Justice Administration & Criminology Senior Seminar
JAC 1700-4010
Monday, Wednesday, Friday 3:00-3:50

“Knowledge is of no value unless you put into practice.” – Anton Chekhov

Instructor: Ross Kleinstuber, Ph.D.
Office: 104-B Krebs
Office Hours: Mon., Wed., Fri. 10:30-10:55 and 11:55-12:55; Thursday by appointment
Office Phone: 269-2989
Email: rkleins@pitt.edu

**NOTE** This course will utilize CourseWeb (https://courseweb.pitt.edu/) for announcements, assignments, additional readings, and other materials pertinent to the course. You are expected to be familiar with CourseWeb and to check it regularly. If you have any questions about using CourseWeb, please see me.

Required Books


*Other readings will be assigned throughout the course at the instructor’s discretion.

Course Description
This capstone course is designed as a culmination of your collegiate learning experience. It will draw upon your previous courses and present new ideas about the criminal justice system to get you to think about certain aspects of the justice system in a different way and prepare you to write a senior thesis. In this regard, the students will be presented with different perspectives about the criminal justice system and expected to critically analyze those points of view and then to prepare and write their own thesis about one aspect of the criminal justice system, justice administration, or criminology.

Course Expectations & Objectives
The books chosen for this course were deliberately picked to challenge the readers’ assumptions about the justice system and to make the readers uncomfortable. They each paint a disturbing and negative picture of a system most of us have learned to take for granted in order to keep us safe, but just because we take something for granted does not mean it is the best way to accomplish a goal. These books will challenge the readers to reconsider the way we run the justice system and to think of ways we might be able to improve its ability to dispense justice. In this regard, readers
will not necessarily be expected to agree with any of the authors. Rather, students will be expected to read and critically analyze the arguments being made by the authors and come to class ready to discuss the readings. This course will involve very little lecture; it is designed to be a seminar. This means students will be expected to have read the assigned material prior to class, and they will be expected to be respectful of their classmates at all times. The objectives of this course are:

1. To challenge students to think critically about certain aspects of the criminal justice system.
2. To learn how to evaluate the strength of an argument and its supporting evidence.
3. To have students be able to express their own views in an intelligent and coherent manner.
4. To enable students to produce and defend their own perspective on one aspect of the justice system, justice administration, or criminology.

Course Grading
Your grade in this course will be based out of 600 points, broken down as follows:

3 book reviews (100 points each): 300 points
Senior Thesis: 300 points

Grades will be calculated based on total points accumulated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>555-600 = A</td>
<td>519-536 = B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>537-554 = A-</td>
<td>495-518 = B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>477-494 = B-</td>
<td>417-434 = C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>459-476 = C+</td>
<td>375-398 = D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>399-416 = D+</td>
<td>357-374 = D-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-356 = F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note on Disabilities
Students with disabilities who require special testing accommodations or other classroom modifications must notify the instructor and the Coordinator of Disability Services in writing no later than the second week in the term. Documentation of a disability may be needed to determine the appropriate accommodations or classroom modifications. For information or to schedule an evaluation-of-need appointment, call the Office of Health & Counseling Services in G10 Student Union, at (814) 269-7119.

Academic Dishonesty
Students are expected to be familiar with the University of Pittsburgh’s Guidelines on Academic Integrity (http://www.as.pitt.edu/fac/policies/academic-integrity) and abide by them. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Anyone caught plagiarizing, cheating, or helping anyone do so will be referred to the appropriate university authorities and, at the very least, receive a 0 on the assignment. Additional penalties may apply depending on the nature of the incident.

The Guidelines on Academic Integrity forbid students from presenting “as one’s own, for academic evaluation, the ideas, representations, or words of another person or persons without customary and proper acknowledgment of sources.” Plagiarism is dishonest and illegal. Writers are indebted to authors from whom they borrow exact words, ideas, theories, opinions, statistics, illustrative material, or facts (beyond common knowledge). Writers are also indebted if they
summarize or paraphrase in their own words material from sources. All quoted material requires the acknowledgement of the source by the use of quotation marks or indentation (if exact wording is incorporated). In addition, both directly quoted and summarized material must be acknowledged by use of a note or parenthetical citation that indicates the author and/or date of publication and page number or numbers. If the writer indents a quotation, it must be clearly set off from the body of the text and must be documented in the aforesaid manner. Students are permitted to use any professionally recognized citation style, but to verify the various documentation procedures, writers should consult the style sheet for the particular citation format they are using (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.). (Note: Language of this paragraph was adapted from both the University of Pittsburgh’s Guidelines on Academic Integrity and the Indiana University of Pennsylvania’s Academic Integrity Policy.)

