**ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE**

**Social Sciences Division**

**CJI 250 *–* Current Issues in Criminal Justice**

**Course Outline**

**Course Number & Name:**  CJI 250 Current Issues in Criminal Justice

**Credit Hours:**  3 .0 **Contact Hours:**  3.0 **Lecture:** 3.0 **Lab:**  N/A **Other:**  N/A

**Prerequisites**: Grade of “C” or better in CJI 101

**Co-requisites:** None **Concurrent Courses:** None

**Course Outline Revision Date:**  Fall 2010

**Course Description**: This course examines the current critical issues in the criminal justice system. It includes comparison and analysis of pending cases before the federal and state courts. Students learn about previous decisions and other topics of a social nature that can impact on the administration of the criminal justice system.

**Course Goals:** Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to do the following:

1. describe the functions of the various components of the criminal justice system (law enforcement, courts and corrections) and explain the interrelationship of these components with respect to the current topic of analysis;
2. demonstrate basic knowledge of criminal law and the rights of individual citizens with respect to the current topic of analysis;
3. describe the role of the criminal justice professional in the community and the organization and administration of the various entities in the criminal justice system with respect to the current topic of analysis;
4. explain the social, political, economic, and cultural factors within society that influence the development of criminological theory, laws and criminal justice practices and their application to criminal behaviors and sanctions with respect to the current topic of analysis;
5. demonstrate critical thinking skills within the context of evaluating the complexity of criminal justice issues with respect to the current topic of analysis; and
6. communicate effectively with accurate ‘criminal justice’ terminology in written and/or oral form.

**Measurable Course Performance Objectives (MPOs)**: Upon successful completion of this course, students should specifically be able to do the following:

1. Describe the functions of the various components of the criminal justice system (law enforcement, courts and corrections) and explain the interrelationship of these components with respect to the current topic of analysis:

1.1 *describe the court and legal system and the importance of evidence in the preparation of criminal cases related to the current topic*;

1.2 *identify and describe the procedural, cultural, tactical, and Constitutional impediments involved in the adversarial system related to the current topic;*

1.3 *explain the correctional process related to the current topic;*

1.4 *explain the theory, structure, and function of the juvenile justice system related to the current topic (if applicable);*

1.5 *explain the theory, structure, and function of courts related to the current topic*;and

1.6 *describe the basic theories that form the foundation of law enforcement models and the historical development of the criminal justice system in the United States related to the current topic*

1. Demonstrate basic knowledge of criminal law and the rights of individual citizens with respect to the current topic of analysis:

2.1 *discuss the primary goals of civil law and criminal law and explain how these goals are realized;*

2.2 *define the terms mala in se, mala prohibitum, misdemeanor, and felony;*

2.3 *explain the differences between crimes mala in se and mala prohibita;*

2.4 *list the four written sources of United States criminal law;*

2.5 *explain the two basic functions of criminal law;*

2.6 *delineate the elements required to establish mens rea (a guilty mental state);*

2.7 *explain how the doctrine of strict liability applies to criminal law;*

2.8 *list and briefly define the most important excuse defenses for crimes;*

2.9 *describe the four most important justification criminal defenses;*

2.10 *distinguish between substantive and procedural law;* and

2.11 *explain the importance of the due process clause in the criminal justice system*

1. Describe the role of the criminal justice professional in the community and the organization and administration of the various entities in the criminal justice system with respect to the current topic of analysis:

3.1 *outline the three levels of law enforcement*;

3.2 *list the four basic responsibilities of the police*;

3.3 *identify the differences between the police academy and field training as learning tools for recruits*;

3.4 *list* *the three primary purposes of police patrol;*

3*.*5 *explain why differential response strategies enable police departments to respond more efficiently to 911 calls*;

3.6 *explain community policing and its strategies;*

3.7 *describe the procedures involved in a Constitutionally-sound criminal investigation;* and

3.8 *explain the ethical responsibilities of criminal justice professionals*

**Measurable Course Performance Objectives (MPOs)** (continued):

1. Explain the social, political, economic, and cultural factors within society that influence the development of criminological theory, laws and criminal justice practices and their application to criminal behaviors and sanctions with respect to the current topic of analysis:

4.1 *list some of the most important law enforcement agencies under the control of the Department of Homeland Security*;

4.2 *explain how some jurisdictions have reacted to perceived leniency to perpetrators of domestic violence;*

