Proseminar in Criminology & Criminal Justice

CriJ 5305
The University of Texas at El Paso
Department of Criminal Justice
Master of Science in Criminology and Criminal Justice Program
Fall 2022

Professor: Dr. Ted Curry
Classroom: Education 112
Day & Time: Wednesday 6:00 – 8:50pm
Email: trcurry@utep.edu
Office hours: TR 10:00-11:00am
Online office hours are available, just email the professor for details.

REQUIRED BOOKS & READINGS


2. Various articles and other materials posted on Blackboard or emailed to the class.

3. Recommended CJ-oriented email newsletters to subscribe to and Websites to periodically check:
   - [Arnold Ventures](#)
   - [The Crime Report](#)
   - [The Hill: Criminal Justice](#)
   - [Bureau of Justice Statistics](#)
   - [Texas Center for Justice](#)
   - [Mother Jones: Crime & Justice](#)

PLEASE READ ME!

Please read the syllabus carefully and in its entirety! I realize that my syllabus is approaching book-length (or at least that of a novella), but all of the information contained herein is vital. It is thus absolutely essential that you, the student, understand what is expected of you, how you will be graded, and how this course will be conducted. All of this information is here.
WHAT IS A SYLLABUS?
A syllabus is a contract between students and professors that clearly identifies expectations and obligations for both. A syllabus is also a commitment on the part of both the professor and each student to adhere to the dictates of the syllabus. All features of this syllabus will be implemented equally and fairly for each student. It is your responsibility to fully read and understand this syllabus and to let the professor know, as soon as possible, if you have any questions or concerns.

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES
The course has two key objectives. The first is to introduce students to the department’s faculty members and their research interests and activities. The second is to provide students training in areas central to success in the program. As part of this, the course will cover big-picture issues related to career planning and time management, skills for performing well in classes, and strategies for navigating the program in a successful and timely manner. Also, substantial attention will be devoted to mastering the principles of effective social scientific writing. This class is intended for all first-semester students in the MS-CCJ program and is usually taught by the department’s current Director of Graduate Studies.

COURSE FORMAT
Our typical class meeting will have two parts. First, we will have a roughly 30-45 minute visit from a CJ department faculty member. This faculty member will have selected one of their articles or other writings that will be a part of the discussion. All students will read the faculty member’s CV and the article and be prepared to discuss it and ask questions. Additionally, for each faculty visit, we will have 2-3 student discussion leaders. The discussion will resemble an interview—leaders will
come prepared with questions to get a discussion started about such things as what initially drew the faculty member to this area of research, how this work fits within their broader research agenda, and what unique challenges emerged in doing this work.

After this visit, we will take a short 10-minute break, and the rest of class will focus on materials focused on the skills, strategies, and habits that will contribute to your success in the program and to your overall professional development.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Graduate-level courses are different from the undergraduate experience in a number of ways. Students must find within themselves a high level of self-discipline and motivation. Students must endeavor to always attend class, to never be late, to have always completed the assigned readings, and be eager to engage in discussion about the readings and assignments with the class.

**Class Attendance and Tardiness**

On-time attendance is required for each week’s class, as is remaining in class until dismissal. Students are allowed one absence without penalty. Each additional absence will result in the loss of 10% to the student’s final grade unless there is a serious illness or family emergency (work-related excuses will not count). Class will start at 6:05pm sharp. Late students will be considered tardy. Students are allowed one tardy without penalty. Each additional tardy will result in the loss of 5% to the student’s final grade. Students must bring the week’s assigned readings with them to class, either in hard copy format or electronically on a device other than a cell phone.

However, for cases when students are ill or may have been exposed to Covid, there is
an option to attend class via Zoom. In such cases, students should email the professor before class so that the necessary arrangements can be made. Virtual attendance through Zoom cannot be used for matters pertaining to work, family, vacation, etc. – only in cases of illness and Covid exposure.

Faculty scholarship notes. For weeks when we have a visit from a CJ faculty member you will read an example of their scholarship, typically a research article. For each of these readings, you will submit at least 2-3 pages of typewritten notes before class, either as a hard copy or via email. Each submission is worth up to 10 points.

Student success notes. Due each week, students will submit typewritten notes pertaining to the other assigned readings. For each reading, students will take at least one page of notes in which they describe the overall main points or ideas from that reading, which includes three bullet-pointed issues or questions to raise in our class meeting. The exact content of these notes—the themes and ideas that you emphasize—is absolutely open to your discretion and should reflect your interests and experiences. These notes will be turned in before class, either as a hard copy or via email. Each submission is worth up to 10 points.

Writing assignments

Students will complete three different writing assignments over the course of the semester that will utilize the strategies for successful writing that we read about and discuss. Each will be worth 20 points. The assignments will be discussed in detail at least two weeks prior to being due.

