

“All animals are created equal, but some animals are more equal than others.”

[George Orwell](#), *Animal Farm*

“Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heav'n.”

[John Milton](#), *Paradise Lost*

SYLLABUS for CJ 101-003
Introduction to Criminal Justice
Spring, 2008

General Information

Professor:	Dr. Michael B. Blankenship	Class URL:	blackboard.boisestate.edu
Office:	Library 152D	Classroom:	LA 106
Office Hours:	Tue 9:00 – 12:00 AM Thur 3:00 – 6:00 PM	Class Times:	1:40 PM to 2:55 PM
Phone:	208-426-2771	Class Days:	Tue & Thur
E-mail:	mblanken@boisestate.edu		
Web Site:	www.boisestate.edu/cj/mblanken		
Blog:	justicegambit.blogspot.com		

Philosophy

The primary goal of attending college is educational attainment. In pursuit of this goal, one of the objectives of this course is to create an atmosphere conducive to critical thinking. My approach is **not** to inundate you with facts and figures (some essential information is a requisite), but to provide you with some fundamental tools that can be used to explore various issues including crime, criminality, and social responses to law breaking. My method also includes challenging students' perceptions (some of which are closely held) and introducing students to a variety of concepts, issues, and ways of examining the construction of reality.

Lectures and discussions: (1) focus on major issues; (2) assist in the synthesis of knowledge; (3) encourage constructive criticism; and (4) interject material not found in the reading assignments. Assignments: (1) assist in the synthesis of knowledge; and (2) reinforce academic competencies. In order to receive the maximum benefit from this course, it is imperative that students attend each class prepared to discuss the assigned material.

My primary concern is your academic success. Initially, we will measure this construct through the process of evaluating your performance. However, the true measure of success is what you learn and what you carry with you for the remainder of your life. I have structured the class to facilitate the academic success of each student. While I will be your guide through the course material, you must be willing to dedicate yourself to the goal of learning.

Teaching Style

I approach every course from the perspective of a social scientist. My goal is to maximize the probability of students' academic success by employing a teaching style that does **not focus** on rote memorization and reading exclusively from the text. I use the assigned text as an outline, but also inject additional material. From time to time, I add new material or discuss recent events that I share via email or my [blog](#).

What Students Can Expect From Me

My performance is predicated on three goals – preparedness, competence, and responsiveness.

Preparedness. Class begins promptly at 1:40 PM on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Unless something unusual occurs, I arrive early and am available to answer questions before and after class. I have a plan of action each day we are in class. Each class and each assignment is designed to move us closer to the course goals and objectives.

Competence. I am starting my third decade as a full-time faculty member. I have earned four college degrees including a Ph.D. in Criminal Justice. I have published in a number of areas, including white-collar crime and capital punishment. Every member of the Department of Criminal Justice is a busy scholar, so competence and dedication are the norm. I also served as a police officer for seven years. In short, I am a professor and have things to profess based on the best available research.

Responsiveness. I hold regular office hours and respond to every email. Please feel free to pose any question or to pursue further information on any topic.

What I Expect From Students

Student performance is based, in part, on preparedness, civility, and integrity.

Preparedness. I require students to arrive at class on time and prepared to learn. I do not tolerate sleeping in class, nor other activities that prevent learning. This category includes using the Internet for activities unrelated to the class.

The rule of thumb is to devote three hours of preparation for every hour in class. Research has shown that successful students set aside specific time slots to prepare for each class. Time management is a major issue for college students, especially during the first year of college. Class attendance and reading the assignments are highly correlated with academic success.

Civility. I expect students to engage in civil discourse. There is no room for incivility in this class. I ask that you refrain from talking when others are talking, and that you listen attentively when others are speaking.

Integrity. Integrity is essential to quality of life and true academic success. More detail is provided in sections that follow.

Academic Integrity

The ability to pursue knowledge in an open and candid atmosphere free of intimidation and ad hominem attacks is a bedrock principle of university life. Such an environment affords a degree of freedom not found in any other venue. In order to preserve and benefit from this environment, it is important that we observe two fundamental standards – civility and honesty – that make academic life possible and enjoyable.

