course is seven weeks in length. Due dates will be strictly enforced. If you miss a week of discussions, this is no different than missing class. You cannot make it up. I will accept your short essays up to one week past the due date with an automatic 30% deduction taken off the scored assignment. You will be given an entire week to sit down during a time of your choosing to take the mid-term and final exam. There will be no make ups. If you have a special issue, you need to contact me in advance – not after the fact. I will not accept a late submission on the research paper. After the due date, the research paper link will be locked.

Academic Dishonesty:

Academic dishonesty includes cheating on an exam, turning in someone else’s assignment from a previous class, or plagiarism. This includes paraphrase or direct quotation of work of another person without fully and properly crediting the author with citations and reference page; or using materials prepared by another person/agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

It is expected that UTEP students will understand and subscribe to the ideal of academic integrity and that they will be willing to bear individual responsibility for their work. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for possible disciplinary action. For students who are found to have engaged in any form of academic dishonesty, sanctions may include a failing grade on the assignment or exam in question, a failing grade in the course, suspension, or dismissal from the University.

Writing center:

The University Writing Center is located in Library, Room 227. It is a great place to receive help with editing your written papers, and with APA style assistance. They are open M-Th 9:00-5:00 pm, Fr 9:00-2:00 pm, and Sundays 12:00-5:00pm. Appointments are recommended well before the deadline, but they will take walk-ins.

UTEP Drop Policy:
If unforeseen circumstances happen where a drop is necessary, students are responsible for initiating any course drop. It is the student’s responsibility to determine how dropping courses may affect financial aid.

Students are limited to dropping no more than 6 courses over their entire academic career of all courses taken at any public college or University in Texas.

1. Students who drop a course before the “official census date,” the course will not appear on the transcript, and doesn’t count toward the 6-course drop limit.

2. Dropping a course after the official census date, but before the “course drop date” will generate a “W” in the course—although the drop shows on your transcript, a “W” does not lower your GPA. However, this type of drop counts against your 6 drop limit.

3. If the course is dropped after the “course drop date” or if the student just stops coming/taking tests, etc., UTEP requires the instructor to issue an “F” in the course that permanently remains on the transcript. This type of drop counts against the 6 drop limit.

4. UTEP also allows instructors to administratively drop any student because of excessive absences, lack of effort, or disciplinary reasons. In this case, the student will be notified of the course drop through their UTEP email account. A “W” will be issued if the drop occurs before the course drop date, and an “F” will be issued if a student is administratively dropped for disciplinary reasons or after the course drop date. This type of drop counts against the 6 drop limit.

5. If circumstances occur where a student must miss an excessive number of classes and/or is unable to submit multiple assignments (e.g., student medical reasons, medical conditions of a family member, death of a family member, active military service), they should first discuss the possibility of withdrawal from all classes with their academic advisor. Complete withdrawals from all classes in the same semester do not count against the 6 drop limit.

Online / Technical support:

I will be setting up a Mail Box link in Blackboard. You can use this as a primary source of communication with me during the course. If you are having trouble with this course or its material, you should contact me via email to discuss the issues while you work it out with UTEP. I do not work for IT or Distance Learning at UTEP. As a student in this course, you can get help from the following resources:

Cynthia Marrufo, Criminal Justice Counselor (crimjust@utep.edu):
www.calendly.com/cbmarrufo

As a student in this course, you also have access to support from University Technology Services
• for Blackboard and computer issues.
• Blackboard Support: http://at.utep.edu/bbc/
• Technical Support from Technology Support:
  • http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=63402 or call 915-747-5257

Collaborative Discussion Original Post Example (pay attention to APA citation & Reference formatting):

Cesare Beccaria wrote a book *Of Crimes and Punishments* (1819) where he argued that all individuals wish to be exempt from the “compacts that bind the rest of mankind” (Jacoby, et al., 2012, p. 406). People generally prefer to serve their own best interests. Because of the natural state of war, men must bind together in order to defend themselves. Laws and
Punishments are necessary to keep the interests of the group united together under a common purpose. Therefore, the laws created form a contract that binds these people together.

For this system to work, Beccaria argued for a system of detailed written laws describing the deviant behaviors that constitute crime and the associated punishments. Beccaria further argued that in order to deter crime, the punishment should fit the crime by severity of the punishment paralleling the severity of harm. Also, the punishment should be severe enough to outweigh the benefit or pleasure obtainable from the crime. Finally, Beccaria argued that in order to deter crime, the punishment needed to be certain. Criminals need to believe that it would be likely they would be caught and punished. Also, the punishment given needed to occur soon after the commission of the crime. Becarria focused on “sound judgments and fixed laws” to guide the application of penalties and punishments.

Gina Lombroso-Ferrero (1911) wrote a book summarizing her father’s research on the biological traits of the “Criminal Man”. Original research focused on anthropology, but later expanded to children, heredity, race, and most importantly, social causation of crime (Jacoby, et al., 2012). This evolved later into the Positivist School of Thought. A major problem with Lombroso’s criminal anthropology was the assumption that certain physical characteristics were indicative of biological inferiority.

Reference:


Calendar and Assignments:

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<tr>
<th>Mondays/Week</th>
<th>Reading Assignment</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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<tr>
<td>Weeks 1 and 2</td>
<td>Module 1 History of Gangs</td>
<td>Intro Group Discussion (non-graded)</td>
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<tr>
<td>JUN 7-19 (MON – SAT)</td>
<td>Read Chapter 1 Read supplemental articles / view videos and links</td>
<td>Group Discussion 1 (week 2)</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Module 2 Defining Gangs – Myths vs. Realities Read chapters 2 and 3 Read</td>
<td>Group Discussion 2 Quiz 1 Due SAT Quiz 2 Due SAT</td>
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<tr>
<td>JUN 20-26 (SUN – SAT)</td>
<td>supplemental articles / view videos and links</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Module 3 Crime Theories and Applications Read chapter 4</td>
<td>Group Discussion 3 Quiz 3 Due SAT</td>
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<td>JUN 27-JUL 3 SUN - SAT</td>
<td>Read supplemental articles / view videos and links</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Module 4 Life-Course and Other Explanations for Gang Involvement Read Chapter 5</td>
<td>Group Discussion 4 Quiz 4 Due SAT</td>
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<td>JUL 4-10 SUN - SAT</td>
<td>Read supplemental articles / view videos and links</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Module 5 Girls, Gangs and Other Problems Read Chapters 6 and 7 Read supplemental</td>
<td>Group Discussion 5 Quiz 5 Due SAT Exam 1 (Mods 1-4) Due SAT</td>
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<tr>
<td>JUL 11-17 SUN - SAT</td>
<td>articles / view videos and links</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Module 6 Urban Gangs and Strategies</td>
<td>Group Discussion 6 Quiz 6 Due SAT</td>
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<td>JUL 18-24</td>
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<td>SUN - SAT</td>
<td>Read Chapters 8 and 9</td>
<td>Research Paper Due</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Read supplemental articles / view videos and links</td>
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| Week 8   | Module 7             | Group Discussion 7 Due FRI |
| JUL 25-30| Intervention and Suppression | Quiz 7 Due FRI |
| SUN - FRI| Read chapter 10      | Exam 2 (Mod 5-7) Due FRI |
|          | Read supplemental articles / view videos and links |                   |