MENTAL ILLNESS AND CRIME  
Florida State University 
CCJ 4938  •  Spring 2021

Course Instructor: Dr. Sonja Siennick
Contact Information: 405 Eppes Hall, 850-645-9265, ssiennick@fsu.edu

Teaching Assistants: Annelies Kress and Szilvia Biro
Contact Information: ank18e@my.fsu.edu and sbiro@fsu.edu

Course Description

What is mental illness? Does it cause crime? And what should police, courts, and jails and prisons do about it? This course provides an overview of the major issues related to mental illness and crime. You will read reviews of the relevant research, see and hear interviews with people with mental illness and with mentally ill offenders, and use your newly acquired knowledge to propose changes to criminal justice practices. My highest priority is to help you gain knowledge that will help you express your own informed opinions on mental illness and crime. Many of the questions we will address remain controversial and do not have a single ‘right’ answer. Throughout the course, I encourage you both to express your point of view (in an educated and respectful manner, of course) and to remain open to others’ perspectives.

Upon successfully completing this course, you will know the following:

- The major mental disorders
- The main types of treatment for mental illness
- The strength of the association between mental illness and crime
- How police and the courts address mentally ill offenders
- The extent of mental illness among correctional populations
- How insanity pleas are used and how often they are successful
- How involuntary treatment is used
- The strength of the association between mental illness and victimization

Course Materials

Each week in which a paper is not due will feature a new course module, which may contain slides, readings, video or audio clips, and websites to visit. All of the materials you will need will be listed in the .pdf file for that week’s module. I recommend that you first complete the readings, then view the slides and any multimedia components embedded in them, and then listen to or view any supplemental materials given at the end of the module.

You will need access to a computer that can stream audio and video. You will also need internet access. Some electronic readings will be accessed through FSU’s library.
Course Requirements

Due dates and times are in Eastern Time. See pages 5-6 for frequently asked questions.

First Day Attendance. By the end of the third day of classes, please comment on the first day attendance discussion board post so that we can count you as present.

Quizzes. You will take four multiple choice quizzes, one about this syllabus and three about the readings. They will be evenly spaced throughout the course and (in the case of reading quizzes) will be only on that week’s material. The quizzes are not timed, but must be completed and submitted by their due dates and times.

Discussion Boards. There are two parts to this requirement. First, you will write posts in response to four discussion prompts that will be evenly spaced throughout the semester. After reading that week’s readings, viewing the slides, and watching/listening to any video or audio clips, read the discussion prompt and write a post of at least 250 words. Your post should show us that you did the readings and understood the slides, though it can include your personal reaction to the material. That is, it should be scholarly and well-reasoned, but it does not have to be a formal essay and it can include some (just some!) opinion or conjecture. Post that post to the discussion board before the due date and time. Grades will be based on:

- Insight: Show us that you are using the readings and slides to develop your own informed perspectives. Is this a well-thought-out post that demonstrates your understanding? 2 points.
- Evidence: Show us that you completed and understood the readings and slides. Does the post incorporate the course material? 1.5 points.
- Mechanics: Submit carefully proofread posts of the appropriate length. Does the post meet the word count and contain no spelling errors? 0.5 points.

Second, in the same weeks you will reply to one other person’s post. Your reply should be approximately 100 words, and like your initial post should be scholarly and well-reasoned and should demonstrate your knowledge of the course material. Your reply could, among other things, explain why you agree or disagree with someone’s post, extend the post with new related material, or link the post with material from a different week of class. Remember to be professional and respectful when disagreeing with others! You are free to comment on more than one post, and you are also free to hold extended discussions with each other, but keep in mind that we will only grade your first reply. Post your reply to the discussion board before the due date and time. Grades will be based on:

- Insight: Show us that you can use the course material to support, refute, or extend other people’s arguments. Does the reply incorporate the course material? 1.5 points.
- Mechanics: Submit carefully proofread replies of the appropriate length. Does the reply meet the word count and contain no spelling errors? 0.5 points.

We strongly recommend that you save your discussion board posts in a Word document to protect yourself in case of a Canvas failure.

