



COURSE SYLLABUS
CJ568-01W: Seminar in Corrections
Fall 2015

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COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings:

Required Reading:

- Latessa, E.J. & Holsinger, A.M. (2010). *Correctional contexts: Contemporary and classical readings*. 4th ed. New York: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780199751464;
- Other materials/readings as assigned and posted online

Course Description/Explanation:

A study of popular issues in community-based and institutional corrections with emphasis on organizational goal setting and achievement, program evaluation, client supervision, agency administration, and problem solving. An analysis of current research and its applicability to the criminal justice system and society will be performed.

Student Learning Outcomes/Core Competencies:

- Think critically about important issues in corrections
- Problem-solve solutions to issues in current corrections policy and practice
- Enhance communication skills and reading/research acumen

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional Methods/Activities/Assessments

This course will provide a variety of activities and assessments to assist you in achieving the outcomes/objectives for the course. Each week you will work towards achieving these outcomes through discussions/comments, papers, and a final presentation. Below is an explanation of each course requirement including due date, assignment instructions, and other requirements.

Please note that a core competency of this course is critical thinking. Critical thinking requires students to think through situations, facts, and issues in an open-minded and objective way in an effort to analyze and evaluate information in an informed manner. Qualities of a critical thinker (and of arguments that embody critical thinking) include:

- **Certainty is not always necessary for a critical thinker; possibility and probability should always be a consideration**—in other words, just because the book tells you it is true, doesn't mean that there may not be another solution or possibility to consider. The way facts relate to one another—and not just fact alone—should be used to determine truth.
- **Critical thinkers are not only independent thinkers; they are also fair-minded in that they are willing to consider all points of view, and they are careful to take every aspect of an argument into consideration**—your way of thinking may not necessarily be the only way or the right way of thinking. Consider other perspectives
- **Consider evidence (facts), source (from what source did your evidence come from), and motivations (what might be the underlying motivation behind these facts)**—in other words, gather information from credible sources and evaluate these sources/factual information in the context of what you have been asked to discuss/evaluate.

As defined by the National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking, critical thinking is:

“The intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action. In its exemplary form, it is based on universal intellectual values that transcend subject matter divisions: clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance, sound evidence, good reasons, depth, breadth, and fairness.”

(Scriven, M. & Paul, R. Presented at the 8th Annual International Conference on Critical Thinking and Education Reform, Summer 1987.

When preparing discussions/comments/assignments/papers/presentations, use the following to help you critically think through task. You will be graded (in part) on how well you are able to perform this skill.

- Determine the problem/issue you are trying to solve. Make sure you remain open-minded and objective and be aware of your own biases on the subject and put them aside;
- Develop a hypothesis and/or possible solution to the problem/issue. Brainstorm other possible solutions. Think about the pros and cons of the problem/issue;
- Gather information on the problem/issue that may support or contradict your position;
- Analyze your facts. Don't assume anything. Evaluate the facts objectively;
- Determine a reasonable conclusion based on all of the facts;
- Make sure your facts (and the reporting of the facts) are accurate. You may assume a causal relationship but there might be other possible conclusions to be drawn based on other factors. Be sure to evaluate what those might be

Course Points

- (1) *Introduction* (1 Introduction @ 50 points)
(2) *Discussion Posts* (4 Discussion posts @ 100 points each)
(3) *Comment Posts* (16 comments @ 10 points each = 160 course points)
(4) *Reflection Papers* (2 papers @ 100 points each = 200 course points)

INTRODUCTION

1 Introduction @ 50 points

The Introduction is a chance for you to 'meet' your colleagues in the class and an opportunity to introduce yourself to your professor. You will also be required to answer a course-related question. Specific instructions on what to post are available when you click on Introduction/Discussion in Week #1. The Introductory post is due on Thursday of Week #1 of the course.

DISCUSSION POSTS

4 Discussion posts @ 100 points each

Student Learning Outcomes #1-#3: Think critically about important issues in corrections; Problem-solve solutions to issues in current corrections policy and practice; Enhance communication skills and reading/research acumen.

