

Soca 435 – Criminal Justice Process¹

Tues / Thurs – 201 Hodges Hall, 1:00 – 2:15

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Course Description and Rationale

The criminal justice system has many interrelated parts. For instance, the police are called to manage scenes of public trouble. Sometimes these troubles involve clear crimes which trigger investigations, evidence collection, and arrests (such as the scene of a burglary). But police work also involves situations where there is no clear crime (such as traffic accidents, public disagreements, or even when an apartment manager discovers the body of an elderly tenant). In all of these cases, the police must do something! What they do is shaped by several factors: (a) the specific circumstances that brought them to the scene; (b) expectations held by the public, the responder's supervisors, etc; and (c) formalized decision rules designed to standardize their response. All of these link to social processes. These processes connect the elements of the criminal justice system.

In this seminar we will closely study criminal justice processes that implemented in different arenas of the criminal justice system. We will begin with an ethnographic exploration of the patrol officer's world. Here we will pay close attention to the ways that formal rules facilitate and complicate patrol work. Next, we will examine the various criminal justice professionals who work in a Chicago criminal courtroom. Lastly, we will examine criminal justice processes from the point of view of a Correctional officer working in New York State's maximum security Sing Sing prison. Across these case studies, we will see how the elements of the Criminal Justice system are unalterably connected.

¹ This course is joined with Soca 389-W04 "Writing in Sociology/Anthropology" and Soca 488-C04 "The Capstone Experience". The planned workload assumes 5 credit hours of effort.

Our examination of these case studies draws upon several areas of substantive sociology, including:

- Organizational Theory
- The Sociology of Culture
- The Sociology of Knowledge
- Symbolic Interaction & Phenomenology
- Ethnographic Field Methods
- Criminological & Jurisprudence Theory

Learning Objectives

By the end of the term, I expect students to be able to:

- (1) Define Discretion and show how this powerful concept mediates all dimensions of Criminal Justice Policy in the United States.
- (2) Describe the organizational ecology of the criminal justice system and identify how this ecology influences police officers, prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges, and other personnel.
- (3) Identify the sociological foundations of authority in the criminal justice system. Students should be able to distinguish between ascribed and earned authority.
- (4) Comprehend the core conceptual elements identified in the areas of substantive sociology listed above and apply these conceptual tools to empirical examples in the course reading.
- (5) Compose an original research paper which situates a specific criminal justice process within its broader organizational ecology and which integrates this process in an analysis of similar processes.
- (6) Present a brief synopsis of the research paper and answer questions about it.

Required Reading

This is a reading intensive senior-level seminar. On average, there will be more than 100 pages of assigned reading per class. Your instructor will provide you with reading guides to help you differentiate what should be read closely from what can be skimmed. However, he will teach the class with an assumption that everyone is prepared to discuss the assigned chapters.

There are three required texts for this class. They are listed below in the order we will read them.

Moskos, Peter C. 2008. Cop in the Hood: My Year Policing Baltimore's Eastern District. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. [ISBN 978-0-691-14386-6]

Bogira, Steve. 2006. Courtroom 302: a year behind the scenes in an American Criminal Courthouse. New York: Vintage. [ISBN 0-679-75206-4]

Conover, Ted , 2001. New Jack: Guarding Sing Sing. New York: Vintage [ISBN 0-375-72662-4]

These books represent two genres as well as two different methodological approaches. Moskos has written a classic ethnography based on in-depth participant observation. The purpose of this book is to make a particular kind of argument about policing and the laws police are sworn to uphold. He presents evidence in the form of stories and examples to make his points. In contrast Courtroom 302 is an example of narrative journalism. Bogira's purpose is to tell a story. Courtroom 302 describes the landscape of urban criminal justice. Here, stories and examples are designed to help you, the reader, picture this world. [Of course, Bogira also makes a subtle argument critiquing U.S. drug policies; but he makes this argument by showing you the consequences of the policy, rather than asserting propositions. Lastly, Conover's book adopts elements of both ethnography and narrative journalism. Trained as an anthropologist, Conover spent two years working as a correctional officer in Sing Sing. He writes from a first person point of view and describes the prison world as experienced by a correctional officer. But the purpose of his book is to show you, the reader, what it's like inside the big house. It is not designed to argue any specific point.

In addition to the books listed above, several articles or Chapters be placed on the course ecampus page. Whereas the books present stories, the articles present propositional arguments. That is, the articles will be more technical than the books. We will use the material from the books to illustrate technical arguments from the articles.

Assignments & Requirements

This seminar involves three distinct courses. Soca 435 – Criminal Justice Processes is a 3 credit hour course graded on an A – F scale. Soca 389 – Writing in Sociology/ Anthropology is a one credit hour course graded on an A –F scale. Soca 488 is a 1 credit hour course graded on a Pass/Fall scale.

