COURSE INFORMATION:
Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday
8am – 11:50am
Location: Terrill Hall 120

PROFESSOR INFORMATION:
Dr. Scott H. Belshaw
Office: Chilton Hall #265
Telephone: (940) 565-4591
Email: scott.belshaw@unt.edu
Office Hours: By appointment
Student Graduate Assistant: Sarah Standlee

COURSE NOTE AND CAUTION
Several pertinent videos will be shown in this course which will describe and/or depict disturbing and violent crimes and other forms of adult content. Students will be responsible for the substantive information provided in these videos on assignments, discussions, and other course activities. I strongly encourage students who may find such scenes too disturbing or otherwise to consider taking another course. Because of the nature of this course, it is simply impossible to avoid exposure to such material.

***Please see blackboard at unt.edu for syllabus, updates, and announcements.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course examines the role and influence of mass media, and especially “crime flicks,” on how crime and criminal justice are interpreted and perceived by the American public. Anyone with even a cursory knowledge of criminal justice knows that media depictions of it are often littered with distortions and inconsistencies—the media does anything but present what actually occurs in the criminal justice system on any typical basis. As noted criminal justice scholar Dr. Todd Clear commented: “It is not so much that the media get it wrong as that they focus on aspects of crime and justice that are, in the scheme of things, not so important.” Media depictions of crime and justice are great entertainment for the general public—noted by the fact that some of the most popular television shows and series are crime and justice based—but this same level of entertainment rarely provides accurate detail of how the law enforcement, court, and correctional components of the criminal justice system function on a day-to-day basis.

The sensationalistic and sometimes misleading nature of the mass media is far from unimportant to the study of criminal justice. In addition to delving into myths and facts about crime and justice as generated in the media, this course will also examine the relationship between media, crime, and justice and how such a relationship often does translate into tangible public policy. On the broader level, this course will also help students to become critical consumers of the mass media as it relates to crime and justice. This course will also help students understand why the media is organized as it is in relation to its presentation of crime and justice.
COURSE GOALS

The primary goal of this course is that students come to understand the influence that the media has on public perceptions of crime and the criminal justice system and the extent that the media impacts criminal justice policy. The secondary goal is that students are able to dispel media generated myths of the criminal justice system.

At the completion of this course, students should:

- Be familiar with the relationship of the media (e.g., crime films) to the criminal justice system.
- Understand the evolving media-criminal justice system relationship.
- Be able to dispel common myths about the criminal justice system as depicted in crime films.
- Understand that the media can and does have an influence on criminal justice policy.
- Understand how the media has a major role in the social construction of crime.
- Understand how the media shapes explanations of criminality.
- Be able to discuss how criminal justice practitioners use the media and media technology to combat crime.
- Understand what the future may bring in terms of the media and criminal justice relationship.
- Be able to critically evaluate media portrayals of crime and criminal justice.
- Be more knowledgeable consumers of criminal justice related media.

GRADE BREAKDOWN: Grades are based on your earned point totals for the semester.

Reflection Paper 1 Due on May 16---------------------------------------------20%
Reflection Paper 2 Due on May 20th-----------------------------------------20%
Reflection Paper 3 Due on May 30th-----------------------------------------20%
Reflection Paper 4 Due on May 30th-----------------------------------------20%
Attendance/Participation/Blackboard-----------------------------------------20%
Total-------------------------------------------------------------100%

A- 100% -90%
B- 80%-89%
C- 70%-79%
D- 69%-60%
F- Below 60%

Maymester Schedule (May 13th, 2013 to May 30th, 2013)

May 13 Introductions and Syllabus (Documentary)
May 14 Law Enforcement Module
May 15 Law Enforcement Module
May 16 Corrections Module
May 20 Corrections Module  
May 21 Corrections Module  
May 22 Organized Crime Module  
May 23 Organized Crime Module  
May 27 Organized Crime Module  
May 28 General Criminal Justice Module  
May 29 General Criminal Justice Module  
May 30 General Criminal Justice Module and Course-Wrap-up

**MAKE UP POLICY**

There are no make-up assignments in this class with the exception of authorized absences according to University policies prescribing authorized absences in certain situations. I reserve the right to consider extreme circumstances and modify this rule. 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 (e.g., traveling for a basketball game).