Civility

Significant emotional valence is attached to many of the topics in this class. While individuals have a general right to pose questions, to respond to questions, and to make statements, these rights do have limits. Civil discourse is always expected from each member of the class. When anyone is speaking, please be respectful (and quiet) no matter how much you might disagree with the content of the question, statement, or discussion. You will be exposed to a number of ideas, arguments, and discussions that you might not agree with or respect. That is the nature of academic life. However, it is essential that emotions

be kept in check and that respect for every individual in the class be maintained at all times. Please feel free to contact me outside of class to voice any political or ideological objections to the content of the course.

Honesty

All forms of academic dishonesty are inimical to the goals of this class. Any student who engages in academic misconduct, or knowingly assists another student in this purpose, is in violation of [university policy](#). While there are many forms of academic dishonesty, the two major forms are cheating on an exam and plagiarism. All forms of academic dishonesty undermine the opportunity to learn and bring the institution into disrepute. Therefore, the highest standards of honesty will be observed in this class at all times. Failure to abide by this code of conduct will be dealt with in accordance to university policy.

Contacting Me

The most efficient (and perhaps effective) means of contacting me is by [email](#). When doing so, please add **CJ 101** in the Subject line along with the purpose of your email. I respond to every email I receive from students, normally within eight hours. If you have not received a response within eight hours, please send a second message. **Never hesitate to send me an email, nor apologize for sending more than one.**

If we are to be successful, it is important that you stay abreast of class events and that you have all of your questions answered. **Never leave campus with a question unanswered!** After class may be a good time for a brief conversation or to make an appointment. I suggest that you exchange contact information with other class members. You are also strongly encouraged to logon to the course Web site [each day](#) in order to stay informed about class events and updates.

Students can also leave voice mail at 208-426-2771 or stop by my office on Tuesdays between 9:00 AM and 12:00 noon and Thursdays between 3:00 and 6:00 PM. I suggest that you call or email beforehand. Feel free to contact me to schedule a conference when the need arises. Before or after class is usually a good time for a brief discussion. Please do not wait until the end of the semester to contact me about a problem. I strongly encourage you to contact me when an issue first arises – we have a better chance of finding a solution the earlier you contact me.

All email from me to students will be sent via the university's email system. If you want to receive email at a different email address, then it is **your** responsibility for having BSU email forwarded to that address. BSU's Office of Information Technology has provided a link to information about forwarding your email (http://helpdesk.boisestate.edu/students/broncomail/using_broncomail.shtml#question4).

Attendance Policy

Research has shown that academic performance is positively correlated with class attendance. Therefore, I encourage students to attend every class, with one exception. Please be considerate and **do not** attend class when you have contracted a communicable illness. Otherwise, attendance is mandatory unless an excused absence is granted by the professor.

- Participation in an official [university-recognized activity](#) constitutes an excused absence. Students must request authorization using the attached form for an excused absence due to a university activity prior to the date of the absence. It is the student's responsibility to make up any missed assignments.

- Students may accrue **two** unexcused absences without incurring any penalty (assuming that missed assignments are submitted). Students are encouraged to save these days for times when a genuine illness or a bona fide emergency occurs.
- After the 2nd absence students must request permission for an excused absence using the form attached to the syllabus. A third unexcused absence will result in the reduction of five points for the course. A reduction of one letter grade for the course will be imposed for the next two unexcused absences. The sixth unexcused absence will result in a failing grade for the course.
- Please **DO NOT** call or send email notifying me of an absence.
- Class starts promptly at 1:40 PM on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Once attendance has been taken students not registering with the “clicker” will be counted as absent. Anyone entering the classroom after a quiz has commenced will not be permitted to undertake the quiz.
- In the event that class is cancelled, a notice will be placed on our Blackboard site and an email will be sent to your BroncoMail address.

