

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

### **Course and Contact Information**

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|------------------|---|
| Instructor:      | Greg Woods, J.D.  |
| Office Location: | MacQuarrie Hall 508   |
| Telephone:       | (408) 924-1840  |
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| Office Hours:    | Wednesdays, 8:00 - 9:00 AM, 1:30 - 3:30 PM, and by appointment. |
| Class Days/Time: | Mondays & Wednesdays 6:00 PM - 7:15 PM                          |
| Classroom:       | MacQuarrie Hall 523   |

### **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 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.

## **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 course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

## **Weekly Assignments**

Students will be assigned weekly reading and writing assignments in class and as reflected below. Weekly Assignments are due during every other **Wednesday** class session, or as instructed, and will consist of a two-to-three paged double spaced typed analysis in 12-point font. (CLO 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5)

## **Group Project**

Students will be assigned to work in groups and are expected to participate in a professional and respectful manner. Each group will be tasked with a project, to be assigned and explained extensively in class, to develop and present in class during the semester as reflected below. Each group is required to participate during in-class exercises and make one presentation to the class once per semester. (CLO 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5)

## **Final Paper**

Final Papers will require students to conduct independent research to craft a thesis paper, to be assigned and explained extensively in class and will be due during the last scheduled class session of the semester 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 expected to be punctual and prepared to participate during in-class activities in an informed, professional and respectful manner. Participation credit will be rewarded in response to student preparedness and politeness in class. (CLO 2, 3, 4 & 5)

## Grading Policy

Final grades will be evaluated as follows:

|                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| Weekly Assignments (7) | 20% |
| Group Project          | 20% |
| Final Paper            | 25% |
| Final Examination      | 25% |
| Participation          | 10% |

## Grading Scale

A = 90 to 100

B = 80 to 89

C = 70 to 79

D = 60 to 69

F = 59 and below.

**Please Note: Extra credit will not be awarded, late assignments will not be accepted, and no assignment may be submitted via email.**

Students have the right, within a reasonable time, to know their academic scores, to review their grade-dependent work, and to be provided with explanations for the determination of their course grades. **Students are encouraged to review their progress in person no later than Week Eight (Wednesday, October 9th) and periodically throughout the semester** during office hours, and by appointment.

## Classroom Protocol

### Attendance/Punctuality

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

## Late Assignments/Missed Quizzes

Late assignments will not be accepted, no assignment may be submitted via email, and missed quizzes cannot be retaken for credit.

## Cell Phones/Texting

All cell phones and other electronic devices should be turned off and put away during class sessions. Routine phone calls, texting or other online activity during class is discouraged, will be noted and may result with up to 10% (one letter grade) deducted from the final grade.

## University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, relevant information to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. is available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' Syllabus Information web page at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

# JS189-01 / Senior Seminar: Contemporary Problems, Fall 2019

## Course Schedule

| Week | Date           | Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines   |
|------|----------------|--|
| 1    | August 21      | Introductions/Course overview; Syllabus, Class, Group Project, Assignment & Exam formats; The Social Construction of Crime: Conflict & Consensus; Immanuel Kant (1724 - 1804) & The Enlightenment Outlook; Natural Law & Limits of the Criminal Law; In a Time Before Cops; Felonies & Misdemeanors; Criminalizing Thought; Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program; <b>Profile: Cesare Beccaria (1738-1794)</b> ; In-class exercise: <i>In what ways will a commitment to education increase the access to justice? Is capital punishment a sustainable solution? Why?</i>  |
| 2    | August 26 & 28 | Policy & Control: Bloody Codes & Traditional Notions of Liberty; Laws as Legislative Solutions to Society's Problems resulting in Criminalized, Restricted Behavior for all; We the People & the Cross-examination of Evidence; Act & Intent; Malice, Capital Offenses & Limitations on Criminal Liability; Criminalizing Expression, Hate Speech & Obscenity; <b>Read Chapters 1, 2 &amp; 3: The Myths of Accurate Crime Measurement, The Myth That "Criminals" Are Fundamentally Different from "Non-criminals" &amp; Rational Choice as an Explanation for Criminal Behavior; Prepare, Submit and be ready to discuss Weekly Assignment #1: Review Questions #2 (p 12), #1 (p 23), #2 (p 35) &amp; Profile: John Locke (1632-1704)</b> ; In-class exercise: <i>In what way is the Uniform Crime Report related to the dark figure of crime? How is our crime rate calculated? Is this calculation flawed in any way? How might such data impact gun sales in the United States?</i> |

