

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Program in Criminal Justice
Ideas in Justice
Spring 2015

Dr. Matthew J. Sheridan
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Appointments made upon request
Class times: Monday 6:30 – 8:40

Required Texts:

Berman, Greg and Feinblatt, John. (2005) *Good Courts: The Case for Problem-Solving Justice*. The New Press. ISBN: 9781565849730

Ross, Jeffrey and Richards, Stephen (2003) *Convict Criminology*. Cengage Learning. ISBN: 9780534574338

Ideas in Justice will discuss Myths, Unknowns, Controversy, Current and New approaches in Justice. Ideas in Justice is concerned with issues in justice as they affect criminal justice practices and the achievement of its goals. Some topics will review old issues, some ideas are lesser known, seldom discussed and generally not included in textbook discussions. They are the issues that have had long reaching effects on the justice system. And, then there are topics about new approaches toward achieving justice goals.

Program in Criminal Justice, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, March 2008

Learning Goals: A Statement of Principles

The Program Committee for the Program in Criminal Justice at Rutgers University in New Brunswick has adopted a series of learning goals for students who complete the major. These goals represent the consensus of the faculty regarding the concepts a student should grasp and the skills a student should acquire in the course of completing the major. These goals guide the choices faculty make about the structure of the curriculum and the requirements for our majors. Moreover, they guide faculty and instructors preparing course material and teaching courses.

The Program in Criminal Justice will provide students with a rich understanding of crime and criminal justice in the United States and abroad through an interdisciplinary approach that blends a strong liberal arts educational experience with pre-professional instruction in the field of criminal justice. Graduates of the program will be well-informed citizens on the topic of crime and justice, and qualified for graduate study or for employment as practitioners in a variety of legal, policymaking, and law enforcement fields.

Criminal justice majors graduating from a research university should be able to use critical thinking, factual inquiry, and the scientific approach to solve problems related to individual and group behavior. In addition, students should have an understanding of the legal, political and policymaking processes that affect criminal justice systems in the United States and elsewhere in the world. Finally, students should be familiar with the institutional structures and latest

developments in the field in order to engage in meaningful debate about current public policy issues.

Learning Goals for Criminal Justice Majors

Competence:

Theory. Students who complete the major in criminal justice should understand and be able to articulate, both orally and in writing, the core theoretical concepts that form the foundation of analysis and research in criminology and criminal justice today. Core concepts are derived from explanations of crime from a variety of perspectives, including biogenic, psychological, and sociological approaches. There are myriad theories of crime that are informed by these perspectives, including, classical, control, critical, ecology, labeling, learning, strain, and trait-based approaches. Theoretical literacy should extend to multicultural and international understanding.

Institutions. Students who complete the major in criminal justice should understand the special role of three types of institutions: Police, Corrections, and Courts. In addition, students should know how institutional forms vary across jurisdictions and how these institutions interact with and influence each other.

Research Methods: Students who complete the criminal justice major should be familiar with the tools, techniques, and data sources necessary for empirical analysis. Students should understand the various ways that empirical analysis is used in the scientific approach: for description, for developing, and for testing theories. They should be able to analyze data using computer applications and should be familiar with basic statistical techniques and regression analysis. They should be able to read and assess research from a wide range of sources, including general interest, academic, and government publications.

Critical Thinking:

Upon completion of the major students should be able to apply their understanding of core concepts and quantitative tools to analyze and research real world problems, and evaluate alternative policy proposals on a range of criminal justice issues, from micro-level analyses relevant to particular cases to management concerns to macro-level analyses of legislative and other broad-scale policies. Accomplishment of this goal will require that students can apply their literacy and numeracy skills to different institutional structures, within the U.S. and across countries.

Scholarship:

Qualified majors should have an opportunity through such avenues as advanced coursework, internships, and faculty interactions to conduct independent research on matters of central relevance to the field of criminal justice.

Class structure: Students will be selected for each class to present a journal entry that is an important and current topic of Justice. The presentation should explain why it is an issue and why it is important.

Class will begin with a lecture followed by a class discussion. Each week's lecture will be announced at the end of the previous week's class to enable everyone to explore the topic. The course will be divided into 5 parts

January 26 Introduction to Course - **Day one – a day of questions and perhaps not too many answers**

Part One – Crime: its social importance and responses to crime

Readings: Convict Criminology

February 2 A question of crime

February 9 Myths: Criminal Justice in Turmoil

February 16 The psychological effects of imprisonment

February 23 The Graying Prison population

March 2 Collateral Consequences

March 2 Review for mid term

March 9 Mid Term

March 16 Spring Break No Class

Reading – Good Courts

March 23 The Guard Subculture

Film: Pelican Bay

Film: Serpico

March 30 Ethics

April 6 Re-entry: Myth and Reality

April 13 Innocence Projects

April 20 Community corrections

April 20 Submit Papers

Journal entries from this point forward may be any reaction you may have to an idea whether from readings, TV, Movies, News, etc.

April 27 Part Five: Student issues – presentations

May 4: The future of Criminal Justice

Student issues – presentations

May 4 Final Review Final Journal entry will be submitted

May 5 and 6 Reading Days

May 11 Final Exam

GRADING

Exams are worth 25 points each (50 points)

Paper is worth 30 points

Presentation is worth 10 points

Journal is worth 10 points

Journal requirements (1 entry per week, minimum 1 page entry – 15 entries)

Entries are to address Justice issues and topics for that date

The first paper is the first journal entry (1) Other entries should be comment from readings and should help prepare you for that days classroom discussion. Entries will be reactions from Convict criminology, Justice myths

You are encouraged to respond to scenes from movies, TV, news reports, or anything else that pertains to justice ideas

Final Journal entry a self-assessment of learning based on journal entries, class discussions, etc. This is your evaluation of how you have progressed through this course.

Presentation will be brief and discuss paper, personal growth, journal entries

Paper Requirements

- 1. The paper must address the topic**
- 2. The paper must satisfy the instructors guidelines to be rated as satisfactory otherwise they will be handed back as unsatisfactory**
- 3. All papers will be on white paper and typed**
- 4. Papers must adhere to the requirements of English Grammar.**
 - a. Proof all work prior to submission for mistakes of grammar**
 - b. Proof all work prior to submission for spelling errors**
 - c. Papers will NOT contain cross outs.**
- 5. References are to be documented, this includes the use of your textbook or class notes.**
- 6. Papers may not be plagiarized.**
- 7. The length of paper will be a minimum of 5 typed. You are expected to hand in a completed paper - one that contains a developed theme.**
- 8. The structure for the paper should be as follows:**
 - A. An Introduction**
 - B. The Body**
 - C. The Conclusion(s)**

Women's rights

Advocacy for criminal justice