

## **Introduction to Criminal Justice (CRJ 101)**

Spring 2025

Adjunct Prof. Patrick Schelle

### **Course Description:**

Criminal Justice is the field that studies formal social control. This course covers the processing of crime by agents of formal control (police, courts, and institutional corrections). The general focus is on understanding the complex interactions of structures and agents in the system. Of particular concern are discretion and diversity in law enforcement, due process in criminal courts, and the punishment-rehabilitation dichotomy in corrections. The ultimate goal is to provide a critical foundation that prepares students for the challenges of a career in criminal justice.

### **Required Reading:**

Unfair: The New Science of Criminal Injustice by Adam Benforado.

Additional readings will be printed and brought to class by Professor Schelle

### **Assignment Percent of Course Grade**

Course grades will be assigned according to the percentages shown below.

### **Grading Scale:**

Participation & Engagement	25%
Short Exams	25%
Weekly Writing	25%
Final Zine Project	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

### *Weekly Writing*

Reflections consist of specific questions and free writing that students engage to discuss the readings, discussions, and materials for the course. This exercise is used to enhance writing skills, critical thinking, and articulation of ideas through summarizing thoughts. Each student will be provided a designated notebook to complete each weekly writing summary.

### *Exam's*

Every 2 weeks students will take part in a short exam after course discussion that will be a review of each reading. Exams will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and true/false questions.

### *Participation & Engagement*

Students who have signed up for the course are expected to participate each week unless otherwise, cannot because of means outside of their control. Participation and engagement are broadly subjective to the instructor's discretion but based on engaging in the readings as well as indicating participation either through oral communication or active listening.

***Final Zine or Comic Book Project***

Students will be tasked with creating a zine focused on one criminal justice “myth” discussed during the semester. Zine topic can be related to personal experiences with the criminal legal system. We will discuss the requirements for the zine project and select topics for zines during class on February 25th. We will have time during four or more class sessions to work on and create zines, including time to plan, peer review, and create final zines.

Each student will also write an artist statement (350-500 words) about the zine itself, and 350-500 words about the process of making the zine. Each zine will have 8 “pages,” should include an image at least every 2 pages, and should include at least 300 words across the entire zine. Professor Schelle will provide materials to make the zines, including additional resources, research, etc.

**Week Topic**

Week 1	
Jan. 28 <sup>th</sup>	
	Course Overview
	What is Justice?
Week 2	
Feb. 4 <sup>th</sup>	
Week 3	
Feb. 11 <sup>th</sup>	
	History of the Criminal Justice system
	What is crime?
Week 4	
Feb. 18 <sup>th</sup>	
	Policing
Week 5	
Feb. 25 <sup>th</sup>	
	Courts-Lawyers & Juries
Week 6	
March 4 <sup>th</sup>	
	Courts-Eyewitness & Experts
Week 7	

March 11 <sup>th</sup>	
	Courts-Judges & Sentencing
Week 8	
March 18 <sup>th</sup>	
	Punishment-Prisons & Jails
	Are Prisons Obsolete? – Angela Davis
Week 9	
March 25 <sup>th</sup>	
	Punishment-Community Corrections
	Alternatives to Incarceration
	Probation/Parole
Week 10	
April 1 <sup>nd</sup>	
	Youth “Juvenile” Justice
	Collateral Consequences of the label “Juvenile”
Week 11	
April 8 <sup>th</sup>	
	Restorative Justice
	Until We Reckon – Daniel Sered
	Victim/Perpetrator, Restorative Circles
Week 12	
April 15 <sup>th</sup>	
	Transformative Justice & Abolition
	(JLWOP, Death Penalty)
<b>Week 13</b>	
<b>April 22<sup>rd</sup></b>	
	<b>NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK)</b>
Week 14	
April 29 <sup>th</sup>	
	Special Topics (selected by the class)
	Guest Speaker TBD
Week 15	
May 6 <sup>th</sup>	
	Zine Presentations
Week 16	
May 13 <sup>th</sup>	

Zine Presentations
Course Wrap-Up