According to policies set by the University and the Division of Sociology and Anthropology, courses that fulfill capstone and writing requirements must satisfy several objectives:

“The capstone experience is defined as: an academic experience in which students demonstrate, in a significant, relevant project that has both an oral and a written component, their abilities:

- (i) to gather material independently, as needed
- (ii) to think critically about and to integrate the theoretical and/or practical knowledge that they acquired through their undergraduate careers
- (iii) to reflect on the ethical issues that are implicit in their projects and/or their project’s design.”²

“All students must successfully complete at least one course that requires a substantial writing component and in which the grade is partially determined by writing skills.... Currently the following courses have been approved for meeting this requirement.... Sociology and Anthropology (SOCA) 389.”³

Soca 389 courses share the following components: (1) writing throughout the semester, according to a defined schedule; (2) at least 20 pages (5000 words) of total writing; (3) timely written feedback; (4) the opportunity for students to revise and resubmit, with at least a week between assignments; (5) limited enrollments; and (6) writing is the basis of the 100% of the one-credit grade.⁴

In order to comply with the established policies, this combination of courses (435/389/488) includes the following requirements:

2 Book Reviews

Each student will prepare a 6 to 8 page book review of Moskos’ Cop in the Hood, & Bogira’s Courtroom 302. The book review will include a critical summary, identification of core criminal justice processes described in the book, and a synthetic analysis and/or interpretation. [Dr. Colyer will provide you with explicit instructions and his grading rubric by September 1st.]

² “Requirement for a Capstone Experience in all Undergraduate Programs.” Memorandum issued by Richard Turton, Senate Curriculum Committee Chair, January 2, 2001.

³ West Virginia University Undergraduate Catalog 2007-2010. Pgs 30-31

⁴ Memorandum from Dr. Lawrence Nichols, interim Chair of the Division of Sociology and Anthropology, to Dr. Paul Brown, chair of the Senate Liberal Studies Program Committee (December 6, 2004) describing the Sociology and Anthropology department’s policy.

Term Paper

Each student will write an original 10 to 15 page term paper about a particular criminal justice process related to policing, the courts, or correctional institutions. This paper will integrate arguments and evidence from a minimum of **8** external sources. Dr. Colyer will provide students with formal instructions and the grading criteria. There are several specific writing assignments related to the term paper which will be due throughout the semester.

Oral Presentation

Each student will prepare a brief presentation (approximately 10 minutes in length) of their term paper. Presentations will take place in the last two class periods and will be graded, in part, by peer-review. A presentation is required for Soca 488. Everyone must attend these sessions. **Unexcused absences on these days will result in a failing grade for 488.**

Midterm Exam

The midterm exam will focus on the sociological concepts developed to study criminal justice processes. 80% of the midterm will be essay and 20% will be short answer, or definitions. Dr. Colyer will provide a study guide.

Final Examination

There will be a cumulative final examination to given on the date and time established by the WVU final exam schedule.

Seminar Participation

This is not a lecture oriented course. The material is designed to be encountered, contemplated, and discussed. Accordingly, it is imperative that all students participate in seminars. At the beginning of class students may be asked to write and submit a short reflection on a concept or incident described in the reading. These reflections will be graded and applied towards the participation grade. Also, this semester Dr. Colyer will engage students through Socratic dialog. Those who are unprepared will be noticed.

The following table identifies how grades will be factored in each course. Explanation follows.

Soca 435 – Criminal Justice Processes			
	Assignment	Points	% of Grade
	Cop in the Hood Book Review	100	20%
	Courtroom 302 Book Review	100	20%
	Mid-Term Examination	100	20%
	Final Examination	100	20%
	Seminar Participation	100	20%
Soca 389 – Writing in Sociology / Anthropology			
	Assignment	Points	% of Grade
	Annotated Bibliography Entries	50	25%
	Rough Draft	50	25%
	Term Paper	100	50%
Soca 488 – The Capstone Experience⁵			
	Assignment	Points	% of Grade
	Presentation of Term Paper Topic	80	80
	Peer Review of Classmate’s Presentations	20	20

⁵ Note: The capstone component of the course is entirely pass-fail. Failure to complete any of these components will result in a grade of F for soca 488.

Statement on Academic Integrity

Your instructor assumes that he will never have reason to doubt your honesty, but he wishes to be clear about his policies concerning plagiarism and academic misconduct. According to the WVU Student handbook (<http://www.arc.wvu.edu/rightsa.html#Anchor-1.-44522>) acts of dishonesty include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Plagiarism defined as:
 - Submitting as one's own work the product of someone else's research, writing... that is, submitting as one's own work any report, notebook, speech, outline, theme, thesis, dissertation, or commercially prepared paper.
 - Incorporating in one's submission, without appropriate acknowledgement and attribution, portions of the works of others; that is, failing to use the conventional marks and symbols to acknowledge the use of verbatim and near-verbatim passages of someone else's work or failing to name the source of words, pictures, graphs, etc., other than one's own, that are incorporated into any work submitted as one's own.
- Forgery, misrepresentation, or fraud defined as:
 - Knowingly presenting false data or intentionally misrepresenting one's records for personal gain.