The Discussions are directly related to the assigned readings. Upon completion of the assigned readings, you are expected to engage in an **ongoing** discussion/debate with your classmates. Your contributions to the discussion forums will be graded for **quality** and a **detailed analysis** linking the material to a critical appraisal of theory, policy, and

practice. The introduction of outside materials is not mandatory (unless otherwise noted in the discussion topic assignment), but is highly recommended. In all cases, students must cite in-text and provide a full bibliography/works cited at the end of their post for all citations mentioned in the post (See information later in the syllabus for more information on citing utilizing APA citation format. Also see the 'How to Cite' FactSheet).

The Discussion posts should be **the equivalent of 1 page in length or a minimum of 250 words and should include one outside source (i.e., a source outside the regular readings assigned for the week/course)**. The specific discussion assignment is located in each unit Week by clicking on the Discussion link.

NO LATE DISCUSSIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED. Posts are due by 11:00PM CST on **Wednesday** (excluding the first Wednesday of the course-Week #1).

Assessment Method: Discussion posts will be graded using the Discussion Post Grading Rubric.

COMMENT POSTS

(16 comments @ 10 points each = 160 course points)

Student Learning Outcomes #1-#3: Think critically about important issues in corrections; Problem-solve solutions to issues in current corrections policy and practice; Enhance communication skills and reading/research acumen.

Comment posts are responses you make to the discussion posts that you and your classmates post each week. You are **required** to make a minimum of **four** comments each week.

Comment posts should be meaningful. Merely agreeing or disagreeing with a classmate will not be looked upon favorably and will result in a loss of points. A meaningful post is one that moves the discussion forward in some substantive way through providing one's perspective, additional information through research, or reframing the discussion in some new way. You are expected to engage in an **ongoing** discussion/debate with your classmates. Your comments will be graded for **quality**, and **relevance**. Your comments will also be graded based on your ability to engage in critical thinking. You should provide a minimum of 4 comments per discussion.

NO LATE COMMENTS ARE ACCEPTED. All comment posts are due by 11:00PM CST on **Friday** (excluding the first Friday of the class-Week #1).

Assessment Method: Comments will be graded using the Comments Grading Rubric.

REFLECTION PAPERS

(2 papers @ 100 points each = 200 course points)

Student Learning Outcomes #1-#3: Think critically about important issues in corrections; Problem-solve solutions to issues in current corrections policy and practice; Enhance communication skills and reading/research acumen.

Assignment Instructions: Students are required to complete two reflection papers. These papers will represent students' observations of their readings, a critical evaluation of the topic, and thoughts on how best to address the problems/issues inherent in their topic. Students must utilize a minimum of **four outside** sources to inform their paper. These sources **must** be peer-reviewed publications **or** governmental reports. These papers must be a **minimum** of 5 pages in length (does not include references), **maximum** 12-point font, 1-inch margins, include your name, and utilize proper APA citation format. Students should organize their papers as follows:

- Identify the topic and provide an overview of the issue, its relationship to corrections, and how this topic is currently handled/addressed in corrections policy/practice (you may provide 'real time' examples from correctional jurisdictions) (approximately 2-1/2 pages)
- Provide a critical evaluation of this topic including information that supports and/or disputes current policy and practice (approximately 2-1/2 pages)
- Provide thoughts on how best to improve/address the problems/issues inherent in the topic, including providing an example of 'best practices' (if they exist) (approximately 2 pages)

Students may write **Reflection Paper #1** on any of the following topics:

Purposes of punishment
Sentencing
Mass Incarceration
Psychology of imprisonment
Prison Privatization
Inmate misconduct
Corrections staffing
Legal issues in corrections

Students may write **Reflection Paper #2** on any of the following topics:

Age-specific correctional concerns
Gender issues in corrections

Prisoners and Pell Grants (Education in Prison)
 Risk/needs assessment
 Institutional programming
 Intermediate interventions
 Offender reentry issues

Reflection papers are due by 11:00PM CST on **Tuesday** in Weeks #3 and #5 of the course.

Assessment Method: Students will be assessed using the Reflection Paper Grading Rubric.

Course Pre/Pos-test (not graded)

Pre and post-tests allow the professor to assess your baseline (foundation) knowledge of a particular subject at the time that you enter a course and the degree of increase in knowledge at the end of the course. This pre/post-test is comprised of no more than 10 questions that will assess your knowledge. You will be asked to complete the pre-test by **Friday** of Week #1 and your post-test by **Friday** of Week #5. These tests will not be graded (they are used for assessment purposes only).

