

**San José State University**  
**Department of Justice Studies!**  
**JS189-01, Senior Seminar: Contemporary Problems, Fall 2019**

**Course and Contact Information**

**Justice Studies Department Reading and Writing Philosophy**

The Department of Justice Studies is committed to scholarly excellence. Therefore, the Department promotes academic, critical, and creative engagement with language (i.e., reading and writing) throughout its curriculum. A sustained and intensive exploration of language prepares students to think critically and to act meaningfully in interrelated areas of their lives—personal, professional, economic, social, political, ethical, and cultural. Graduates of the Department of Justice Studies leave San José State University prepared to enter a range of careers and for advanced study in a variety of fields; they are prepared to more effectively identify and ameliorate injustice in their personal, professional and civic lives. Indeed, the impact of literacy is evident not only within the span of a specific course, semester, or academic program but also over the span of a lifetime.

**Course Description**

Identification, discussion and analysis of selected problems in justice studies. A major term paper on a selected topic is required. Prerequisite: Senior standing in final semester; Justice Studies or Forensic Science major; JS 100W and JS 114 with a "C or better"; Department Consent Note: A grade of "C" or better is required for Justice Studies majors. 3 Units.

**Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. *Demonstrate their ability to complete a formal research paper that (a) synthesizes relevant scholarly sources; (b) reflects professional formatting and writing standards (APA format); (c) addresses relevant*

*forming any particular worldview or position in the pursuit of "justice" and addressing social problems in our communities/societies.*

4. *Demonstrate their ability to undertake a critical analysis of a contemporary problems relevant to justice studies.*
5. *Students should read, write, and contribute to discussion at a skilled and capable level that appropriately reflects the cumulating experience of their justice studies major.*

## **Required Textbook**

Bohm, Robert M. and Walker, Jeffery T. (2013). Demystifying Crime & Criminal Justice (2nd Edition). OXFORD ISBN: 978-0-19-984383-1

Students may purchase texts in the bookstore and online.

## **Library Liaison**

Silke Higgins, [silke.higgins@sjsu.edu](mailto:silke.higgins@sjsu.edu), (408) 808-2118  
<http://libguides.sjsu.edu/justicestudies>

## **Course Requirements and Assignments**

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/ studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other

## **Final Examination**

Students will complete a cumulative final examination using key terms and concepts from readings and class discussion consisting of short answer and essay based questions. (CLO 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5)



3 September 4  
(Labor Day  
Holiday 9/2)

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*In what ways is  
mental illness linked to the United States justice system?*

4 September  
9 & 11

**Assign Final Paper (DUE NO LATER THAN 12/9);** Retribution:  
Discretionary Application; The Death Penalty, Due Process, Tookie Williams  
& The Mercy Seat; Justification & Excuse; The Civic Duty to Respond to  
Crime; The Absence of Crime is the Greatest Indicator; **Read Chapters 24 &  
25: The Myths of Closure and Capital Punishment & Prisons as Country  
Clubs; Prepare, submit and be ready to discuss Weekly Assignment #2:  
Review Questions #1 (p 263), #2 (p 277) & Profile: Sir Robert Peel  
(1788-1850) + Week 3 #'s;** In-class exercise: *Is Buck v. Bell, 274 U.S. 200  
(1927), relevant in regard to current policy specific to criminalization of the  
chronically homeless, mentally ill or immigrant communities?*

