
MENTAL ILLNESS AND CRIME
Florida State University

Course Instructor: Dr. Sonja Siennick

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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

All of the readings that you will need are linked on Canvas.

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.

Papers. You will write three 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 following criteria, with approximately 10 points going to insight and 10 going to evidence.

- **Insight:** Show us that you are using the readings and slides to develop your own informed perspectives. Is this a well-thought-out paper that demonstrates your understanding?
- **Evidence:** Show us that you completed and understood the readings and slides. Does the paper incorporate the course material?

Exams. You will complete two essay exams. They will be take-home and open book and notes. The second exam is not cumulative.

Presentations. You will give a 10-minute in-class presentation on a topic (of your choosing) related to mental illness and crime or the criminal justice system. These presentations will require outside scholarly reading. Details will be provided in class.

Course Grades

Papers: 3 @ 20 points each.....	60
Exams: 2 @ 15 points each.....	30
Presentation: 1 @ 10 points each.....	10
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Total	100 points (%)

Grading scale

94%-100%	A	80%-83%	B-	70%-73%	C-
90%-93%	A-	77%-79%	C+	60%-69%	D
87%-89%	B+	74%-76%	C	Below 60%	F
84%-86%	B				

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

Missing and late work. Missing or late assignments 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 regarding your excused absence, please include documentation (e.g., a doctor's note, a jury duty summons). Forgetting about the assignment, needing to work late, and being unable to get to a computer will not qualify as excused absences, so please plan accordingly and do not procrastinate.

Here is the **University Attendance Policy**: 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.

You are allowed ONE undocumented absence in this course. This equates to a free extension on a single course requirement. Please contact me to receive up to an additional week on the requirement. Note that we cannot grant extensions on presentations, so please plan accordingly.

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.

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/academic-resources/academic-integrity-and-grievances/academic-honor-policy>)

Academic Success. Your academic success is a top priority for Florida State University. University resources to help you succeed include tutoring centers, computer labs, counseling and health services, and services for designated groups, such as veterans and students with disabilities. The following information is not exhaustive, so please check with your advisor or the Department of Student Support and Transitions to learn more.

Americans with Disabilities Act. Florida State University (FSU) values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. Our goal is to create learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive, and welcoming. FSU is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities in a manner that is consistent with academic standards of the course while empowering the student to meet integral requirements of the course.

To receive academic accommodations, a student:

- (1) must register with and provide documentation to the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS);
 - (2) must provide a letter from OAS to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type; and,
 - (3) should communicate with the instructor, as needed, to discuss recommended accommodations. A request for a meeting may be initiated by the student or the instructor.
- Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from the Office of Accessibility Services has been provided.

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

Confidential Campus Resources. Various centers and programs are available to assist students with navigating stressors that might impact academic success. These include the following:

Victim Advocate Program
University Center A
Rm. 4100
(850) 644-7161
Available 24/7/365
Office Hours: M-F 8-5
<https://dsst.fsu.edu/vap>

University Counseling
Center
Askew Student Life
Center, 2nd floor
942 Learning Way
(850) 644-8255
<https://counseling.fsu.edu/>

University Health Services
Health and Wellness
Center
(850) 644-6230
<https://uhs.fsu.edu/>

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.

Course Calendar

Week 1	Mental health and illness
Week 2	Mental disorders
Week 3	Mental disorders, continued; treatment
Week 4	Deinstitutionalization Thursday: Paper 1 due
Week 5	The mental illness-crime link
Week 6	The mental illness-crime link; review Thursday: Exam 1
Week 7	Substance abuse; gun violence
Week 8	Mental illness and policing Thursday: Paper 2 due
Week 9	Crisis intervention teams
Week 10	Mental health courts
Week 11	Mental illness and corrections; insanity pleas
Week 12	Involuntary treatment Thursday: Paper 3 due
Week 13	Tuesday: Exam 2
Week 14	Tuesday: Presentations
Week 15	Tuesday and Thursday: Presentations