

CJ 100 – Intro to Criminal Justice

Syllabus

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Course Information

Instructor Information

See the online course in Blackboard for instructor contact information and availability.

Textbook and Course Materials

Textbook – Lab, Steven P., Marian R. Williams, Jefferson E. Holcomb, Melissa W. Burek, William R. King, and Michael E. Bueger. (2013). Criminal Justice: The Essentials. 4th Edition. New York: Oxford University Press. ISBN# 9780190272524

Contact the [Scribner Bookstore](#) for ordering information.

Course Description

This course is structured to provide an overview of the principles, practices, and procedures of the criminal justice system and its components, namely, the police, the courts, and corrections. It is geared to present an introductory examination to the operations and issues of the United States criminal justice system.

Credit Hours

4

Prerequisites and/or Co-requisites

No prerequisites

Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- SLO #1: Understand the three major entities in the American criminal justice system: police, courts, and corrections.
- SLO #2: Explain the importance of the law in the criminal justice system and differentiate substantive law from procedural law.
- SLO #3: Demonstrate an understanding in how crime data is collected and analyzed.
- SLO #4: Explain how the criminal justice system in the United States is influenced by each branch of the government (executive, legislative, and judicial), and at each level of our republic (federal, state, and local).

Course Format and Design

This course is offered fully online in modular format. The course is designed to provide students with a variety of learning experiences and equip students with learning resources and activities that enable learning outcomes.

You will note that each Module contains a list of vocabulary terms. I do not expect that students memorize all of these terms; rather, it can be helpful for some students as they prepare for exams.

University Information and Policies

University Mission Statement

Prepare each student for a meaningful life and career

The mission of Virginia Wesleyan University is to engage students of diverse ages, religions, ethnic origins, and backgrounds in a rigorous liberal arts education that will prepare them to meet the challenges of life and career in a complex and rapidly changing world. In this endeavor, the university employs a wide range of approaches to teaching and learning and provides opportunities to connect the study of the liberal arts with practical learning experiences on campus, in the Hampton Roads region, and throughout the world. In accord with our United Methodist heritage, Virginia Wesleyan aspires to be a supportive community that is committed to social responsibility, ethical conduct, higher learning, and religious freedom.

Special Needs and Accommodations

Virginia Wesleyan University is committed to giving all students the opportunity of academic success. If you are a student who is requesting accommodations based on the academic impact of a disability, speak to your instructor about your accommodations letter and specific needs. If you do not have an accommodations letter for this course, you will need to visit or call for an appointment with a disability support specialist to coordinate reasonable accommodations. Visit [Virginia Wesleyan University Disability Support Services](#) on the Web.

Honor Code

As a liberal arts university, Virginia Wesleyan is committed to values of citizenship and social responsibility fundamental to a community of scholars. People who join this academic community agree to maintain academic honesty and, therefore, not to cheat, lie, falsify data, or commit plagiarism or academic theft. Refer to the [Virginia Wesleyan Honor Code](#) for definitions, rights, responsibilities, and procedures.

Student Handbook

All students are expected to uphold the university's mission statement and abide by the university's honor code, the Virginia Wesleyan Creed, and all other standards that govern the conduct and behavior of students. For more information, refer to the [student handbook](#).

Technology Requirements

Online courses require that you have access to a computer with a reliable Internet connection (high-speed access recommended). A backup plan is recommended in the event of an Internet outage.

You will need to have access to and be able to use the following:

- A Web browser (Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox is recommended.)
- Adobe Acrobat Reader ([Get Adobe Acrobat Reader free.](#))
- Microsoft Office 365 ([Get Office 365 free.](#))
- A Virginia Wesleyan e-mail account to use when submitting assignments

For assistance with passwords and user IDs, contact the [Virginia Wesleyan Help Desk](#).

For assistance with Blackboard, please contact [the Learning House Help Center](#).

Instructional Technology

For information, support, and training in the academic software of the university, refer to the university's department of [Instructional Technology](#).

Learning Center

Contact the [Learning Center](#) for the following services:

- Academic advocacy and communication
- Academic planning and workshops
- Academic tutoring
- Computers and assistive technology
- Disability support services
- Individualized writing assistance
- Speech lab

Hofheimer Library

The Hofheimer Library supports the Virginia Wesleyan community by providing services, resources, and facilities that advance the academic program. Visit the [Hofheimer Library](#) on the Web for information, resources, services, and hours.

Nondiscrimination Statement

Virginia Wesleyan University does not discriminate against students of any race, religion, color, creed, gender, national and ethnic origin, age, marital status, covered veteran status, handicap, sexual orientation, or any other legally protected status in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other university-administered programs and facilities.

Diversity Statement

Virginia Wesleyan University values the benefits of its diversity. We are committed to educating the campus community about issues of diversity. The campus promotes freedom of thought and opinion in the spirit of mutual respect. Our campus community is enriched through programs, activities, and interactions by celebrating our uniqueness as well as our commonalities.

This commitment to diversity links programs and services that support the distinctiveness of individuals regardless of racial and ethnic backgrounds, physical and cognitive abilities, family status, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, age, and religious and spiritual values.