Cell Phones
You are expected to turn off your cell phones before coming to class. I reserve the right to answer any cell phone that rings during class or to complete any text message I catch you typing during class. Remember, you are expected to be respectful at all times. Interruptions during class, whether they are from cell phones or unnecessary conversations, are disrespectful. Failure to respect your classmates and the instructor may result in being asked to leave.

Book Reviews
Throughout this course, students will be expected to read three books about different aspects of the justice system—each of which points out how the system often produces less than just results. These books should also be thought of as a model for how you want to present your senior thesis. Therefore, you will need read these books critically and evaluate the strength of the arguments being presented. Each of these books will be discussed in class; however, at the end of each book, you must produce your own review of the book.

These reviews should include a brief summary of the book, including the author’s or authors’ main thesis and the evidence she or they used to support the thesis. It should then include a critical analysis of the book. In other words, do you agree, disagree, or partially agree with the thesis and why?

It is important to understand that these book reviews are an opportunity for you to explain what you think about the arguments presented in the books in an informed manner. There is no “right” or “wrong” answer in these papers, and I will not be basing your grade on whether your opinion is the same as mine. Rather, YOUR GRADES ON THE BOOK REVIEWS WILL BE BASED ON YOUR ABILITY TO CLEARLY INDICATE YOUR POSITION, YOUR ABILITY TO DEFEND YOUR POSITION WITH SUPPORTING EVIDENCE, AND YOUR ABILITY TO ORGANIZE YOUR PAPER LOGICALLY AND COHERENTLY. In this regard, you will be expected to provide factual evidence to support your opinion, and you will be graded on your ability to do so. The goal of these assignments is to teach you how to analyze the strength of an argument and to teach you how to find and utilize factual evidence in order to formulate an informed and educated opinion. This skill will be indispensable in writing your own senior thesis.
**Senior Thesis**
The culmination of this course—and your justice administration and criminology education at UPJ—will be the production of your own senior thesis. You should think of this as a mini-version of the books you read or as a super-term paper. I will be expecting more than a standard term paper. I expect you to choose a topic related to criminology, criminal justice, or justice administration that interests you, to produce a thesis about that topic, and to do in depth research about that topic in order to present compelling evidence in support of that thesis. This paper should reflect your four years of education about criminology and the criminal justice system, and it should be the culminating piece of your undergraduate endeavor. You should produce a paper that you would be proud to show to a potential employer or to include in a graduate school or law school application. You should think about this paper as the most important assignment of your undergraduate career.

In consultation with the instructor, you may choose *any topic* that has *any* relationship whatsoever to the fields of criminology, criminal justice, or justice administration. I encourage you to select a topic that reflects your own course history, interests, and future plans in the field. Throughout the course, we will be using class time to go over topics, theses, sources, and rough drafts. The final paper will be worth 50% of your course grade.

**Course Schedule**
Because much of the expected work for this class will be done outside of class, we will not be meeting every single day for which class is scheduled. We will probably average about two meetings per week. Readings will be assigned on a weekly basis and announced both in class and on CourseWeb. You will be expected to read the assigned readings prior to the class for which they are assigned.

Below is a rough outline of the course and estimated due dates for assignments. The exact due dates for all readings and assignments will be announced in class and on CourseWeb. Please follow the dates provided in those announcements.

**Part I: The Politics of Injustice:** Month of September
**Part II: Actual Innocence:** Month of October
**Part III: The New Jim Crow:** Month of November
**Part IV: Review and Finalize Senior Theses:** Month of December

**Assignments (Note: all due dates are approximate; official due dates will be announced in class and on CourseWeb)**
Senior Thesis Topics: September 14  
Senior Thesis Statements: October 5  
*Politics of Injustice* Book Review: October 9  
Final Paper List of Sources: November 13  
*Actual Innocence* Book Review: November 16  
*New Jim Crow* Book Review: December 11  
Senior Thesis: Final Exam Week During Scheduled Exam Period