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Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
8	October 7 & 9	Security: Surveillance, Pit Bulls & Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design; Broken-Windows and Labeling Theories; <b>Read Chapters 4 &amp; 5: The Myths That Violent Juveniles Will Become Adult Criminals &amp; That of Black Crime; Prepare, submit and be ready to discuss Weekly Assignment #4: Review Questions #2 (p 46), #2 (p 56) &amp; Profile: Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909) + Week 7 #'s;</b> In-class exercise: <i>In what ways are homelessness and poverty linked to the United States justice system? How do you propose these two particular problems be solved?</i>
9	October 14 & 16	Return/Review Assignment #4; Fear: Budget Priorities & the Fear-Victimization Paradox; Sanctuary Policy Jurisdictions & Scapegoating the Undocumented; Pelican Bay & Solitary Confinement; <b>Read Chapters 22 &amp; 23: The Myths That Imprisonment Is the Most Severe Form of Punishment &amp; The Death Penalty Is Administered Fairly; Prepare and be ready to discuss Review Questions #3 (p 241), #2 (p 253) &amp; Profile: Emile Durkheim (1858-1917);</b> In-class exercise: <i>Does social media perpetuate or prevent criminal behavior? How might Emile Durkheim explain the phenomenon of contemporary social media in the United States?</i>
10	October 21 & 23	Engagement: Amber Alerts, Neighborhood Watch, Flash Mobs, Social Media & Foot Patrol; Community Policing & Cultivating Credibility; <b>Read Chapters 14 &amp; 15: The Myths The Role of Police Is to Fight Crime &amp; That Science Solves Crimes; Prepare, submit and be ready to discuss Weekly Assignment #5: Review Questions #1 (p 156), #2 (p 164) &amp; Profile: Chief August Vollmer (1876-1955) + Week 9 #'s;</b> In-class exercise: <i>Do you believe raising education standards could be the key to better policing? If so, should law enforcement agencies only hire police officers who have earned college degrees?</i>
11	October 28 & 30	Return/Review Assignment #5; Expungement: Incarceration rates, Recidivism, Release & Community Integration; Confidential Informants, Witness Intimidation & Snitches Get Stitches; Exceptions to Warrants; <b>Read Chapters 20 &amp; 21: The Myths That the Exclusionary Rule Allows Many Criminals to Escape Justice &amp; That Punishment Reduces Crime; Prepare and be ready to discuss Review Questions #3 (p 176), #2 (p 183) &amp; Profile: Dollree Mapp (1924-2014);</b> In-class exercise: <i>What is the exclusionary rule? How does the exclusionary rule address the problem of Fourth Amendment violations by law enforcement? Does the exclusionary rule allow criminals to escape justice?</i>

12	November 4 & 6	Self-Incrimination: Confessions, Miranda & Contemporary Custodial Interrogation; Good Cops, Bad Cops & The Thin Blue Line; <b>Read Chapters 16 &amp; 17: The Myths Surrounding Policewomen on Patrol &amp; That Police Use of Force Is Widespread; Prepare, submit and be ready to discuss Weekly Assignment # 6: Review Questions #3 (p 176), #2 (p 183) &amp; Profile: Chief Penny E. Harrington (1943 - ) + Week 12 #'s;</b> In-class exercise: <i>What does “exoneration” mean? Why did 2015 “set a record” in regard to exonerations?</i>
13	November 13  (Veterans Day Holiday 11/11)	Return/Review Assignment #6; <b>Begin Group Presentations;</b> In-class exercise.
14	November 18 & 20	Group Presentations; Fair Trial: Right to Counsel, Peers as Jurors & Impartial Judges; Richmond, CA: Homicide Rates, Officer Involved Shootings & Black Lives Matter; Mens Rea, Expert Witnesses, Diminished Capacity & The Twinkie Defense; <b>Read Chapters 18 &amp; 19: The Myths of Racial Profiling &amp; The Best Police Response to Domestic Violence Is to Arrest the Offender; Prepare and be ready to discuss Review Questions #2 (p 192), #1 (p 201) &amp; Profile: Chief Chris Magnus (1961 - ) &amp; Bass Reeves (1838-1910);</b> In-class exercise: <i>What specific problems could be eliminated through community policing?</i>
15	November 25 & 27	Group Presentations; Challenging Presumptions, Critical Analysis & Meritorious Debate; A Game That Moves As You Play, A Work Forever in Progress; No Justice, No Peace; It’s just us: Laws as Expressions of Community Demand; Compulsory Registration: Public Disclosure & California Penal Code Section 290; <b>Read Chapters 10 &amp; 11: The Myths that Gun Control Policies Reduce Crime &amp; Sex Offenders are Beyond Redemption; Prepare, submit and be ready to discuss Weekly Assignment #7: Review Questions #1 (p 113), #1 (p 125) + Week 14 #'s;</b> In-class exercise.
16	December 2, 4 & 9	Return/Review Assignment #7; Conclude Group Presentations (2/4); <b>Review for Final Examination &amp; Final Papers Due (12/9);</b> Final Thoughts.
<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>Friday, December 13</b>	<b>MacQuarrie Hall 523 12:15 PM - 2:30 PM</b>