An essential feature of this community is an environment in which all students, faculty, administrators, and staff are able to study and work free from bias and harassment. Such an environment contributes to the growth and development of each member of the community.

Course Policies

Participation

It is expected that all students enrolled in the course will stay current with course material and participate in all discussion questions, activities, critical thinking exercises, and take exams at their designated times. Given the nature of this course it is imperative that you stay current. Please refer to the course schedule for a list and due dates for scheduled tasks. It is difficult to determine the exact amount of time that it will take you to complete weekly course tasks as it will likely vary by student. It is my estimation that you will probably need to put in approximately 12 hours of work per week to complete all required tasks (i.e., readings, modules, assignments, videos, etc.). When possible, estimated time commitments appear at the beginning of each module.

Late Work

Late assignments will lose points (half-credit) if they are not turned in at the time they are due. Furthermore, assignments will not be accepted after 24 hours from its original due date.

Makeup Work

Make-up exams will only be given in cases of extreme illness, medical emergency, death in the family, or conflict with a religious holiday. In the case of illness or death in the family, documentation may be required, and I MUST be notified within twenty-four hours of the exam date. If these requirements are not met, you will receive 0 points for that exam.

Extra Credit

No extra credit.

Netiquette Guide

Criminal justice issues are often controversial and not everyone may hold the same views regarding these issues. Each of you is expected to be respectful and tolerant of others' viewpoints and to communicate with each other as well as the instructor in a courteous manner. We will engage in frequent discussion (via online discussion boards) in this course and everyone is expected to act professionally.

Strategies for Success

Everyone can earn a good grade in this course if you complete the assigned readings, complete all discussion and critical thinking questions, and study for the two exams. Keep in mind that the teaching videos have been selected to enhance your understanding of the material. To ensure that you are watching these videos, a small portion of your mid-term and final exam questions may come from one or more of these videos.

Course Grades and Assignments

Grade Allocation

Assignment	Point Values [or Percentages]
Weekly Discussions	20%
Mid-term Exam	15%
Final Exam	20%
Critical Thinking Papers	30%
Interview Project	15%
Total Percentage Possible	100%

Grading Scale

A	93–100
A-	90–92
B+	88–89
B	83–87
B-	80–82
C+	78–79
C	73–77
C-	70–72
D+	68–69
D	63–67
D-	60–62
F	Below 60

Assignment Descriptions

Description of Graded Work:

Exams: The class will consist of 2 exams, a midterm and a final. Most of the material on the exams will come from the assigned readings; however, I may include a few questions from the videos in each module to ensure that students are completing each module. Refer to the course calendar for exam dates. They will show up in the "Tests & Quizzes" tab. As you can see these two exams account for 35% of your course grade (15% for mid-term, and 20% for the final) so it is very important that you prepare well for these exams and that includes reading the book chapters and working your way through the modules.

Discussion Posts: Participation in **five** graded discussion forums will occur during the course. For each corresponding module, students are required to post **one** response to the discussion question(s) posed. Students should then reply to **two** other student's posts for each discussion forum. A total of 20% of your final grade will be based on effort and participation in these discussions. Note that there are actually 6 discussion post forums throughout the semester. **Your lowest discussion post score will be dropped.**

Grading for discussion posts is as follows:

10 points: includes one post and two responses, sufficiently and substantively addresses all questions, posts reflect thoughtful consideration of the questions and reactions.

7 points: missing one post requirement, does not sufficiently and substantively address all questions, posts mostly reflect thoughtful consideration.

5 points: missing one post requirement, does not address questions, lacks thoughtful consideration.

0 points: missing more than one post requirement, answers questions incompletely, response does not indicate any thought put into it.

At the ending of the session, your 5 highest scores will be added, and then multiplied by two. This will create your final discussion post grade. For example, if your discussion post grades were 10, 10, 9, 9, and 8, this would total 46, which would be multiplied by 2, making your final score of 92.

This is intended to be an interactive, fun part of class where you get to express yourself a bit and share with your classmates and your instructor. Please participate.

Critical Thinking Papers

Students will be required to answer five critical thinking questions throughout the session. Students will have the ability to answer two questions from a list of four questions. The purpose of this exercise is to encourage students to think deeper, and move beyond the pages of a textbook. Each critical thinking answer should be at least one full page (approximately 350 words) **per question**, double-spaced, and 12-point Times New Roman font. Students can receive up to 20 points for each paper.

Students should note that each question/answer contains a maximum of 10

points. So, for example, if your answer to one question is graded an 8, and the answer to another question earns you a 9, you will receive a 17/20 for that particular modules critical thinking exercise.

Grading for Critical Thinking Papers is as follows:

20-16 points: A flawless paper, or just a couple of minor errors. Clear, well-organized paper; paragraphs begin with topic sentences related to the theme. Paper flows logically, and reader does not get “lost.

