

Criminal Justice System

CCJ/PSC 274

Summer 2022 – Online

Instructor: Dr. Jill K. Doerner

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Course Description

The purpose of this course is to familiarize you with the structure and the functioning of the American criminal justice system. We will explore three main issues. The first is the conflict between our desires for safety, on the one hand, and freedom, on the other. The second issue is the systematic nature of American criminal justice, that is, the degree to which the various agencies are interrelated and operate together to achieve common goals. As will be seen, the conflict between safety and liberty has significant implication for the degree to which criminal justice agencies form a system. Finally, a third issue is the extent to which the system operates to provide equal protection for all or to privilege some while disadvantaging others.

Course Outcomes

- By the end of this course, you should be able to:
 - Discuss the historical development of the criminal justice system, including the police, the courts, and the correctional system.
 - Explain the state of the current criminal justice system in the United States.
 - Describe the problems and practices of the police.
 - Analyze the workings of the courts and the agents of the court, as well as the workings and influence of the correctional system in our society.
 - Identify the differences in how the criminal justice system treats males and females, as well as minorities.

Instructor

I am currently the Associate Director of the URI Honors Program and an Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Rhode Island. I am also an Affiliate of Criminology & Criminal Justice (CCJ) and served as the Director of the CCJ Program from 2016-2020. My pronouns are she/her/hers. I started at URI in 2008. I have a Ph.D. in Sociology from Bowling Green State University and am originally from Ohio. I have a 3-year-old daughter.

My research focuses primarily on gender, racial/ethnic, and age differences in the sentencing process within the adult criminal justice system, as well as consequences of incarceration for the aging prisoner population. I have also been working on research exploring how experiential learning and other teaching methods can impact students' attitudes and learning outcomes, particularly about issues of inequality and social justice. In addition to this course, I teach courses in Sociology/CCJ focusing on general sociology, the juvenile justice system, gender and crime, and policy issues in criminal justice. I also teach courses in the Honors Program.

If you need to get in touch with me, please email me at jdoerner@uri.edu. I will be checking messages several times a day and will get back to you promptly.

Required Text

[Criminal Justice: The Essentials](#)

~ Lab, Williams, Holcomb, Burek, King, and Buerger (2021/22). 6th Edition. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

* If you are interested in the eBook, click [here](#)

Other course materials will be available in Brightspace

Brightspace Training

If you have not used Brightspace before, or need a refresher, I would highly recommend enrolling in this training course. On the main homepage of Brightspace, click on 'Discover', and then you will see the 'Students Getting Started in Brightspace' course. Click [here](#) for step-by-step instructions.

Course Requirements

This course is divided into five lessons, one for each week of the course. These are listed below in the Course Outline and can be found in the menu on the left side of the Brightspace page for our course (Lesson 1, Lesson 2, etc.). Each lesson/week includes PowerPoint slides outlining material I would cover if taking this class in person, some additional reading to supplement the text, one or more comments, which I consider important supplements to the text, and a video link (which will be the basis for the group discussion for the week). Each lesson is timed to open after the conclusion of the previous one, however you can access some of the materials earlier via links here in the syllabus.

In Brightspace I have also included some recommended readings, videos, and podcasts, which I think you might find interesting/helpful. Links can be found within each lesson.

Each lesson/week concludes with a test to be done on the last day of each week (Friday). Each week's material will open the Saturday prior to the week they are to be completed. For example, Lesson 1 material will open on Saturday, June 25th at 6 a.m. and needs to be completed June 27th – July 1st (see below).

[Pre-Course Survey/Practice Test](#)

So that I may get a better sense of who is in the class, I ask that you complete a short pre-course survey before 11:59 p.m. on June 30th. It will only take a few minutes of your time. It will also give you practice in taking tests in Brightspace as they will be in the same format. You can find it in the Quizzes tool and also linked on the Content page.

**Brightspace will not let me create an ungraded assignment. Therefore, this does have points attached to it – please do not pay attention to your score (if displayed), as it does not count toward your course grade.*

Reading

The pages in the text to be read in conjunction with each lesson are specified in the Course Outline below. Any additional readings will be linked on the Content page for each lesson.

