San José State University Department of Justice Studies JS189-04, Senior Seminar: Contemporary Problems, Spring 2021

Course and Contact Information

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 Format

Our class is offered completely online with no designated day/time meeting pattern. However, students are provided the opportunity to be virtually present and interact during regularly scheduled live streamed Zoom lectures and review questions and subject matter during regularly scheduled Office Hours on Zoom and via email.

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

policy needs (such as necessary reforms) to solving tangible social problems; (d) somehow contributes to our collective understanding of concepts and approaches to "justice," however defined (social justice, criminal justice, community justice, and so forth).

- 2. Demonstrate their ability to present scholarly work to an audience of their peers.
- 3. Demonstrate a working understanding of "evidence-based" approaches to social problems and public policy. As a culminating skill set in our program, students should demonstrate their ability to apply social scientific (and otherwise rational) forms of reasoning, argumentation, research, and support in 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.

Other Readings

Additional course materials will be found on Canvas under Files and Modules.

Other technology requirements / equipment / material

Internet, computer, microphone & camera.

Library Liaison

Nyle Monday, Nyle.Monday@sjsu.edu, (408) 808-2041 http://libguides.sjsu.edu/justicestudies

Course Requirements and Assignments

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Project

Projects will require students to conduct independent research and craft a thesis paper specific to significant contemporary problems impacting the system of justice in the United States, in the form of a **fifteen-to-twentypage** written analysis, due during the last scheduled day of instruction as reflected below. Reliable sources for all assertions should be cited in the American Psychological Association (APA) format. (CLO 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5)

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)

Faculty members are required to have a culminating activity for their courses, which can include a final examination, a final research paper or project, a final creative work or performance, a final portfolio of work, or other appropriate assignment.

Participation

Students are invited to participate on Zoom during live lectures in an informed, professional and respectful manner, check in during virtual office hours at least once during our semester, and consistently submit quality

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Course Schedule

Week 1 January 27 Introductions/Course overview; Syllabus, Class, Project, Assignment & Examination formats; The Social Construction of Crime: Conflict & Consensus; Immanuel Kant (1724 - 1804)

Week 4 February 15 & 17
Assignment #2 (DUE 2/17); 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 6 & 7: The Myths That Mental Illness Causes Crime & Drug Decriminalization (pgs 57-79); Prepare, Submit and be ready to discuss Weekly Assignment #2: Review Questions #3 (p 12), #1 (p 23), #2 (p 35), #3 (p 46), #2 (p 56), #3 (p 66), #2 (p 79) & Profile: Sir Robert Peel (1788-1850); 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?

Week 5 February 22 & 24