

## **COURSE NUMBER & TITLE: CJ4000 Introduction to Criminal Justice**

### **PREREQUISITES:**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course examines the American criminal justice structure and the functions and processes that impact communities and society.

### **NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES: 8**

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- 1 - Examine and assess historical and societal influences on the structure and development of the American criminal justice system.
- 2 - Comprehend and critique policing roles, functions, styles, and legal constraints that influence community interaction.
- 3 - Evaluate the effect of current topics and police related issues on criminal justice practices.
- 4 - Examine the courts, pretrial processes, plea bargaining, and punishment procedures.
- 5 - Explore correctional facility and programmatic design as integral components in rehabilitation goals.
- 6 - Evaluate the effectiveness of the juvenile justice system and resources.
- 7 - Reflect on criminal justice issues in professional and academic application.

### **COURSE CONCEPTS:**

1. History and structure of criminal justice
2. Policing functions, styles, and legal constraints
3. Ethics and current issues in policing
4. Criminal court, pretrial and trial processes
5. Sentencing, appeals, and the death penalty
6. U.S. correction systems and prison life
7. Juvenile justice system and processes

### **PRIMARY RESOURCES:**

These resources are required to complete the course.

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| Please make sure that you purchase the primary textbook(s) that match the syllabus you |  
| are issued. Please let your assigned Mentor know through the NCU messaging system |  
| what text(s) you have purchased. NCU cannot be responsible for Learner purchase of |  
| books that do not match assigned syllabi. |  
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#### **Book**

Bohm, R. M. (2008) *A concise introduction to criminal justice* (1st ed.). Boston: McGraw Hill. ISBN: 9780073401508

You may purchase books at [EdMap](#).

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

These resources must be used to complete the assignments.

## **MENTOR RESOURCES**

The Mentor has not provided any additional resources for this syllabus.

## **SUPPLEMENTAL REFERENCES & READINGS:**

These resources are not required, but may provide assistance in completing your work for this course. Please copy and paste any web links listed below into your browser to view the websites.

### **Professional Journals**

Criminology

Journal of Police Science and Administration

Social Problems

The Police Chief

Sheriff

Law Enforcement Technology

The Police Marksman

ASLET Journal (American Society of Law Enforcement Trainers)

FBI Law Enforcement Journal

## **Overview**

### **Section 1: History of the American Criminal Justice System**

Activity 1: Discussion 1 – Past, Present, and Future Development of American Law 10 Points

### **Section 2: Police Functions, Styles, and Legal Constraints**

Activity 2: Discussion 2 – Police Services and Styles 10 Points

### **Section 3: Influences on Policing Styles**

Activity 3: Paper 1 - The Effect of Current Events on the Criminal Justice System 15 Points

### **Section 4: Criminal Court Processes and Sentencing**

Activity 4: Paper 2 - The Criminal Prosecution Process in Action 15 Points

### **Section 5: Corrections Theories and Processes**

Activity 5: Discussion 3 - Options in Corrections 10 Points

### **Section 6: Juvenile Justice**

Activity 6: Paper 3 - Processing and Sentencing Juvenile Offenders 15 Points

### **Section 7: Signature Assignment - Research Paper**

Activity 7: Paper 4 - Topic Analysis, Criminal Justice 20 Points

### **Section 8: Reflective Summary**

Activity 8: Discussion 4 - Course Summation 5 Points

## **Section 1: History of the American Criminal Justice System**

The history of American law enforcement has its roots in early English history. Most citizens are familiar with a community-oriented structure that includes a hierarchy of local police chiefs and officers. This configuration is borrowed directly from England. Over time, the United States developed its own criminal justice structure that addresses regional,

state, and federal needs. Each level carries out specified, distinct responsibilities. Local law enforcement officers keep the peace and maintain order through local codes, statutes, and courts. State agencies address broader issues through a network of agencies and courts. Federal agencies enforce federal laws, homeland security, and domestic terrorism concerns.

A beginning study of criminal justice starts with an overview of the historical and societal influences that affected the development and evolution of American law enforcement agencies. This Section includes readings that give you a global view of the American justice system, its courts, corrections agencies, due process, and law enforcement agencies and their roles.

-Coursework; -Discussion

### **Required Reading:**

Chapters 1, 2 in the primary textbook

## **Activity 1: Discussion 1 – Past, Present, and Future Development of American Law (10 Points)**

### **What is the Future of the Criminal Justice System?**

After reflecting on the history and present day structure of the American criminal justice system, what issues do you believe will direct its future development and structure? Support your analysis with examples. Post your answer in the Discussion area at the bottom of the Activity screen.

Learning Outcome: (1)

### **Activity Outcomes**

- Examine and assess historical and societal influences on the structure and development of the American criminal justice system.