Cell phones, mp3 players, instant/text messaging, and surfing the Web

Cell phones should be turned off or set to vibrate. In the event that you receive a call while in class, please step outside the classroom to conduct discussions. iPods and mp3 players should also be turned off during class. I ask that you refrain from using the text messaging and instant messaging of your cell phones during class, and especially during a quiz. *A presumption of cheating exists if a student is found using an unauthorized electronic device while taking a quiz or exam.*

Students are encouraged to use the Internet for course-related activities, such as browsing relevant Web sites and note taking. Surfing the Internet for entertainment or for other course assignments during this class is frowned upon by the professor.

If you want to record lectures, I request that you notify me before doing so.

Purpose of this Course

This course seeks to:

1. provide an introduction to the study of the making of law, the breaking of law, and social reactions to the breaking of law in the United States;
2. promote integrative understanding of society and its institutions through the study of crime;
3. reinforce academic competencies;
4. introduce you to social science concepts and applications as they relate to the study of crime;
5. begin the socialization process into the discipline.

The course is an *introduction* to:

1. the general characteristics of social science with a significant emphasis on the scientific method and research;
2. the argot of the discipline;

3. various theoretical aspects of crime and criminality;
4. the basic philosophy, history, and functions of the police, courts, and punishment (I do not like the term “corrections”) components as well as the functions and substance of law;
5. new ideas, concepts, and opposing viewpoints on crime, criminals, and crime-control policies;
6. the requirements for mastering basic academic competencies.

The subject matter in this class is criminal and deviant behavior and its social/political response. We do not study people who, as one of my professors phrased it, “sing too loud in church!” Please be forewarned that you might find some of the material in this class offensive due to the topic and/or its graphic nature. I will try to warn the class prior to the introduction of any material that might be offensive. In the event that you object to the graphic nature of any material, I request that you refrain from commenting during class and/or that you leave the class and then contact me as soon as possible to discuss the situation.

Text

Cole, George F., & Smith, Christopher E. (2007) *The American system of criminal justice* (11th Edition). Belmont, CA: Thompson.

This text is bundled with a student response system (i.e., a clicker). The SRS will allow you to record your presence in class, take pop quizzes, and participate in class discussions. **You will need to have the SRS with you every day.** I also suggest carrying some spare batteries.

Grading

Grading will be based on the following items:

1. Directed research project - 20%
2. Visit to courts – 15%
3. Unannounced quizzes – 20%
4. Examinations – 45% (three exams)

Nota Bene! Assignments submitted late will be penalized one letter grade per day unless an excused absence is granted. Students are not held accountable for events beyond their control, such as an email or Blackboard failure.

Final grades are based on the following scale:

A+ = 97-100	B+ = 87-89	C+ = 77-79	D+ = 67-69	F = 59<
A = 93-96	B = 83-86	C = 73-76	D = 63-66	
A- = 90-92	B- = 80-82	C- = 70-72	D- = 60-62	

I subscribe to the following standards for the meaning of grades (Travers, 1950):

- A = all major and minor goals achieved
- B = all major goals and most of the minor goals achieved
- C = all major goals achieved, but many of the minor ones were not
- D = a few major goals were achieved, but the student is not prepared for advanced work
- F = none of the major goals were achieved

Directed Research Project

A selection of journal articles are available from the Blackboard course site. I have also prepared a [QuickTime movie](#) that provides step-by-step instructions on how to gain online access to the databases in [Albertsons Library](#). This assignment will require you to select one article of your choice and prepare a synopsis of the research. The format of the document should consist of 2 page (maximum) with one-inch margins. Please remember to include your name on the document. I have prepared a model for students to follow that is available via Blackboard. The synopsis should address the following items:

1. Statement of the Problem

What is the research question?

2. Methodology

What is the method of observation employed by the researchers? Survey, archival, participant observation, experimental or quasi-experimental, etc.

3. Results

What did the research reveal?

4. Limitations

What were the limitations of the study? Sample size, type of sample, geographical, a flaw in the research design?

5. Future Research

What research questions might be addressed in the future?

The purpose of this assignment is to introduce you to the literature in criminal justice and criminology, how to conduct library research using online data bases, and how to comprehend published research.

The first assignment is due February 26th. The second assignment is due April 8th.

