**CRIME AND SOCIETY**

**Michael D. Sousa**

**SOCY 2044**

**Contact Information**

Email: [msousa@law.du.edu](mailto:msousa@law.du.edu)

By Zoom Appointment

**NOTE: OUR LIVE ZOOM CLASSES WILL BE HELD ON THE FOLLOWING DAYS AND TIMES:**

5/12 from 12:30 – 3:30 (Tuesday)

5/15 from 12:30 – 3:30 (Friday)

5/19 from 12:30 – 3:30 (Tuesday)

5/22 from 12:30 – 3:30 (Friday)

5/26 from 12:30 – 3:30 (Tuesday)

5/29 from 12:30 – 3:30 (Friday)

*I already sent the class a collective Zoom invitation.* Please let me know if you need me to send you the Meeting ID once again.

**Course Description**

This course explores issues related to crime, the criminal justice system, the legal system, and crime-related policy largely through a sociological perspective. At the end of the course, you should have a good framework for understanding the close, dialectical relationship between society and the criminal justice system in the United States.

**Course Materials**

There are two required texts for this course:

1. Nicole Gonzalez Van Cleve (2016). ***Crook County: Racism and Injustice in America’s Largest Criminal Court*** (Stanford Law Books)

2. John Pfaff (2017). ***Locked In: The True Causes of Mass Incarceration and How to Achieve Real Reform*** (Basic Books)

In addition to these four required texts, there will be various readings posted to the course site (on Canvas) for which you are also responsible.

**Class Expectations, Policies and Attendance**

My overriding goal for this course is to have you engage with the class material and to think critically about crime, law, and the criminal justice system in the United States. To that end, here are my expectations for the course:

1. Although this is a 2000-level course, I will not be teaching this course at a rudimentary level. That is, I expect you to come to class prepared to discuss the material and to engage with me and your fellow classmates in a critical way. I want to challenge your thinking and broaden your intellectual horizons regarding the sociological study of crime, law, and criminal justice. Further, while I cannot be certain, I suspect that the reading load for this course will be greater than what you may expect from a 2000-level course. While I am positive that the readings selected will be intriguing and thought-provoking, if you are not committed to a heavy reading load, then I would strongly think about taking this course from another instructor.
2. This class will not be taught strictly as “straight lecture.” Rather, I will be using a Socratic Method to teach this course. That is, I will oftentimes “cold call” students to answer questions about the course readings, respond to my questions, or respond to questions/comments from your fellow students. This develops your critical thinking skills and public speaking skills, in addition to testing your understanding of the assigned material. If speaking in front of a class is a problem for you (albeit over Zoom) or you have hesitation about participating in class in this way, then you may wish to drop this class and take it with another instructor.
3. Assigned readings are expected to have been completed prior to the class meeting for which they are assigned. You have two free “passes” from being called on during class. If you are unprepared for class on more than two occasions, however, I reserve the right to either reduce your final grade by a full letter grade or administratively remove you from the course, at my discretion.
4. Some of the topics covered in this course may elicit strong and diverse opinions, such as race, sexual assault, child abuse, and drug addiction. I expect that these topics will be discussed openly, professionally, and without aggression or malice. It is perfectly fine to have differing opinions on such weighty topics, but we must respect everyone’s views in the classroom.
5. I do not lecture from PowerPoint slides, and none will be made available to you by me. In addition, I do not provide students with a “study guide” as a handout prior to any exam. While I am happy to review the material with you as much as you wish (within reason!), every time we have class we are building your study guide, which is why attending class is critical.
6. *Class attendance*: You are all adults and are paying thousands of dollars for your education. Even in this new COVID-19 environment, it is up to you how much you want to get out of your investment in general, and, more particularly, how much you want to learn in this class. This is a small class, I will get to know you quickly, and I will be aware of who is attending and who is not. If, however, current circumstances preclude you from participating during our live Zoom lectures, please let me know ASAP.

**Grading**

Overall course participation – 25%

Assignment 1 – 10%

Assignment 2 – 10%

Assignment 3 – 10%

Assignment 4 – 5%

Take Home Midterm – 20%

Final Exam – 20%

**Final Grade Scale**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A: 93-100% | B: 83-86% | C: 73-76% | D: 63-66% |
| A-: 90-92% | B-: 80-82% | C-: 70-72 | D-: 60-62% |
| B+: 87-89% | C+: 77-79% | D+: 67-69 | F: 59% or less |

**Participation Grade**

Contrary to what you may believe, active participation in a course does *not* mean simply attending class and being prepared. Those are your fundamental responsibilities as a conscientious student. For me, participation means actively contributing to class discussion *voluntarily* and *regularly* over the course of the semester by a combination of asking questions, responding to my questions, and/or engaging with your classmates in meaningful discussions about the material. Please know that this participation grade is entirely subjective based upon my impressions of your contributions to class over the entire semester. Experience has shown that if you need to ask me what your participation grade is towards the end of the semester, it means that you have not done your share to create a meaningful classroom environment in this regard. Please do not try to “negotiate” a grade bump with me for participation points at the end of the semester.

