

CRM 375 – Current Issues in Corrections

COURSE SYLLABUS Spring 2017

Instructor	Kerry Nelson
Classroom	Strong 201
Class Times	Monday @ 4:00 pm to 5:15 pm (seated meeting) One additional day will be online assignments and work
Campus Office	By appointment only and will arrange a mutually agreeable meeting
Daytime Office	301 East Highway CC Nixa, MO
Phone	417-724-1344 (work office)
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This syllabus is the class agreement between you and me. It provides each of us with a document that describes, in part, what the course content will consist of, what we will study, how your performance will be evaluated, and how a variety of behaviors and/or conduct will be handled. Please familiarize yourself with the entire syllabus and understand that minor adjustments may be made throughout the semester. If there are changes, you will be notified accordingly and an updated syllabus will be provided upon request.

Office Hours –I am available regularly by e-mail at kerry.nelson@doc.mo.gov and I check this email frequently. If you need to meet with me it should not be difficult to find a mutually agreed upon time. We simply need to communicate and that starts with you.

Course Description – The primary focus of this course will be on community-based corrections, centralized heavily on adult probation and parole supervision. There is also a group project connected to current issues in corrections.

Trends across the United States reflect a movement away from incarceration practices that dominated the 1980s, 90s and well into the 21st century. Replacing many of the draconian practices of long and mandatory prison sentences for non-violent offenders are the less costly community-based responses. Justice practitioners are also discovering that less costly community-based responses are meeting the expectation of public safety and lowering recidivism.

This course teaches students the most current probation and parole practices and is based on contemporary research (evidenced-based practices) with the primary goal of public safety through a reduction in recidivism. Included is diverting non-violent offenders away from long prison stays and diminishing *returns* to prison. Students in this course will also learn that dwindling government budgets are also creating a sense of urgency to reduce the burgeoning prison populations across the United States. For students with criminal justice careers in mind, these elements should mean the field of community corrections is correlated with future employment opportunities.

Students can expect to learn the basics of community-based supervision including, but not limited to the following areas: client assessment using actuarial instruments (static risk variables; dynamic need variables); criminogenic needs; Sentencing Assessment Reports (aka Presentence Investigations); typical caseloads in Missouri; the use of community-based treatment with supervision; principles of effective intervention; specialized caseloads; intermediate sanctions and modification and revocation of supervision.

Required Textbook

- ✓ *Community Based Corrections*, 11th Edition
by Leanne Fiftal Alarid
Published by Cengage Learning, ISBN-9781305633728
- ✓ Additional reading assignments will be part of this class

Course Lectures and Guest Presentations – Lectures, guest presentations and class discussion are important aspects of the course because they bring in real-life experiences into the classroom . You will still have to reading assignments. Guest presenters will be local justice professionals that will share their experiences of correctional and criminal justice work. They will offer a pragmatic view into the justice system.

Performance Items and Grading Policy

- ✓ **Group Projects** – Each student will participate in a group project that will culminate in two very important items:
 1. Groups will deliver a professional-level classroom presentation (15-20 minutes) wherein each student will have an active role and participation. For more details on my expectation of the presentation itself, a rubric can be found on Blackboard under the *Group Project & Presentation* link. The presentation will be scored separately from the paper assignment noted below and be worth a minimum of 100 points.
 2. Each student will also submit a 5-7 page paper (refer to writing assignment for submission requirements) on the same topic as the presentation. This paper is expected to be commensurate with an upper-level student who demonstrates proper grammar, spelling and narrative flow. Your paper should do the following:
 - a) Explain the current status, relevance, and implications of the topic;
 - b) Articulate the arguments and evidence which supports the current policy;
 - c) Articulate the arguments and evidence in opposition of the current policy;
 - d) Identify and critically examine ethical issues which may affect an assessment of the merits of the policy;
 - e) Critically discusses with sound reasoning, your personal position on the policy's worth;
 - f) A final recommendation on the policy which may be to remove, change or embolden the current policy. Recommending no change is not considered a recommendation.

You will be divided by me into groups for the project and assigned a topic by me. The classroom presentation is considered the final exam. Beginning work early in the semester is strongly encouraged.

- ✓ Exams – There will be a minimum of two exams that are derived from course lectures and readings. You should expect a variety of short essay, multiple-choice and true-false questions. I do not provide study guides or rubrics.
- ✓ Writing Assignments – There will be a number of days where we will not meet formally in class; however, reading assignments followed by short writing assignments and/or Discussion Board will be assigned and required.

