Ethical Issues in Criminal Justice
University of North Texas CJUS 3700
Fall 2020

Course Information:
3 Credit Hours

Professor Information:
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Course Description
A study of ethical issues facing the criminal justice system. Problems confronting the police, the courts, and the juvenile and correctional systems are addressed. Prerequisite(s): CJUS 2100 or equivalent.

This course will serve as an intense, but hopefully enjoyable, ethical boot-camp, investigating the ways that ethics is pertinent to professionals working in the criminal justice system. Although the first third of the course will cover ethical theory, we will spend the remainder of the course “in the trenches,” learning about the day-to-day ethical dilemmas and experiences that such criminal justice professionals may expect to encounter in their future practice.

Course Objectives
By the end of the course, the following objectives should be accomplished:

- ✓ Students should grasp the leading theories and foundations of ethics;
- ✓ Articulate a comprehensive understanding of how various ethical traditions impact the form and function of our criminal justice systems;
- ✓ Become familiar with various ethical challenges and dilemmas that criminal justice
professionals will likely encounter in their future work;

• ✓ Demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of how ethics is constructed and evaluated in criminal justice work;

• ✓ Evaluate criminal justice legal policies based on how they impact people’s lives and serve the interests of our communities;

• ✓ Shape and understand their individual perspectives of what is good and bad, right and wrong in our administration of justice;

• ✓ Communicate their interests and ideas with others in a way that demonstrates an openness to change.

Students will also be responsible for additional reading, video links, and other material that will be posted on Canvas. Students are responsible for examining all assigned material. Such material will be fair game in the course, and in particular, for examinations.

ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

COURSE NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Please make sure to have your official UNT email forwarded to your preferred email address (if different) to receive important updates, class cancellations (if applicable), and generally, so I can reach you if necessary.

The announcement board in Canvas will be used for primary communication to the class as a whole. I advise you check the announcements section frequently.

Please send questions regarding the class to me at scott.belshaw@unt.edu. Do not email me through Canvas. You can expect a response from one of us within 24 hours. With that said, if we do receive several emails regarding a common topic, an announcement will be posted or a mass email will be sent addressing the issues instead of responding to each individual email.
It is your responsibility to utilize a computer system that works and is compatible with the UNT online system/Canvas. Utilizing a compatible computer system is especially critical during examination times. I would recommend that you take your exams on the UNT campus if possible. If that is not possible, I would recommend you avoid waiting until the last minute to take your exam in case problems arise.

For connection/browser issues or questions regarding how to work Canvas, please contact the UNT Helpdesk at 940-565-2324 or http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/ (Links to an external site.).

TEXTBOOKS:

The assigned texts listed below are required for all students enrolled in this class. Reading assignments are noted in the course calendar. All students are expected to read the assigned chapters prior to the date specified in the course calendar. The assigned readings will serve as a foundation for the discussion of issues in class as well as examination material.

2. Aristotle. Nicomachaen Ethics. It can be viewed for free here: http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.htm (Links to an external site.)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

The following section lists the required components of this course as well as the points that may be earned toward the final course grade for each component.

Zoom Meetings: We will have a few zoom meetings throughout the semester. The professor will let you know the dates. This will be to talk about current issues and present information that is relevant to the class. These meetings will be a part of your participation grade. However, sometimes I have been known to give extra credit for attending too.

Readings:

Students should follow the schedule of reading assignments found on the course calendar. The reading assignments need to be read before participating in discussions. This will not only facilitate peer discussion, but will also allow you time to formulate questions you may have regarding the material. In addition to the required texts, the course may utilize video presentations, additional handouts, etc. that concern issues pertinent to the study of ethical problems. Information from all sources (textbook,
online discussions, video presentations, handouts) may be included on course examinations.

**Examinations:**

There will be 3 exams that will be given at various intervals throughout the course. Each exam will consist solely of essay questions. Rote memorization of facts is not the goal of this course. As a professor, I want you to be able to apply the concepts that you will learn to numerous situations. Note that any material covered in the textbook or any supplemental material (such as extra assigned readings, online videos, etc.) is “fair game.” It is your responsibility to make sure that your exam is submitted correctly and on time. No email substitutions will be accepted. The exams will open on Monday mornings and will be due on Sunday nights (with the exception of the third exam). I recommend you copy the questions into a Word document and then paste the answers back into Canvas. You can save and resume the exam on Canvas, but you can only submit it once.

EXAM DATES ARE ON THE ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE.

**Reflection Papers:**

Each student will be required to write two reflection papers on the supplemental text required in this course. After finishing each supplemental book, students are required to reflect upon what they learned in each book and provide their thoughts and opinions on the topics within the books. Reflection papers will be turned in via Turnitin.

- Reflection Paper 1: Aristotle Ethics
- Reflection Paper 2: Hard Measures

A reflection paper is not meant to be a regurgitation of information presented in the book. Do not provide me with a review of the book’s content. Rather, provide your own thoughts, opinions, and unique insight from the information learned in your reading – in short, your reaction to the information.

