CJS 315-091 Professional Writing in Criminal Justice

Spring 2019

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Class Hours & Location: Ferguson Liberal Arts 471 / MWF @ 12:00 p.m.-12:50 p.m.

Office Hours:
• Monday  2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
• Tuesday  8:30 am – 10:30 am; 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
• Wednesday  2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
• Thursday  8:30 am – 10:30 am
• Friday  by appointment only

Additional hours by appointment only

Required textbook:


Course Protection and Intellectual Property

My personal work contained in this syllabus, the course calendar, and all handouts and assignments created by me are my intellectual property and are protected by law. You do not have authorization to duplicate any part of the work without my permission.

Course Description:

This course is a writing-enhanced course that emphasizes grammatical structure, use of capitalization and punctuation, sentence structure, topic development, and writing in the APA style. This course will prove useful in the students’ last few semesters of college coursework as it gives them time and opportunity to develop the writing skills that will be critically necessary in the field, in graduate school, and in other areas of their professional and personal lives. Prerequisites: ENG 131 and 132 or instructor consent.

Program Learning Objectives:

• The student will demonstrate an understanding of the purposes and operation of the major components of the criminal justice system, and the student will be able to critically analyze the criminal justice system and its aims and outcomes.
• The student will demonstrate an understanding of legal and/or social science research and will apply professional standards of writing and research to criminal justice issues.

Student Learning Objectives: By completing this course, students should be able to:

1 My general office policy is, “if my door is open then I am available to help you.” Do not hesitate to drop by for help or to talk outside my regular office hours if my door is open. Note that I will generally at the Bradshaw State Jail on Thursday afternoons so plan on me not being on campus during those times.
1. The student will demonstrate their ability to gather, assimilate, and report accurate information in a concise and consistent manner.

2. The student will be able to identify the various components of grammatical structure.

3. The student will demonstrate an understanding of the value of the written report in policing, courts, and corrections.

4. The student will demonstrate their ability to report research, write, and cite in APA format by completing a first and final draft of an annotated bibliography on a current and salient criminal justice topic.

5. The student will develop critical thinking and writing skills through multiple assignments that will include research, role-play, and practical situations.

 Attendance Policy:

Students are expected to attend all class sessions on a regular and punctual basis. Attendance will be taken during each course session for financial aid purposes and reported to the university for this purpose. Students who are more than five minutes late may not be allowed to enter the classroom (if there is some legitimate reason, in the professor's judgment, that you will be late, contact the professor prior to the beginning of class by email, telephone, or text message). Note that attendance is not part of the course grade, however, students are responsible for all material covered in class and obtaining course notes and assignment information from someone other than the professor.

 Grading Policy

Final course grades will be assessed on the following scale:

- “A” 90-100% Literature Review Project: 20% of grade
- “B” 80-89% Presentation: 10% of grade
- “C” 70-79% Assignments: 70% of grade
- “D” 60-69%
- “F” 0-59%

 Required Course Work:

- Literature Review Project: CJS 315 students will be required to complete a comprehensive literature review during the course of the semester. This project will be completed in multiple steps over the course of the semester. The completed paper will comprise 20% of the overall grade.
- Presentation: Students will make a 5-7 minute presentation during the final weeks of the semester based on their literature review project. The presentation will comprise 10% of the overall grade.
- Assignments: The majority of the overall grade (70%) will be based on student performance on a series of assignments given throughout the semester. Most of the assignments will consist of steps in the literature review writing process such as drafts of sections of the overall paper. Other assignments will take the form of quizzes and exercises designed to evaluate student mastery of writing concepts. Many of the assignments will be cooperative in-class assignments.

 Incomplete course work: Late assignments will not be accepted will not be permitted without approval obtained from the instructor based on extenuating circumstances. Extenuating circumstances include, but are not limited to: military deployment, religious holidays/observances, court appearances, jury duty, family emergencies, personal or immediate family illness, or participation in student athletics or other university approved activity.

 Please note the following course policies regarding course work missed as a result of absences:
Students who miss exams because of participation in student athletics or other university approved activities will be permitted to take a make-up exam at the professor’s convenience. Such students will also be allowed to make up assignments given or completed in class on the day of the approved absence.

Students who miss assignments for reasons other than student athletics or other university approved activities will need to provide acceptable documentation of the absence. Acceptable documentation includes, but is not limited to: notices from doctors/medical providers on official stationary that include the date(s) of illness; published obituaries that include date of funeral services; copy of military orders; or a copy of jury duty summons or other judicial document supporting a court appearance.

Requests for late submission of assignments must be made in person during regular office hours. The professor will ignore such requests made by email.

Conduct: Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance that is available to help SFA students succeed.

Rules of the Classroom
1. No cell phone usage… this includes texting. You will be asked to leave – so don’t do it.
2. The wearing of hats, caps, or other head wear is not acceptable in the classroom.
3. Maturity – Certain topics within this course may stir emotional reactions in some. So as not to distract others or derail the lecture, mature behavior is required. Please treat others with respect and courtesy. If you distract my class—or if you disrespect others’ opinions, feelings, or beliefs—you will be asked to leave.
4. When others are speaking, you are expected to listen and to be respectful of the person’s right to have an opinion that may differ from your own.
5. I do not “give” grades, I merely report them. You are in complete control of your final grade. Everyone starts with an A; where you go from there depends entirely upon you. Do NOT come to me at the end of the semester asking me to “give” you anything—and a 79 is NOT an 80…
6. The tentative class schedule is a general guide. Coverage of the material may be accelerated, decelerated, rearranged, augmented, diminished, or otherwise modified when the professor believes such change would be to the benefit of the class.
7. This syllabus will act as the final word in the event of a discrepancy, error, or misunderstanding. Make sure you read and understand it completely—and make sure you keep a copy for reference during the semester.

Academic Integrity:
Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.
Definition of Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism include (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

Consequences: Students who, by a preponderance of the evidence as judged by the professor, engage in academic dishonesty or plagiarism may face the any or all of the following at the discretion of the professor: (1) receive a grade of zero on the relevant assignment or exam or (2) receive a grade of zero for the course.

Disabled Student Policy:

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

Course Withdrawal and Withheld Grades:
Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.