When written assignments are required (outside of discussion board) the following requirements for submitting the paper will always be:

- Your name and date are a header at the top, right-side of the paper
- Your first line is title followed by the next line beginning the narrative
- Typewritten in 12 pt Times New Roman
- One-inch margins on all sides top and bottom
- Double-spaced
- Sources cited are on the last page by itself and not counted in the total page count

- ✓ Final Class Meeting – **Mandatory attendance**
- ✓ Attendance - **Twenty (20) points** will be awarded for students with a perfect attendance record. An excused absence (see below) does not count toward perfect attendance. Your physical presence in each and every class is required to count toward this achievement.
- ✓ Missed Classes - Any student who has more three (2) unexcused absences will have **up to twenty (20) points deducted** from the course total (deduction begins on the third unexcused absence). Subsequent and additional absences after the fourth will very likely cause additional deductions.
- ✓ Extra Credit – Upon a student’s request, up to **ten (10) points** extra credit may be earned. When requested, the student will be provided a topic in which a two to three-page paper is due on or before the next meeting of our class. There is a maximum number of extra credit requests a student can make and this will be handled at my discretion. Also, students with poor attendance will very likely be excluded from this opportunity. Paper requirements are noted earlier in this document.
- ✓ Grading Scale – traditional grading as shown below as a percentage of the total will determine grades. Grades are rounded up to the nearest tenth.
 - 90% and above A
 - 80 – 89% B
 - 70 – 79% C
 - 60 – 69% D
 - Below 60% F
- ✓ If you have any doubt whether your performance (grade) is correct, please arrange to visit with me by appointment and we will go over your grades together. Please do not take up class time for this. If I made an error in grading, I will correct it. I retain all of your assignments and tests and you are welcome to review them by appointment.

Coursework and Make-up Policy

Excused Absences – The following are considered excused absences and documentation is required to be presented to me on the next scheduled class following the missed event. You may also email a copy of your documentation for missing class. The following are generally acceptable reasons considered to be an excused absence. Remember, excused absences are counted against perfect attendance, but not against the maximum allowable absences before incurring a penalty.

- Officially sanctioned Missouri State sporting events in which the student is an active athlete/participant;
- Significant documented medical events;
- Death-related absences with supporting evidence;
- Jury duty;
- Obligation into military service.

Examples of items not considered an excused absence might include: car problems; minor illness and/or work.

Exams – If you have an *excused absence* for missing an exam you must notify me in advance for a make-up, and at that time we will make arrangements for the missed exam.

Final Exam (presentation) – Your presentation cannot be missed.

Final Class Meeting– Attendance during the regularly scheduled final class meeting is required. ***An absence will result in the loss of 10 points***

Guest Presentations – Several times throughout the course, we will have guests in class that you will have an opportunity to ask questions. They are either working in and around the field of corrections or they have been clients of those who work in the field. Asking questions is encouraged as long as you are courteous!

Course Jurisdiction and Classroom Expectations – As your instructor I have original jurisdiction over this class and may deny a student the right to attend the class who is unduly disruptive. A class disruption is defined here as anything that distracts the instructor or other students from the learning experience. Class disruptions can involve (but are not limited to) sleeping in class; arriving late to class; leaving class early; interrupting the instructor; texting or cell phone communications; making rude, insensitive, or threatening comments; and using unprofessional tones of voice or body language. The course instructor may have a student administratively withdrawn from a course upon showing of good cause and with the concurrence of the department head. The appeals process in case of such administrative withdrawal shall be as stated in the academic regulations under “Grade Re-evaluation Based on Performance.”

My expectation is that you are to attend class every day, notwithstanding true emergencies. The historical argument that “it is my money” is not only an invalid excuse to miss class; it’s not true. Nearly half of your tuition is paid from funds given to the university from taxes, which means we all have a stake in your academic performance, including class attendance. Attendance is taken daily via the class roster. As stated earlier under the grading policy, students with perfect attendance will have twenty (20) points added to their semester score. Conversely, unexcused absences may result in the loss of points.

- ✓ Absence Policy – It is likely that the only absences that will be viewed as excused are those for officially sanctioned Missouri State sporting events in which the student is an athlete/participant, documented medical events, death-related absences with supporting evidence (some instructor discretion), jury duty and being called into military service. If the class does not meet due to weather, it is not considered an absence. However, if class is scheduled to meet you are expected to be there.

If you arrive late to class, *please do not walk in front of whoever is at the front the room* (me, a guest speaker, another student, etc.) and the rest of the class. Instead, enter from the back of the room if possible. Make sure you sign the roster at the end of the class period.

You are responsible for the information disseminated in the class period you missed including lecture information, hand-outs, special e-mail announcements, etc.

During each class I will circulate a role / attendance sheet. You are expected to initial in the row with your name, and only your name. Signing for another student will be considered a breach of academic integrity and will be dealt with accordingly. No excuse will be accepted for not having signed the role if you were in attendance. If the class role doesn't get to you by the middle of the class period, please raise your hand and let me know the attendance sheet didn't get to you yet.

Leaving class before its normal ending time may be considered an absence. If you intend to leave early, please have the courtesy of telling me before class begins and why you will be absent. An occasional early departure is something that is sometimes unavoidable; however, an ongoing pattern of leaving early will assuredly lead to some sort of demerit.

In testing/exam situations the use of cell phones or similar communication devices, or any other electronic or data storage device for other than university emergencies, may lead also to a charge of academic dishonesty and additional sanctions under the *Student Academic Integrity Policies and Procedures* (<http://www.missouristate.edu/assets/provost/AcademicIntegrityPolicyRev-1-08.pdf>).