## **Section 2: Police Functions, Styles, and Legal Constraints**

As communities grow and expand, the role of policing changes to accommodate community environment and needs. Policing follows legal, informal, and enforcement guidelines in the functions of patrol, investigation, traffic, and drug enforcement. Policing strategies often include community partnership, problem solving, and change management goals.

Readings in this Section emphasize the functions of community policing, and the constitutional rights of citizens in the implementation of policing strategies.

Many of the upcoming Activities in this course require you to consider various aspects of the law enforcement system in your own community. It is suggested that you search out local resources that provide such data. These might include: local government websites, local police or sheriff's departments, the district attorney's office, special interest advocacy groups, or the local attorney bar association.

If this information isn't readily available in your own community, you can choose another entity (town, city, etc.) to research in order to fulfill the Activity requirements.

-Coursework; -Discussion

**Required Reading:**

Chapter 3 in the primary textbook

**Activity 2: Discussion 2 – Police Services and Styles (10 Points)**

 **Policing Strategies in Your Community**

Consider the police services in your own community. Critique the roles, functions, styles, and legal constraints that guide their interaction with citizens and service agencies. Have the policing strategies in your community changed over time? Why or why not? Post your answer in the Discussion area at the bottom of the Activity screen.

Learning Outcome: (2)

**Activity Outcomes**

- Comprehend and critique policing roles, functions, styles, and legal constraints that influence community interaction.

**Section 3: Influences on Policing Styles**

Policing styles are a direct reflection of current events in the nation and in your own community. For example, international terrorism threats have spurred the development of terrorism emergency plans in many local communities and public institutions. As a societal agency, police services should be flexible and responsive in order to provide appropriate and timely services.

Readings in this Section focus on the public perception regarding the quality of police service, police operations, and terrorism fundamentals.

-Coursework; -Discussion

**Required Reading:**

Chapter 4 in the primary textbook

**Activity 3: Paper 1 - The Effect of Current Events on the Criminal Justice System (15 Points)**

 **The Criminal Justice System in Communities**

To better understand how present day issues shape policing styles, analyze and evaluate the influence that current events have on the criminal justice system at broad and local levels. How are police styles in your community a reflection of local, state, and national trends and needs? Your analysis paper should be 4-5 pages in length. Try to support your viewpoint with local data and include 3 to 4 references from the NCU Library.

Please cite references appropriately in APA style. Format your paper using APA standards (cover sheet, reference page, etc.) Submit your document in the Course Work area at the bottom of the Activity screen.

Learning Outcome: (3)

**Activity Outcomes**

- Evaluate the effect of current topics and police related issues on criminal justice practices.

## Section 4: Criminal Court Processes and Sentencing

The nation's criminal court system is a highly organized, complex structure that is unfortunately overburdened with defendants and caseloads. Part of this burden is a result of the check-and-balance processes of criminal proceedings – a series of steps that assure defendant rights and procedures.

Readings in this Section focus on the American court structure at various governmental levels, the purpose of courts, the key players and their responsibilities, and specific court processes.

-Coursework; -Discussion

### Required Reading:

Chapters 5, 6 in the primary textbook

## Activity 4: Paper 2 - The Criminal Prosecution Process in Action (15 Points)

### The Criminal Prosecution Process in Communities

Although criminal courts share a basic administrative structure, local courts utilize various procedures in the prosecution process that includes plea bargaining and sentencing. Analyze and evaluate the criminal prosecution system in a particular community. Do these courts utilize plea bargains? Why or why not? In what situations are they applicable? If necessary, research on a broader level (county, township, city, state courts) to locate statistics or information to support your viewpoint. Include 3 to 4 references from the NCU Library and other sources.

Please cite references appropriately in APA style. Format your paper using APA standards (cover sheet, reference page, etc.) The body of your final paper should be 4-5 pages. Submit your document in the Course Work area at the bottom of the Activity screen.

Learning Outcome: (4)

### Activity Outcomes

- Examine the courts, pretrial processes, plea bargaining, and punishment procedures.

## Section 5: Corrections Theories and Processes

There is a great societal debate on how to best structure corrections and rehabilitation efforts and programs for incarcerated individuals. What philosophy and criteria should drive the design of facilities and programs? Can the costs associated with such efforts be considered an investment in bettering society? How do offenders rejoin society while respecting the rights of all, including the offender? There are no simple answers to these tough questions. A broad study of corrections structures and processes is necessary to gain an understanding of the rehabilitative possibilities in corrections theory.

Readings in this Section focus on incarceration facilities and programs, prison life, inmate rights and constitutional application, recidivism, probation, and parole programs and procedures.