GRADING

Assignments for this course will be scored using a points system. Below is an explanation of how each assignment type will be scored.

Assignment Type	# of Assignments	Point Value	Total Points
Introduction	1	50	50
Discussions	4	100	400
Comments	16	10	160
Reflection papers	2	100	200
Pre/Post-test	1	0	0
		TOTAL	810

Grades earned on each assignment will be added together and will be divided by the total number of points possible in the course. Below is the overall point scale/grading schema for the course.

Total points possible for the term = 810.

810-729 = A
728-648 = B
647-567 = C
566-486 = D
485 and below = F

Grades will be available in the gradebook so that students can track their progress in the course on an ongoing basis.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

1. You will need regular access to a computer with a broadband Internet connection. The minimum computer requirements for the Epic Web Client are:
 - Any current Flash-compliant browser (eg. Internet Explorer 7 or Firefox 3.0) ;
 - 512 MB of RAM, 1 GB or more preferred ;
 - Broadband connection required – courses are heavily video intensive ;
 - Video display capable of high-color 16-bit display – 1024 x 768 or higher resolution ;
 - A sound card and speakers or headphones ;
 - Current anti-virus software must be installed and kept up to date ;

Some classes may have specific class requirements for additional software. These requirements will be listed on the course offerings page. Most home computers purchased within the last 3-4 years meet or surpass these requirements.

2. You will need some additional free software for enhanced web browsing. Ensure that you download the free versions of the following software:
 - Adobe Reader
 - Adobe Flash Player
3. At minimum, you must have Microsoft Office 2003, XP, 2007 or OpenOffice. Microsoft Office is the standard office productivity software utilized by faculty, students, and staff. Microsoft Word is the standard word processing software, Microsoft Excel is the standard spreadsheet software, and Microsoft PowerPoint is the standard presentation software. Copying and pasting, along with attaching/uploading documents for assignment submission, will also be required. If you do not have Microsoft Office, you can check with the bookstore to see if they have any student copies.

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

This course will be facilitated using EPIC, the Learning Management System. To log in to EPIC/the course, use the Epic log-in and password you received during the enrollment process.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Interaction with Instructor Statement:

My primary form of communication with the class will be through Email. Any changes to the syllabus or other important information critical to the class will be disseminated to students in this way via your official University Email address available to me through MyLeo and in Announcements. It will be your responsibility to check your University Email regularly.

Students who Email me outside of regular office hours can expect a reply within 24 hours M-F. Students who Email me during holidays or over the weekend should expect a reply by the end of the next regularly scheduled business day.

EPIC Student Technical Support:

It is reassuring to know that technical support is available to make your online learning experience convenient. All you have to do is call or email and a knowledgeable representative will help you solve your technical issues.

myLeo Support:

Your myLeo email address is required to send and receive all student correspondence. Please email helpdesk@tamu-commerce.edu or call us at 903-468-6000 with any questions about setting up your myLeo email account. You may also access information at <https://leo.tamu-commerce.edu>.

Course Technical Support:

For technical support on courses offered on the EPIC Learning Management System:

Call 855.593.6048

Hours: Mon – Fri 7am – 10pm CST / Sat, Sun & Holidays 8am – 8pm CST

Internet Access:

An Internet connection is necessary to participate in discussions and assignments, access readings, transfer course work, and receive feedback from your professor. View the requirements as outlined in Technology Requirements above for more information.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures:

Academic Honesty

Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including (but not limited to) receiving a failing grade on the assignment, the possibility of failure in the course and dismissal from the University. Since dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. In **ALL** instances, incidents of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Department Head. Please be aware that academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) cheating, plagiarism, and collusion.

