



Department of Public Justice  
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

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458 Mahar Hall  
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**Course Syllabus: PBJ 401-030**  
Seminar in Public Justice  
Fall 2017

Class Meetings: M 5:00 – 7:45 p.m.  
Classroom: 111 Mahar Hall

Office Hours: M 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m., T 11:00 a.m. –  
12:30 p.m., or by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

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This course is the Public Justice capstone course, which offers students the opportunity to reflect on their undergraduate experience in Public Justice and focus upon topics at the forefront of discussion in the U.S. today. It is designed to draw together students' intellectual, theoretical, and practical experience within the Public Justice system and enhance their understanding of their role within it. Students also will have the opportunity to select a topic within Public Justice of interest and investigate it further through individualized research, writing, and oral presentations.

**COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

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By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

- Critically analyze criminal justice ideas and related policy implications;
- Conduct independent research in the area of Criminal Justice;
- Present written findings pursuant to department guidelines; and
- Present and defend research findings orally.

**TEXTBOOK AND READINGS**

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Required Textbook:

Kappeler, V. E., & Potter, G. W. (2005). *The mythology of crime and criminal justice* (4th Edition). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc. **ISBN 13: 978-1-57766-358-4**

Recommended Textbooks:

Ferree, C. W., & Pfeifer, H. (2013). *Write and wrong: Writing within criminal justice*. Burlington, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning. **ISBN-13: 978-1-449-62681-5**

Keyes, J. M. (2011). *Carpe audience: Giving better presentations despite PowerPoint*. Bailey, CO: The Keyes Firm. **ISBN-13: 978-1-460-98031-6**

Additional readings may be assigned over the course of the semester. All readings will be posted to Blackboard prior to the start of the semester. Check the course schedule for assigned due dates.

## CLASSROOM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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### Attendance and Participation

Attendance and class participation is mandatory and will be taken into consideration in the grading process. Students should come to each class prepared to engage in class exercises and discussions, and having completed the assigned readings. Attendance is defined as coming to class, prepared, on time, and staying for the duration of the entire class period. Participation means actively engaging in the course discussion and contributing over the course of the semester. The material covered in class will come from a variety of sources beyond just your textbook and article readings. Therefore, poor attendance and/or participation will have a negative impact on your grade.

**Attendance:** You are expected to attend every class. If you do miss a class, please make sure that you obtain the information covered from a classmate. I will not re-lecture material or provide copies of my lecture notes to students.

Excused absences must be arranged for in advance or documented in writing. Examples of excused absences are illness; family emergencies; obligations beyond your control, such as a job interview; and participation in SUNY Oswego athletic events. You will be required to provide satisfactory documentation of such absences.

**Arriving Late/Leaving Early:** Late attendance and leaving early is discourteous to the instructor and other students and demonstrates a lack of responsibility. Please do not come in late or leave early without prior approval from the instructor. If you arrive to class more than ten (10) minutes late or leaving early without prior arrangement, this will be deemed an unexcused absence.

### Blackboard System

This course makes use of the Blackboard system. Over the course of the semester, I will post announcements, the syllabus, and assignments on Blackboard. Please inform me as soon as possible of any technical difficulties not remedied by Blackboard's help feature.

To be successful in the course, you will need access to reliable internet service. When you submit an assignment, you will receive a confirmation on the screen. Be sure to save this (e.g., print it out or take and save a screenshot). If I do not receive an assignment, and you cannot provide this receipt, you will not receive credit for the assignment. Be sure to allow yourself adequate time to complete the assignment. Technology failure is not an accepted excuse for missing an assignment.

### Cell Phone and Laptop Policy

**Cell phones will be turned off during class and will be placed face down on the desk in front of you. *There will be NO text messaging.*** If there is an exigent circumstance in which a student is expecting an urgent call or message, see me before class to discuss this. Cell phones will be relinquished to the professor while students take exams if found to be in use.

Laptop computers, iPads, and other forms of computers / electronic devices are strictly prohibited in class.

**Students who use cell phones or other electronic devices in class, in violation of this policy, will be asked to leave and will have 2 points (percent) deducted from their final course average for each day that a violation occurs.**

## **Assignments and Assigned Readings**

Students will be expected to come to class prepared, having completed all assigned readings and being ready to discuss the material on the day for which it is assigned. Failure to come prepared may result in you being counted absent at the instructor's discretion. The material in each of these articles also is subject to being on the corresponding exam for that chapter.