Visit to the Courts

This assignment will require you to visit a courtroom (while court is in session) in the Ada County Court House (200 Front Street) and to record and submit your observations in the form of a report. You may elect to attend an actual trial, arraignments, or preliminary hearings. Additional scheduling information and a model will be provided via Blackboard.

The purpose of this assignment is to provide a brief glimpse of some of the functions of the courts.

Two important items that you should note. The first is parking. I suggest that you **not** park illegally. If you park close to the court house you will probably have to pay. The other item to remember is decorum in the court. Remember to turn your cell phone off and that noise should be kept to an absolute minimum.

The report should be 1-3 pages in length (double-spaced) and consist of the following items:

- (1) Date, time, and courtroom number
- (2) Judge's name
- (3) Type of hearing (arraignment, preliminary hearing, trial)
- (4) Case(s) information (offense(s), bail, type of attorney (private or court-appointed), plea, disposition)
- (5) Observations/impressions – what went on and what did you think?

This assignment is due on or before May 1st.

Unannounced Quizzes

Quizzes will be administered in class using the “clicker” technology. Thus you will need to bring your device to class everyday as it will also be used to check attendance. **Missed quizzes cannot be made up.** The two lowest quiz grades will be dropped.

These quizzes serve several purposes. First, they are an incentive for students to read the material prior to class. Second, they are an incentive to attend class. Third, the quizzes will focus on some of the major ideas, concepts, and terminology from the material. Last, they will serve as additional review material for exams.

Examinations

This grade is composed of three major examinations that will be administered through the [Online Testing Center](#). You will need to make a reservation and follow the Testing Center policies, which includes having proper identification. Missed exams can only be rescheduled in very limited circumstances, which fall into the category of excused absences. *Please do not ask to take the final exam early because of family vacations or similar circumstances.*

Exam Dates:

You may reserve a time slot to take the exam anytime the Testing Center is open (with the exception of class time) between the following dates:

Exam 1 - Monday, February 25th – Thursday, February 28th

Exam 2 – Monday, March 31st – Thursday, April 3rd

Exam 3 - Monday, May 12th – Thursday, May 15th

The purpose of these examination is to measure your comprehension of the content of the course. The format of the exams is objective, and will consist of 100 items.

Course Materials

PowerPoints, handouts, podcasts, and any other material related to the course (including this syllabus) can be found at the Blackboard course site. These items are made available for preparation and review purposes. Students will find that they are a poor substitute for class attendance, attentiveness and note taking.

Disclaimers

1. This syllabus does not constitute a contract. Therefore, it is possible that changes may be made to accommodate changing circumstances. Modifications will be posted on Blackboard. In the event of revisions, students are responsible for updated information.
2. Part of the course requirements include various levels of participation in different activities, several of which require public display. Your continued participation in this course constitutes implied agreement to having some or all of your work available to members of this class, faculty, graduate assistants, and in limited circumstances, the general public. You can control access to your identity and contact information through Blackboard. No performance data will be accessible by anyone other than you, the professor, and the teaching assistant. The only individuals who will have access to personal information, including email addresses, will be the professor and the teaching assistant, unless you elect to reveal this information.

Department Peer Advisor

Jonathan Bolen

Department of Criminal Justice

Library 166

208-426-5628

jonathanbolen@mail.boisestate.edu

<http://cja.boisestate.edu/Pages/Advising.htm>

Teaching Assistant

Demene May

Department of Criminal Justice

L-152D

demeneemay@boisestate.edu

Request for an Excused Absence Form

Instructions: The form must be submitted prior to the event for which you are requesting an excused absence or upon your return to the first class after an absence due to an illness or family emergency. **This form has to be submitted only in the event of a university-sponsored activity or after a second unexcused absence.**

Name: _____

BSU Student ID Number _____

Email: _____

Course: CJ 101- _____

Date(s) of Absence: _____

Date of First Class Attended after Absence: _____

Brief explanation of circumstances beyond the control of the student leading to the absence (in the event of an illness, **an explicit diagnosis is not required**; I just need a statement to the effect that you were ill and documentation that you sought medical treatment):

_____/_____
Signature / **Date**

Your signature attests to the accuracy of the information provided.

Did you remember to attach relevant documentation?