

CRJU 343 Crime and Culture Syllabus

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Description of the course:

In this course we will focus on several aspects of culture and justice in America and across the globe. We will study both the positive and negative aspects of difference and deviance in anthropological (holistic) and identity politics perspectives. We will approach culture as the human understanding and creation of “differences that matter,” differences that reflect values, symbols and rituals as well as social control in criminal justice. To this end we will study social difference and diversity in subcultures in the United States as well as issues of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination as it effects justice practices in courts, policing and corrections.

We will also study individuals and groups that define their cultural difference through their radical behavior from the political right and left. We will study cases of school shooters and school cultures, charismatic criminal leaders, cults and prophets and terror groups as manifestations and interpretations of cultural difference where these leaders seek to change, rebel against and overthrow cultural values they oppose.

Finally we will study social difference as a resource, deviance as a potential for growth, a way of peacemaking and a social advantage, evolutionary and hybrid. That is, we w

government, academia and the military play in projecting ideologies. Question: Do American passively let the media and powerful political forces define our difference, or are we using our language to define them? Tw 14
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Schedule of Readings:

Introduction to Course

Chapter One: Introduction Investigating Difference

CASE STUDY discussion about criminal justice cases with cultural (race, class, gender ethnicity etc.) significance from Gates-Crowley, Katrina, Sotomayor/New Haven case, Utah etc. How do anthropological and cultural studies/identity studies help us prevent criminal justice injustices and even catastrophes?

FILM: "The Lives of Others" on Soviet Culture in East Germany before the fall of the Berlin Wall

Chapter One: Investigating Difference

What is difference, culture, diversity, multiculturalism, ethnicity? General course vocabulary and criminal justice terms.

Chapter One Read and continue defining basic cultural terms.

Chapter Two: Conceptualizing Difference

Study Vocabulary

Chapter Three: Privilege and the Construction of Crime

Chapter Four: Talking Through our Differences: Intercultural and Interpersonal Communication

Chapter Five: Social Class, Crime, and Justice

How does poverty affect the justice and social control of law enforcement in cases as diverse as Katrina and Haiti natural disasters or local cases such as the US implementation of drug laws?

We will use Methland as an example of class conflict and class encouragement to crime. Does growing up in poverty encourage meth addiction? Addiction seems to affect all class, race and gender groups, but the poorest get prison time and the wealthiest seem to get rehabilitation much more often.

Chapter Six: Stolen Lands, Stolen Lives: Native Americans and Criminal Justice

Supplement with questions: Who Defines Native American Identity? Also study Casino Politics, Reservation Laws, film "Frozen River" and scenes from "Smoke Signals"

Chapter Seven: Exclusion, Inclusion, and Violence: Immigrants and Criminal Justice

Supplement with questions: Why do immigrant groups form their own informal "social control" and police? film "The Godfather"

Chapter Eight: The Significance of Race: African American and Criminal Justice

Supplement with questions about case studies: OJ Simpson, Gates-Crowley arrest, Susan Smith false accusation murder case etc.

film "Ghost Dog"

and Workers

Supplement with "Monster" scenes from documentary on Eileen Wuornos, Susan Smith case, Yates case etc. Violent crime among women is on the rise but still only about 7% of total violent crimes.

NY Times article on "Godmother's of the Italian Mafia" link through the WSC Portal/ Course on Plato

Chapter Twelve: Gay Men, Lesbians, and Criminal Justice

Supplement with the response to the AIDS crisis, and with scenes from "Tough Guise" and Gay/Lesbian Civil Union and Marriage Laws

Chapter Thirteen: Old Enough and Knowing Better: Aging and Criminal Justice

Changing economy and job market means older criminals-article

Chapter Fourteen: Youth Crimes and Justice in a Changing Society

Majority of Crime committed by young men, also majority of victims are young men.

Supplement with scenes from documentary "Girlhood" and fiction film "Thirteen," and new laws that lower the age of which a person can be charged as an adult

Chapter Fifteen: The invisible Minority: Individuals with Disability

Supplement with laws on disability rights and how they benefit everyone.

Religion, persecution, cults and prophets: We will study the Waco Branch Davidian Case, Heaven's Gate in California, Jim Jones in Guyana as well as the Aum Shinriko in Japan and recent terrorism post 9-11.

Chapter Sixteen: In Whose God We Trust? Religious Difference, Persecution, and Criminal Justice. From Salem to today. Also cults, prophets and secret societies as subcultures of control and power.

Chapter Seventeen: Undocumented immigration as moral panic: Casting difference as threat

Supplement with early American moral panics over alcohol, marijuana and immigrant influence, also the politicization of "terror threat" colors in Tom Ridge's book. Look at new laws on immigrant rights/schooling /healthcare/driver's licenses/workers visas or green cards, compare US to Germany etc. gastarbeiter

Read and discuss Methland, the story of a small town and the causes and consequences of Meth addiction and production in the Midwest US.

ELY LIBRARY RESEARCH DAY FOR FINAL CASE STUDIES

Preparation for Student final projects: What is your topic for a final presentation to class. Using our text, prepare a cultural case study of your own. I suggest using POWERPOINT to convey your ideas in a brief but clear manner.

Student final projects week. ELY LIBRARY RESEARCH DAY. If you need extra help, meet with Professor Stassinis at Ely Library and meet with your project group or individually to work on your project. Projects done alone get 5-7 minutes, in group get 10 minutes to present research and a thesis to the class.

Final Project is worth 10% of your grade. Powerpoint presentations are encouraged as is visual creativity and presentation of qualitative and quantitative data. Each group member should contribute 3-5 slides with evidence of research, contribution towards the group thesis or argument of your project with use of our text and discussion from this course.

For example, possible project questions might include:

Are there differences between the type and frequency of crimes committed on Native American Reservations than crimes in the general American population? What is the role of race, ethnicity and class in the relationships between Native American Reservations and police?

What are the roles of gangs and teenager/juvenile crime in Chinese communities as compared with gangs in Latino, Black and Irish communities? What race, class and gender factors might allow for the corruption and escape of Whitey Bulger as opposed to the executed gang leader Tookie Williams?