

**San José State University**  
**Department of Justice Studies**  
**JS189-01, Senior Seminar: Contemporary Problems, Fall 2020**

**Course and Contact Information**

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Office Hours:	Mondays & Wednesdays, 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM, and by email appointment; Invitations/Zoom links through Canvas under Announcements.
Class Days/Time:	Mondays & Wednesdays, 6:00 PM - 7:15 PM live streamed Zoom lectures; Recordings of all class sessions are on Canvas under Files.
Classroom:	On Line; Invitations/Zoom links to live lectures through Canvas under Announcements.

**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

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

## Course Requirements and Assignments

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. 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 **eight (8)** 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)

## 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-twenty-page** 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 work in a timely manner. Participation credit will also be rewarded in response to student preparedness and politeness during online class sessions. (CLO 2, 3, 4 & 5)

## Grading Policy

Final grades will be evaluated as follows:

Weekly Assignments (8)	30%
Project	30%
Final Examination	30%
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 for credit.**

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 7th) and periodically throughout the semester** during office hours, and by appointment.

## Classroom Protocol

### Attendance/Punctuality

Our class is offered completely online live-streamed. Students are provided the opportunity to be virtually present and interact during regularly scheduled live streamed Zoom lectures, every Monday and Wednesday from 6:00-7:15 PM, and review questions and subject matter during regularly scheduled office hours on Zoom and via email. Regular attendance and punctuality are encouraged.

