

Crime & Criminal Justice

LS 170

Spring 2023

4 credits

Course Description

This course introduces scholarly frameworks for thinking about crime and criminal justice, and traces through case law and scholarship the evolution of these earlier conceptions into today's policy debates. It examines the scope and nature of crime in the United States from a comparative and interdisciplinary perspective, focusing on the uses and limits of the criminal justice system.

The course will introduce concepts of criminal process and the main elements of the criminal justice system, including police, courts, and corrections. It will consider the main institutional features, problems, and critiques of the processes through which suspects are apprehended, tried, sentenced, and punished. Past and current trends and policy questions will be discussed.

Since UC Berkeley is now, and has long been, one of the world's leading centers for the study of law and society, the work of both past and current Berkeley scholars will be highlighted in particular. Related topics touched upon here will include the massive expansion of the U.S. prison system in recent years and its relation to crime rates, critical analysis of different theories of the causes of crime, strategies for preventing and controlling crime, the death penalty, gun control, white collar crime, and crime in family settings.

Course Outcomes

After successfully completing this course, you will be able to...

- Identify and describe key actors, processes, and features of the U.S. criminal justice system
- Explain and apply competing theories of crime and criminal behavior
- Apply the characteristics, structure, and processes of the justice system across factual scenarios
- Analyze and recite criminal case law
- Define and understand the differences between criminal and non-criminal behaviors
- Analyze the implications of constructions of crime for individuals labeled in this way and for society
- Develop policies to help solve problems and inequities caused by concepts of crime
- Recognize the diverse attitudes and values of participants in the criminal justice system.
- Analyze criminal justice topics and convey the information verbally and in writing at a skilled and capable level
- Utilize the substantive and legal knowledge gained in this course to serve as an ethically responsible member of society

Instructor Information, Contact, Office Hours, & Communication

Course Professor

Brittany Bilderback Arsiniega

Email: arsiniega@berkeley.edu

Graduate Student Instructor (GSI)

While the instructor will interact with the whole class and will oversee all activities, as well as being available to resolve any issues that may arise, the GSI will be your main point of contact. Your GSI is responsible for assisting you directly with your questions about assignments and course requirements, as outlined in the Assignments and Calendar. The GSI will also facilitate ongoing discussion and interaction with you on major topics in each module.

- Margot Lipin, margotlipin@berkeley.edu
- Cheri Kruse, cherikruse@berkeley.edu

Office Hours

The course instructor will offer virtual office hours via Zoom; the GSIs will provide information about how they will hold office hours. These office hours allow for synchronous interaction with the instructor and GSIs and are a good opportunity to discuss your questions relevant to the course.

Brittany Arsiniega Office Hours: One-on-one meetings by appointment during the following times: Mondays (9AM-10AM and 2PM-3PM) and Thursdays (9-10AM). To book, visit <https://calendly.com/arsiniega/officehours>

GSI Office Hours:

Will be provided in section.

Course Mail

You can also contact your GSI and instructor using bCourses emailing system, accessed via your Inbox. Make sure to check the Inbox for messages from the instructor and GSI. You can also choose to have your bCourses mail forwarded to your personal email account or your cell phone.

Question & Answer Discussion

Please use this discussion to post questions relevant to the entire class. This can include questions about the course materials and topics or mechanics around assignments. The instructor and GSIs will monitor this discussion, but you should also feel free to answer questions posted by other students. This helps to create a general FAQ so that all students in the course may benefit from the exchange.

Course Materials and Technical Requirements

Required Materials

There is one required text for the course:

Aaron Fichtelberg, 2022. *Criminal (In)Justice*, 2nd edition (e-book and book rentals instead of purchases are fine)

All other readings, including judicial decisions, will be available as links or .pdfs from the bCourses site. Many of these articles and cases require in-depth reading, and you should allocate your time accordingly.

Each week you will find the assigned reading materials posted in bCourses.

Technical Requirements

This course is built on a Learning Management System (LMS) called Canvas and UC Berkeley's version is called bCourses. You will need to meet these [computer specifications to participate within this online platform](#).

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulties please alert one of the GSIs immediately. However, understand that neither the GSIs, nor the instructor can assist you with technical problems. You must call or email tech support and make sure you resolve any issues immediately.

In your course, click on the "Help" button on the bottom left of the global navigation menu. Be sure to document (save emails and transaction numbers) for all interactions with tech support.

Extensions and late submissions will not be accepted due to "technical difficulties."

Learning Activities

You are expected to fully participate in all the course activities described here.

1. Read reading assignments
2. Watch, listen to, and read instructor lectures
3. Watch and listen to any additional media (e.g. podcasts or videos) provided for the week
4. Attend discussion sections
5. Complete all assignments on time

Sections

GSIs and your instructor will grade all of your work and lead your course discussions. You will frequently have discussion prompts during section. Attendance and participation in section is part of your participation grade.

