**SYLLABUS**

CJUS 5000.001

Criminal Justice Policy

Fall 2009

**Room:** WH 114 **Instructor**: Dr. Chad Trulson

**Meeting Times:** W 6-8:50 pm **Office**: 273H Chilton Hall

**Office Hours**: M 9-11 or by appointment

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**TEXTS/READINGS**

**Main Text (Required)**

Worrall, John (2008). Crime Control in America: What Works? Boston: Pearson.

**Supplemental Required Texts**

Pratt, Travis (2009). Addicted to Incarceration: Corrections Policy and the Politics of Misinformation in

the United States.

Hubner, John (2005). Last Chance in Texas: The Redemption of Criminal Youth. New York: Random

House.

Zimring, Franklin (2007). The Great American Crime Decline. New York: Oxford University Press.

\*\*Additional materials in the form of articles and/or book chapters will supplement this course.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In a broad sense, this course focuses on the policies/programs/practices that have shaped the landscape of the criminal justice system for more than 100 years. While the most consequential and significant criminal justice policies related to our everyday lives occur at the state and local levels, this course also includes a focus on significant federal criminal justice policy. This focus is justified, for often the basis of state and local criminal justice policy and practice emanates from federal policy. In fact, state and local crime policy mandates are often encouraged and funded by the federal government in some way. As such, it is impossible to divorce federal crime policy from more specific state and local crime policies and practices.

A primary focus of this course is centered on criminal justice policy approaches that have been the subject of research and debate on the effective ways to address the crime problem in America. This focus will examine crime policy coming from the traditional divisions in our criminal justice system—police, courts, and corrections—but will also venture beyond by examining juvenile justice policy, and crime policy involving communities, families, and schools. The bottom line goal of this examination is to come to an understanding of the impact, if any, that these various policies, programs, and practices have had on the crime problem and the criminal justice system.

The numerous and varied crime control policies found at the federal, state, and local levels presents a prime opportunity for the evaluation and discussion of these policies in this course. In addition to examining the impact that these more localized criminal justice policies have on crime and criminal justice, this course will examine the consequences of such policies, both anticipated and unanticipated, and positive and negative.

**COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

In this course you will learn:

* About the various resources to consult in researching crime policies and their impact on criminal justice.
* About the state of crime in America, and how it has changed over time.
* About the variety of supposed influences on the crime rate.
* About significant federal and state criminal justice policies and how they have evolved over the years in terms of addressing the American crime problem.
* About recent localized initiatives to deal with specific crime problems.
* About the evolving goals of the criminal justice system and how those goals are embodied in criminal justice policy and constantly change.
* About the role of politics in the formulation and implementation of criminal justice policy.
* About significant criminal justice policy involving law enforcement at the federal and state level.
* About significant criminal justice policy involving the processing, adjudication and disposition of criminal matters at both the state and federal level.
* About the role of the U.S. Supreme and other courts’ impact on crime policy.
* About significant criminal justice policy impacting the incarceration of convicted felons at both the state and federal level.
* About the multifaceted nature of the criminal justice system, and that criminal justice policy tends to vary substantially from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.
* About defining the “success” of criminal justice policy.
* About the differences between the intended and unintended consequences of criminal justice policy.
* About evidence concerning whether criminal justice policies “work.”
* About the pros and cons of several criminal justice policies.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

There are a total of 200 points that can be *earned* in this class. The grading policy along with other class requirements is presented below.

**Grading Scale:**

180-200 points= A

160-179 points= B

140-159 points= C

120-139 points= D

Below 120 points= F

**Mid-Term (60 points) and Final Examination (60 points) (Total 120 points):**

Each student is required to take a mid-term and a comprehensive final examination in this course (60 points for each exam, for a total of 120 points towards the final grade). The examinations will consist of essay style questions for which students will be required to choose one or more questions to answer (I may also opt to choose the question for you to answer). The exams will be in the form of comprehensive exams that many of you will take at the completion of your graduate studies.

