

# Soca 335 – Criminal Justice Processes<sup>1</sup>

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Tues / Thurs – G21 Woodburn Hall, 2:30 – 3:45

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**Office Hours** Tuesday 10:00 – 12:00 | Thursday 12:00 – 2:00  
and by appointment.

## Course Description and Rationale

The criminal justice system has many interrelated parts. For instance, the police are called to 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 use decision rules to classify the trouble and then implement one or more *processes* in response. These processes connect the elements of the criminal justice system.

In this seminar we will closely study criminal justice processes that are 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 techniques used by homicide detectives to identify suspects, gather evidence, and make murders "go from read to black". Our third study shifts to the activities and procedures of workgroup personnel in a Chicago criminal courtroom. Here we see how the elements of the CJ system are unalterably connected.

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

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

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Learning Objectives

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

- (1) Describe the organizational ecology of the criminal justice system and identify how this ecology influences police officers, prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges, and other personnel.
- (2) Identify the sociological foundations of authority in the criminal justice system. Students should be able to distinguish between ascribed and earned authority.
- (3) 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.
- (4) 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.
- (5) 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. Dr. Colyer 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 978-0-691-14008-7]

Simon, David. 2006. *Homicide: A Year on the Killing Streets*. New York: Holt.  
[ISBN 0-8050-8075-9]

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

In addition to the books listed above, several articles or Chapters be placed on the course ecampus page. Unless otherwise indicated, these readings are *supplemental*. That is, they will help you make sense of the conceptual arguments we discuss in the seminar, but they are not required. I anticipate that these materials will be helpful in writing the term paper (see below). Required articles will either be listed on the course schedule below, or I will make an announcement at least two class periods in advance.

## Assignments & Requirements

This seminar involves three distinct courses. Soca 335 – 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.”<sup>2</sup>

“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.”<sup>3</sup>

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.<sup>4</sup>

In order to comply with the established policies, this combination of courses (335/389/488) includes the following requirements:

### 2 Book Reviews

Each student will prepare a 6 to 8 page book review of Simon’s Homicide, & 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

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

<sup>3</sup> West Virginia University Undergraduate Catalog 2007-2009. Pgs 30-31

<sup>4</sup> 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.

interpretation. [Dr. Colyer will provide you with explicit instructions and his grading rubric by September 1<sup>st</sup>.]

### **Term Paper**

Each student will write an original 15 to 20 page term paper about a particular criminal justice process. 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.

### **Seminar Participation**

This is not a lecture oriented course. The material is designed to be considered, 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.

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

<b>Soca 335 – Criminal Justice Processes</b>			
	<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>% of Grade</b>
	Homicide Book Review	100	25%
	Courtroom 302 Book Review	100	25%
	Mid-Term Examination	100	25%
	Article Summaries	4@ 10 points each	10%
	Seminar Participation	60	15%
<b>Soca 389 – Writing in Sociology / Anthropology</b>			
	<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>% of Grade</b>
	Miscellaneous Workshop Assignments	10	10%
	Annotated Bibliography Entries	20	20%
	Rough Draft	30	30%
	Term Paper	40	40%
<b>Soca 488 – The Capstone Experience<sup>5</sup></b>			
	<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>% of Grade</b>
	Presentation of Term Paper Topic	80	80
	Peer Review of Classmate's Presentations	20	20

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<sup>5</sup> 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 dishonesty, 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.

## **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

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#	Date	Topic
1	Tuesday 8/19/2008	Introduction to Class <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Review of Syllabus</li><li>- Defining the Terrain</li></ul>
2	Thursday 8/21/2008	Situated Activities: Bounded Activity Within Social Structures <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Peter Berger: "Sociological Perspective – Man in Society" (<b>Summary Due</b>)</li><li>- Moskos, Chapter 1</li></ul>
3	Tuesday 8/26/2008	The World of the Patrol Officer – Training vs. Reality <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Moskos Chapter 2</li><li>- Moskos Chapter 3</li></ul>
<b>Paper Topic Statement Due</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Overview on using library databases and building an annotated Bibliography</li></ul>		
4	Thursday 8/28/2008	The Patrol Officer's Processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Moskos Chapter 4</li><li>- Sykes &amp; Clark, "A Theory of Deference Exchange in Police-Civilian Encounters". Via Ecampus. (<b>Summary Due</b>).</li></ul>
5	Tuesday 9/2/2008	CJ Processes driven by the Reactive Policing Model <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Moskos Chapter 5</li><li>- Selections from the Summary Report of The Kansas City Preventive Patrol Experiment. Via Ecampus. (<b>Summary Due</b>)</li></ul>
6	Thursday 9/4/2008	Discretion & Arrests <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Moskos Chapter 6</li><li>- Goldstein. "Police Discretion: The Ideal Versus the Real" Via Ecampus. (<b>Summary Due</b>)</li></ul>
7	Tuesday 9/9/2008	The Art of Acquiring Information <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Homicide Chapter 1</li></ul>
8	Thursday 9/11/2008	Introducing Interrogation Homicide Chapter 2
<b>Annotated Bibliography – 2 Entries are due</b>		

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9	Tuesday 9/16/2008	Homicide Chapter 3
10	Thursday 9/18/2008	Homicide Chapter 4
11	Tuesday 9/23/2008	Homicide Chapter 5
12	Thursday 9/25/2008	Homicide Chapter 6  <b>Annotated Bibliography – 2 Entries are due</b>
13	Tuesday 9/30/2008	Homicide Chapter 7
14	Thursday 10/2/2008	<b>Mid-Term Exam (in class)</b>
15	Tuesday 10/7/2008	Homicide Chapter 8
16	Thursday 10/9/2008	Writing Workshop 1  -Topic: Refining the focus of your term paper Building the Detailed Outline  <b>Annotated Bibliography – 2 Entries are due</b>
17	Tuesday 10/14/2008	Homicide Chapter 9
18	Thursday 10/16/2008	Writing Workshop 2  Topic: Building Arguments and using Evidence  <b>Term Paper Outline is Due</b>
19	Tuesday 10/21/2008	Homicide Chapter 10
20	Thursday 10/23/2008	Bogira: Prologue, Chapter 1 & 2  <b>Annotated Bibliography – 2 Entries are Due.</b>
21	Tuesday 10/28/2008	Bogira Chapter 3,4,5, 6

22	Thursday 10/30/2008	Writing Workshop 3  <b>Homicide Book Reviews are Due</b>
	Tuesday 11/4/2008	Election Day - No Class (But Read Bogira 7 &8)
23	Thursday 11/6/2008	Bogira Chapter 9, 10, 11, 12  <b>Annotated Bibliography – 2 Entries are Due</b>
24	Tuesday 11/11/2008	Bogira Chapter 13,14,15,16
25	Thursday 11/13/2008	Writing Workshop 4  Topic: Putting it all together – Preparing the first Draft  <b>Revised Detailed Outline Due</b>
26	Tuesday 11/18/2008	Bogira 17, 18, 19, Epilogue
27	Thursday 11/20/2008	Writing Workshop 5  Peer Review of the first Draft.  <b>First Draft of complete paper due.</b>
	Tuesday 11/25/2008	Thanksgiving Recess
	Thursday 11/27/2008	Thanksgiving Recess
28	Tuesday 12/2/2008	Presentations
29	Thursday 12/4/2008	Presentations
	Monday 12/8/2008	<b>Term Paper Due by 4:00 p.m.</b>