Cheating is defined as:

- Copying another's test or assignment
- Communication with another during an exam or assignment (i.e. written, oral or otherwise)
- Giving or seeking aid from another when not permitted by the instructor
- Possessing or using unauthorized materials during the test
- Buying, using, stealing, transporting, or soliciting a test, draft of a test, or answer key

Plagiarism is defined as:

- Using someone else's work in your assignment without appropriate acknowledgement
- Making slight variations in the language and then failing to give credit to the source

Collusion is defined as:

- Collaborating with another, without authorization, when preparing an assignment
If you have any questions regarding academic dishonesty, ask. Otherwise, I will assume that you have full knowledge of the academic dishonesty policy and agree to the conditions as set forth in this syllabus.

Students should also reference the following link for more detailed information.

<http://web.tamu-commerce.edu/academics/colleges/artsSciences/departments/sociologyCriminalJustice/frequentlyAskedQuestions/academicHonesty/default.aspx>

Policy for Reporting Problems with EPIC

Students who encounter Epic-based problems with submitting assignments/exams, etc., are required to do the following:

Call 855.593.6048 for Epic Learning Management System technical support.

Hours: Mon – Fri 7am – 10pm CST / Sat, Sun & Holidays 8am – 8pm CST

Your call will be logged and I will check with the Tech Support staff to confirm your call. Once I have confirmed your call, I will contact you regarding the issue.

Attendance Policy

While this is an online course, students are expected to ‘attend classes and actively participate. Student participation/activity will be monitored by the professor. Students should plan to dedicate approximately 15-20 hours/week of time to this course, of which approximately 1 hour/week should be spent in the discussion board (reading posts and comments and conversing with others).

APA Citation Format Policy

It is very important that you learn how to cite properly. In some ways, citations are more important than the actual text of your paper/assignment. Therefore, you should take this task seriously and devote some time to understanding how to cite properly. If you take the time to understand this process up front, it will save you a significant amount of time in the long run (not to mention significant deductions in points).

In the social and behavioral sciences (including Criminal Justice), we use APA (American Psychological Association) format. As a rule of thumb, one cites whenever they are paraphrasing other people’s words or when they quote other’s words directly. You may learn to cite from a variety of different sources including the APA Tutorial and the sources listed below and in the Getting Started section of your course.

- www.apastyle.org
- <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/02/>
- www.library.cornell.edu/resrch/citmanage/apa

It is the student’s responsibility to understand how to cite properly. If you have questions, feel free to ask.

Late Work

In principle, I do not accept late work and do not believe in allowing students to turn in work after the due date. My position is that everyone knows the rules of engagement at the beginning of the term and that it is the student's responsibility to ensure that they plan accordingly to submit their assignments in a timely manner. However, I also do understand that sometimes there are circumstances outside one's control that may impact timely submission of assignments. To that end, I have developed a policy on late work. Please note that this policy applies **ONLY to your Reflection Paper assignments and not to discussion or comment submissions.**

Late assignments will be accepted after the due date and time up to 1 day (24 hours) late. Twenty (20) points will be deducted from all late assignments. Assignments turned in more than one day late **will not** be accepted/graded.

Drop Course Policy

Students should take responsibility for dropping themselves from the course according to University policy should this become necessary.

University Specific Procedures:

ADA Statement

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce
Gee Library- Room 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
Email: Rebecca.Tuerk@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/)
<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*). Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Every effort will be made to adhere to the course schedule as noted below. However, unforeseen circumstances may require changes to the schedule. In that case, changes will be announced via University Email and in Announcements. The professor reserves the right to change the schedule if necessary and depending on the progress of the class. I highly recommend that you follow the schedule outlined below **VERY CAREFULLY** so that you are sure to complete readings as assigned and turn your assignments in on time.

Please note that all discussions/comments/reflection papers are due by 11:00PM CST on the day they are due as outlined in the syllabus. Please note that this course runs on a Monday-Sunday schedule.

