

San José State University
Department of Justice Studies
JS189-04, Senior Seminar: Contemporary Problems, Spring 2023

Course and Contact Information

Instructor: Greg Woods, J.D.
Office Location: MacQuarrie Hall 508
Telephone: (408) 924-1840
Email: greg.woods@sjsu.edu
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM, via Zoom and Thursdays, 9:00 AM - 10:30 AM, in person on campus by email appointment; Zoom links available by email request.
Class Days/Time: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 12:00 PM - 1:15 PM
Classroom: MacQuarrie Hall 523

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 on campus and in person. Students are encouraged to review questions and subject matter during class, regularly scheduled Office Hours on Zoom and in person, and/or via email. Supplemental video materials are available through Canvas Modules. Other than our textbook, all other course materials available through Canvas Files.

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.

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

Kappelar, Victor E. and Potter, Gary W. (2018). *The Mythology of Crime and Criminal Justice* (5th Edition). Waveland Press, ISBN: 978-1-4786-0260-6

(Thursday, March 16th) and periodically throughout the semester during office hours and/or by email appointment.

Classroom Protocol

Attendance/Punctuality

Regular attendance and punctuality are encouraged. Students who are routinely inattentive, discourteous or who choose not to contribute to classroom discussion and activities, will be noted and may result with up to 10% (one letter grade) deducted from the final grade.

Late Assignments

Late assignments will not be accepted for credit without prior agreement.

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9](#), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on Syllabus Information web page (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>). Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Additional Information

All sources of information to support written assertions must be cited in the American Psychological Association (APA) Format. PLEASE NOTE: Detection of plagiarism will result with NO CREDIT.

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
14	April 25 & 27	Review Assignment #6; 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; Read Chapter 12: The Myth of a Lenient Criminal Justice System (pgs 383-412) & Profile: Bass Reeves (1838-1910) ; Exercise: <i>What specific problems could be eliminated through community policing?</i>
15	May 2 & 4	Assignment #7 (DUE 5/4) ; Challenging Presumptions, Critical Analysis & Meritorious Debate; Compulsory Registration: Public Disclosure & California Penal Code Section 290; Read Chapter 13: Capital Punishment <i>The Myth of Murder as Effective Crime Control</i> (pgs 413-442) ; Prepare, submit and be ready to discuss Weekly Assignment #7: Identify and explain three significant concepts presented in Chapters 12 and 13, & Profile: Dorothea Lynde Dix (1802-1887) ; Exercise: <i>Is capital punishment a sustainable solution? Why?</i>
16 Project Due (5/11)	May 9 & 11	Assignment #8 (DUE 5/11); Project Due (5/11) ; Review Assignment #7, 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; Read Chapter 14: Merging Myths and Misconceptions of Crime and Justice (pgs 443-462) ; Prepare, Submit and be ready to discuss Assignment #8: Identify and explain three significant concepts presented in Chapter 14 OR What are the three most significant concepts you learned in our class this semester? Review for Final Examination; Final Thoughts.
Final Examination	Thursday, May 18	MacQuarrie Hall 523 9:45 AM - 12:00 PM