## Late Assignments

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

## University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

## JS189-01 / Senior Seminar: Contemporary Problems, Fall 2020

### Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	August 19	Introductions/Course overview; Syllabus, Class, Project, Assignment & Examination 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> ; Exercise: <i>In what ways will a commitment to education increase the access to justice?</i>
2	August 24 & 26	<b>Obtain &amp; Review Textbook: <i>Demystifying Crime &amp; Criminal Justice</i></b> ; 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>Profile: John Locke (1632-1704)</b> ; <b>Prepare, Submit and be ready to discuss Assignment #1: <i>What is the most significant problem impacting the system of justice in the United States right now? &amp; Is the profile subject relevant today?</i></b> 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>
3	August 31 & September 2	Review Assignment #1; Sovereignty: Constitutions, Statutes & Case Law; Jurisdictional Structures; Sources of Authority; Oscar Grant and the Duty to Protect and Serve; Criminalizing Behavior; <b>Read Chapters 1, 2 &amp; 3: <i>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</i> (pgs 3-35)</b> ; <b>Profile: Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832)</b> ; Exercise: <i>In what ways is mental illness linked to the United States justice system?</i>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
4	September 9 (No Class Monday the 7th, <b>Happy Labor Day!</b> )	<b>Assign Project (DUE NO LATER THAN 12/7)</b> ; Retribution: Discretionary Application; The Death Penalty, Due Process, Tookie Williams & The Mercy Seat; Justification & Excuse; <b>Read Chapters 4 &amp; 5: The Myths That Violent Juveniles Will Become Adult Criminals &amp; That of Black Crime (pgs 37-56)</b> ; <b>Prepare, Submit and be ready to discuss Assignment #2: Review Questions: 1-3 (pg 12), 1-3 (pg 23), 1-3 (pg 35), 1-3 (pg 46), 1-3 (pg 56) &amp; Profile: Sir Robert Peel (1788-1850)</b> ; 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 14 & 16	Review Assignment #2; Criminal Profiling: Stop & Frisk; Reasonable Suspicion & Probable Cause; Pretexting & Metadata collection analysis; <b>Read Chapters 6 &amp; 7: The Myths That Mental Illness Causes Crime &amp; Drug Decriminalization (pgs 57-79) &amp; Profile: John Augustus (1785-1859)</b> ; 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 21 & 23	Recidivism: Restoration & Crisis Intervention Training; <b>Read Chapters 8 &amp; 9: The Myths about Drug Use and Violent Offending &amp; That White-Collar Crime Is Only about Financial Loss (pgs 81-101)</b> ; <b>Prepare, Submit and be ready to discuss Assignment #3: Review Questions 1-3 (pg 66), 1-3 (pg 79), 1-3 (pg 92), 1-3 (101) &amp; Profile: Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909)</b> ; 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 28 & 30	Review Assignment #3; Legislative Intent: Mandatory Minimum Sentencing & the “Three Strikes” sentence enhancement law of California; Proposition 47 and California’s Realignment Policy; <b>Chapters 10 &amp; 11: The Myths that Gun Control Policies Reduce Crime &amp; Sex Offenders are Beyond Redemption (pgs 103-125) &amp; Profile: Megan Kanka (1986-1994)</b> ; Exercise: <i>Is gender inequality still a problem in the third decade of the twenty-first century? If so, in what three ways should this problem be solved?</i>
8	October 5 & 7	Security: Surveillance, Pit Bulls & Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design; Broken-Windows and Labeling Theories; <b>Read Chapters 14 &amp; 15: The Myths The Role of Police Is to Fight Crime &amp; That Science Solves Crimes (pgs 147-165)</b> ; <b>Prepare, Submit and be ready to discuss Assignment #4: Review Questions 1-3 (pg 113), 1-3 (pg 125), 1-3 (pg 156), 1-3 (pg 164) &amp; Profile: Chief August Vollmer (1876-1955)</b> ; 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>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
9	October 12 & 14	Review Assignment #4; Fear: Budget Priorities & the Fear-Victimization Paradox; Sanctuary Policy Jurisdictions & Scapegoating the Undocumented; Pelican Bay & Solitary Confinement; <b>Read Chapters 16 &amp; 17: The Myths Surrounding Policewomen on Patrol &amp; That Police Use of Force Is Widespread (pgs 166-183) &amp; Profile: Carmen Best (1955-);</b> Exercise: <i>Does social media perpetuate or prevent criminal behavior?</i>
10	October 19 & 21	Have you researched and outlined your Project? The Civic Duty to Respond to Crime; The Absence of Crime is the Greatest Indicator; “Badge Bending” & Defunding Police; <b>Read Chapters 18 &amp; 19: The Myths of Racial Profiling &amp; The Best Police Response to Domestic Violence Is to Arrest the Offender (pgs 185-201);</b> Prepare, Submit and be ready to discuss <b>Assignment #5: Review Questions 1-3 (pg 176), 1-3 (pg 183), 1-3 (pg 192), 1-3 (pg 201) &amp; Profile: Joe Arpaio (1932-);</b> 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 26 & 28	Review Assignment #5; Engagement: Amber Alerts, Neighborhood Watch, Flash Mobs, Social Media & Foot Patrol; Community Policing & Cultivating Credibility; <b>Read Chapters 20 &amp; 21: The Myths That the Exclusionary Rule Allows Many Criminals to Escape Justice &amp; That Punishment Reduces Crime (pgs 205-229) &amp; Profile: Dollree Mapp (1924-2014);</b> 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>
12	November 2 & 4	Expungement: Incarceration rates, Recidivism, Release & Community Integration; Confidential Informants, Witness Intimidation & Snitches Get Stitches; Exceptions to Warrants; <b>Read Chapters 22 &amp; 23: The Myths That Imprisonment Is the Most Severe Form of Punishment &amp; The Death Penalty Is Administered Fairly (pgs 230-253);</b> Prepare, Submit and be ready to discuss <b>Assignment #6: Review Questions 1-3 (pg 212), 1-3 (pg 228), 1-3 (pg 241), 1-3 (pg 253) &amp; Profile: Emile Durkheim (1858-1917);</b> Exercise: <i>How might Emile Durkheim explain the phenomenon of contemporary social media in the United States?</i>
13	November 9 (No Class Wednesday the 11th, <b>Happy Veteran’s Day!</b> )	Review Assignment #6; Self-Incrimination: Confessions, Miranda & Contemporary Custodial Interrogation; Good Cops, Bad Cops & The Thin Blue Line; <b>Read Chapters 24 &amp; 25: The Myths of Closure and Capital Punishment &amp; Prisons as Country Clubs (pgs 254-277) &amp; Profile: Chief Penny E. Harrington (1943-);</b> Exercise: <i>What does “exoneration” mean? How many exonerations have occurred in the past five years in the United States?</i>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
14	November 16 & 18 <b>(Happy Thanksgiving!)</b>	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 26 &amp; 27: The Myths Prisons Can be Self-Supporting, Correctional Privatization &amp; Inherent Efficiency (pgs 278-295); Prepare, Submit and be ready to discuss Assignment #7: Review Questions 1-3 (pg 263), 1-3 (pg 277), 1-3 (pg 284) &amp; Profile: Bass Reeves (1838-1910); Exercise: <i>What specific problems could be eliminated through community policing?</i></b>
15	November 23 & 25	Review Assignment #7; Challenging Presumptions, Critical Analysis & Meritorious Debate; Compulsory Registration: Public Disclosure & California Penal Code Section 290; <b>Read Chapters 28 &amp; 29: The Myths That Correctional Rehabilitation Does Not Work &amp; That Rehabilitation Is the Focus of Community Corrections (pgs 296-319) &amp; Profile: Dorothea Lynde Dix (1802-1887); Exercise: <i>Is capital punishment a sustainable solution? Why?</i></b>
16	November 30, December 2 & 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; <b>Prepare, Submit and be ready to discuss Assignment #8: Review Questions 1-3 (pg 309), 1-3 (pg 319) &amp; Profile of choice OR What are the three most significant concepts you learned in our class this semester?</b> Review for Final Examination; <b>Projects Due (12/7);</b> Final Thoughts.
<b>Final Exam</b>	Monday, December 14	<b>Submit Final Examination by no later than 12:00 PM</b> (high noon) on <b>Monday, December 14</b> , the day our Final Examination is scheduled.