4.3 *discuss the development of the “three strikes” law and its impact;*

4.4 *discuss the impact of increased sentences for narcotics offenses*;

4.5 *describe how the USA Patriot Act of 2001 changed the guidelines for electronic surveillance of suspected terrorists*;

4.6 *analyze the nature of crime and criminal behavior based on major theories and current issues and the relationship of the theories to research, policies, and practices in the field of criminal justice*;

4.7 *discuss the application of physical and biological sciences to criminal justice;*

4.8 *explain victimization, including who victims are, the effects of victimization on victims and society, the rights of victims, and processes for including victims in the criminal justice system*; and

4.9 *analyze the impact of societal diversity on the criminal justice system*

1. Demonstrate critical thinking skills within the context of evaluating the complexity of criminal justice issues with respect to the current topic of analysis:

5.1 *analyze a fact scenario and determine if the exclusionary rule applies*;

5.2 *analyze a fact scenario and determine if it is an appropriate application of the stop and a frisk rule*;

5.3 *analyze a fact scenario and determine if the four elements for an arrest are present;*

5.4 *analyze a fact scenario and determine if the items can be seized and whether a search warrant is required;*

5.5 *analyze a fact scenario and determine if Miranda warning is necessary;*

5.6 *analyze a fact scenario and determine if the identification is constitutionally valid*;

5.7 *analyze the consequences of our high rate of incarceration and identify potential solutions;*

5.8 *explain the use of “preventive policing” to combat terrorism by American law enforcement agencies and the pros and cons of this approach in the context of constitutional rights;*

5.9 *determine when police officers are justified in using deadly force;*

5.10 *analyze the death penalty and the pros and cons of this type of sentence;*

5.11 *discuss the primary elements of the Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments to the US Constitution and apply them to contemporary criminal justice events;* and

5.12 *use critical thinking and problem solving; focusing on the criminal justice system and analyzing information from multiple sources, including the print and video media*

* *apply various criminal justice theories and issues identified in the textbook to events and offenders depicted in films (shown in class) and Internet and print media research*
* *research a controversial criminal justice topic and prepare a opinion based paper that presents a persuasive argument (reaction paper)*
* *compare and contrast the realities of the courtroom to the description in the text*

**Measurable Course Performance Objectives (MPOs)** (continued):

* *explain the impact of the media and its influence in criminal justice policy and criminal behavior*
* *distinguish between the Internet and print media as sources of information*
* *identify potential bias in resources including the required text*

6. Communicate effectively with accurate ‘criminal justice’ terminology in written and/or oral form:

6.1 utilize effective and persuasive communication skills in written and/or oral form; and

6.2 use accurate ‘criminal justice’ terminology in writings and oral presentations

**Methods of Instruction**: Instruction will consist of, but not be limited to, a combination of lectures, class discussions, multi-media presentations, group projects, the assignment of textbook readings and other resource material, case studies, demonstrations, and completion of various assessment instruments (a documented research paper, and both in-class and take-home tests and exams). Specific choice of instructional methods is left to the discretion of the instructor.

**Outcomes Assessment:** Quiz and exam questions (if applicable) are blueprinted to course objectives. Checklist rubrics are used to evaluate non-test type assessment instruments, such as case studies, presentations, logs, journals, and papers, for the presence of course objectives. Data collected will be analyzed to provide direction for the improvement of instruction, viability of class assignments, relevancy of assigned literature, and evaluation of instructional time spent on specific topics.

**Course Requirements:** All students are required to:

* + - 1. Maintain regular attendance.
      2. Actively participate in class discussions and workshops.
      3. Read the recommended textbook and any other assigned resource materials.
      4. Complete all assigned homework on time.
      5. Complete all written assignments, including a research paper based on multiple source research gleaned from appropriate library sources and previously published internet sources.
      6. Complete an in-class midterm and final examination.
      7. Take all quizzes and exams when scheduled.
      8. Follow any specific class requirements mandated by the instructor.

**Methods of Evaluation:** Final course grades will be computed as follows:

**% of**

**Grading Components final course grade**

* **Attendance/Class Participation** **5 – 15%**

Attendance points will be computed based on the ratio of the number of days attending the course during a regular semester (i.e., 28 contact days). A similar procedure will be used to determine participation points.

* Logs/Journals 10 – 15%

Logs/Journals are written exercises designed to heighten student’s awareness of various events related to criminal justice that is experienced, observed, read, or viewed on television. Student must relate experiences to chapters either discussed/not discussed throughout the semester.

