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SOCI 221.01: Criminal Justice System

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SOCI 221, Spring Semester 2017

The Criminal Justice System

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Note: When contacting professors, teaching assistants, or preceptors by email, a student should use his or her UM "official" (eg.: umontana or umconnect) email address.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to take an analytical and sociological look at the American criminal justice system and its component parts. The course consists of four units. The first is an introductory unit that examines crime and the nature of the criminal law and ends with an overview of the criminal justice system. Later units cover policing, criminal adjudication, and post-conviction strategies. Throughout the course we will be focusing on the question of how the desire to control crime must be balanced by the need to protect citizen's rights. Students should leave this course with a basic understanding of the operation of the American criminal justice system.

TEXTBOOK AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

The text for this course is: Criminal Justice: Mainstream and Crosscurrents (3rd Edition) by John Randolph Fuller, Oxford University Press 2014

Since you will be reading nearly the entire book, you are encouraged to secure access to a copy. Note that the textbook serves as a supplement to, but not a substitute for, the material presented in lecture.

Reading assignments:

Unit I:	Chapters 1-4
Unit II:	Chapters 5-7
Unit III:	Chapters 8-10
Unit IV:	Chapters 11-13

TESTING AND GRADES

Four exams consisting of a combination of multiple choice, short answer and true/false questions will be administered during the course of the semester. Each exam is worth up to 75 points. A student's grade will be based on the total number of points earned and assigned as follows:

270 points or above	A
240 to 269.5 points	B
210 to 239.5 points	C
180 to 209.5 points	D
179.5 points or below	F

If the total number of points earned falls below but very close to the cutoff for a particular grade, the higher grade may be assigned only if the student has demonstrated excellent attendance and class participation. Plus or minus grades will not be used.

A FEW OTHER CLASS POLICIES

No "extra credit" assignments or projects will be allowed.

To receive a grade other than an F, a student must take all of the exams.

If a student will not be able to take an exam on time, prior notification of the professor is required. A message can be left on voice mail or email 24 hours a day. Failure to provide prior notification can result in the student receiving zero points for that exam.

Those taking the class on a Credit/No Credit basis must earn at least 180 points in order to receive credit.

Attendance and active class participation are expected and may be taken into consideration in the assignment of final grades in marginal cases. Students with a record of poor attendance should not expect a favorable recommendation from the instructor for scholarships, internships, jobs, or admission to grad school or law school.

The fourth exam for this class will take place on Wednesday, May 10th at 8 AM, during finals week. Students should plan their schedules accordingly.

To protect privacy, test scores and course grades will not be given out over the telephone or via email. Students must approach the instructor in person.

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The UM Student Conduct Code is available at: http://www.umt.edu/vpsa/policies/student_conduct.php.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

Teaching and learning are most likely to take place where the classroom environment is one characterized by mutual respect and freedom from unnecessary distractions. Below are some comments regarding the responsibilities of instructors and students in maintaining a good classroom environment. The instructor, teaching assistant, and preceptors will work hard to adhere to these guidelines and students will be expected to do likewise.

Vital to the whole notion of a university is the free exchange of ideas. Such an exchange is more likely in an atmosphere free from ridicule, insults, or personal attacks. Instructors must deal with their students in a respectful fashion. Likewise, students must demonstrate respect in their communications with instructors, teaching assistants, preceptors, guest speakers, and other students.

Late arrivals and early departures decrease the learning time available, interrupt the flow of class, and are distracting to all. Both the instructor and the student need to be in the classroom and ready to begin class at the scheduled starting time. Except in the case of sudden illness or other emergency, early departures should be avoided. If because of extraordinary circumstances, a student knows that he or she has to leave early, that student should let the instructor know before class and sit in a location where he or she can depart with minimal interruption. The instructor should be careful to avoid keeping the students in class past the scheduled ending time. In turn, students should refrain from packing up their belongings and/or leaving prior to being dismissed by the instructor.

It is also distracting when students engage in private conversations, use cell phones, listen to headphones, surf the internet on laptop computers or other devices, or read non-class materials during class. Cell phones, pagers, and similar devices must be adjusted so that they do not ring, beep, or buzz audibly during class.

The exercise of common courtesy on the part of the instructor, the teaching assistant, preceptors, and students will enhance the success of this class.

If a student has concerns about any aspect of the class, he or she should bring those concerns to the attention of the instructor or teaching assistant in a timely fashion.