

Miscarriages of Justice

CJ

Spring 2018

Classroom: CJ 460
Meeting Times: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday: 11am-12pm
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Please note that the best way to contact me is via email.

Course Description & Objectives

The purpose of this course is to provide a critical examination of the connection between social inequalities and the criminal legal system. This course focuses on intentional and unintentional faults that may result in unnecessary contact, arrest, conviction and incarceration of undeserving individuals. We will discuss the role of race, gender, social class, and other important demographics and their relations to “miscarriages” of justice in the criminal legal system. Also discussed are the implications of the inability to convict the guilty. We will also discuss how the media portrays crime and miscarriages of justices. Finally, a discussion of possible remedies will conclude each topic or how law and policy may be improved to reduce the prevalence of miscarriages of justice.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course students will have a better understanding of the prevalence and costs of miscarriages of justice, factors that contribute to miscarriages of justice, and potential reforms to the current criminal legal system to eliminate or reduce the number of miscarriages of justice. Furthermore, students will be able to criticize objectively current criminal legal system policies as well as broader social policies.

Specifically, students will be able to:

1. Describe the prevalence of miscarriages of justice in the U.S. criminal legal system.
2. Discuss various strategies to measure wrongful convictions, and be able to identify the costs of wrongful convictions for both individuals and society.
3. Classify and discuss the major causes of mass incarceration in the United States including those seen outside of the criminal legal system.
4. Demonstrate a critical understanding of the causes of social inequalities in the U.S. criminal justice system and present these critiques effectively in group discussions and written assignments.

5. Provide policy recommendations to reduce miscarriages of justice and communicate these suggestions effectively in group discussion and written assignments.

Required Materials

This course does not require a text. However, students will be provided with scholarly articles and other reading material via Blackboard. Students are expected to read and analyze these documents in the same manner they would a text.

Student Expectations

To ensure learning outcomes are met, students are expected to:

Participate. Students are expected to be prepared for class by completing required readings prior to the start of class. Students are expected to attend **all** classes and are responsible for **all** material presented during class sessions, including course related announcements.

Check Email & Canvas Regularly for Course Correspondence. Important information regarding the course schedule, assignments, and grades will be posted to Canvas.

Be Respectful. This includes directing full attention to discussions. When participating in discussion and in email exchanges with the instructor and other classmates, students are expected to use respectful language. Do not communicate with others via the internet in a way you would not interact with them in person. Disrespectful language, and/or disrespectful classroom behavior will not be tolerated. Disregard for this expectation will result in students being asked to leave class. In instances of serious or repeated infractions, students will be subject to University disciplinary action.

Complete Assignments When Scheduled. Students are informed in writing (this syllabus) of the due dates of ALL assignments **for the entire semester on the first day of class.** For this reason:

Make Up Policy:

There will be **no** make-up of class assignments (including exams) without a university excuse. Late papers will receive a 5 point deduction per day late (each assignment is due at the end of the class period, a 5 point deduction per day late begins immediately following the end of the class the paper is due; a hard copy must be turned in during class). Communicating absences a head of time (when possible) will help with support making up missed assignments.

Extra Credit

There will be no opportunities for extra credit in this course.

Policy Regarding Absences

Attendance is a required (scored) portion of this class. As this class will be conducted similar to a seminar course, students are expected to be present and prepared. I am here to steer the course but I do not expect to do the majority of the talking in class. This means that attendance and class discussion is vital to your performance in the course.

Cell Phone Policy

ANY USE OF CELL PHONES WILL NOT BE TOLERATED DURING CLASS. If a cell phone is seen during class you will be asked initially to turn it to silent and to put it away. If a phone is seen a second time, I will ask that you to place it on my desk until the end of class at which point you can retrieve it as you leave the room. If usage continues, I reserve the right to ask you to leave the room and you will not be credited for any assignments accepted during that particular period.

Computer Usage Policy

The use of computers for the purpose of taking notes will be allowed. If I believe that a student is using a computer for any other purpose than class, I will reserve the right to eliminate the usage of computers by that particular student and if need be, the class as a whole.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES

University Policies:

By enrolling in this course, you agree to abide by the following University Policies: Academic Dishonesty/ Excused Absence Policy for Undergraduates/ Computing Services Acceptable Use/ Inclement Weather/ Dead Week/ Students with Disabilities/ Academic Forgiveness/ Academic Probation and Suspension/ Academic Rights and Responsibilities of Students/ Affirmative Action/ and Sexual Harassment. Please read the full text of each policy by going to www.marshall.edu/academic-affairs and clicking on "Marshall University Policies." Or, you can access the policies directly by going to http://www.marshall.edu/academic-affairs/?page_id=802

Academic Dishonesty:

Academic Dishonesty includes cheating, fabrication and falsification of data or information, plagiarism, bribes/favors/threats, and complicity (i.e., helping or attempting someone commit an act of dishonesty). As stated in the policy, "A student, by voluntarily accepting admission to the institution or enrolling in a class or course of study offered by Marshall University accepts the academic requirements and criteria of the institution. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of policies regulating academic conduct, including the definitions of academic dishonesty, the possible sanctions and the appeal process. For the purposes of this policy, an academic exercise is defined as any assignment, whether graded or ungraded, that is given in an academic course or must be completed toward the completion of degree or certification requirements. This includes, but is not limited to: Exams, quizzes, papers, oral presentations, data gathering and analysis, practica and creative work of any kind" (MU Undergraduate Catalog). If a student violates this policy, discretion will be used by the instructor; the possible sanction to be applied will be a failing grade for the assignment, exam, or paper. For those of you who need a reminder about the policy, please refer to the MU Undergraduate/Graduate Catalog.