Late assignments will not be accepted unless authorized as a result of a university approved absence. Make-up assignments as a result of authorized absences must be turned in within 3 days of returning from the authorized absence.

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

Section V of the “Code of Student Conduct and Discipline” of the policies of the University of North Texas regarding cheating and plagiarism will be enforced in accordance with University policy (Please review the University policies in the undergraduate catalog).

**Reflection Papers**

Each student will be required to complete four reflection assignments (each assignment is worth 20%). Reflection assignments will be due the following Thursday and one Monday. See due dates above. No late assignments will be accepted.

Each reflection paper functions as an opportunity for the student to critically evaluate the media presented in class, compare it to reality as discussed in class and demonstrated in documentaries, and to demonstrate their understanding of the material as it relates to crime and criminal justice. Students will have the opportunity to demonstrate their mastery of the subject by applying what they have learned from the discussions and other course material to the media evaluation assignments.

Specific media evaluation assignments and the particular details of each assignment will be handed out each week in class. Each media evaluation assignment must be at least 1 page, typed, 1.5 inch spacing, 1 inch margins all around, 12 pt Times New Roman font and clear subdivisions for each part of the assignment. Failure to fully respond to the
assignment, including critically evaluating, comparing to reality, and linking the media to crime and criminal justice will result in loss of points for each assignment.

ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE TURNED IN CLASS..NO EMAILED PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED. DON’T DO IT!

Blackboard Assignments- Dates TBD
During the semester the instructor will assign various blackboard discussion assignments. The Blackboard discussion tool is a great place to post assignment questions so that everyone in class may follow the discussion/solution. I will reply to assignment questions in the discussion forum. When you have assignment questions, check the discussion forum first to see if an answer to your question has already been posted.

Assignments for discussion sections are posted on Blackboard. They will include additional readings, video clips, discussion questions, and projects. These assignments need to be completed before the next class period. These online assignments might take place in lieu of our standard class period.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

** YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE CREDIT FOR BEING IN CLASS IF YOU LEAVE IN THE MIDDLE OF IT. **

Attendance will strongly affect course grades. 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. You must arrange to make up any work missed during the excused religious absence or school sponsored activity.

The professor expects that each student will regularly and promptly attend class sessions. A student who is absent from a class session is responsible for the subject matter discussed during that particular session. It will be extremely difficult for you to obtain an acceptable grade in this course if you consistently miss class.

Bonus assignments might be given at the discretion of the professor. You must be present in class to receive credit for the bonus assignments and bonus points will be added to test grades.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:
It is expected that each student will do his/her own work. Cheating, including plagiarism, on any assignment will result in a zero for that assignment and the course. This is criminal justice, how could anyone even contemplate cheating when you are studying to
work in a system based on trust and honor? With that said, I reserve the right to pursue
the formal channels for plagiarism/cheating set down in the UNT Policy Manual.

All students are urged to read the UNT Code of Student Conduct and Discipline located
in the UNT Policy Manual (Section 5.2). Academic dishonesty will be handled on a case-
by-case basis with the final disposition being at the discretion of the professor.

**A GRADE OF “INCOMPLETE”**
I – Incomplete; a non-punitive grade given only during the last one-fourth of a semester
and only if a student (1) is passing the course; (2) has justifiable reason (medical or other
emergency circumstance) why the work cannot be completed on a schedule; and (3)
aranges with the professor before the end of the semester to finish the course at a later
date by completing specific requirements that the professor must list on the grade sheet.
All work in the course must be completed within the specified time (not to exceed one
year after taking the course). If you do not meet the specifications for this grade, you will
need to see the Registrar’s Office about resigning from the University.

**INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY:**
My lectures are protected by state and common law and by applicable federal copyright
laws. You are not authorized to make any commercial use of them without express prior
permission from myself. Persons who do make use of my lecture notes for commercial
purposes (i.e. sell your class notes to an internet site or other commercially-related
business) will be held legally liable.

**ADA STATEMENT:**
It is the policy of UNT not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age,
national origin, disability (where reasonable accommodations can be made), disabled
veteran status or veteran of the Vietnam era status, in its educational programs, activities,
admissions or employment policies. In addition to complying with federal and state equal
opportunity laws and regulations, the University, through its diversity policy declares
harassment based on individual differences (including sexual orientation) inconsistent
with its mission and educational goals. Direct questions or concerns to the equal
opportunity office, (940) 565-2456, or the dean of students, (940) 565-2648.

