

JUSTICE IN CRISIS

Justice 460
Fall 2009

Time: Tuesday and Thursday 2:30 – 3:45 pm
Location: SSB 223
Office: LIB 213M
Phone: 786-1820
Email: afirse@uaa.alaska.edu
Office Hours: Monday 1:00 – 3:00pm; Tuesday and Thursday 9:30 am – 10:30 am

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course critically examines various perspectives on justice and the ability of society to maintain the ideal of justice. It compares conditions in different countries and investigates different social and historical circumstances when justice was challenged and in some cases compromised. The influence of culture, race/ethnicity and socioeconomic inequality on the operation of the American Justice System is analyzed.

II. COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Present and critically review different perspectives on justice
2. Examine the strengths and weaknesses of different systems of justice and demonstrate a critical understanding of these different systems
3. Review and evaluate different strategies for achieving justice
4. Assess the role of historical events, information and social science literature on justice systems
5. Appraise the operation of contemporary criminal law and its ability to achieve justice
6. Critically examine the operation of the contemporary criminal justice process
7. Review and critique the influence of socioeconomic forces and racial/ethnic bias on the criminal justice system
8. Review and evaluate different sources of academic literature, research reports and statistical information and the influence of such material on justice policy and the justice system

III. REQUIRED TEXTS

Benson, M. and S. Simpson, White-Collar Crime: An Opportunity Perspective (2009)

Mayer, J., The Dark Side (2008)

Scheck, B., P. Neufeld and J. Dwyer, Actual Innocence (2003)

Weisheit, R. and F. Morn, Pursuing Justice (2004)

IV. CORUSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Examinations

There are two examinations, the first approximately at the midpoint of the semester and a second examination during finals week. The examinations will consist of one or more essay questions.

B. Reading and Discussion Questions

Each week seminar participants are expected to submit written answers to questions from the assigned reading. The question or questions will be provided by the instructor during the prior week. In addition, seminar participants are expected to bring at least one question of their own independent creation, generated from the assigned weekly reading, and be prepared to guide a brief discussion on the question and related reading material for that week.

C. Review and Oral Presentation of Research Journal Article

All seminar participants are required to complete a brief literature search and find one journal article relevant to some specific issue or substantive area covered in the assigned reading. After carefully reading the article, each seminar participant is required to write a brief review and then lead the seminar in a discussion of the article and review. Individual topic assignments and guidelines for the written review and discussion will be provided in class.

D. Final Grade Calculation

Examination One	25%
Final Examination	25%
Discussion Questions	25%
Journal Review/Oral Presentation	25%

E. Class Attendance and Participation

This course is designed to encourage discussion and debate and therefore, preparation prior to class coupled with class attendance and participation are necessary for the success of this course.

V. GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Academic Honor Code

Academic integrity is a basic principle that requires students take credit for ideas and efforts that are their own. Cheating is defined as any means by which a student uses unauthorized assistance to prepare materials submitted as his/her own. Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Please review the current catalog and student handbook for additional information on academic dishonesty and disciplinary procedures.

B. Examinations

No make-up examinations will be given absent extraordinary and documented circumstances beyond the student's control. In such cases it is your responsibility to notify me 12 hours prior to the scheduled examination time. All make-up examinations will be given at the end of the semester during the final examination period.

C. Classroom Etiquette

Please make all efforts to arrive at class on time and prepared. There are times when this will not be possible so if you must enter late do so quietly and do not disturb your classmates and the flow of the moment. Please turn off your cell phone and any other hand held electronic devices before entering the classroom. Obviously do not talk on your cell phone, text message or explore cyberspace during class time. In general use of a laptop computer for note taking is an unnecessary distraction and prohibited without a demonstrated need for a special accommodation. Students with a disability necessitating laptop use should see the instructor.

D. Campus Safety

Although relatively safe, our campus is not a sanctuary from crime and accidents still occur no matter how hard we try to prevent them. You are encouraged to be responsible for your own safety and to bring safety concerns to the attention of UAA faculty or staff, or to contact the Campus Police at 786-1120 when necessary.

E. Accommodations for Disabilities

I am happy to provide appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities. If you require accommodations please contact Disability Support Services and then speak with me so we can make the necessary provisions.

VI. TOPICAL AREAS AND REQUIRED READING

- All dates for reading assignments and examinations are approximations and are to be used only as a general guide. The instructor reserves the prerogative to adjust the syllabus throughout the semester. Any changes will be announced in class. Each student is responsible for attending class and being aware of course scheduling.

Week 1: August 25

What is Justice – Religious and Philosophical Perspectives
Reading: Weisheit and Morn, Chapter 1

Week 2: September 1

What is Justice - Justice and the State, and Social Justice
Reading: Weisheit and Morn, Chapters 2 and 3

Week 3: September 10

Formal Systems of Justice – Common Law and Civil Law
Reading: Weisheit and Morn, Chapters 4 and 5

Week 4: September 15

Formal Systems of Justice – Islamic Law and American Justice
Reading: Weisheit and Morn, Chapters 6 and 7

Week 5: September 22

Contemporary Issues – Death Penalty and Actual Innocence
Reading: Scheck, et al. Chapters 1-3

Week 6: September 29

Contemporary Issues – Death Penalty and Actual Innocence
Reading: Scheck, et al. Chapters 4-7

Week 7: October 6

Contemporary Issues – Death Penalty and Actual Innocence
Reading: Scheck, et al. Chapters 8-14 and Appendixes 1 and 2

Week 8: October 13

Contemporary Issues – White Collar Crime
Reading: Benson and Simpson, Chapters 1-4

Week 9: October 20

Contemporary Issues – White Collar Crime
Reading Benson and Simpson, Chapters 5-7; Weisheit and Morn, Chapter 11

Week 10: October 27

Contemporary Issues – White Collar Crime
Reading Benson and Simpson, Chapters 8-10

Week 11: November 3

Contemporary Issues – Terrorism and the War on Terror
Reading Mayer, Chapters 1-4

Week 12: November 10

Contemporary Issues - Terrorism and the War on Terror
Reading Mayer, Chapters 5-8

Week 13 November 17

Contemporary Issues - Terrorism and the War on Terror
Reading Mayer, Chapters 9-12

Week 14 November 24 **THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

Strategies for Achieving Justice – Individual and Organizations
Reading: Weisheit and Morn, Chapters 12, 13

Week 15 December 1

Strategies for Achieving Justice – Global Justice
Reading: Weisheit and Morn, Chapters 10, 14 and Postscript

FINAL EXAMINATION: THURSDAY DECEMBER 10, 2009 FROM 1:00PM TO 3:00PM.