The mid-term will be comprised of all reading and lecture material up to the time of that exam. The final exam will be comprehensive and based on all reading (including handouts), lectures, and video material given during the entire class. Please be prepared for this final exam by reading all material given in class during the course of the entire semester. Last minute efforts to catch up will likely result in an undesirable grade.

**Criminal Justice Policy Highlights (50 points total):**

Each student will be required to complete five Criminal Justice Policy Highlight papers during the course of the semester. Each “highlight” paper requires students to locate, present, and discuss a **recent** (e.g., in the last 2-3 years) criminal justice policy/program/practice at the state, local, or federal level consistent with the topic of discussion on the night the highlight paper is due. Each highlight paper should focus on programs/policies/practices that are meant to address crime, crime control, or crime related problems and issues. The following areas reflect the general subject matter for each of the highlight papers:

1. Highlight paper 1: Police crime control policy/programs/practices
2. Highlight paper 2: Court/legislative crime control policy/programs/practices
3. Highlight paper 3: Adult correctional/sentencing policy/programs/practices
4. Highlight paper 4: School crime control policy/programs/practices
5. Highlight paper 5: Juvenile crime control policy/programs/practices

Each highlight paper should be at least 2 pages, typewritten, double-spaced, and strictly adhere to APA referencing style for citation (if applicable). **Note**: you may use any and all internet sources to locate recent criminal justice crime reduction initiatives. Please feel free to expand beyond Texas.

The goal of the highlight papers is to expose you to recent initiatives among police, court, and correctional agencies to deal with crime or crime related issues. **Your papers should present and discuss in detail the recent initiative, the goal of the initiative, if there is evidence of it being employed in other areas (if applicable), and your thoughts on it relative to crime control.**  **You might also discuss why the policy/program/initiative was started (e.g., was there some sensational event that spurred it) and/or if there is any claims or evidence on the effectiveness of the policy/program/practice.**

Feel free to be broad in your selection of recent policies/programs/practices as long as they relate to the areas provided above. Such policies may be short-term, long-term, limited to a particular area, at any level of government (i.e., local, county, state, federal, or even private if applicable) and may broadly address a crime related issue. Some examples to get you thinking might include recent gun buyback initiatives by law enforcement, enhanced information systems among law enforcement agencies, mass prisoner releases, DNA collection from arrestees/prisoners, accelerated parole initiatives, restricted visitor privileges at schools, etc. Please be creative and inform the class of the most recent developments in criminal justice to address the crime problem.

**Note:** Do not simply identify a crime policy/program/initiative already identified in the main text for this course. Go find something unique. This may take some time searching the internet.

**Criminal Justice Policy Paper (30 points total)**

Each student is required to write one Criminal Justice Policy Paper critically evaluating on **one** of the required supplemental texts assigned in this course (1) The Great American Crime Decline, 2) Addicted to Incarceration, or 3) Last Chance in Texas). Because of the number of students in this course, students will be divided evenly between the three texts. **NOTE: All students must read all three supplemental texts regardless of your assigned policy paper.**

Each policy paper must critically evaluate and provide informed comments and analysis regarding the main points and/or topics covered in the supplemental text. Additionally, each policy paper must conclude with an informed opinion which critically evaluates the major points and/or topics of the text chosen and/or assigned.

Each policy paper must provide insight and analysis of information beyond that provided in the book of focus in the policy paper. For example, “The Great American Crime Decline” by Zimring explores what he believes are the reasons for the crime drop in America in the 1990s.   
Therefore, your policy paper on this book should include a number of academic references and citations which may agree or disagree with Zimring’s analysis of the issue and/or provide alternative explanations of the phenomenon (i.e., what led to the major reductions in crime in the 1990s according to others). Your paper should also include your “informed” opinion, for example, whether you agree or disagree with the major points of the book and why or why not, based on what you have learned through your academic sources.