Papers. You will write four papers, each approximately 1,000-1,250 words in length unless otherwise noted. These papers are your chance to tackle the course material in greater depth.
Don’t just repeat the course material; instead, show us that you can use that material to give informed critiques of other perspectives. These papers should be formal essays and should include citations in APA format. If you use outside sources, please also include a reference list. Grades will be based on the same criteria as the discussion board posts, with approximately 7 points going to insight, 7 going to evidence, and 1 going to mechanics.

Course Grades

Quizzes: 4 @ 4 points each..........................16
Discussion board posts: 4 @ 4 points each.............16
Discussion board replies: 4 @ 2 points each............8
Papers: 4 @ 15 points each..........................60

Total 100 points (%)

Grading scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>94%-100%</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90%-93%</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87%-89%</td>
<td>B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84%-86%</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80%-83%</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>77%-79%</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>74%-76%</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>70%-73%</td>
<td>C-</td>
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<tr>
<td>60%-69%</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 60%</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I round according to conventional mathematical rules. To protect your privacy I cannot discuss specific course grades over email; please make arrangements to Zoom with us.

Course Communication

How We will Contact You
You can check Canvas for course announcements and changes. Please adjust your Canvas settings to ensure that you receive course announcements via email.

How You Should Contact Us
Please email us with any questions about the course material, requirements, or policies. Monday through Friday, we will respond to your email within 24 hours. We will try to respond promptly to emails sent on weekends, but may not be able to respond until Monday.

Course Policies

Discussion board etiquette. As noted above, it is important to stay professional when commenting on other people’s discussion board posts. It is okay to disagree with others—in fact, debates will make the course more interesting!—but it is not okay to be disrespectful. Name-calling and personal attacks will result in a loss of one point per instance from your final grade.

Missing and late work. Missing or late assignments, quizzes, and posts will receive 0s unless you are unable to complete or submit the item due to an excused absence (per the University attendance policy below). When you email me, please include documentation of your absence.
(e.g., a doctor’s note, a jury duty summons). Forgetting about the assignment/quiz/post, needing to work late, being unable to get to a computer, and having an undocumented illness will not qualify as excused absences, so please plan accordingly and do not procrastinate.

The University attendance policy is as follows: Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

Given the atypical circumstances of this semester, I am modifying this attendance policy as follows: You are allowed ONE undocumented absence in this course. Please contact me to arrange a new due date for the assignment you missed.

**TurnItIn.** This course will use Canvas’s TurnItIn anti-plagiarism tool. Assignments receiving high similarity scores will be investigated according to College procedures.

**Technology.** When you submit an assignment, it is your responsibility to ensure that the submission was successful. If you experience internet or Canvas problems while you are submitting something, please email us immediately. If the trouble relates to a written assignment, please attach your assignment. It is important that you contact us before the due date and time so that we know you did the work on time. You have a one-hour grace period to contact us about technology-related problems. If you do not successfully submit an assignment or quiz by the due date and time and we do not hear from you within an hour of that date and time, that assignment or quiz will receive a 0.

**Americans with Disabilities Act.** Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should:
(1) register with and provide documentation to the Office of Accessibility Services; and
(2) request a letter from the Office of Accessibility Services to be sent to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type; and
(3) meet (in person, via phone, email, skype, zoom, etc…) with each instructor to whom a letter of accommodation was sent to review approved accommodations.

This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For the latest version of this statement and more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the: Office of Accessibility Services
874 Traditions Way
108 Student Services Building
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167
(850) 644-9566 (voice)
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)
oas@fsu.edu
https://dsst.fsu.edu/oas/
**Academic Honor Policy.** The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to “…be honest and truthful and...[to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University.” (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at [http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics/Academic-Honor-Policy](http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics/Academic-Honor-Policy))

**Syllabus Change Policy.** Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Will you provide feedback on a draft of my paper?** Yes! Please send your draft to Anneliese by 5pm on the Tuesday before it is due. Note that we do not “pre-grade” papers, but we can tell you whether you are on the right track or are missing anything major.

