

Political Science 313
CRIMINAL JUSTICE POLICY
Spring 2023

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Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 2:00-3:00; and by appointment

Course Description

This course covers the basic policies and controversies in criminal justice in the United States. It will focus primarily on criminal justice policy. How these policies get made, why they get made, how well or poorly they work, and what we can do better. We will examine primarily longstanding areas of policy debates, but we will also pay attention to policy debates in the news.

Readings

When Brute Force Fails by Mark Kleiman
Courtroom 302 by Steve Bogira
Reserve Readings (* required reading; ^ recommended reading)
The New York Times or *The Washington Post* on-line

The lectures and the assigned readings are intended to complement one another. In order to get the most out of the lectures it is important that you do the assigned reading prior to the appropriate class period. You should read the Times or Post on-line in order to keep up with major political events during the semester, especially as they relate to topics in criminal justice.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students should be able to...

- 1) Explain the political factors shaping criminal justice policy
- 2) Evaluate the effectiveness of current policy towards addressing criminal justice policy problems
- 3) Apply knowledge from course material to contemporary political debates on related issues
- 4) Identify the key issues in major areas of American criminal justice policy

Requirements and Grading

- Midterm (20%)
- Final Exam (25%)
- Class Participation (10%)
- Paper assignment 1 (20%)
- Paper assignment 2 (25%)

Participation

Class participation is an essential part of the class. At minimum, this means good attendance. Students are also expected to be attentive during lectures and to ask questions and contribute comments to class discussions. *You should come to each class having read the required assignment and prepared to discuss and/or write about the issues raised by the readings.* It is also your responsibility to remain abreast of current events in American politics, especially as they apply to criminal justice policy. If you want to receive an A for participation, you need to 1) have excellent attendance; 2) contribute regularly to class discussions, and; 3) demonstrate knowledge of assigned readings and current events, especially during in-class writing assignments.

Paper Assignments

Paper Assignment I

Find a case from within the past five years that you consider to be a miscarriage of justice. Research and describe the details of the case. Discuss what policy failures led to this particular injustice. What policy changes would have prevented this injustice and would prevent similar future injustices? **6 pages maximum. Due by the beginning of class February 14.**

Paper Assignment II

Choose a (relatively narrow) area of criminal justice policy in need of reform and investigate potential reforms/solutions. What is the problem and why? How would the reform address these issues? How likely would proposed reforms be successful? In short, how would your reform make this policy "smarter"? How does the contemporary political context affect the likelihood for effectively addressing this problem? Critically analyze the problem, the proposed solution, and the costs and benefits of reform proposals. If you have any doubts as to the appropriateness of your topic, consult the instructor in advance. **8 pages maximum. Due by the beginning of class April 18.**

You are responsible for the full details of the assignments available at the course website.

Late Policy

It is expected that exams will be taken and assignments turned in when they are scheduled on the syllabus. There will be a 20-point penalty for failure to take an exam at the required time and a 1/3 letter grade per day penalty for written assignments. If you miss an exam, the rescheduling must take place at the convenience of the instructor. Written assignments are due at the beginning of class. To avoid penalties you need to let the instructor know of valid, exigent circumstances before the assigned time.

Academic Integrity

Do your own work. Each test and assignment will include a signed statement of an honor pledge: "I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this test or assignment." Plagiarism will be addressed in accord with University policy. The code of Student Conduct and associated policy (NCSU POL11.35.1) can be found here: <http://policies.ncsu.edu/policy/pol-11-35-01>. Academic Integrity also includes not representing work from AI as your own.

Disability

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of available accommodations, students must register with Disability Services for Students at 1900 Student Health Center, Campus Box 7509, 515-7653. For more information on NC State's policy on working with students with disabilities, see the Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Regulation 02.20.1

http://www.ncsu.edu/policies/academic_affairs/courses_undergrad/REG02.20.1.php

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Assigned Readings

January 10

Course Introduction

Klein, "How politics makes us stupid" *
Hidden Brain, "The Double Standard" *
Matthews, "The book that changed how I think about thinking"*

January 12 – 17

Making Criminal Law and Policy

Kleiman, Introduction and chapters 1-2
Marion & Oliver, "Criminal Justice Ideology" *
Collins, "The systemic racism black Americans face, explained"*

January 19

Crime and Deterrence

Kleiman, chapters 3-4
Greenblatt, "Crime in America"*
Bokat-Lindell, "Why Are So Many Americans Killing One Another?"*
Klein, "Interview with Patrick Sharkey"*

January 24 – 31

Courts and Constitutional Issues

Lantigua-Williams, "Are Prosecutors the Key to Justice Reform?"*
Bazon, "This District Attorney Is Fighting Crime..."*
Oliver, "Public Defenders"*
Yoffe, "Innocence is Irrelevant"*
Oliver, "Forensic Science"*
Balko, "How do we improve forensics?"*
Mantel, "Wrongful Convictions"*
Oliver, "Prosecutors" ^

February 2 – 9

Policing

Lyons, "Police Under Scrutiny"*
Yglesias, "Defund police is a bad idea, not a bad slogan"*
Lopez, "How to reform American Police..."*
Chang, "We can't fix policing without talking about race"*
Klaas, "Focus on Who Police Are, Not What They Do"*

February 14

Guest Speaker: Cary Deputy Chief of Police

Paper #1 due February 14

February 16

Wellness Day

February 21 – 28

Drugs

Kleiman, chapter 9
Lopez, "America can end it's war on Drugs: Here's How"*
Lopez, "The War on Drugs Explained"*
Frakt, "Pointers From Portugal on Addiction and the Drug War"*
Price, "Marijuana Legalization"*
Wallace-Wells, "Is there a case for legalizing heroin?"*
Hari, "7 facts about drugs and addiction..." ^
Lopez, "Why you can't blame mass incarceration on the war on drugs" ^

March 2

Midterm Exam