Each policy paper must be at least 5 pages (not including title and reference page), with no less than 5 academic citations relevant to the topic. Citations must be included on a reference page and strictly adhere to APA format. Each paper must be double-spaced, typewritten, and include headings which will help structure and organize your critical evaluation and analysis.

To help get you started, below is a general outline you might follow when writing each policy paper (**I strongly encourage you to develop your own unique headlines particular to your own paper**):

1. Introduction
   1. Introduce in a paragraph or two the focus of the book. In short, explain what the author(s) is trying to accomplish in the text.
2. Foundation of Book
   1. This section should note in detail and an organized fashion the main points/claims/arguments/perspectives made in the book. In short, what did the author find relative to what he or she was trying to accomplish in the text.
   2. **Note**: the main points/claims/arguments/perspectives made by the author may not be readily apparent and easily identified. You will have to read the book carefully to ferret out what the author is trying to relay to the reader.
3. Critical Evaluation
   1. This section should *critically evaluate* the main points/claims/arguments/perspectives as argued or presented in the book.
   2. This section is where outside academic resources pertaining to the topic are important to agree with or refute all or part of what the author is arguing.
4. Discussion and Conclusions
   1. This section is where you provide your informed opinion based on what you have learned from the book and your outside research into the subject.
   2. Evaluate what you learned from a criminal justice policy standpoint.
   3. In short, should we believe the claims made by the author, why or why not?

**Note:** This is a very general outline. Your critical analysis must be tailored to the specific book you have selected or have been assigned. Do not be afraid to tailor your paper to your book with your own creativity.

**ATTENDANCE**

I do not take attendance in this class. Attendance should not be a problem for graduate students. Attendance is extremely important to your grade. Missing class means missing out on important lecture material, the ability to turn in assignments on time, and collecting additional materials in the form of articles or instruction. If attendance is a problem, please consider taking this class another semester. **Your failure to attend class does not constitute my emergency.**

**MAKE UP POLICY**

Make-up exams/assignments are allowed in this class as long as you have an authorized absence according to university policies. Those in athletics, those who are absent for religious holidays, and/or those involved in other school supported activities that require being absent from class will be allowed make up if proper procedures are followed in requesting an excused absence. I must have written documentation in advance that you will be away from class for the absence to be excused. Make-up assignments as a result of authorized absences must be turned in within 3 days of returning from the authorized absence. In the event that circumstances require a make-up test, and provided students follow the appropriate procedures for requesting an excused absence that falls on a test or assignment due date, any authorized make-up test will be conducted during finals week immediately after the final test in this course or at a time arranged with the professor.

**Authorized Absences:** Absences are authorized only in cases of participation in school sponsored activities and/or religious holidays. For an excused absence due to a school sponsored activity, students must be approved in advance by the department chair and academic dean. Within three days after the absence, students must obtain authorized absence cards from the Dean of Students for presentation to instructor. Students who wish to request an excused absence for religious holidays can do so and will be excused from class as long as they make a request within the required time frame set by the University (see the most recent undergraduate catalog). Notification must be in writing so that I may have it for my records. Students must arrange to make up any work missed during the excused religious absence or school sponsored activity. Please contact me as soon as possible if you must miss class. I am quite reasonable and am willing to work with you within reason and upon a legitimate absence.

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY/MISCONDUCT**

Please see the most recent undergraduate and graduate catalogues in regards to academic misconduct, including cheating and plagiarism, and policies pertaining to these matters. The policies of the University of North Texas will be strictly enforced in regards to these matters.

**ADA STATEMENT AND DISABLED STUDENT POLICY**

Students with a certified disability may contact me at any time regarding accommodations. The Department of Criminal Justice complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students. Students who have established a file containing documentation of a disability must present a written accommodation request from the Office of Disability Accommodations to the instructor. Any accommodations supported by the Office of Disability Accommodations will be complied with immediately.