**There is a substantial amount of reading assigned each week, as this 5-week course does cover most of what would be included in a 14-week course taught during the regular semester. Also, because it is asynchronous, it requires a great deal of commitment and drive on your part to learn the material. You will need to create a schedule for yourself to stay on top of things.*

**If you need to access articles from the NYTimes, URI has a site license, and you can register: <https://uri.libguides.com/newspapers>*

PowerPoint Slides

These slides present modified outlines of the lectures I give when teaching the course in a face-to-face classroom. For the most part, they run parallel to the text, emphasizing what I consider the most important points. Some of the information in the slides, however, is not in the text. Make sure to pay particular attention to updated statistics that are included in the slides, as well as click on hyperlinks to articles, data resources, and the like.

To do well on the tests, you should study these slides both before and after you read the text. It might also be helpful to print these slides out and add in your own notes as you read.

Videos and Discussions

Each lesson includes a video on that aspect of the course. These are 60-90 minutes in length. You are required to watch each one and to participate in an online discussion about it. The discussion will open at 6 a.m. each Saturday (starting June 25th) and will remain open until 11:59 p.m. on Thursday each week.

Your initial posting should present your own view of the video – what you learned from it, what you found interesting, how it connected with the week's reading, aspects of it that you disagree with, questions that it raises for you, etc. This needs to be completed by Wednesday at noon each week. Thereafter you should read what others have posted and comment on their opinions, thoughts, and questions.

Expect to post at least 3-5 times per week. However, it isn't just about quantity, but also quality. Do not wait until the last minute to post, as this will cost you points. Posting at the last minute does not help to move the discussion along.

The discussions will be graded as follows:

5 points: frequent contributions that often move the discussion along by posing new questions, challenging others, answering their questions, and/or presenting new information

3 points: frequent contributions that occasionally move the discussion along as above but that usually are just expressions of opinion and/or agreement/disagreement with the opinions of others

1 point: an occasional contribution that just expresses a personal opinion and/or agreement/disagreement with others and does not move the discussion along

Tests

There will be 5 tests. The dates and times are given in the Course Outline below.

Each test will consist of 10 to 20 multiple choice questions and one or two essay-type questions. The questions will be drawn from the reading, PowerPoints, and required videos. **The test will become available to you at 6 a.m. on the day it is to be administered (Friday of each week) and will remain open until 11:59 p.m. that day. You will have 45 minutes from the time you open the test to complete it. The test will automatically be submitted at the end of 45 minutes (regardless of whether you are mid-answer).**

While taking the test you may use the text and any other material that I, or your classmates, have put online. However, do not think that you can do well on the tests without having mastered the material beforehand. You will not have time to look up all the answers and even if you did, you would not find them as the tests are designed to measure comprehension and application of the material, not simply memorization.

Grades

Each of the five tests will be worth 30 points. Grades for the discussions will be weighted by 4 and added to the test scores. The final grade for the course will thus be based on 250 points.

Tests (30 points each) x 5 tests = 150 points

Discussions (5 points each x 4) x 5 discussions = 100 points

A	237-250	B-	199-206	D+	162-173
A-	224-236	C+	192-198	D	149-161
B+	217-223	C	182-191	F	148 and below
B	207-216	C-	174-181		

Extra Credit

Up to 10 points of extra credit can be earned by writing a short paper describing some aspect of the criminal justice system of another country, pointing out ways in which it differs from that in the U.S. For example, “Differences Between the French Police and the American Police” or “Italian versus American Courts” or “Conditions of Confinement

in Sweden and in the U.S.” All extra credit papers must be submitted by July 29th at 11:59 p.m. (via the Assignments Tool) and be properly researched and cited in APA format. **This will be the only extra credit offered.**

Academic Honesty and Cheating

Academic Honesty

The Community Standards of Behavior section in your [student handbook](#) outlines the University Policies and Regulations regarding honesty in all interactions and academic work. Students who violate this policy will be severely penalized.

Cheating

In taking your tests, you are allowed to use your text and other course material posted online. Consulting with other students about the test before you have taken it or while you are taking it is not allowed. After you have taken it, you are not permitted to discuss it with another student who has not yet taken it. All work submitted for a grade, including work for extra credit, must be yours and yours alone.