Each reflection paper must be at least three full pages in length (not including cover page and reference page) and should be in APA format. It should be focused and concise clearly setting out your organized reactions to the reading. It should be well-organized by utilizing descriptive headings to organize your paper. Failure to reflect on the material and provide thoughts and opinions on the substantive content in the book will result in loss of points. Point loss may also result from failing to adhere to the requirements and for papers with grammatical, spelling, and organizational issues. Late papers will not be accepted.

**Canvas Discussions/Assignments/Activities:**
Most weeks you will be required to submit one discussion board post. Each discussion board requires you to submit four substantive comments – one original post of your own and then three comments on fellow classmates’ posts. To earn points, such comments must be more than trivial and in fact substantial and substantive (think of these as the discussion you would engage in if we were in class). Each discussion board is graded out of 30 points, and they will be combined to make up 20% of your total grade. For more information on discussions, please read the Discussion Board Instructions document located under Course Content on Canvas. Discussion boards will open Monday mornings at 12am and are due Sundays at 11:59pm.

Lackadaisical discussions will result in a loss of points for discussions board post.

**Makeup Policy:**

There are not make-up tests/quizzes/assignments in this class with the exception of authorized absences according to University policies prescribing authorized absences in certain situations. I reserve the right to consider extreme circumstances and modify this rule. Those in athletics, those who are absent for religious holidays, and/or those involved in other school-supported activities that require being absent from class will be allowed make up if proper procedures are followed in requesting an excused absence. I must have written documentation in advance that you will be away from class for the absence to be excused (e.g., traveling for a basketball game).

There is absolutely no make-up for assignments turned in late unless authorized as a result of university-related absence or through prior consultation and approval of myself. Assignments as a result of authorized absences must be turned in within 3 days of returning from the authorized absence.

**Note:** I am reasonable; so if you must miss an assignment for an unavoidable and “legitimate” circumstance, please let me know as soon as possible so as to get you back on track. Communication is the key.

**Authorized Absences:**

Absences are authorized only in cases of participation in school sponsored activities and/or religious holiday. For an excused absence due to a school-sponsored activity, the department chair and academic dean must approve students in advance. Within three days after the absence, students must obtain authorized absence cards from the Dean of Students for presentation to instructor. Students who wish to request an excused absence for religious holidays can do so and will be excused from class as long as they make a request within the required time frame set by the University (see the most recent undergraduate catalog). Notification must be in writing so that I may have it for my records. You must arrange to make up any work missed during the excused religious absence or school-sponsored activity.

**GRADE BREAKDOWN:** Grades are based on your earned point totals for the semester.

- Exam 1 – 20%
• Exam 2 – 20%
• Exam 3 – 20%
• Discussion Boards – 20%
• Reflection Papers – 10% each

PARTICIPATION, PREPARATION AND BEHAVIOR:
To be successful at learning and understanding the material in this class, it is essential that you read and complete the assigned material and engage in thoughtful online discussions. Your attendance and active participation, along with your willingness to engage in thoughtful discussion will be taken into account at all times during the semester. An online classroom, at least during times of online discussion, is a place to express ideas, opinions, and engage in thoughtful discussions. Students will respect the views and opinions of others at all times or their status in the course will be examined. In sum, simply be appropriate during online interactions. Each student brings unique insight and perspectives, and that can make for a very interesting and lively discussion forum, but just please be appropriate and respectful of others. Please review the undergraduate catalog concerning conduct, which adversely affects the university community.

Miscellaneous:
The material posted online is my personal intellectual property or that of the University of North Texas. You may not utilize the material for other than class purposes.

SYLLABUS CHANGES:
I reserve the right and have the discretion to change the syllabus. While every effort will be made to follow this syllabus as closely as possible, it is sometimes the case that the syllabus must be modified. In the case that the syllabus needs to be adjusted, I will announce such adjustments in class. I will make every effort to ensure that any changes to the syllabus benefit the class as a whole. It is the student’s responsibility to check announcements so that any and all syllabus changes are documented. Failure to obtain syllabus changes because of failure to check and read announcements does not constitute a defense against missed assignments, test dates, and other applicable changes.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:
It is expected that each student will do his/her own work. Cheating, including plagiarism, on any assignment may result in a zero for the semester. This is criminal justice – how could anyone even contemplate cheating when you are studying to work in a system based on trust and honor? With that said, I reserve the right to pursue the formal channels for plagiarism/cheating set down in the UNT Policy Manual. All students are urged to read the UNT Code of Student Conduct and Discipline located in the UNT Policy Manual (Section 5.2). Academic dishonesty will be handled on a case-by-case basis with the final disposition being at the discretion of the professor.

A GRADE OF “INCOMPLETE”: 
I – Incomplete; a non-punitive grade given only during the last one-fourth of a semester and only if a student (1) is passing the course; (2) has justifiable reason (medical or other emergency circumstance) why the work cannot be completed on a schedule; and (3) arranges with the professor before the end of the semester to finish the course at a later date by completing specific requirements that the professor must list on the grade sheet. All work in the course must be completed within the specified time (not to exceed one year after taking the course). If you do not meet the specifications for this grade, you will need to see the Registrar’s Office about resigning from the University.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY:

My lectures are protected by state and common law and by applicable federal copyright laws. You are not authorized to make any commercial use of them without express prior permission from myself. Persons who do make use of my lecture notes for commercial purposes (i.e. sell you class notes to an Internet site or other commercially-related business) will be held legally liable.

