

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

[George Orwell](#)

After all, every murderer when he kills runs the risk of the most dreadful of deaths,
whereas those who kill him risk nothing except promotion.

[Albert Camus](#)

SYLLABUS for CJ 510-001

Punishment & Corrections

Spring, 2008

General Information

Professor:	Dr. Michael B. Blankenship	Class URL:	blackboard.boisestate.edu
Web Site:	boisestate.edu/cj/mblanken	Classroom:	ILC 205
Office:	Library 152D	Times:	6:00 PM to 9:00 PM
Office Hours:	Tue 9 – 12 noon Thur 3 – 6 PM	Days:	Thursdays
Phone:	208-426-2771		
E-mail:	mblanken@boisestate.edu		
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 constructing 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.

Contacting the Professor

The most efficient (and perhaps effective) means of contacting me is by email. When doing so, please add **CJ 510** 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!** Before or 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 log on 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 Thursday 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. 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.

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. Some of this discussion will be controversial and will challenge your ideology. 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 according to university policy.

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 **one** unexcused absence without incurring any penalty (assuming that missed assignments are submitted). Students are encouraged to save this day for times when a genuine illness or a bona fide emergency occurs.
- After the 1st absence students must request permission for an excused absence using the form attached to the syllabus. A second and third unexcused absence will result in the reduction of one letter grade for the course for each absence. The fourth 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 6:00 PM on Thursday.
- 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.

The use of the Internet is encouraged during class for course-related activities. Students should refrain from instant/text messaging and browsing Web sites not related to the course during class.

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

Purpose

This course seeks to:

1. provide an overview of the philosophies and history of punishment. The major emphasis will be on punishment in the U.S., but both historical and comparative references to other countries and cultures will be discussed.
2. promote an integrative understanding of society and its institutions through the study of punishment;
3. reinforce academic competencies;
4. reinforce social science concepts and applications to the study of crime and criminals;
5. continue the socialization process into the discipline.

The subject matter in this class is criminal and deviant behavior and the social/political responses to this category of behavior. 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 (e.g., torture, executions, death penalty). 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.

Course Themes

Throughout this course we will place the subject at hand within a larger context for analysis. One of these themes is struggling with the concept of justice. We will learn about our society through our examination of punishment and by posing the question “Does this punishment meet the requirements of justice?” I use the word struggle since we will not arrive at a definition that has concerned humans for thousands of years. The other themes deal with the primary goals of punishment – retribution, deterrence, incapacitation, and rehabilitation. We will continually pose the question “Does this punishment meet or undermine one or more of these goals?” We will also pursue answers to the question, “Why do we punish?” There are alternatives to retributive justice, such as restorative justice and therapeutic models. Instead, for thousands of years, humans have punished one another. Why?

Texts

Hallinan, J.T. (2003). *Going up the river: Travels in a prison nation* (ISBN 0-8129-6844-1) New York: Random House.

Johnson, R. (2002). *Hard time: Understanding and reforming the prison* 3rd ed. (ISBN 0-534-50717-4). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Johnson, R. (2006). *Death work: A study of the modern execution process* 2nd ed. (ISBN 0-534-61559-8) Belmont, CA: Thompson

J.G. Murphy (1995). *Punishment and rehabilitation* (3rd ed). (ISBN 0-534-24600-1). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Santos, M.G. (2004). *About prison* (ISBN 0-534-62355-7). Belmont, CA: Thompson.

Reading assignments will be posted each week on Blackboard. Additional materials may be sent via email.

Grading

Grading will be based on the following items:

1. Writing Assignments – 30 %
2. Research Paper - 40%
3. Final Examination – 30%

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

Nota Bene! No assignment will be accepted late. Any assignment received after the date and time indicated will receive a grade of 0 (zero).

Writing Assignments

Writing assignments will consist of two categories: (1) a blog; and (2) a wiki. Both of these items can be accessed at no cost from any computer connected to the Internet. The purpose of this assignment is to integrate technology in our class while using these tools to enhance our critical thinking and communication skills.

Blog

You will need to create an account at blogger.com. You can elect to keep your blog private (making it accessible only to members of the class) or to make your entries available to the public

Your blog will be a place for you to record your thoughts, draft your questions, make notes, and complete outside assignments. It will contain a mixture of in-class writing and out-of-class assignments. **Each week you will need to identify an article related to punishment policy or practice and post an entry about your reaction to the entry. Each student will be required to access each class member's blog and comment on that student's posting.** I will evaluate blogs on a random basis, so please make sure that your blog is always up to date.

Wiki

We will use the course wiki to exchange information and to share resources. Everyone must contribute to the development of the wiki. The wiki will also be used to post the research paper.

Research Paper

This assignment will require you to select a topic and submit a research paper of sufficient length to adequately cover the topic. The paper must conform to the Department of Criminal Justice's style guide. The title of the paper should be _____ and Punishment. You will fill in the blank with a topic that must be approved by the professor. Some suggested topics include religion, alternatives, treatment, and justice.

The paper will be submitted using the wiki and should consist of a minimum of 2500 words. A printed copy of the final draft must also be submitted. This task will be accomplished in stages, so deadlines must be followed.

Topic Approval - January 29th
10-15 references - February 19th
Thesis Statement – February 26th

Outline – March 11th
First Draft – March 25th
Second Draft – April 15th
Final Draft – May 1st

Examination

This grade is composed of a comprehensive final (30% of the final grade). A missed exam can only be rescheduled in very limited circumstances, which fall into the category of excused absences. The final exam will be administered on May 15th, so please arrange your schedule accordingly. The exam format will use a combination of essay and objective 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 review purposes (I do **not** provide study guides). Students will find that they are a poor substitute for class preparation, 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 and the professor. The only individual who will have access to personal information, including email addresses, will be the professor, unless you elect to reveal this information.

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 101-001

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?