Students with Disabilities

Any student with a certified disability that is likely to affect their performance on any or all of the assignments should contact me to arrange for accommodations. As part of this process, please be in touch with Disability, Access, and Inclusion (formerly Disability Services for Students), located at 302 Memorial Union. You can also call – 401-874-2098 or email – dai@uri.edu

In addition, if you have trouble viewing/listening to the videos, please contact me for assistance.

Code of Conduct and Anti-Bias Statement

All of you are bound by [URI's Community Standards](#). We may encounter concepts that challenge us and perhaps make us uncomfortable or upset, but we must maintain a learning environment that does not infringe on student rights.

URI respects the rights and dignity of each individual and group. We reject prejudice and intolerance, and we work to understand differences. We believe that equity and inclusion are critical components for campus community members to thrive. If you are a target or a witness of a bias incident, you are encouraged to submit a report to the [URI Bias Response Team](#). There you will also find people and resources to help.

Netiquette for Online Discussions

In written communication with me or your classmates, consider carefully what you write. Re-read email and discussion content before sending or posting. One benefit of this type of communication is more opportunity for reasoned thought, more ability to go in-depth, and more time to think through an issue before posting a comment. However, one negative of this type of communication is the possibility of miscommunication. Be aware of this and compose your comments in a positive, supportive, and constructive manner.

Course Assistance and Communication

Do not hesitate to get in touch with me if you are not doing as well as you would like in the course, or if you have questions about anything. I'm very good about answering email and you can make an appointment outside of office hours if the time doesn't work with your schedule.

~A note about emails: Please send proper emails. Make sure to put **CCJ/PSC 274** in the subject line and to include your full name in the text. Also, use proper capitalization and punctuation, and address me in an appropriate fashion.

Student Resources

Basic Needs

Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in this course or others is urged to contact the [Dean of Students Office](#) for support.

Counseling Center

If you are experiencing stress, mental health, family, or personal issues, please reach out. 217 Roosevelt Hall, 401-874-2288.

Health Services

Potter Building, 6 Butterfield Road, 401-874-2246, health@uri.edu

Rhody Outpost

This food pantry serves all URI students who are food and/or housing insecure, and struggle to make ends meet. All you need is your student ID. The food pantry is located at St. Augustine's Episcopal Church, 15 Lower College Road, in Kingston.

The Student First Fund has been established to provide additional emergency support to URI students with demonstrated financial need. Eligible applicants must: 1) be in good academic standing (2.0 cumulative GPA), 2) have applied for financial aid, 3) have exhausted all financial aid options (e.g., subsidized and unsubsidized loans) and 4) have sought employment.

Writing Center

The Undergraduate Writing Center provides free writing support to students in any class, at any stage of the writing process: from understanding an assignment and brainstorming ideas, to developing, organizing, and revising a draft.

Course Outline

Lesson 1 – Week 1 – June 27th – July 1st *Crime and the Criminal Justice System*

Read:

Crime, Criminal Justice, and Policy
~ Lab et al., Chapter 1 (pg. 1-22)

The Media, Moral Panics and the Politics of Crime
~ Chiricos

Watch:

[Michelle Alexander: Locked Out of the American Dream](#)
~ The video is 35 minutes in length

PowerPoints:

Crime, Criminal Justice, and Policy (Chapter 1)

Handout:

Process Model

Comments:

Legal and Factual Guilt
Why We Have Legal Technicalities

Required Video and Discussion:

[13th](#) (2016)

~ Discussion opens on Saturday, June 25th @ 6 a.m. and closes on
Thursday, June 30th @ 11:59 p.m.

~ Your initial post needs to be completed by Wednesday (6/29) at noon

Test 1:

Available Friday, July 1st @ 6 a.m. and locks @ 11:59 p.m.