**My assignment is shorter/longer than the length requirements. Is that okay?** We are fine with discussion board posts that are 5-10 words too short or long and with papers that are ¼ page too short or long (with normal spacing and margins). But please, for the sake of your graders, don’t write a post or paper that is double the requested length. Also, please don’t submit papers that are ½ page or more too short. This last guideline is to protect you; if your assignment is markedly too short, you are probably missing key content.

**Why did I lose points on my assignment?** If you’d like more detailed feedback on your grade, please contact your grader. The most common reasons that people lose points are not answering the question(s) in full and not incorporating enough course material. We like to see people spend half or more of their posts and papers describing and discussing course concepts.

**I got stuck at work/my car broke down/my loved one is ill and I missed the assignment deadline. What do I do?** You get one free extension in the course. To use it, simply email us to let us know that you will be turning your assignment in late. Tell us how much extra time you need (within reason) so that we can reset the Canvas due date for you. After you use this freebie, to gain extensions on additional assignments, you will need documentation that those absences were excused under the policy described above.

**I am having trouble with Canvas and can’t submit my assignment! Or, I swear I submitted it but it is not showing up! Help!** If it’s before the deadline or within the grace period, please email it to us! If you believe that you submitted it but we have no record of that, contact Canvas Support at (850) 644-8004 and tell them that your instructor needs a log of your Canvas activity on the date that you submitted the assignment. Also, make sure that you can provide us with a version of your assignment that was last saved before the assignment deadline. Then contact us to discuss this further.
What is my current grade? Can I still earn a ___ in this class? To calculate your current percentage grade, add up the total number of points you have earned so far, and divide that by the total number of possible points so far. To determine how many more points you must earn to achieve a target final grade, look at the grading scale to see how many points you must earn to make that grade, and then subtract your total points earned from that number. If the result is less than the number of points remaining, then yes, you can still earn that grade!

Can I complete an extra credit assignment to boost my grade? Sorry, but there is no extra credit in this course. Your best bets for maximizing your grade are ensuring that you have fully and thoroughly answered the discussion board and paper prompts, contacting us early to ask any questions that you have about the assignments, and sending us draft papers by the deadline mentioned above.

Resources for Students

If you need help or are interested in exploring the mental health resources available to FSU students, here is some information:

The University Counseling Center offers free and confidential services to enrolled students.
- Their website, [https://counseling.fsu.edu/](https://counseling.fsu.edu/), provides information, tips and strategies, and links to other relevant groups and services.
- Their NOLES C.A.R.E. program, [https://nolescare.fsu.edu/](https://nolescare.fsu.edu/), does the same for suicide prevention.
- You can call 850-644-TALK (8255) to request a consultation with a counselor.

Psychology Today’s website features a directory of community mental healthcare providers and information about mental health problems and treatments: [https://www.psychologytoday.com/us](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us).

In a crisis, you can:
- Call 911
- Call the University Police at 850-644-1234
- Call 800-273-TALK (8255) for the suicide prevention LifeLine
- Text “Home” to 741741 for the Crisis Text Line
- Go to the nearest emergency room
Course Calendar

Modules open the Saturday before, and assignments are due on Friday of that week

January 6    Module 1: Mental disorders, part 1; Quiz 1
January 11   Module 2: Mental disorders, part 2; Discussion Board Posts
January 18   Paper 1
January 25   Module 3: Deinstitutionalization; the mental illness-crime link; Quiz 2
February 1   Module 4: The mental illness-crime link; substance abuse; Discussion Board Posts
February 8   Module 5: Mental illness and gun violence
February 15  Paper 2
February 22  Module 6: Mental illness and policing; Discussion Board Posts
March 1      Module 7: Mental health courts; Quiz 3
March 8      Module 8: Mental illness and corrections
March 15     Paper 3
March 22     Module 9: Insanity pleas; Quiz 4
March 29     Module 10: Involuntary treatment; Discussion Board Posts
April 5      Module 11: Mental illness and victimization
April 12     Paper 4