All assignments will be due at the beginning of the class period on the assigned date. Any assignments turned in after the start of the class period will be considered late. Late assignments will not be accepted for any reason unless prior arrangements have been made.

## **Your Grade**

Please do not wait until the semester is over to be concerned about your grade. If you are concerned about your grade at any point, please do not hesitate to come discuss this with me during office hours or by making an appointment. I am happy to meet with you to discuss your performance and help you work towards your desired grade, or you may contact me via Blackboard course mail. Grades will not be discussed through your personal email account.

## **Office Hours**

Office hours are available for you to address questions, concerns, and any issues you may wish to discuss about the course. Please do not hesitate to take advantage of this time, especially if you are experiencing a problem with the course. The sooner we address a problem, the more likely we are to resolve it favorably. If you are unable to meet during the office hours for any reason, please feel free to contact me to arrange an appointment.

## **Contacting Me**

Email is the best way to get in touch with me as I am not always on campus or available by phone. Please be sure to include your name and course name in the subject line, and use professional language. I do check email regularly and multiple times per day, and will respond to you within 24 hours unless you have been notified prior that I will be unavailable. If for any reason you do not get a response within 24 hours, I most likely did not receive your email. Please feel free to resend your email or speak with me at the end of class or during office hours.

## **Your Email Address**

From time to time, I will e-mail the class with important information (i.e., instructions for an assignment, announcements, etc.). Emails, especially containing confidential information, only will be sent to a student's SUNY Oswego email account or via the mail tool in Blackboard. Please also be sure you make my e-mail address a safe address on your account so that my e-mails are received and not sent to junk mail.

## **Retention of Graded Material**

Education requires evaluation, both of individual students' performance, as well as the performance of an academic program as a whole. Work you submit for grading in this course may be retained by the Department in order to assess the quality of curriculum we offer to students of Public Justice.

## UNIVERSITY POLICIES

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### **Intellectual Integrity**

The College Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism applies to all assignments and exams in this course. This also includes academic dishonesty and cheating on the taking of attendance. You should familiarize yourself with that policy, which is reproduced in the College Catalogue and can be accessed in its entirety at the website address below. If it is determined that you have cheated or plagiarized on an assignment or exam in this course, the professor reserves the right to assign a grade of E for that assignment or exam, or a grade of E for the course, depending on the circumstances.

*“Intellectual integrity on the part of all students is basic to individual growth and development through college course work. When academic dishonesty occurs, the teaching/learning climate is seriously undermined and student growth and development are impeded. For these reasons, any form of intellectual dishonesty is a serious concern and is therefore prohibited.”*

([http://catalog.oswego.edu/content.php?catoid=26&navoid=1803#inte\\_inte](http://catalog.oswego.edu/content.php?catoid=26&navoid=1803#inte_inte))

### **Disability Services**

If you have a disabling condition which may interfere with your ability to successfully complete this course, please contact the Disability Support Services (DSS) located at 155 Campus Center, phone (315) 312-3358, [dss@oswego.edu](mailto:dss@oswego.edu). Please also see me after class or during office hours to discuss your needs.

The Office of Disability Services (ODS) provides support services and adaptive technologies to students who have a legally documented disability or students who suspect that they may have a disability. Students must contact the office before adaptive services can begin. Certain services, such as alternative testing, require advanced notice and are contingent upon the student initiating the process in a timely fashion. Alternative testing may occur at a time other than the time the rest of the class is taking the exam.

### **University Closings**

School closings will be communicated through the SUNY Oswego homepage and local media. Students can call the Oswego Information Line at (315) 312-3333. SUNY Oswego participates in the New York Alert emergency messaging system. This system allows University Police and the SUNY Public Affairs office to contact students in the event of emergencies, including campus-wide closing due to inclement weather. Participation in this system can be set up through the personal information page of students' myOswego accounts. If I must cancel class, I will post a sign on the door, add a message on our course website (Blackboard), and/or send a class email as soon as possible.

### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

SUNY Oswego values the contributions to learning for its members that result from maintaining a diverse student body, faculty, and staff. The goal of SUNY Oswego is to nurture members' abilities and capacities for appreciation of living and working together in a diverse learning environment. Members must not expose others to discriminatory acts of any form related to gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, marital status, age, or disability since such acts, either active or passive, create a hostile environment.