**PARTICIPATION, PREPARATION AND BEHAVIOR**

To be successful at learning and understanding the material in this class, it is essential that you attend every class, actively participate in discussions, and read and complete the assigned material. Your attendance and active participation, along with your willingness to engage in thoughtful discussions regarding criminal justice policy will be taken into account at all times during the semester.

Additionally, so that everyone may enjoy a classroom environment that is geared towards learning, out of respect for everyone involved, please do not be late, and do not carry conversations in class. This is highly disruptive to your fellow students and myself and will not be tolerated. Moreover, the classroom is a place to express ideas, opinions, and engage in thoughtful discussions. Students will respect the views and opinions of others at all times or will be asked to leave the classroom. **Please review the undergraduate catalog concerning conduct which adversely affects the university community.**

**Miscellaneous:**

No recording devices in the classroom unless approved by this instructor.

No tobacco products in the classroom.

Please turn off anything that beeps or buzzes or makes any other noise.

No text messaging in class.

**Laptops** are allowed as long as you use them for taking notes and other related classroom functions. If used for surfing the web, instant messaging, sending emails or otherwise, I will not allow them in the classroom.

**SYLLABUS CHANGES**

I reserve the right and have the discretion to change this syllabus. While every effort will be made to follow this syllabus as closely as possible, it is sometimes the case that the syllabus must be modified. In the case that the syllabus needs to be adjusted I will announce such adjustments in class and/or via university email. I will make every effort to ensure that any changes to the syllabus benefit the class as a whole. It is the student’s responsibility to be in class so that any and all syllabus changes are documented. Failure to obtain syllabus changes because of missing class does not constitute a defense against missed assignments and other applicable changes.

**CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING AND WRITING ASSIGNMENTS**

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| **DATE** | **TOPIC** | **READING (to be done)** |
| **September** |  |  |
| 2 | Syllabus and Introduction | Syllabus and Introduction |
| 9 | Identifying and Evaluating Crime Control  Crime Control Perspectives | Chapters 1 and 2 (Worrall) |
| 16 | Traditional Policing  Proactive, Directed, and Creative Policing | Chapters 3 and 4 (Worrall)  **Policy Highlight #1 Due** |
| 23 | Community Involvement in Policing  Prosecutors and Crime Control | Chapters 5 and 6 (Worrall) |
| 30 | **The Great American Crime Decline** | **Have Read: The Great American Crime Decline**  **Criminal Justice Policy Paper Due (Those with this selected text)** |
| **October** |  |  |
| 7 | **Mid-Term Exam (6-8 pm)** | **Mid-Term Exam (6-8 pm)** |
| 14 | Crime Control Through Legislation  Crime Control in the Courts and Beyond | Chapters 7 and 8 (Worrall)  **Policy Highlight #2 Due** |
| 21 | Sentencing  Probation, Parole, and Intermediate Sanctions | Chapters 9 and 10 (Worrall)  **Policy Highlight #3 Due** |
| 28 | **Addicted to Incarceration** | **Have Read: Addicted to Incarceration**  **Criminal Justice Policy Paper Due (Those with this selected text)** |
| **November** |  |  |
| 4 | Individual, Family, and Household Crime Control  Crime Control in the Community and in Schools | Chapter 12 and 13 (Worrall)  **Policy Highlight #4 Due** |
| 11 | Reducing Criminal Opportunities through Environmental Manipulation | Chapter 14 (Worrall) |
| 18 | Juvenile Crime Control | Chapter 15 (Worrall)  **Have Read: Last Chance in Texas**  **Criminal Justice Policy Paper Due (Those with this selected text)**  **Policy Highlight #5 Due** |
| 25 | **Online Question and Discussion of Last Chance in Texas** | **Online Question and Discussion of Last Chance in Texas** |
| **December** |  |  |
| 2 | Putting it all Together and Explaining Crime Trends | Chapter 16 (Worrall) |
| 9 | Final Exam Review | Final Exam Review |
| 16 | **Final Exam (6-8 pm)** | **Final Exam (6-8 pm)** |