

## SOCL 3371: Sociology of the Criminal Justice System Fall 2018

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**Class Location/Time:** Tuesdays & Thursdays, 12:00pm - 1:20pm, 152 Coates Hall

### **SOCL 3371: SOCIOLOGY OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM (3)**

Prereq.: SOCL 2001 or equivalent. The criminal justice system and its organizational components.

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course presents an overview of the criminal justice system and social control, from policing to trials and sentencing policy. Among other topics, we will discuss tough on crime policies, drug treatment courts, the War on Terrorism, the politics of crime and crime control, the punishment of sex offenders and its implications for public safety, rules of evidence, prison riots, and the death penalty. The emphasis in the course is to critically evaluate how we process individuals through the criminal justice system and the implications this processing has on public safety, civil liberties, public policy, and social control. Particular attention is paid to current challenges to the system. The first season of **The Wire** will be used as a medium to illustrate the gap between the idea of the criminal justice system and the reality of the criminal justice system.

#### **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- To *describe* basic features of the American criminal justice system, legal sanctions, and methods of social control;
- To *explore* different philosophical perspectives on justice and formal and informal decision-making;
- To *understand* police organizations, how cases are processed through the court system, sentencing decisions, and the various forms of criminal punishment;
- To *critically evaluate* criminal justice policies and their consequences;
- To *become* smart consumers of news reports, political rhetoric, and public discussion about crime, punishment, and the law.

#### **ASSIGNED TEXTS:**

Currie, Elliott. 2013. *Crime and Punishment in America (Revised Edition)*. New York, NY.: Picador.

Kubrin, Charis E. & Thomas Stucky. 2013. *Introduction to Criminal Justice: A Sociological Perspective*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

\* In addition to these books, several articles / chapters will be assigned throughout the semester.

### **REQUIRED MATERIAL:**

The Wire: Season 1 (DVD / BLU-RAY / HBO GO / HBO NOW / Amazon Prime / iTunes)  
Blue Bloods - Various Episodes (DVD / CBS All Access / iTunes / Hulu / Netflix)  
Frontline (Season 22) - The Plea (iTunes)  
13th (Netflix)  
The House I live In (Netflix)  
VICE - Fixing the System & Raised in the System (HBO GO / HBO NOW)

### **OPTIONAL MATERIAL:**

The Wire: Seasons 2 - 5 (DVD / BLU-RAY / HBO GO / HBO NOW / Amazon Prime / iTunes)  
Alvarez, Rafael. 2009. *The Wire: Truth Be Told*. New York, NY: Grove Press.  
Reiman, Jeffrey and Paul Leighton. 2012. *The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison (Tenth Edition)*. London, UK.: Pearson.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING**

Students are expected to come to class on time and remain for the entire class. Attendance and participation are vital components to being successful in this class. The reading assignments should be completed by the dates indicated on the schedule below. In class, you should be prepared to demonstrate your understanding of the reading material (or at least have a set of thoughtful questions about it) and prepared to offer a point of view about the issues being addressed. Participation by students produces a more thoughtful discussion which will make the course not only more interesting but more meaningful. Class attendance / participation is worth 20% of your grade and should not be taken lightly.

Several quizzes and writing assignments will be given out periodically throughout the quarter. If students are actively engaged in class discussion then quizzes will become infrequent. However, if class participation is lacking then quizzes will be relied upon to gauge student preparedness.

Four in class exams will be given on Tuesday, September 4, 2018; Tuesday, October 2, 2018; Tuesday, October 23, 2018; & Thursday, November 8, 2018. The final examination will be given during the examination period on Wednesday, December 5, 2018 from 10:00am to 12:00pm. The final is comprehensive. All exams will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. All students will be taking the class for a letter grade; there is no pass/fail option.