Members of the college community who experience or observe discrimination, an incident of sexual discrimination, sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, or exploitation, whether

occurring on or off campus, should immediately report the incident. For further information on this policy, and reporting procedures, access the following link:

<http://www.oswego.edu/about/titleix/discriminationpolicy.html>

## GRADING

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Your grade in this course will be based upon the following:

<i>Assessment</i>	<i>Details</i>	<i>% of Grade</i>
Research Paper	Students are expected to complete a substantial (15-20 full pages, <u>excluding</u> the title page, abstract, and references) research paper on a topic of their choosing. Papers must adhere to the Public Justice Department's Guidelines for research papers – failure to do so will result in the student failing the course. The paper itself will be completed in stages prior to the final product, including: a paper topic and description, annotated bibliography and outline, and first draft. All assignments are mandatory to satisfy the writing requirements of the course. See Appendix A for additional information regarding the paper assignment.	30%
Oral Presentation and Discussion	Students will present their research findings from the above paper in a 30-minute presentation to their classmates. All presentations must include an accompanying PowerPoint slide presentation. Students also will be required to lead a 15-minute critical thinking discussion following their presentation with questions based on three critical areas of their choice. See Appendix B for additional information regarding the presentation and discussion assignment.	30%
Critical Thinking Exercises	For each lecture, there will be a corresponding in-class assignment or activity. Details and directions for individual assignments will be provided on the evening they are assigned.	20%
Participation and Attendance	Students are expected to come prepared, having completed all readings, and ready to discuss. Active, meaningful, and engaged participation is required and will improve the student's grade as course is a seminar.  Attendance is key in earning a good participation grade. Students may have a maximum of one (1) unexcused absence without penalty to their grade. Students with excessive absences will have their grade reduced by half a letter grade for each additional absence.	20%

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

<b>A</b>	94% - 100%	<b>B</b>	83% - 86%	<b>C</b>	73% - 76%	<b>D</b>	63% - 66%
<b>A-</b>	90% - 93%	<b>B-</b>	80% - 82%	<b>C-</b>	70% - 72%	<b>D-</b>	60% - 62%
<b>B+</b>	87% - 89%	<b>C+</b>	77% - 79%	<b>D+</b>	67% - 69%	<b>E</b>	0% - 59%

## SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Date	Topics	Readings and Assignments
M 8/28	Course Introduction <i>PBJ Department Paper Guidelines</i> The Social Construction of Crime Myths	K & P: Chapter 1 <b>Presentation Sign-Ups Due by Friday, September 1 at 5 p.m.</b>
M 9/4	<b>*** LABOR DAY – NO CLASSES ***</b>	
M 9/11	Crime Waves, Fears, and Social Reality <i>Writing a Research Paper</i>	K & P: Chapter 2
<b>Paper Topic Forms Due by Friday, September 15 at 5 p.m.</b>		
M 9/18	The Myth and Fear of Missing Children <i>Library Instruction / Finding Resources</i>	K & P: Chapter 3
M 9/25	Myth and Murder: The Serial Killer Panic <i>Effective Oral Presentations</i>	K & P: Chapter 4
M 10/2	Moral Panics and Mass Shootings <i>Practice Oral Presentations (5 minutes each)</i>	BB: Schildkraut et al. (2015) BB: Fox & DeLateur (2014)
<b>Annotated Bibliography and Paper Outlines Due by Friday, October 6 at 5 p.m.</b>		
M 10/9	Juvenile Superpredators: The Myths of Killer Kids, Dangerous Schools, and a Youth Crime Wave	K & P: Chapter 9
M 10/16	Apocalypse Now: The Lost War on Drugs	K & P: Chapter 8
M 10/23	Battered and Blue Crime Fighters: Myths and Misconceptions of Police Work	K & P: Chapter 10
M 10/30	Order in the Courts: The Myth of Equal Justice	K & P: Chapter 11
M 11/6	Capital Punishment: The Myth of Murder as Effective Crime Control	K & P: Chapter 14 <b>First Draft of Paper Due</b>
M 11/13	Student Presentations	
M 11/20	Student Presentations	
M 11/27	Student Presentations	
M 12/4	Student Presentations Course Wrap-Up	<b>Final Draft of Paper Due</b>

**This syllabus is tentative and may change due to unforeseen circumstances. If there are any changes to the syllabus, I will notify you in writing and will provide you with an updated copy.**

## **APPENDIX A. RESEARCH PAPER ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES**

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This course requires a substantial research paper on a topic of your choosing. Each paper must be 15-20 full pages in length, typed and double-spaced, not counting your cover page, abstract, and references. Your paper is expected to follow the APA style guide. You are expected to draw on at least eight (8) scholarly sources (including at least two [2] peer-reviewed academic journal articles) that contribute to and are properly cited within the body of your paper.