-Coursework; -Discussion

**Required Reading:**

Chapters 7, 8, 9 in the primary textbook

**Activity 5: Discussion 3 - Options in Corrections (10 Points)**

 **The Rehabilitative Environment**

After reviewing various types of correctional facilities and programs, focus on a particular demographic (women, high-security inmates, etc.) and justify the particular facility or program that you think provides the best opportunity for rehabilitation. Are there components that should be enhanced or redesigned in a programmatic or physical sense? Support your reasoning. Post your answer in the Discussion area at the bottom of the Activity screen.

Learning Outcome: (5)

**Activity Outcomes**

- Explore correctional facility and programmatic design as integral components in rehabilitation goals.

**Section 6: Juvenile Justice**

The number of juveniles offenders processed through the criminal justice system is alarmingly on the increase. Correctional theory for juveniles focuses heavily on education, training, and prevention in an effort to reduce recidivism. Juvenile justice facilities, processes, and procedures vary in an effort to return young citizens back to society as productive adults.

Readings in this Section focus on juvenile courts, processes, and programs.

-Coursework; -Discussion

**Required Reading:**

Chapter 10 in the primary textbook

**Activity 6: Paper 3 - Processing and Sentencing Juvenile Offenders (15 Points)**

 **Efficient and Effective Juvenile Programs**

After reflection on the chapter reading, critique the efficiency of the juvenile justice system. Where is the system working? Where are the gaps? Research and share examples of effective and efficient programs – what makes them successful? Include 3 to 4 references from the NCU Library and other sources.

Please cite references appropriately in APA style. Format your paper using APA standards

(cover sheet, reference page, etc.) The body of your final paper should be 4-5 pages. Submit your document in the Course Work area at the bottom of the Activity screen.

Learning Outcome: (6)

### Activity Outcomes

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the juvenile justice system and resources.

## Section 7: Signature Assignment - Research Paper

A valuable skill in the criminal justice field is the ability to critically analyze and problem-solve a situation. You have been introduced to many relevant topics in this general overview of the criminal justice system. For a culminating assignment, you will choose a specific topic and explore it in depth. This requires continued research in the NCU Library to broaden your knowledge so that you may analyze the topic in detail and offer justifiable alternatives to the situation.

 -Coursework;  -Discussion

### Required Reading:

All chapters in the primary textbook

## Activity 7: Paper 4 - Topic Analysis, Criminal Justice (20 Points)

### Research a Criminal Justice Topic

Review and reflect on the major topics in this course that address various aspects of criminal justice:

1. History and structure of criminal justice
2. Policing functions, styles, and legal constraints
3. Ethics and current issues in policing
4. Criminal court, pretrial and trial processes
5. Sentencing, appeals, and the death penalty
6. U.S. correction systems and prison life
7. Juvenile justice system and processes

Choose a topic of personal interest and thoroughly research it. First situate the topic in the discipline - why is this subject important in the criminal justice community? You will then analyze the topic by stating a problem and offering alternative solutions. You can localize your topic, or focus on a particular geographic area or demographic for exploration. Your research should include at least 4-5 references from the NCU Library. Your final paper should be 8-10 pages long not counting the cover or reference pages.

Organize the paper with an opening paragraph, supporting information, and closing paragraph format. Use APA formatting with proper APA in-text citations. Create a reference page including the textbook and outside resources. Use your word processing editor to check spelling and grammar. Your paper must be submitted with the NCU cover sheet, followed by an APA formatted coversheet before the body of the paper. Submit your document in the Course Work area at the bottom of the Activity screen.

Learning Outcomes: (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)

## Activity Outcomes

- Examine and assess historical and societal influences on the structure and development of the American criminal justice system.
- Comprehend and critique policing roles, functions, styles, and legal constraints that influence community interaction.
- Evaluate the effect of current topics and police related issues on criminal justice practices.
- Examine the courts, pretrial processes, plea bargaining, and punishment procedures.
- Explore correctional facility and programmatic design as integral components in rehabilitation goals.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the juvenile justice system and resources.

## Section 8: Reflective Summary

Reflection is a valuable step in the learning process because it offers the Learner an opportunity to make personal connections to the material. This Activity encourages you to consider a global perspective of your learning to define connections that are personally relevant and meaningful.



-Coursework; -Discussion

### Required Reading:

Review text and information relevant to research paper

## Activity 8: Discussion 4 - Course Summation (5 Points)



### Final Reflections

Explain how this course has changed your understanding of criminal justice. Discuss the concepts and issues that were of greatest interest to you. How do you plan to apply this new knowledge in a professional and academic sense? Post your answer in the Discussion area at the bottom of the Activity screen.

Learning Outcome: (7)

## Activity Outcomes

- Reflect on criminal justice issues in professional and academic application.

Effective Date:

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