Grades will be distributed as follows:

		<u>Grading Scale:</u>	
		97% - 100%	A+
		94% - 96.99%	A
		90% - 93.99%	A-
		87% - 89.99%	B+
		84% - 86.99%	B
		80% - 83.99%	B-
		77% - 79.99%	C+
		74% - 76.99%	C
		70% - 73.99%	C-
		67% - 69.99%	D+
		64% - 66.99%	D
		60% - 63.99%	D-
		0% - 59.99%	F
<b>Class Attendance / Participation</b>	<b>20%</b>		
<b>Quizzes</b>	<b>5%</b>		
<b>Writing Assignments</b>	<b>15%</b>		
<b>Exams</b>	<b>30%</b>		
<b>Final</b>	<b>30%</b>		

## **COURSE POLICIES**

*Academic Misconduct and Classroom Etiquette:* Students are expected to abide by the LSU student code of conduct. Students who are caught cheating on an exam you will be referred to LSU's Dean of Students. Students are also expected to abide by the basic rules of classroom etiquette including: getting to class on time and coming prepared to engage; turning off all electronic devices; not talking during lectures; and remaining respectful of diverse views when engaging in classroom debate. All views are allowed and welcome; however, expressing them in a respectful way is required. Reasonable people can disagree, but disagreement needs to be expressed in ways that are conducive to the free exchange of ideas, productive dialogue, and meaningful learning.

*Use of Technology in the Classroom:* Please turn off all computers, cell phones, pagers, portable devices (e.g., Tablets, MP3, or CD players) and any other electronic communication and/or entertainment devices before coming to class. Students with phones that ring during class will be asked to leave.

*Missed Classes:* If you miss a class, you will be required to provide written documentation of a valid reason for your absence within one week of the day (see LSU Policy Statement 22, posted on the course website, for examples of valid reasons for absences). Missing class more than once or twice is likely to compromise your grade.

*Missed Exams:* If you miss an exam, you will be required to provide written documentation of a valid reason for your absence within one week of the exam day (see LSU Policy Statement 22, posted on the course website, for examples of valid reasons for absences). All make-up exams will be administered at my discretion and at a time and place of my choosing. If you miss a scheduled make-up exam you will receive a zero for your exam grade, which will make it very difficult to pass this course.

*Disability:* Any student who feels he/she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the professor privately to discuss specific needs. Also, contact the LSU Disability Services at (225) 578-5919 as soon as possible to better ensure that accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

## **OUT OF CLASS EXPECTATIONS**

It is expected that the students have read the assigned chapters or pages prior to class for the background necessary to properly participate in the discussion and think critically about the concepts addressed. As a general policy, for each hour you are in class, you (the student) should plan to spend at least two hours preparing for the next class. Since this course is for three credit hours, you should expect to spend around six hours outside of class each week reading or writing assignments for the class.

### **COURSE SUGGESTIONS:**

Although it is not required, you are encouraged to:

1. Raise your hand in class, question the professor, and engage with the material via discussion!
2. Get acquainted with one another. Exchange e-mail addresses and phone numbers. Form study groups. Engage in collaborative learning. Studies show that students who engage in collaborative learning tend to do better in college and beyond.
3. See the professor and/or the GA as often as is necessary to do well in this course. Do not wait until problems are irreparable or concerns are outdated to seek assistance. Try to make it to our office hours but if that is not possible make an appointment. If you extend the effort, we will be available and willing to help you do well in this class.

### **CONTENT & TRIGGER ADVISORY**

Several of the materials, used in class and assigned, contain mature themes with coarse language and adult content - viewer discretion is advised. To a degree, this is the point of using these materials to better understand the idiosyncratic criminal justice system and the larger social world - learning can be an uncomfortable process. If you have specific triggers, please let me know and I will note the assignments accordingly. However, this will not release you from the assignment. The trigger warnings are to give you the tools you require to complete the assigned work.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE:**

### **Week 1: INTRODUCTION**

August 21st

**Class Orientation**

**Human Behavior & Crime Control**

August 23rd

**Perspectives of Punishment**

### **Week 2: FOUNDATIONAL JUSTICE ISSUES**

August 28th

**The Criminal Process**

August 30th

**Criminal Justice Theory**

### **Week 3: POLICING**

September 4th

**EXAM 1**

September 6th

**History of Policing**

### **Week 4: POLICING**

September 11th

**Police Reform: A Revised History**

September 13th

**Police Culture**

#### **Read:**

Kubrin & Stucky - Preface, Chapters 1 & 2

#### **Watch:** The Wire - Season 1

Episode 1: The Target

Episode 2: The Detail

#### **Read:**

Kubrin & Stucky - Chapters 3 & 4

#### **Watch:** The Wire - Season 1

Episode 3: The Buys

Episode 4: Old Cases

#### **Read:**

Kubrin & Stucky - Chapter 5

#### **Watch:** The Wire - Season 1

Episode 5: The Pages

Episode 6: The Wire

Episode 7: One Arrest

#### **Read:**

Kubrin & Stucky - Chapters 6 & 7

Kelling & Moore - Evolving Strategy (PDF)