Reading Assignments

Each week includes assigned readings relevant to the topics covered. You can access all of the assigned readings via bCourses.

Lectures

Lectures are **asynchronous**. Lectures will be recorded by the instructor and posted to bCourses no later than class time, which is **Tuesday** and **Thursday** at **2PM** (Pacific). Students are expected to watch all lectures just like they would be expected to attend all in-person lectures.

Assignments

All assignments are due at **11:59PM (Pacific)** on the indicated due date unless otherwise stipulated in bCourses.

Knowledge Plan: You will write a plan to help ensure optimal learning in this course by writing a short essay to a list of questions available on bCourses. Your responses should be 1-2 pages long, single-spaced. Your knowledge plan is due **January 24**.

Criminal justice system quiz: This quiz will be administered on bCourses. It will be available starting on Friday, February 3 at 8AM and must be completed by Monday, February 6, at 11:59PM. You may choose when to start the quiz; once you do, you will have thirty (30) minutes to complete it. This quiz will contain multiple-choice and true/false questions to demonstrate you've learned the basics about the criminal justice system, how it operates, and the legal system of which it is a part.

Participation in discussion section: Discussion sections will be held live and in person. All times are in Pacific time zone. There will be no section the week of January 16.

- Section 101: Mondays, 3-4PM, Social Sciences Building 104 (Margot)
- Section 102: Tuesdays, 11AM-12PM, Social Sciences Building 104 (Margot)
- Section 103: Wednesdays, 2-3PM, Cory 241 (Cheri)
- Section 104: Thursdays, 5-6PM, Evans 81 (Cheri)

Criminal justice in American culture assignment: In this assignment, you will choose a movie, television show, or podcast that deals with the American criminal justice system and compare and contrast the way the criminal justice system is depicted with what we have learned in the course. Your choice is due on **March 21** for instructor approval. You will then watch / listen to your approved selection and will write a short paper (1,000 words or less) responding to a prompt that will be available on bCourses. Your assignment is due on **April 21**.

Midterm writing assignment: This will be a short (600-800 word) paper in which I will test your learning on the first half of the course. This assignment will be released at **8AM on Wednesday, March 15** and you must upload your responses to bCourses no later than **11:59 PM on Friday, March 17**.

Final Exam: The final exam will take place during the assigned final exam time (**Monday, May 8, 11:30-2:30PM**), but you will complete the assignment remotely, via bCourses. The final will consist of multiple choice, short-answer, and an essay question.

Final Reflection: This will be a short (1-2 pages, single spaced) paper in which I will ask you to re-read your knowledge plan, think about your growth over the course, and plan for how you will apply the knowledge from this course in the future. This end-of-semester reflection is due by **May 5**.

Estimated time per week:

The chart below shows an estimate of how much time you should expect to spend each week on different activities, and where / how that time will be spent.

Description	Estimated time per week	Location
Reading assignments	4 hours	Assigned textbook and other readings uploaded to bCourses
Watch lectures	2 hours 40 minutes	Video lectures will be uploaded to bCourses no later than class time
Attend discussion section	50 minutes	In person on Berkeley's campus
Working on assignments, studying, office hours	2 hours	Office hours with instructor via Google Meet; working on assignments and studying wherever you prefer

Grading and Course Policies

Your final course grade will be calculated as follows:

Category	Percentage of Grade
Knowledge Plan	2%
Attendance and participation in section	15%
Criminal justice system quiz	10%
Criminal justice in American culture assignment	15%
Midterm Writing Assignment	25%
Final Exam	30%

Category	Percentage of Grade
Final Reflection	3%

Grading scale:

Your final grade will be computed by assigning weights to each grade as indicated above. You will then be assigned a letter grade that corresponds to your percentage grade in the course. I will round up any grade ending in 0.5 or higher.

A+: 98-100 A: 94-97 A-: 90-93 B+: 88-89 B: 84-87 B-: 80-83
 C+: 78-87 C: 74-77 C-: 70-73 D+: 68-69 D: 64-67 D-: 60-63
 F: 59 or below

Late Work Policy

Written assignments must be turned in electronically to the bCourses site. Assignments are due at precisely the time specified in this syllabus or on bCourses. Assignments submitted late will be penalized ten percent (10%) per day. For example, if an assignment is due at 11:59PM and you submit it at 12:03AM, your assignment will be docked 10% for late submission. This late submission policy does not apply to the midterm and final examinations, for which late submissions are not permitted.

I will provide exceptions only for documented, late-occurring emergencies or maladies. If you would like to request an extension on an assignment, you must email the professor (not your GSI).