Class Participation

Students must come to class having thoroughly read all of the assigned readings.
Students must bring each of the week’s assigned readings with them to class either in hard copy format or electronically on a device other than a cell phone. Participating in classroom discussions is worth up to 10 points per week. Use Bloom’s Taxonomy and the discussion below to understand what is expected of students regarding classroom participation.

\[
\text{Bloom’s Taxonomy}
\]

- **Outstanding Contributor:** Contributions in class reflect exceptional preparation. Ideas offered are always substantive and insightful. Arguments are always well substantiated and persuasively presented. Comments are consistently at the “Create” and “Evaluate” levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy. This type of participation will result in an A-level grade for weekly class participation scores.

- **Good Contributor:** Contributions in class reflect thorough preparation. Ideas offered are usually substantive and insightful. Arguments are usually well substantiated and persuasive. Comments are consistently at the “Analyze” and “Apply” levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy. This type of participation will result in a B-level grade for weekly class participation scores.
**Adequate Contributor:** Contributions in class reflect satisfactory preparation. Ideas offered are sometimes substantive and insightful. Arguments are sometimes well substantiated and persuasive. Comments are consistently at the “Understand” and “Remember” levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy. This type of participation will result in a C-level grade for weekly class participation scores.

**Unsatisfactory Contributor:** Contributions in class reflect inadequate preparation. Ideas offered are seldom substantive and insightful. Arguments are seldom well substantiated and persuasive. Comments are confusing, unclear, off-topic, ill-informed or, at best, merely piggyback onto the comments of others. This type of participation will result in an F-level grade for weekly class participation scores.

**Non-Participant:** This person says little or nothing in class. Therefore, there is not an adequate basis for evaluation. This type of participation will result in an F-level grade for weekly class participation scores.

**GRADES**

Grades are based on the following:

- **Faculty scholarship notes (10 weeks x 10 points)** 100 points
- **Student success notes (14 weeks x 10 points)** 140 points
- **Writing Assignments (3 x 20 points)** 60 points
- **Classroom participation (14 weeks x 10 points)** 140 points
- **Total** 440 points

Letter grades are assigned according to the following scale:

- A = 89% and above
- B = 79% - 88%
- C = 69% - 78%
D = 59% - 68%
F = Below 59%

- Notice that my grading scale is curved 1% in your favor. For example, in most courses a 79% is a C whereas in my class it is a B. This is to avoid the situation where someone misses receiving a higher grade by a very small margin – because in my class you miss receiving a higher grade by a full percentage point plus the “very small margin.”

- I apply the grading scale uniformly to all students. I do not adjust grades in any way for any student. All students are treated exactly the same. Remember, your grade is an accomplishment, not a gift. In other words, you earn your grade, I do not give you a grade.

- You can view your grades in Blackboard which will show your scores on the assignments as well as your running total of points and current course average.

- No extra credit assignments will be offered – please do not ask.

- Getting an A in my Class: In this syllabus, I go to great lengths to clearly specify the expectations and requirements of this class, as well as how to achieve them. Think of this as a path or a set of steppingstones that you follow from the start of the semester to the end. If you expend the necessary time and effort to fully understand this syllabus, then you know what you have to do and you should be able to earn an A in my class.

**CLASS AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

- **Cell Phones:** All cell phones must be turned to silent mode during class. If you receive a call or text, you are welcome to glance at your phone and, if you need to respond immediately, you must leave the class to do so. Otherwise respond during break. Otherwise, students are not to use their cell phones during class.
• **The first time** a student is observed using their cell phone in class without authorization they will receive a warning.
• Repeated violations will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

• **Laptops and Tablets**: Students are encouraged to use laptops and tablets during class, but only for class purposes.
  • **The first time** a student is observed using their laptop or tablet in class for matters not related to class, they will receive a warning.
  • Repeated violations will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

• **Cursing**: Students should avoid using curse words in the classroom, whether class is in session or not. Clothes with curse words are also unacceptable.

• **Disruptive and Disrespectful Behavior**: Any student who engages in behavior deemed by the professor to be disruptive or disrespectful to others (including, but not limited to, students, the professor, TAs, etc.) will be required to immediately leave class for that day. All such incidents will immediately be reported to UTEP’s Office of Student Conduct and, if appropriate, to the UTEP Police Department.

• **Communication**: All students must regularly check their utep “miners” email account as the professor will occasionally need to communicate with the class or with individual students using this medium. To contact your professor, it is best to speak with him before or after class, use email, visit office hours, or call his office.