**Other Information**

***Academic Integrity Policy and Student Honor Code***

All students of the University of Colorado-Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council ([honor@colorado.edu](mailto:honor@colorado.edu); 303-735-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Additional information regarding the Honor Code Policy can be found online and at the Honor Code Office.

***Services for Students with Disabilities***

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please provide me with a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or by email at [dsinfo@colorado.edu](mailto:dsinfo@colorado.edu).

***Religious Accommodations***

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. See campus policy regarding religious observances for full details.

***Contacting Me***

Course content-related questions should be emailed to me at [msousa@law.du.edu](mailto:msousa@law.du.edu). The subject line should include the course name (SOCY 2044). Emails that lack a greeting, main text, or sign-off may not be acknowledged. Emails that contain questions that could be answered by reading the syllabus will be responded to with “Please consult the syllabus.” Emails that ask what we covered during a class session or “what was important” that you missed based upon your absence (unexcused), will likely be responded to with “Everything we discussed is important. Please get the class notes from one of your colleagues.

***Contacting You***

There may be various times during the semester where I email the class through Canvas for such things as following up with additional information from class discussion, amending the scheduled class readings based upon time and course progression, advising you of things to focus on in particular readings, or cancelling class due to inclement weather. This will obviously also occur through in-class announcements and may occur through a Canvas posting. In either circumstance, **you are responsible for all information communicated through** **these means.**

**Course Schedule and Readings**

I reserve the right to amend and alter the following schedule of topics and readings during the course of the semester to respond to class interest, time, or for anything other reason. That said, I am happy to alter the course readings a bit to respond to collective student interest (e.g., concentrating more readings specifically on capital punishment if that is an area the class would like to study more in-depth).

IMPORTANT: Readings and assignments described under a particular day are to be completed BEFORE that day.

**Week 1 (5/11 – 5/15):**

**Monday**  
I have posted an assignment for you to complete by Tuesday morning and it is posted on Canvas. In short, you are to watch the very powerful and informative documentary “13th” on Netflix (or through the link I provided) and to respond to questions relating to the substance of the movie. We will discuss the issues raised in the movie on Tuesday. In short, the movie is an incredible summation of the entire course. I expect well-written, thoughtful responses which should be a paragraph or two for each question. Please proofread your answers before submitting them.

*Assignment 1 due before class on Tuesday*

**Tuesday**  
We will have our first live class on Tuesday at 12:30 (I will send out a recurring Zoom invitation). We will discuss “13th” as a class as well as some beginning pages from a criminal justice textbook. Please have these pages read for class on Tuesday.

**Wednesday**  
For Wednesday, please read the materials posted for 5/13. It contains an academic article along with three legal cases. You may never have read actual legal cases before, so it may be a bit challenging. Nonetheless, do your best. What I would like you to take from the cases are the following: 1) what were the basic facts? 2) what were the legal arguments? 3) what did the courts hold? 4) how is this relevant (if at all) to our course?  
  
[In the past, students have loved reading legal cases. If you as a class enjoy it, I am happy to add legal cases (perhaps on 4th Amendment searches and seizures)]

I have started a discussion board on this topic on Canvas. Please post any comments or questions about these readings to the class as a whole. I will monitor the discussion and chime in as appropriate. When we have a discussion board on a topic, contributing to the discussion will count towards your overall participation grade (20% of the course).

**Thursday**  
You are to read the first four chapters of *Locked In* by John Pfaff. I have posted an assignment to respond to some questions. This assignment will count 10% towards your final grade. I expect well-written and thoughtful responses in a paragraph or two for each question. Please proofread your work before turning it in.

*Assignment 2 due on Thursday*

**Friday**  
We will have our second live Zoom lecture. You are to finish the *Locked In* book by John Pfaff. I have posted a second assignment on the book, namely, to answer questions for chapters 5-8. This will count 10% towards your final grade. Again, I expect well-written and thoughtful responses. Please proofread your work before turning it in.

*Assignment 3 due before class on Friday*

**Week 2 (5/18 – 5/22)**

**Monday**

Please read the posted articles for 5/18 and be prepared to discuss in class on Tuesday. I have created a discussion board under the heading of “Punishment After Incarceration.” Feel free to post comments and questions to the discussion board. Doing so will count towards your 20% overall participation grade.

**Tuesday**

Please read the posted articles for 5/19 and be prepared to discuss in class on Tuesday.

**Wednesday**

Please read the posted articles for 5/20 and be prepared to discuss on exam (in addition to our other materials).

**Thursday**

*Take home exam* - - I will send it out on Thursday morning and you will need to turn it in before class on Friday.

**Friday**

Discussion of readings for the week

**Week 3 (5/25 – 5/29)**

**Monday**

Please read the posted articles for 5/25 and be prepared to discuss in class on Tuesday.

**Tuesday**

Please read the posted articles for 5/26 and be prepared to discuss in class on Tuesday.

*Assignment* 4 due prior to class on Tuesday.

**Wednesday**

Read Introduction and Chapters 1-3 of *Crook County*

**Thursday**

Read Chapters 4 – Conclusion of *Crook County*

**Final**

Final Exam