Course Policies

Promptness

All assignments have specific due dates and times listed on bCourses. You are expected to meet those listed due dates. All assignments will be submitted via bCourses.

Honor Code

The student community at UC Berkeley has adopted the following Honor Code: "As a member of the UC Berkeley community, I act with honesty, integrity, and respect for others." The expectation is that you will adhere to this code. Read the entire [Berkeley Honor Code](#) for more information.

Collaboration and Independence

Reviewing lecture and reading materials and studying for exams can be enjoyable and enriching things to do with fellow students. This is recommended. However, all assignments are to be completed independently and should be the result of one's own independent work.

Cheating

Anyone caught cheating or engaging in another type of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism or using AI to write assignments) on any assignment, including the midterm and final writing assignments, will receive a failing grade in the course and will also be reported to the University Center for Student Conduct. The expectation is that you will be honest in the completion of all work in this course.

Plagiarism

To copy text or ideas from another source without appropriate reference is plagiarism and will result in a failing grade for your assignment and usually further disciplinary action. For additional information on plagiarism and how to avoid it, read the [UC Berkeley Library Citation Page, Plagiarism Section](#).

Academic Integrity and Ethics

Cheating on exams and plagiarism are two common examples of dishonest, unethical behavior. Honesty and integrity are of great importance in all facets of life. They help to build a sense of self-confidence, and are key to building trust within relationships, whether personal or professional. There is no tolerance for dishonesty in the academic world, for it undermines what we are dedicated to doing - furthering knowledge for the benefit of humanity.

Incomplete Course Grade

Students who have substantially completed the course but for serious extenuating circumstances, are unable to complete the final writing assignment, may request an Incomplete grade. This request must be submitted in writing to the GSI and instructor. You must provide verifiable documentation for the seriousness of the extenuating circumstances. According to the policy of the university, Incomplete grades must be made up within the first three weeks of the next semester.

Students with Disabilities

If you require course accommodations due to a physical, emotional, or learning disability, contact [UC Berkeley's Disabled Students' Program \(DSP\)](#). Notify the instructor and GSI through course email of the accommodations you would like to use. You must have a Letter of Accommodation on file with UC Berkeley to have accommodations made in the course.

UC Berkeley is committed to providing robust educational experiences for all learners. With this goal in mind, we have activated the ALLY tool for this course. You will now be able to download content in a format that best fits your learning preference. PDF, HTML, EPUB, and MP3 are now available for most content items. For more information visit the alternative formats link or watch the video entitled, "[Ally First Steps Guide](#)."

End of Course Evaluation

Before your course ends, please take a few minutes to participate in the course evaluation to share your opinions about the course. Information about the course evaluation will be made available in bCourses.

Reading and topic schedule

Our course schedule is as follows. Note: this chart shows all course modules, but only shows the assigned readings for the first module. Assigned readings for future modules will be available on bCourses.

Week	Topic(s)	Assignments/readings
Module 1: Introduction to key topics; foundational understanding of crime and criminal law in the American legal system; brief history of crime in the United States		
Week #1 Jan 17 & 19 (no section)	Intro to course and instructors What is “crime”?	Jan 17: 1) Syllabus 2) Keith Hjortsjo, “The Transition to College Writing,” Chapter 3: Reading. Jan 19: Fichtelberg, Ch. 1: Defining, Classifying, and Measuring Crime
Week #2 Jan 24 & 26	Criminal Law Overview of the criminal justice process Federalism and criminal law	Jan 24: 1) Knowledge plan due 2) Fichtelberg, Ch. 2: Criminal Law Jan 26: 1) Bureau of Justice Statistics, “What is the sequence of events in the criminal justice system?” 2) Watch “Marijuana” episode of Last Week Tonight with John Oliver
Week #3 Jan 31 & Feb 2	Crime, politics, and governance	Jan 31: 1) Jonathan Simon, “Governing Through Crime,” Introduction: Crime and American Governance

		<p>2) Jonathan Simon, “Governing Through Crime,” Chapter 1: Power, Authority and the War on Crime</p> <p>Feb 2:</p> <p>1) Jonathan Simon, “Governing Through Crime,” Chapter 5: Race, the War on Crime, and Mass Imprisonment</p> <p>2) Criminal justice system quiz opens Feb 3 at 8AM; due Feb 6 at 11:59PM</p>
<p>Module 2: Institutions of American Criminal Justice (Law Enforcement, Courts, Corrections) (Weeks 4-6)</p>		
<p>Module 3: Social Construction of Crime & Theories of Punishment (Weeks 7-9)</p>		
<p>Module 4: Inequality in American Criminal Justice (Weeks 10-12)</p>		
<p>Module 5: Reform and Abolition (Weeks 13-14)</p>		