| Week | Date  | Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines  |
|------|---|---|
| 3    | September 4<br><br>(Labor Day<br>Holiday 9/2) | Return/Review Assignment #1; Constitutions, Statutes & Case Law; Jurisdictional Structures; Sources of Authority; Oscar Grant and the Duty to Protect and Serve; Criminalizing Behavior; <b>Read Chapters 6 &amp; 7: The Myths That Mental Illness Causes Crime &amp; Drug Decriminalization; Prepare and be ready to discuss Review Questions #3 (p 66), #2 (p 79) &amp; Profile: Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832);</b> In-class exercise: <i>In what ways is mental illness linked to the United States justice system?</i>   |
| 4    | September 9 & 11                              | <b>Assign Final Paper (DUE NO LATER THAN 12/9);</b> 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; <b>Read Chapters 24 &amp; 25: The Myths of Closure and Capital Punishment &amp; Prisons as Country Clubs; Prepare, submit and be ready to discuss Weekly Assignment #2: Review Questions #1 (p 263), #2 (p 277) &amp; Profile: Sir Robert Peel (1788-1850) + Week 3 #'s;</b> In-class exercise: <i>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?</i> |
| 5    | September 16 & 18                             | Return/Review Assignment #2; <b>Assign Group Project (DUE 11/13 - 12/4);</b> Criminal Profiling: Stop & Frisk; Reasonable Suspicion & Probable Cause; Pretexting & Metadata collection analysis; <b>Read Chapters 28 &amp; 29: The Myths That Correctional Rehabilitation Does Not Work &amp; That Rehabilitation Is the Focus of Community Corrections; Prepare and be ready to discuss Review Questions #3 (p 309), #3 (p 319) &amp; Profile: John Augustus (1785-1859);</b> In-class exercise: <i>What challenges are inherent to the bail system in the United States? What solutions do you propose to improve the bail system?</i>  |
| 6    | September 23 & 25                             | Recidivism: Restoration & Crisis Intervention Training; <b>Read Chapters 26 &amp; 27: The Myths Prisons Can be Self-Supporting, Correctional Privatization &amp; Inherent Efficiency; Prepare, submit and be ready to discuss Weekly Assignment #3: Review Questions #1 (p 284), #1 (p 295) &amp; Profile: Dorothea Lynde Dix (1802-1887) + Week 5 #'s;</b> In-class exercise: <i>What is the worse problem, recidivism or the lack of rehabilitation? Why? What are the primary differences between Retributive and Restorative models of justice?</i>   |
| 7    | September 30 & October 2                      | Return/Review Assignment #3; Legislative Intent: Mandatory Minimum Sentencing & the “Three Strikes” sentence enhancement law of California; Proposition 47 and California’s Realignment Policy; <b>Read Chapters 8 &amp; 9: The Myths about Drug Use and Violent Offending &amp; That White-Collar Crime Is Only about Financial Loss; Prepare and be ready to discuss Review Questions #3 (p 92), #1 (p 101) &amp; Profile: Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902);</b> In-class exercise: <i>Is gender inequality still a problem in the latter half of the second decade of the twenty-first century? If so, in what three ways should this problem be solved?</i>   |

| Week | Date               | Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines   |
|------|--------------------|--|
| 8    | October<br>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<br>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<br>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<br>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> |

| Week              | Date   | Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines  |
|-------------------|--|---|
| 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<br><br>(Veterans Day Holiday<br>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<br/>12:15 PM - 2:30 PM</b>   |