Lesson 2 – Week 2 – July 4th – July 8th *Criminal Justice and the Law*

Read:

Issues of Law
~ Lab et al., Chapter 2 (pg. 23-51)

What Is a Legal System?
~ Friedman

Read:

Law: Formal and Informal
~ Friedman

[United States v. Jones](#) (2012)

~ [Summary](#)

PowerPoints:

Issues of Law (Chapter 2)

Comments:

Felony Murder Doctrine
Choice of Evils Defense
Guilty but Mentally Ill

Handouts:

The Carroll Doctrine
The Exclusionary Rule

Required Video and Discussion:

[Resnick Lecture on Andrea Yates and the Insanity Plea](#)

Closed Captioning is not available for this video

~ Discussion opens on Saturday, July 2nd @ 6 a.m. and closes on
Thursday, July 7th @ 11:59 p.m.

~ Your initial post needs to be completed by Wednesday (7/6) at noon

Test 2:

Available Friday, July 8th @ 6 a.m. and locks @ 11:59 p.m.

Lesson 3 – Week 3 – July 11th – July 15th

The Police

Read:

Policing and Law Enforcement
~ Lab et al., Chapter 3 (pg. 52-81)

[Defunding the Police: What Would It Mean for the U.S.?](#)

[10 Things We Know About Race and Policing in the U.S.](#)

[Three Ways Police Can Use Body Cameras to Build Community Trust](#)

PowerPoints:

Policing and Law Enforcement (Chapter 3)

Comments:

Styles of Policing
Deception in Interrogation
Problem-Oriented Policing

Required Video and Discussion:

[Policing the Police 2020](#)

- ~ Discussion opens on Saturday, July 9th @ 6 a.m. and closes on Thursday, July 14th @ 11:59 p.m.
- ~ Your initial post needs to be completed by Wednesday (7/13) at noon

Test 3:

Available Friday, July 15th @ 6 a.m. and locks @ 11:59 p.m.

Lesson 4 – Week 4 – July 18th – July 22nd
The Court System

Read:

The Court System
~ Lab et al., Chapter 4 (pg. 82-117)

[State Courts Seek to Address Racial Disparities in Their Operations](#)

[Campaign Funds for Judges Warp Criminal Justice, Study Finds](#)

[Black Defendants Get Longer Sentences from Republican-Appointed Judges, Study Finds](#)

PowerPoints:

The Court System (Chapter 4)

Comments:

Prosecutorial Discretion & Selective Prosecution
Nolo Contendere
Peremptory Challenges & Racial Discrimination in Jury Selection

Required Video and Discussion:

[The Plea](#)

Closed Captioning is not available for this video

- ~ Click for a [transcript](#) of the program
- ~ Discussion opens on Saturday, July 16th @ 6 a.m. and closes on Thursday, July 21st @ 11:59 p.m.
- ~ Your initial post needs to be completed by Wednesday (7/20) at noon

Test 4:

Available Friday, July 22nd @ 6 a.m. and locks @ 11:59 p.m.

Lesson 5 – Week 5 – July 25th – July 29th ***Institutional Corrections***

Read:

Institutional Corrections
~ Lab et al., Chapter 5 (pg. 118-152)

[Can We Wait 60 Years to Cut the Prison Population in Half?](#)

[U.S. Prison Decline: Insufficient to Undo Mass Incarceration](#)

[Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2022](#)

PowerPoints:

Institutional Corrections (Chapter 5)

Comments:

Racial Differences in Incarceration Rates: Individual or Institutional
Discrimination?

Required Video and Discussion:

[Prison State](#)

- ~ Discussion opens on Saturday, July 23rd @ 6 a.m. and closes on
Thursday, July 28th @ 11:59 p.m.
- ~ Your initial post needs to be completed by Wednesday (7/27) at noon

Test 5:

Available Friday, July 29th @ 6 a.m. and locks @ 11:59 p.m.

Click [here](#) for important Summer Session dates/deadlines:
~ ***July 8th is the last day to drop this course***)

University of Rhode Island Land Acknowledgement Statement

We acknowledge that we gather as the University of Rhode Island on the traditional land of the Niantic and Narragansett people in past and present, and honor with gratitude the land itself and the people who have stewarded it throughout the generations. This calls us to commit to continuing to learn how to be better stewards of the land we inhabit as well.

[This video](#), a Newscast produced by the 5 Cent Cigar, explores the history of the URI campus and its complex and often contentious history of building on Indigenous land.