Plagiarism:

For students (major or non-majors; undergraduates and graduates) who plagiarize a paper that is less than 10 pages in length, a letter grade of zero will be issued for that assignment. When a student plagiarizes a major research paper, report, legal paper, etc., that is 10 pages or more in length, a failing grade will be issued to the student for the course. It should be noted that students are entitled to an appeals process. The protocol for doing so is described under the heading “Academic Dishonesty Policy” and the subheading “Appeals Process” in the MU Undergraduate/Graduate Catalog.

** I reserve the right to change this syllabus/schedule at any time during the course of the semester, based on student progress and materials. An update will be provided in class as well as on blackboard and email to all students.

Policy for Students with Disabilities: Marshall University is committed to equal opportunity education for all students, including those with physical, learning and psychological disabilities. University policy states that it is the responsibility of students with disabilities to contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) in Prichard Hall 117 (304.696.2467) to provide documentation of their disability. Following this, the ODS Coordinator will send a letter to each of the student’s instructors outlining the academic accommodation he/she will need to ensure equality in classroom experiences, outside assignment, testing, and grading. The instructor and student will meet to discuss how the accommodation(s) requested will be provided. For more information, access the website for the Office of Disabled Student Services: <http://www.marshall.edu/disabled>

Grading Scale and Distribution**Grade Distribution**

The final grade is the total of three different components: class/attendance, weekly debates, and final paper.

1. Attendance/discussion (400 points/10 points per day)

Attendance/discussion is extremely important to your grade in the course. I will be grading you on both being present but also taking part in class discussion. The only way you can make up attendance/discussion points is with a university excuse or a prior agreement made with me.

2. Weekly Debates (300/ 12 Debates 25 points apiece)

Each week the class will take part in a debate dealing with a particular sub-topic we have discussed throughout the week. The class will be divide into teams and each week two teams will be selected to take part in the debate. Teams will know the topic but will not know which side of the argument they will defend until the day of the class. Other classmates will judge each team on their debate performance and will turn in “counter point” documents to discuss their view on

the topic (have to defend your position) to earn credit for that week. More information will be provide in class.

3. Final Paper (300 points/ 3 Parts 100 points apiece)

Students will be required to complete a final paper/project. This project will take place throughout the semester and will be developed in three parts. The first is the identification of a problem seen in society (a social justice issue). Students will be required to explain the issue (background information, history, current status, etc) as one would do as a part of a literature review. The second part of the project will be working with me to determine a way to address/learn more about the social justice issue. This will involve making contact with individuals/organizations outside of the classroom and taking part in “steps” to alleviate the issue. The student will describe the program/group/individuals in which they are working/communicating with and the steps taken to alleviate the particular issue. The final segment will be a self-reflective essay discussing what they have learned about the issue and how they feel about the steps being taken to help alleviate the problem. Detailed instructions for each section will be provided during the course of the semester.

The following grading schema and point distribution will be used to assign final letter grades in this course:

Grading Scale

A	=	≥ 900 points
B	=	800 - 899 points
C	=	700 - 799 points
D	=	600 - 699 points
F	=	≤599 points

Point Distribution

Attendance/Discussion	400 pts
Debates	300 pts
Paper/Project	<u>300 pts</u>
	1000 pts

Class Schedule

Subject to Change: While it is the intention to cover topics throughout the semester as described below, the following course outline is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Any subsequent changes to the course outline will be announced and posted to Canvas.

Week	Dates	Topics	Reading/Assignment
1	1/8	Syllabus Day 1/8 What is Social Justice and Should We Care?	Provided on Blackboard Instructions for Debate (teams determined)
2	1/15	Religion and Crime MLK Day NO Class	Provided on Blackboard Debate 1 Friday 1/19 (responses due following Monday)
3	1/22	Media and Justice	Provided on Blackboard Determine Paper Topic Debate 2 Friday 1/26
4	1/29	Homelessness and Crime	Chapter 4 Debate 3 Friday, 2/2
5	2/5	Drug Policy	Provided on Blackboard Debate 4 Friday 2/9
6	2/12	Drug Policy Continued No Class 2/13 and 2/15	Provided on Blackboard Project Part One Due 2/16 (by email)
7	2/19	Racial Profiling	Provided on Blackboard Debate 5 Friday 2/23
8	2/26	Black Lives vs. Blue Lives	Provided on Blackboard Debate 6 Friday 3/2
9	3/5	Use of Force	Provided on Blackboard Debate 7 Friday 3/9
10	3/12	Terror and Justice	Provided on Blackboard Debate 8 Friday 3/16

			Project Part Two Due 3/16 (by email)
11	3/19	Spring Break No Class	
12	3/26	Is Community Policing Real	Provided on Blackboard Debate 9 Friday 3/30
13	4/2	School to Prison Pipeline	Provided on Blackboard Debate 10 Friday April 6 th
14	4/9	LGBTQ and Crime	Provided on Blackboard Debate 11 Friday 4/13
15	4/16	What is Punishment and How do We Use it?	Provided on Blackboard Debate 12 Friday 4/20
16	4/23	Special Topics	Provided on Blackboard Final Projects due 4/25 Class Wrap Up
17	4/30	Finals	