

Comparative Criminal Justice Systems
CRJU 4253

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Course Description

This course provides undergraduate students with an introduction to comparative criminal justice systems. Using a multi-dimensional approach that draws from international relations, law, and police strategies, the course emphasizes research and analysis, as well as practical application.

Required Texts

Dammer & Albanese. Comparative Criminal Justice systems. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishers.

Course Requirements¹

Comprehensive Final Exam – One comprehensive examination will be given during the semester that will include information presented in the readings and class discussion.

Class Discussion – Every week throughout the semester discussions will be held via the online courseroom. These discussions will revolve around the assigned readings. Participation in the discussions is mandatory and calculated with your participation grade as class participation. NOTE: All discussion responses are due by midnight Sunday of the assigned week.

¹ All assignments for this course are due *no later than midnight Sunday* of the week the assignment is to be turned in.

Grading Policy and Weighting System

Comprehensive Final Exam	40%
Discussion Participation	60%
<u>Total</u>	<u>100%</u>

Disabled Student Policy

Students with a disability affecting their academic performance are expected to arrange for a conference with the instructor in order that appropriate strategies can be considered to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

Academic Dishonesty

Each student is expected to abide by the rules of academic honesty as defined by the student handbook. Cases of academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade for the course and a letter to the Dean of the College of Health Sciences and Human Services requesting that you be withdrawn from the University. If there are any questions as to whether an action is academically dishonest please consult with the professor.

Course Schedule

See the online courseroom.

What Makes a Good Essay?

1. Answer the question

No matter how interesting or well-written an essay, you will not be given any credit for your efforts unless it answers the question that was set. Your argument and evidence must be relevant to the question.

This is the most important feature of what makes a good essay. It *must* deal with the subject or the topic(s) posed in the question rubric.

Your answer should demonstrate that you have understood what the question is asking for, that you have grasped its key terms, and that you have followed all its instructions.

2. Clear structure

An essay should be like a good piece of architecture - built on firm foundations to carefully made plans. The points of your argument should be arranged in some structure which is logical and persuasive.

If you are dealing with a number of issues, the relation between them should be clearly explained. The connections between each stage of your argument and the original question should be evident throughout the essay.

3. Appropriate style

For an academic essay the third person ('he', 'she', or 'it') rather than the first person ('I') is a more preferable style. Occasional use of 'I' may be acceptable if a personal opinion has been specifically requested (but not in this class).

You should keep your audience in mind (your professor). Try to imagine that you are addressing someone who is intelligent and reasonably, but not necessarily well-informed in the subject.

Remember that your writing should be grammatically accurate. Poor punctuation and weak sentence construction will create a bad impression. Mixed tenses and metaphors should be avoided. Spelling mistakes should be corrected.

4. Arguments supported by evidence

Essays should not be just a series of unsupported assertions. You need to provide some evidence to support them - either in the form of factual details, your own reasoning, or the arguments of others.

You should always reveal the fact that you are using someone else's ideas. Provide attribution by using a system of footnotes or endnotes and accurate referencing.

Never try to pass off other people's written words as your own. This is called plagiarism - a form of intellectual dishonesty which is severely frowned upon in academic circles.

5. Clarity of thought

One of the hallmarks of a good essay is that it demonstrates clarity of thought. This may be your ability to identify different issues and discuss them in a logical manner. It may mean organizing materials into a coherent structure for the essay. It could be showing that you are able to make important distinctions and insights.

This may not come easily at first, but with practice it should be possible to gain greater clarity through discipline, selection, and planning.

6. Wide reading and understanding

Essays are often set to encourage and direct your reading in a subject. If you show that you have read widely and thoroughly understood the subject you are discussing, you will be demonstrating your competence.

The best essays are often produced by people who have taken the trouble to acquaint themselves both with the principal textbook and with secondary works of commentary and criticism as well (e.g., outside reading and discussion).

They will often show evidence of intellectual curiosity which has taken them beyond the bounds of what has been prescribed as a minimum.

7. Originality

An essay will be rewarded with a good mark if it competently reviews all the well-known arguments in a subject and reaches a balanced conclusion. The highest grades however are often given - deservedly - to essays which display something extra.

This may be a demonstration of original ideas or an unusual, imaginative approach. Such essays usually stand out because of their freshness and the sense of intellectual excitement they convey.

But remember that you are not usually *required* to be original. Your tutor(s) (a.k.a., teacher) will be perfectly satisfied if you simply answer their essay questions in a sensible and competent manner.

Reference: <http://www.mantex.co.uk/books/essay01.htm>