15-11 points: Generally sound organization; some topic sentences strong, others weak; some paragraphs not fully developed; reader occasionally confused by awkward organization; some unclear sentences or fuzzy ideas. Distractions due to spelling, punctuation, and/or grammar errors. Writer seems a bit careless (paper was not proof-read as much as it should have been).

10-0 points: Poor organization, lacks clarity; paper not organized around coherent paragraphs; paragraphs lack topic sentences. Paper is seriously marred by mistakes in grammar, spelling, and punctuation; a clear lack of editing and proof-reading.

Interview Project

Students will be required to interview someone that is in the criminal justice field, and then write an essay based on this interview. Students should select someone to interview that is working for an agency or who has a job that the student is interested in. Students will develop their own questions for this interview (at least 20). The paper will be a minimum of 3 pages (1,000 words, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font). Students will submit the name and agency/ organization by the end of module 2, the list of questions by the end of module 4, and the final paper by the end of module 6.

Course Policies on Graded Work:

With the exception of discussion posts, all work in the class is to be done independently, without help from anyone else. Assignments and exams are to be completed individually. Papers are to reflect original work by the student and must appropriately give credit to others' thoughts and ideas. Working too closely with other students or failure to appropriately cite others' work may result in academic dishonesty. According to University regulations the following constitute forms of academic dishonesty: cheating on quizzes or exams, computer dishonesty, plagiarism, grade falsification, and receiving unauthorized assistance from others.

The Bottom Line: violations of academic integrity will not be tolerated. Students who engage in any of the above behaviors will receive a failing grade for the assignment and possibly the course. The student's name will also be turned over to the Dean of Students Office for appropriate action.

Make-up exams will only be given in cases of extreme illness, medical emergency, death in the family, or conflict with a religious holiday. In the case of illness or death in the family, documentation may be required, and I MUST be notified within twenty-four hours of the exam date. If these requirements are not met, you will receive 0 points for that

exam. Make-up exams will be comparable but not identical to the original exam. Quizzes must be completed by the time they are due.

Late assignments will lose points (half-credit) if they are not turned in at the time they are due. Furthermore, assignments will not be accepted after 24 hours from its original due date.

Course Schedule

Refer to the [academic calendar](#) for important university dates.

The instructor reserves the right to make necessary changes, additions, deletions, and revisions to the course schedule as needed.

Module	Readings	Assignments Due
1 Foundations of the United States Criminal Justice System	Lab et al., pp. 1-23	Critical Thinking #1 (20 points) Discussion forum – “UCR Crime Data” (10 points)
2 The Law: The Driver of the Criminal Justice Bus	Lab et al., pp. 24 to the middle of 35; 39-49	Critical Thinking #2 (20 points) Discussion forum – “Mapp v. Ohio: A Landmark Case in Search & Seizure Law” (10 points)
3 Policing in the United States	Lab et al., pp. 50-80	Critical Thinking #3 (20 points) Discussion – “Police Behavior During Traffic and Street Stops” (10 points) Mid-Term Exam – Based on Modules 1-3
4 The Criminal Court System	Lab et al., pp. 82-92; middle of 96 – middle of 103; 110-118	Critical Thinking #4 (20 points) Discussion – “Defending Gideon: A Landmark Case in the Right to Counsel” (10 points)
5 Institutional Corrections	Lab et al., pp. 119-131; middle of 134 – bottom of 137; middle of 142 – middle of 144; middle of 150-151	Discussion – “First Days in Jail” (10 points)
6 Community Corrections	Lab et al., pp 153 – middle of 155; bottom of 157 – 159; 162 – middle of 176; middle of 177 - 182	Critical Thinking #5 (20 points) Discussion – “Can we Reduce Recidivism” (10 points)
7 Wrap-Up		Final Exam – Based on Modules 4-6

Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning, through engagement of other students, is a key ingredient of participatory learning. Students can expect each online course to have some degree of collaborative learning. The type of collaboration may be minimal and take the form of weekly small group discussions.

Alternatively, the type of collaboration may be a major virtual team project that requires weekly and substantive participation from all members. Regardless of the type of collaborative learning, all students are expected to participate in a timely, substantive, on-subject, professional, and complete manner.

Hints for Success in Your Online Course

1. Be sure you have access to proper computer equipment, Internet service, and software as listed above.
2. Designate certain times each week to work on your course. Plan ahead, avoid procrastination, even out your workload, and absorb material before moving on.
3. Have a specific achievement goal for each log-on session to help you accomplish what you need to get done and avoid distractions
4. Actively participate in discussions. Meaningful interchange will lead to better understanding of various aspects of the course and also contribute to the personality and warmth of the online class community.
5. If assigned to an online team or study group, work with your team members actively from the start. Thus, team members will benefit from the other group members' ideas and experiences and can depend on one another to complete assigned tasks.
6. Practice an informal but organized, concise, and clear writing style that aids online communication.
7. Venture beyond the classroom. The Internet medium of the online classroom gives ready access to electronic libraries and to pertinent websites that offer a significant advantage in understanding graduate-level material.
8. Your class may occasionally use short multimedia components to enrich the learning environment. Follow the instructions provided.