Dropping a Class - It is your responsibility to understand the University's procedure for dropping a class. If you stop attending this class but do not follow proper procedure for dropping the class, you may receive a failing grade and will also be financially obligated to pay for the class. The following information is provided by the Registrar's office:

- ✓ Students who drop during the first week will receive no grade.
- ✓ Students who drop between week 2 and 12, will automatically receive a W.

After the end of the 12th week students may not drop classes, will appear on grade rosters, and must be graded. A "W" grade will not be an option at that point. An "I" (incomplete) grade may be assigned if appropriate. For more information, contact the [Office of the Registrar](#) at 836-5520.

Cell Phone Policy –The following statement is taken verbatim from the website of the Missouri State Office of Academic Affairs and also serves as the policy for this course:

As a member of the learning community, each student has a responsibility to other students who are members of the community. When cell phones or pagers ring and students respond in class or leave class to respond, it disrupts the class. Therefore, the Office of the Provost prohibits the use by students of cell phones, pagers, PDAs, or similar communication devices during scheduled classes. All such devices must be turned off or put in a silent (vibrate) mode and ordinarily should not be taken out during class. Given the fact that these same communication devices are an integral part of the University's emergency notification system, an exception to this policy would occur when numerous devices activate simultaneously. When this occurs, students may consult their devices to determine if a university emergency exists. If that is not the case, the devices should be immediately returned to silent mode and put away. Other exceptions to this policy may be granted at the discretion of the instructor. Sanctions for violation of this policy are determined by the instructor and may include dismissal from the class – see [Class Disruption](#).

Use of cell phones, similar communication devices, or any unauthorized electronic data storage device in testing situations, other than to receive University emergency notifications, may constitute a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy and lead to sanctions under the [Student Academic Integrity Policies and Procedures](#).

There are two appeal processes available to students. A sanction for class disruption may be appealed using the appeal process stated in the Class Disruption policy; however, a violation that involves a charge of academic dishonesty must be appealed using the process described in the Student Academic Integrity Policies and Procedures.

Laptops – Some students may find transcribing notes during class helpful and efficient; however, I find that most students who have laptops open aren't really taking notes. They are doing other, non-class related, activities. Because of this, laptops are not to be open during class. If you have a legitimate reason as to why you cannot take handwritten notes, please see me before class to discuss this and make arrangements for your documented reason.

Academic Dishonesty - Missouri State University is a community of scholars committed to developing educated persons who accept the responsibility to practice personal and academic integrity. You are responsible for knowing and following the university's student honor code, *Student Academic Integrity Policies and Procedures*, available at www.missouristate.edu/assets/provost/AcademicIntegrityPolicyRev-1-08.pdf and also available at the Reserves Desk in Meyer Library. Any student participating in any form of academic dishonesty will be subject to sanctions as described in this policy. Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive zero points for the assignment

Nondiscrimination Policy – Missouri State University is a community of people with respect for diversity. The University emphasizes the dignity and equality common to all persons and adheres to a strict nondiscrimination policy regarding the treatment of individual faculty, staff, and students. In accord with federal law and applicable Missouri statutes, the University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, or veteran status in employment or in any program or activity offered or sponsored by the University. Prohibited sex discrimination encompasses sexual harassment, which includes sexual violence. In addition, the University does not discriminate on any basis (including, but not limited to, political affiliation and sexual orientation) not related to the applicable educational requirements for students or the applicable job requirements for employees.

This policy shall not be interpreted in a manner as to violate the legal rights of religious organizations or military organizations associated with the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

The University maintains a grievance procedure incorporating due process available to any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against. Missouri State University is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer. Inquiries concerning the grievance procedure, Affirmative Action Plan, or compliance with federal and state laws and guidelines should be addressed to the Equal Opportunity Officer, Office for Institutional Equity and Compliance, 901 South National Avenue, Springfield, Missouri 65897, equity@missouristate.edu, 417-836-4252, or to the Office for Civil Rights. (Res. Board Policies No. 70-11; Bd. Min. 10-28-11.)

Students with Disabilities – To request academic accommodations for a disability, contact the Director of the [Disability Resource Center](#), Plaster Student Union, Suite 405, (417) 836-4192 or (417) 836-6792 (TTY), www.missouristate.edu/disability. Students are required to provide documentation of disability to the Disability Resource Center prior to receiving accommodations. The Disability Resource

Center refers some types of accommodation requests to the [Learning Diagnostic Clinic](#), which also provides diagnostic testing for learning and psychological disabilities. For information about testing, contact the Director of the [Learning Diagnostic Clinic](#), (417) 836-4787, <http://psychology.missouristate.edu/ldc>.

Appeals – There are two appeal processes available to students. A sanction for class disruption may be appealed using the appeal process stated in the Class Disruption policy; however, a violation that involves a charge of academic dishonesty must be appealed using the process described in the *Student Academic Integrity Policies and Procedures*.

Emergency Response Statement – Students who require assistance during an emergency evacuation must discuss their needs with their professors and Disability Services. If you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible.

For additional information students should contact the [Disability Resource Center](#), 836-4192 (PSU 405), or Larry Combs, Interim Assistant Director of [Public Safety and Transportation](#) at 836-6576.