As this course involves substantial writing students will be constantly reminded of their academic integrity responsibilities. Should there be any question about what constitutes plagiarism or dishonestly, please ask the instructor. Clear cases of Plagiarism and/or Academic dishonesty will result in an unforgivable F on the particular assignment and may lead to the initiation of appropriate disciplinary proceedings. If you have any question about when and how to document sources, or any other question that will help assure academic honesty, please talk to me.

All writing assignments will be submitted electronically and run through turnitin™ (a plagiarism detection algorithm).

Social Justice

West Virginia University is committed to social justice. I concur with that statement and expect to foster a nurturing learning environment based upon

open communication, mutual respect and non-discrimination. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color or national origin. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

Schedule

#	Date	Topic
1	Tuesday 8/24/2010	Introduction to Class - Review of Syllabus - Defining the Terrain
2	Thursday 8/26/2010	Social Process and Social Structure - Peter Berger: "Sociological Perspective – Man in Society"
3	Tuesday 9/2/2010	Producing Patrol Officers 1 – The Academy - Moskos, Chapters 1 & 2
4	Thursday 9/4/2010	Producing Patrol Officers 2 – The Field - Moskos, Chapter 3 & 4
Due: Topic Statement		
5	Tuesday 9/7/2010	Applying Force: Patrol as a Criminal Justice Process - Moskos, 5 & 6
6	Thursday 9/9/2010	Research Assistance: The Class will meet at the Library (details to follow). - Instructions for Annotated Bibliographies handed out.
7	Tuesday 9/14/2010	Public order, Liberty, and Officer Discretion - Moskos Chapters 7, 8, and Epilogue.
	Thursday 9/16/2010	Post-Arrest Criminal Justice Processes - Bogira: Prologue & Chapter 1 - Due: Annotated Bibliography 1 & 2
9	Tuesday 9/21/2010	- Bogira: Chapter 2 – 4 - Due: Moskos Book Review

10	Thursday 9/23/2010	- Bogira Chapters 5-6
11	Tuesday 9/28/2010	- Bogira Chapters 7-9
12	Thursday 9/30/2010	- Bogira Chapters 10-12 - Due: Annotated Bibliography 3&4
13	Tuesday 10/5/2010	- Bogira Chapters 13 -14
14	Thursday 10/7/2010	Mid-Term Exam (in class)
15	Tuesday 10/12/2010	- Bogira Chapters 15-16
16	Thursday 10/14/2010	- Bogira Chapters 17-18 - Due: Annotated Bibliography 5 & 6
17	Tuesday 10/19/2010	- Bogira Chapter 19 & Epilogue
18	Thursday 10/21/2010	- Conover Chapters 1 & 2
19	Tuesday 10/26/2010	- Conover Chapter 4a (pgs 95-126)
20	Thursday 10/28/2010	- Conover Chapter 4b (pgs 126-170) - Annotated Bibliography 7 & 8 -
21	Tuesday 11/2/2010	- Conover Chapter 5 - Bogira Book Review Due
22	Thursday 11/4/2010	- Conover Chapter 6 Bogira (171-209)
	Tuesday 11/9/2010	- Conover Chapter 7a (242-276)

23	Thursday 11/11/2010	- Conover Chapter 7 (276-303) - Annotated Bibliography 9 & 10
24	Tuesday 11/16/2010	- Conover Epilogue
25	Thursday 11/18/2010	No Class – Dr. Colyer will be in San Francisco for the American Society of Criminology meetings. - Rough Draft Due (via ecampus by Friday, 11:59p.m.)
26	Tuesday 11/23/2010	Thanksgiving Recess
27	Thursday 11/25/2010	Thanksgiving Recess
	Tuesday 11/30/2010	Catch up & Term paper workshop
	Thursday 12/2/2010	Presentations
28	Tuesday 12/7/2010	Presentations
29	Thursday 12/9/2010	Presentations
	Monday 12/14/2010	Term Paper Due by 4:00 p.m.

Deadlines

Date	Project	Component	Points
9/3/09	Topic Statement	Writing & Capstone	+/-
9/10/09	Research Workshop	Writing & Capstone	+/-
9/17/09	Annotated Bibliography 1 & 2	Writing & Capstone	+/-
10/1/09	Annotated Bibliography 3 & 4	Writing & Capstone	+/-
10/8/09	Mid-term Exam	Criminal Justice Proc	100
10/15/09	Annotated Bibliography 5 & 6	Writing & Capstone	+/-

10/27/09	Homicide Book Review	Criminal Justice Proc	100
10/29/09	Annotated Bibliography 7 & 8	Writing & Capstone	+/-
11/12/09	Annotated Bibliography 9 & 10	Writing & Capstone	+/-
11/19/09	Rough Draft Due	Writing & Capston	50
12/3/09	Courtroom 302 Book Review Due	Criminal Justice Proc	100
12/14/09	Final Paper Due	Writing & Capston	100