WEEK #1—Corrections in Context

Monday	Read the syllabus carefully. Post a Week #1 Introduction where you introduce yourself, accept the conditions of the syllabus, agree to the Rules of Netiquette, and answer the question I posed based on the
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	<p>readings below. Please note that this post is required for ALL students and will be graded. The link to the Rules of Netiquette may be found under Course and University Procedures/Policies under Student Conduct or here: http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html</p> <p>This week’s readings will explore the philosophical underpinnings of punishment and sentencing and provide a brief history and development of the corrections system in the United States.</p> <p>Readings from the Text Latessa & Holsinger: Part I, Readings 1-6; Part VII, Readings 29-30</p> <p>Articles Available for Download: Boesche, R. (1980). The prison: Tocqueville’s model for despotism. <i>Western Political Quarterly</i>, 34, 550-563.</p>
Thursday	<p>Complete first-week Introduction/Question Complete course pre-test</p>

WEEK #2—Issues in Corrections, Part I

Monday	<p>This week’s readings will cover issues in institutional corrections including: the psychology of imprisonment, living and working in prison, prison misconduct, and legal issues in institutional corrections.</p> <p>Readings from the Text Latessa & Holsinger: Parts II-IV, Readings 7-10 and 12-14</p> <p>Articles Available for Download: Grass, S.C. (2000). Narrating the cell: Dickens on American prisons. <i>Journal of English and Germanic Philosophy</i>, 99, 50-70.</p> <p>Lambert, E, & Barton, S.M. (2008). The impact of punishment and rehabilitation views on organizational commitment among correctional staff: A preliminary study. <i>American Journal of Criminal Justice</i>, 33, 85-98.</p>
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	<p>Melde, C. (2008). Penal reform and the stability of prison adaptive modes. <i>Journal of Crime & Justice</i>, 31, 59-80.</p> <p>Smith, C.E., & Corbin, A.M. (2008). The Rehnquist court and corrections law: An empirical assessment. <i>Criminal Justice Studies</i>, 21, 179-191.</p>
Wednesday	Discussion #1 due
Friday	Comments for Discussion #1 due

WEEK #3—Issues in Corrections, Part II

Monday	<p>This week’s readings will cover issues in institutional corrections including: age-specific correctional concerns, gender, and correctional healthcare (including mental health) and sex offenders</p> <p>Readings from the Text: Latessa & Holsinger: Part IV, Readings 15 & 16 and 19 & 20</p> <p>Articles Available for Download: Rhodes, W., Johnston, P., & McMullen, Q. (2000). <i>Unintended consequences of sentencing policy: The creation of long-term healthcare obligations</i>. Cambridge, MA: Abt Associates.</p> <p>Rafter, N.H. (1985). Gender, prisons, and prison history. <i>Social Science History</i>, 9, 233-247.</p> <p>Van Wormer, K, & Kaplan, L.E. (2006). Results of a national survey of wardens in women’s prisons: The case for gender-specific treatment. <i>Women & Therapy</i>, 29, 133-151.</p>
Tuesday	Reflection Paper #1 due
Wednesday	Discussion #2 due
Friday	Comments for Discussion #2 due

WEEK #4—Evidence-Based Corrections

Tuesday	<p>This week’s readings will cover topics in evidence-based corrections including: evidence-based practice, risk/needs assessment, and institutional programming</p> <p>Readings from the Text Latessa & Holsinger: Part V, Readings 17-18, 22 & 23</p> <p>Articles Available for Download: Byrne, J. M., & Pattavina, A. (2006). Assessing the role of clinical and actuarial risk assessment in an evidence-based community corrections system: Issues to consider. <i>Federal Probation</i>, 70, 64-67.</p> <p>Gendreau, P., Little, T., & Goggin, C. (1996). A Meta-Analysis of the predictor of adult offender recidivism: What works! <i>Criminology</i>, 34, 575-608.</p>
Wednesday	Discussion #3 due
Friday	Comments for Discussion #3 due

WEEK #5—Community Corrections

Monday	<p>This week’s readings will cover community corrections topics including: probation, offender reentry, and intermediate interventions</p> <p>Readings from the Text Latessa & Holsinger: Part VI, Readings 24-28</p> <p>Articles Available for Download: Applegate, B.K., Smith, H.P., Sitren, A.H., & Springer, N. (2009). From the inside: The meaning of probation to probationers. <i>Criminal Justice Review</i>, 34, 80-95.</p> <p>Pettus, C. A., & Severson, M. (2006). Paving the way for effective reentry practice: The critical role and function of the boundary spanner. <i>The Prison Journal</i>, 86, 206–229.</p>
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Tuesday	Reflection Paper #2 due
Wednesday	Discussion #4 due
Thursday	Comments for Discussion #4
Saturday	LAST DAY OF CLASS Complete course post-test