* **Reaction Papers 15 – 20%**

Reaction papers are 3 – 5 page written exercises in which students read outside sources or statements supplied by the professor an discuss their “intellectual and emotional” reaction to the issue or author’s point of view, yet use critical thinking guidelines to take a position and support that position using scholarly literature, interviews and polling.

* **Theme Papers 20 – 25%**

Theme papers are 3 – 5 page written exercises in which students discuss how taking the course has been personally meaningful, beneficial, and relevant to their future professional aspirations. References consulted to garner knowledge on the current topic of analysis can be cited using scholarly journals, criminological, legal and law enforcement sources, or internet sites.

* **Literature Reviews/Research Papers 10 – 20%**

Literature reviews/research papers are written exercise in which students must investigate a particular topic either in the textbook or assigned by the instructor that is related to the course objectives and conduct a review of the criminological literature, case law, management guidelines, or statues. Based on the literature review, students are required to develop a thesis/theme and draw conclusions on the topic researched that relates to the current topic of analysis.

* **Introspective Theme Paper/Case Study Analysis 30 – 40%**

The introspective theme paper/case study analysis is a 7 – 10 page written exercise in which students integrate and synthesize concepts to perform an in-depth analysis and demonstrate relevance to various theories regarding the current topic of analysis. The students must analyze, synthesize, integrate, and demonstrate relevance of concepts to course objectives.

**Methods of Evaluation** (continued)**:**

**% of**

**Grading Components final course grade**

* **Written/Oral Presentation Interview of Law Enforcement 15 – 25%**

**Agency or Professional in the Field**

The written/oral presentation of the interview of law enforcement agency representative or professional requires the student to gather information related to the current topic of analysis and to determine its relevance to concepts and theories presented in class which are related to course objectives.

* **Oral Presentations 15 – 20%**

Oral presentations are based on a topic either discussed/not discussed during the semester that is relevant to the study of criminal justice or police management and related to course objectives and the current topic of analysis. The instructor may require a written outline to augment the oral presentation.

* **Quizzes 10 – 15%**

Quizzes will provide evidence of the extent to which students have met course objectives.

* Exams, including Midterm and Final Exams **20 – 30%**

(number of exams and dates specified by the instructor)

Exams will provide evidence of the extent to which students have mastered and synthesized course material and have met course objectives.

Note: The instructor will determine (as appropriate) the specific components for the course and provide specific weights which lie in the above given ranges at the beginning of the semester.

**Academic Integrity:** Dishonesty disrupts the search for truth that is inherent in the learning process and so devalues the purpose and the mission of the College. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following:

* plagiarism – the failure to acknowledge another writer’s words or ideas or to give proper credit to sources of information;
* cheating – knowingly obtaining or giving unauthorized information on any test/exam or any other academic assignment;
* interference – any interruption of the academic process that prevents others from the proper engagement in learning or teaching; and
* fraud – any act or instance of willful deceit or trickery.

Violations of academic integrity will be dealt with by imposing appropriate sanctions. Sanctions for acts of academic dishonesty could include the resubmission of an assignment, failure of the test/exam, failure in the course, probation, suspension from the College, and even expulsion from the College.

**Student Code of Conduct:** All students are expected to conduct themselves as responsible and considerate adults who respect the rights of others. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. All students are also expected to attend and be on time for all class meetings. No cell phones or similar electronic devices are permitted in class. Please refer to the Essex County College student handbook, *Lifeline*, for more specific information about the College’s Code of Conduct and attendance requirements.

**Course Content Outline:** based on texts chosen by the instructor to explore the selected topic of analysis.

Sample Recommended References:

Gaines, Larry & Miller, R. (2010). *Criminal Justice in Action* (6th edition). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, a division of Thomson Learning and Gaines, Larry & Miller, R. 2010. *Student Study Guide for Criminal Justice in Action* (6th edition). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, a division of Thomson Learning.

Fagin, James. (2011). *Criminal Justice 2010.* Saddle Brook, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Masters, R, Way, L, et al (2011). *CJ Realities and Challenges*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill

Schmalleger, Frank. (2010). *Criminal Justice Today: An Introductory Text for the 21st Century* (11th edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Schmalleger, Frank. (2003). *Criminal Justice Today* (7th edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Seigel*,* Larry. (2010). *Criminology – Theories, Patterns, and Typologies* (10th edition). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, a Division of Thomson Learning.