

Special Topics: *Torture and Human Rights*

01:202:497

Michael Welch, Ph.D.

Professor

Program in Criminal Justice

retowelch@aol.com

www.professormichaelwelch.com

Office: Lucy Stone Hall, Room A357, Livingston Campus

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 4:00pm to 5:00pm

SYLLABUS

PURPOSE OF THE COURSE:

In a post-9/11 world, torture has been revitalized as a (dubious) tool for the global war on terror. The course analyzes moral, ethical, and legal implications to policies and practices involving extraordinary renditions, detainee maltreatment, "enhanced" interrogation, and torture. Special attention is directed at the phenomenon known as modern torture in which "science" is incorporated into interrogation methods. Among other things, those "no-touch" torture tactics are designed to evade human rights prosecutions. (See also Learning Goals listed below.)

REQUIRED BOOK:

McCoy, Alfred W. (2012) *Torture and Impunity: The U.S. Doctrine of Coercive Interrogation*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

Welch, Michael (2009) "American Pain-ology in the War on Terror: A Critique of 'Scientific' Torture." *Theoretical Criminology*, 13(4): 451-474.

Welch, Michael (2011) Illusions in Truth Seeking: The Perils of Interrogation and Torture in the War on Terror. *Social Justice: A Journal of Crime, Conflict & World Order*, 37(2-3): 123-148.

EVALUATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE:

Two Exams: 100 points each

Total Semester Points: 200

In preparation for the first exam, view the documentary *The Ghost of Abu Ghraib* (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P31RzaYp-Kg>). Turning to the Welch articles on torture (listed above) and the McCoy book (Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, 3), please critique the film by attending to the following themes: the allure of science, the science of pain (or pain-ology), human rights law, and impunity. Cite specific passages from the reading materials (use citation

style contain the Welch article in Theoretical Criminology). Your critique should be four pages (single-spaced, 12 pitch). Also precious points will be awarded to those who provide a clever (and insightful) title. The exam is due on October 22 (Tuesday) at 1: 44pm. Deliver it in class and not via email. Penalties apply for late arrivals.

In preparation for the second exam, view the film COMPLIANCE. Turning the McCoy book (Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7), please critique the film by attending to the following themes: authority, obedience, psychological manipulation, chain of command, and sexualization. Draw parallels to similar incidents discussed in the book (and cite specific page numbers). What lessons are learned from the film and the book concerning the various techniques of interrogation, sexual assault, and torture. Your critique should be four pages (single-spaced, 12 pitch). Precious points will be awarded to those who provide a clever (and insightful) title. The exam is due on December 10 (Tuesday) at 1: 47pm. Deliver it in class and not via email. Penalties apply for late arrivals.

There are NO extra-credit assignments.

Final Grades:

90 - 100% A

87 - 89% B+

80 - 86% B

77 - 79% C+

70 - 76% C

60 - 69% D

00 - 59% F

Nota Bene: Photographing, Video, or Tape recording are strictly prohibited, as well as note taking for commercial purposes.

This syllabus is subject to change.

IS THIS COURSE RIGHT FOR ME?

Students often enroll in a class without the benefit of knowing much about the course, the professor, and what is expected of them. In deciding whether this course suits your personal needs, interests, and lifestyle, the following checklist may be of assistance. Should you have difficulty with any of these items, this course is probably *not* suited for you.

1. Attendance and punctuality
2. Rigorous reading assignments and challenging exams
3. Being aware of current events and the world around you
4. Tolerance for the ideas and opinions of others
5. Remaining attentive and riveted to each lecture
6. Abstract thinking and critical thought
7. True and amazing stories

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.