**You MUST follow all of the guidelines listed in the Public Justice Department's Guidelines for Research Papers.** A copy of this document has been uploaded to Blackboard for you. Papers that do not adhere to these guidelines will not pass – and thus, you will not graduate. This includes (but is not limited to):

- Use of proper font (12-point Times New Roman only);
- Proper margins (1" all around);
- Inclusion of APA formatted cover page with a title reflective of your analysis;
- Inclusion of running headers with page numbers;
- References section with APA formatted citations; and
- No more than two (2) direct quotes throughout the paper.

**You are required to submit a topic and description, annotated bibliography, and outline of your paper prior to producing your first draft. You also are required to submit a first draft prior to submitting the final draft.** It is absolutely in your best interest to produce the very best paper you can for the first draft. I will return this draft to you with comments and suggestions for your final paper. (You also will get additional feedback from both myself and your classmates during the oral presentation.) Since this course also fulfills a writing requirement, the first draft is mandatory. There are no exceptions. If you do not submit a draft, you will not pass – and thus, you will not graduate.

Both your first and final paper drafts are due by the start of class on the date they are due (see Course Schedule for specific dates). All papers must be uploaded through the Dropbox feature in the Learning Modules tab on the Blackboard course website. **You must upload a Microsoft Word document file with the appropriate extension included in the file name (.doc or .docx). Your last name must appear in the file name. Papers in incorrect file formats will be returned and marked late.** Any assignments submitted after the start of class time will be deducted ten (10) points for each day late, up to three (3) days after the due date. Papers submitted more than three (3) days late will not be graded.

## **APPENDIX B. ORAL PRESENTATION & DISCUSSION ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES**

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This course requires a class presentation on a topic in public justice of interest to you. This will be the topic that you have chosen for your research paper for the course, and the presentation will consist of you presenting the findings you have uncovered during your research for the initial assignment. Such findings should include empirical evidence (e.g., statistics) to support your main thesis statement.

You must prepare a class presentation of approximately thirty (30) minutes. Your presentation must include a PowerPoint (or similar software; e.g., Keynote; Prezi) slideshow – we will discuss how to use this program to present effectively prior to your preparation of your talk. You also may use any additional visual aid(s) you feel is/are appropriate to your presentation. Keep in mind, however, that **YOU** are the presenter; therefore, only five (5) total minutes of video is allowed. Any video used should be done to enhance your presentation, not just fill up time. It is further recommended that you build in opportunities for your classmates to be involved in your presentation, so that it is interactive.

Presentation of self also matters during this assignment. As such, you are expected to dress the part when it is your turn to present. You should dress as though you are presenting at a conference or attending a job interview or similar function. This will be factored into your overall evaluation.

Please send me your presentation no later than 3 p.m. on the day you are scheduled to present so that I can ensure that your slides are up on the computer and ready to go. You must turn into me the following items at the start of your presentation:

- A hard copy of your slides; and
- A copy of your references (a bibliography) used within your presentation.

At the end of the presentation, you will lead a 15-minute critical thinking discussion with your classmates. You should prepare a list of questions based on three (3) of the following substantive areas, as they relate to your topic and presentation (do not pick an area just for the sake of picking one):

- Criminological theory to further understand your topic;
- Policy implications stemming from the problem presented;
- Directions for future research related to the topic or issue;
- The impact of the topic on future public justice students' careers;
- A recent current event within or relevant to the topic at hand; and/or
- Legal and/or constitutional implications stemming from the issue.

You should be prepared to discuss each area for approximately five (5) minutes before moving on to the next. A copy of your questions should be submitted to me via email **no later than one week prior to your presentation date** for review.

Your presentation will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Scholarly content;
- Presentation organization, clarity, and style;
- How well you have researched your topic;
- How well the presentation maintained the interest and participation of the class;
- Your ability to facilitate a critical thinking discussion; and
- Overall impressions of the presentation.

You will receive a written evaluation within one week of your presentation / discussion. This evaluation will include both positive comments and suggestions for how you may improve your presentation style.