• **Students with Disabilities**: Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have a disability documented with the Center for Accommodation and Support Services (CASS). Please notify the professor as soon as possible of any accommodations needed for the course.
TENTATIVE COURSE CALENDAR
The professor reserves the right to make changes to the course syllabus. Any changes will be announced ahead of time in class.

August 24

Professional development: Discussion of course requirements and format

Classroom activities:
1. Ms. Hilda Arellano: Making the transition to the MS-CCJ program
2. Using google scholar
   • Scholar profile
   • Search terms
   • Find and copy citations
3. What is a CV (or vita)? See faculty profiles on CJ dept website
4. Syllabus review

Readings:
1. Go to our class BlackBoard homepage and:
   a. Explore the “Writing Guide” link, making sure to read the “Academic Integrity” and “Avoiding Plagiarism” links at the bottom
   b. Read the “Reading Comprehension Strategies” link

August 31

Professional development: Note-taking and preparing for the faculty visits

Faculty visit: Dr. Ted Curry
1. Faculty article/reading: Curry 2014 Gender and CJ Processing
2. Faculty CV (see CJ Department website)

Readings:
1. “Guide to reading non-textbook texts”
2. “How to read and take notes efficiently” (including the “notes template”)

Please note that “faculty scholarship notes” and “student success notes” are due before the start of class, either as a hard copy or emailed to me. Be sure to have access to a copy of your own work to refer to during class.

September 7

Faculty visit: Dr. Caitlyn Muniz

1. Faculty article/reading:
   2. Faculty CV

Professional development: Succeeding in graduate school

Readings (find on your own using google scholar):


September 14

Faculty visit: Dr. Amanda Goodson

1. Faculty article/reading:
   2. Faculty CV

Professional development: Improving performance & time management
Readings:

1. “The 7 habits of highly effective people” (click on each “learn more” button)
3. “Does the Pomodoro technique work for your productivity?”

**September 21**

**Faculty visit:** Dr. Misty Duke

1. Faculty article/reading: (2018) Effectiveness of AFM interrogation
2. Faculty CV

**Professional development:** Time management (continued)

Readings:

1. Tracy, Brian. 2007. *Eat That Frog! 21 great ways to stop procrastinating and get more done in less time.*
2. *TBA*

**September 28**

**Faculty visit:** Dr. Melinda Tasca

1. Faculty article/reading: (2016) Families coming together in prison
2. Faculty CV

**Professional development:** Writing mechanics

Readings:

1. Dreyer: Intro, Chs. 1-7
2. Strunk and White. 2000. Introduction (pp. xiii-xviii), but then browse the first 2 chapters, looking for rules that stick out to you.

**October 5**

**Class Presentation & Discussion:** UTEP Writing Center
Professional development: Writing strategy

Readings:
1. Dreyer: Chs 8-13, Outro, Things I like
2. Pp. 11-28 from How to Write a Lot by Paul Silvia.

October 12

Faculty visit: Dr. Mario Cano
1. Faculty article/reading:
2. Faculty CV

Professional development: How to cite & More on writing
1. APA Style “In-text citations” & “References”
2. Perdue OWL
3. “Sentence patterns”
4. “Fragments and run-ons”

*** Writing assignment #1 due by 5:00 p.m.

October 19

Faculty visit: Dr. Chris Guerra
1. Faculty article/reading:
2. Faculty CV

Professional development: Writing good paragraphs and transitions

Readings:
1. “Paragraphs”
2. “Paragraph Transitions”

October 26
Faculty visit: Dr. Egbert Zavala

1. Faculty article/reading:
2. Faculty CV

Professional Development: Scholarly writing

Reading:
1. “Scholarly writing”
2. “The content and organization of a manuscript”
3. “Reducing bias in writing”

November 2

Faculty visit: Dr. Hyunjung Cheon

Professional development: Searching the literature and writing literature reviews

Readings:
2. Curry 2014 (redux)

***Writing assignment #2 due by 5:00 p.m.***

November 9

Faculty visit: (none)

Professional development: Punctuation & plagiarism

Readings:
1. Punctuation
2. Plagiarism

November 16
Faculty visit: Dr. Leanne Alarid

1. Faculty article/reading: (2018) TPJ ONL Youth recidivism
2. Faculty CV

Professional development: Revising/editing/proofreading

Readings:

1. Writing Handout: “Revising drafts” and “Proofreading and editing”
2. TBA

*** Writing assignment #3 submitted electronically by 5:00 p.m.

November 23

Faculty visit: (none)

Professional development: Understanding science & research

Readings:

1. The scientific method
2. Causality

November 30

Faculty visit: (none)

Professional development: Research ethics: Human subjects research and IRBs

Readings:

1. Ethical codes
2. Informed consent & confidentiality
4. ASC code of ethics
5. ACJS code of ethics