Oliver - 4th Era of Policing (PDF)

Padilla & Wyatt - 'Po-lice' Culture (PDF)

#### **Watch:** The Wire - Season 1

Episode 8: Lessons

Episode 9: Game Day

#### **Watch:** Wyatt Cenac's Problem Areas

Episode 6: Gun Problems

**Week 5: POLICING**

September 18th

**Police Practices**

September 20th

**Policing Strategies & Impact**

**Week 6: POLICING**

September 25th

**Police Misconduct & Corruption**

September 27th

**Police Catchup & Review**

**Week 7: COURTS**

October 2nd

**EXAM 2**

October 4th

**The Courtroom Players**

**Week 8: COURTS**

October 9th

**Plea Bargaining & Justice**

October 11th

**Disparities in Criminal Sentencing**

**Read:**

Kubrin & Stucky - Chapters 8 & 9

Simon - Homicide Excerpt (PDF)

Vito - Compstat in *The Wire* (PDF)

**Watch:** The Wire - Season 1

Episode 10: The Cost

Episode 11: The Hunt

**Watch:** Wyatt Cenac's Problem Areas

Episode 3: Community Policing Problems

**Read:**

Kubrin & Stucky - Chapters 10 & 11

Cooper & Bolen - Without Regard (PDF)

**Watch:** The Wire - Season 1

Episode 12: Cleaning Up

Episode 13: Sentencing

**Watch:** Blue Bloods - Season 5

Episode 2: Forgive and Forget

**Watch:** Wyatt Cenac's Problem Areas

Episode 7: Misconduct Problems

Episode 4: Police Abolition

**Read:**

Kubrin & Stucky - Chapters 12, 13, & 14

**Read:**

Kubrin & Stucky - Chapter 15 & 16

**Watch:** Frontline: The Plea

**Week 9: COURTS**

October 16th

**The Jury / Specialized Courts**

**Read:**

Kubrin & Stucky - Chapters 17, & 19

October 18th - No Class

**Fall Break**

**Week 10: COURTS**

October 23rd

**EXAM 3**

**Read:**

Currie - Intro & Chapter 1

October 25th

**MAKING A MURDERER (Episode 1)**

**Week 11: CORRECTIONS**

October 30th

**Goals & Forms of Punishment**

**Read:**

Kubrin & Stucky - Chapters 20, 21, & 22

Currie - Chapter 2

Henning - Chapter 4

Baumgartner & Lyman - LA Execution (PDF)

November 1st

**Death Penalty / Sex Offenders**

**Watch:** Blue Bloods - Season 5

Episode 18: Bad Company

**Watch:** Wyatt Cenac's Problem Areas

Episode 9: Punitive Problems

**Week 12: CORRECTIONS**

November 6th

**The Experience of Punishment / Prison Riots**

**Read:**

Kubrin & Stucky - Chapters 23 & 24

Currie - Chapter 3

**Watch:** The Farm: Life Inside Angola Prison

November 8th

**EXAM 4**

**Week 13: CRIME CONTROL TODAY**

November 13th

**The Carceral State**

**Read:**

Kubrin & Stucky - Chapters 25 & 26

Currie - Chapter 4

November 15th

**THE HOUSE I LIVE IN**

**Watch:** VICE - Raised in the System

**Week 14: CRIME CONTROL TODAY**

November 20th

**Mass Incarceration's Collateral Consequences**

**Emerging Crime Control Strategies**

**Read:**

Kubrin & Stucky - 28, 29 & 30

Currie - Chapter 5

November 22nd - No Class

**THANKSGIVING BREAK**

**Watch:** VICE - Fixing the System

Netflix - 13th

**Week 15: CRIME CONTROL TODAY**

November 27th

**Where Do We Go From Here? / Pyrrhic Defeat Theory**

**Read:**

Currie - Conclusion & Afterword

Reiman & Leighton - Chapter 1 & 4 (PDF)

November 29th

**GUEST SPEAKER: STEVE LASSALLE**

Louisiana Department of Public Safety &

Corrections' Probation and Parole

**Week 16: FINAL EXAMS**

Tuesday / Thursday 12:00pm - 1:30pm

**December 5th (Wednesday)**

**10:00am-12:00pm**