ODA STATEMENT:

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in the course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student.

For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at http://www.unt.edu/oda (Links to an external site.). You may also contact them by phone at 940-565-4323.

I will make every attempt possible to accommodate anyone with a documented disability. Please let me know in advance of exams or other class requirements so I have enough time to send exams or other materials to ODA. You must provide me with the appropriate exam request forms from ODA prior to the exam in order to take the exam at ODA.

Important Notice for F-1 Students taking Distance Education Courses: Federal Regulation

To read detailed Immigration and Customs Enforcement regulations for F-1 students taking online courses, please go to the Electronic Code of Federal Regulations website at http://www.oea.gov/index.php/links/electronic-code-of-federal-regulations (Links to an
The specific portion concerning distance education courses is located at “Title 8 CFR 214.2 Paragraph (f) (6) (i) (G)” and can be found buried within this document: http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2012-title8vol1/xml/CFR2012title2vol1sec2142.xml (Links to an external site.).

The paragraph reads:

(G) For F–1 students enrolled in classes for credit or classroom hours, no more than the equivalent of one class or three credits per session, term, semester, trimester, or quarter may be counted toward the full course of study requirement if the class is taken on-line or through distance education and does not require the student's physical attendance for classes, examination or other purposes integral to completion of the class. An on-line or distance education course is a course that is offered principally through the use of television, audio, or computer transmission including open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, or satellite, audio conferencing, or computer conferencing. If the F–1 student's course of study is in a language study program, no on-line or distance education classes may be considered to count toward a student's full course of study requirement.

University of North Texas Compliance

To comply with immigration regulations, an F-1 visa holder within the United States may need to engage in an on-campus experiential component for this course. This component (which must be approved in advance by the instructor) can include activities such as taking an on-campus exam, participating in an on-campus lecture or lab activity, or other on-campus experience integral to the completion of this course.

If such an on-campus activity is required, it is the student’s responsibility to do the following:

- Submit a written request to the instructor for an on-campus experiential component within one week of the start of the course.
- Ensure that the activity on campus takes place and the instructor documents it in writing with a notice sent to the International Student and Scholar Services Office. ISSS has a form available that you may use for this purpose.

Because the decision may have serious immigration consequences, if an F-1 student is unsure about his or her need to participate in an on-campus experiential component for this course, he/she should contact the UNT International Student and Scholar Service Office (telephone 940-565-2195 or email internationaladvising@unt.edu) to get clarification before the one-week deadline.

GRADES:

Every semester, at least a couple of students come to my office around the end of the semester asking, “What can I do to raise my grade?” My policy and statement concerning that question is this:
• If you focus on learning and being responsible (i.e., keeping up with assignments, completing extra credit when given, etc.), your final grade will reflect this.
• I do not give individual extra credit. If and when I offer an extra credit assignment it will be offered to the entire class. I suggest you take advantage of extra credit whenever it is offered.
• Borderline grades will be evaluated on case-by-case basis and my policy is this: if a student is 1 percentage point away from the next letter grade (borderline grade), has completed all extra credit opportunities, and has not missed more than the allotted number of absences, I will bump them to the next letter grade. I will not raise any grades that are not borderline grades. Not all borderline grades will be raised. Grades are not based on how much I like a person. They are based on work and performance, period.
• ALL GRADES ARE FINAL AFTER ENTERED IN THE COMPUTER. The final decision on whether or not to raise a grade is solely at the discretion of the professor. Do not email me to change your grade because you did not like the grade you earned!

**FINAL POINTS:**

Please do not hesitate to come to me with any questions, problems, or issues you may have. Do not wait to address these issues until it is too late for you to receive an acceptable grade. I think you will find me to be very approachable and eager to address any problems with you in a professional manner.

• To do well in this class the student must complete all assigned readings prior to that class date. (READ! READ!! READ!!!) This will allow for a better discussion and understanding of the material. I take test questions from the book and discussions!!!
• DO NOT highlight and copy text from the Internet and turn it in as your own work. It is easy for me to catch you doing this. I type a sentence into Google or Yahoo and it will pull up the entire text. You will not receive a good grade for doing this!! This includes when doing Canvas assignments.
• If you are having academic or even a personal problems please feel free to talk to me. I am here to help. I might understand more than you think.

Although we will attempt to adhere to the schedule of topics listed and described below, the course schedule should be viewed as **highly flexible.** I am not interested in covering the material as fast as possible simply for the sake of covering it. Rather, I want to cover the material that we do cover thoroughly, and at a pace that is conducive to **learning** the material instead of simply **covering** the material. Consequently, it is your responsibility to come to class, know where we are in the listing of assigned readings **irrespective of this schedule,** and know the material that we have covered prior to any reading assessment, examination, and/or presentation. Further, there may be additional items added to the calendar throughout the course of the semester (i.e. video presentations and/or handouts). It will be your responsibility to keep up with these as well.