I will make every attempt possible to accommodate anyone with a documented disability.
*Please let me know in advance* of exams or other class requirements so I have enough
time to send exams or other materials to ODA. You must provide me with the appropriate
exam request forms from ODA prior to the exam in order to take the exam at ODA.

**GENERAL CLASSROOM POLICIES:**
*Cell Phones and Pagers:* Please turn all cell phones and pagers to vibrate if you have
that setting or silent if you do not. Please do not make a habit of text messaging during
class. I understand emergencies arise. If you receive an emergency call that you must
take, please leave class immediately and take the call or page.

*Laptops:* A student may use a laptop or PDA to take notes but the sound must be turned
off. If you are using a laptop or other electronic device to take notes, I expect that you will be taking notes, not “surfing” the Internet or working on other course assignments.

**Talking During Class:** Students should only be talking during class when they are addressing a comment to the class, asking a question, or participating in class discussion. Now, admittedly you will always have one or two things to share with a neighbor or friend in the class. What I am referring to here is engaging in a lengthy conversation or overly loud talking with another person(s) while we are having a class discussion, watching a video, or while I’m lecturing.

**Sleeping:** Sleeping during class will not be tolerated. If a student is found sleeping, he/she will be asked to leave the classroom immediately. While I understand that you may be extremely tired, lying down and sleeping is not only rude, but also distracting.

**Children in the Classroom:** Due to University policy, liability concerns, and the course material, children are not permitted in this class, no exceptions.

**Civility:** Students are expected to display tolerance for others’ views and statements given in class. When disagreement occurs, students are to act considerately. All comments and language should be respectful and appropriate for a college community. If you feel you cannot act respectfully or appropriately, please exit the classroom and return only when your emotions and language are under control. I understand that every once in awhile a student may need to exit the class early. If you know you will need to leave early, please sit near the door so you do not distract other students when you exit.

**Grades:** Every semester, at least a couple of students come to my office around the end of the semester asking, “What can I do to raise my grade?” My policy and statement concerning that question is this:

- If you focus on learning and being responsible (i.e., keeping up with assignments, completing extra credit when given, etc.), your final grade will reflect this.
- I do not give individual extra credit. If and when I offer an extra credit assignment it will be offered to the entire class. I suggest you take advantage of extra credit whenever it is offered.
- Borderline grades will be evaluated on a case by case basis and my policy is this: if a student is 0.5 percentage points away from the next letter grade (borderline grade), has completed all extra credit opportunities, and has not missed more than the allowed number of absences, I will bump them to the next letter grade. I will not raise any grades that are not borderline grades. Not all borderline grades will be raised. Grades are not based on how much I like a person. They are based on work and performance, period. The final decision on whether or not to raise a grade is solely at the discretion of the professor.

**FINAL POINTS:**
Please do not hesitate to come to me with any questions, problems, or issues you may have. Do not wait to address these issues until it is too late for you to receive an acceptable grade. I think you will find me to be very approachable and eager to address
any problems with you in a professional manner.

1. If you are having academic or even a personal problems please feel free to talk to me. I am here to help. I might understand more than you think!

2. Do NOT email me at the end of the semester asking for your grades. Due to the large number of students that I have this becomes an impossible task. If you want to know your grades on your final and paper please provide me a self-addressed stamped envelope and I will mail them to you. This ensures privacy for the person requesting their grade.

3. If you are looking for a letter of recommendation for a job or graduate school DO NOT send a mass email to multiple professors asking this. We take letters of recommendation very serious. If you cannot take the time to personally ask for a letter from your professor then I do not have the time to write you one.

Although we will attempt to adhere to the schedule of topics listed and described below, the course schedule should be viewed as highly flexible. I am not interested in covering the material as fast as possible simply for the sake of covering it. Rather, I want to cover the material that we do cover thoroughly, and at a pace that is conducive to learning the material instead of simply covering the material. Consequently, it is your responsibility to come to class, know where we are in the listing of assigned readings irrespective of this schedule, and know the material that we have covered prior to any reading assessment, examination, and/or presentation. Further, there may be additional items added to the calendar throughout the course of the semester (i.e. video presentations and/or handouts). It will be your responsibility to keep up with these as well.