

**Criminal Justice Policy Evaluation**  
**CCJ5716**  
**Spring 2023**  
**Monday 1:45 - 4:15 p.m.**

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## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The goals of this course are (1) to familiarize students with “hot topic” criminal justice policies, and (2) to help students become sophisticated practitioners and consumers of policy-relevant research. Specific objectives for students by the end of the course are they will be able to:

- Describe and evaluate the logic and evidence for a wide range of criminal justice policies;
- Identify factors that influence policymaking and policy design;
- Classify and apply specific evaluation research methodologies;
- Distinguish evaluation research challenges and issues and how to address them; and
- Apply a research perspective to identify ways to inform and improve policy.

It is my hope that by the end of the semester, students will be able to conduct high-quality evaluation research and, if ever serving as a criminal justice practitioner or policymaker, be savvy requesters and consumers of such research. To this end, the course will involve considerable reading of and discussion about a range of criminal justice and crime policies, including supermax prisons, sex offender laws, drug laws, faith-based programs, among others, and also the methodologies used to evaluate such policies.

Classes will be structured around discussions, through the Socratic method, that is, reliance on question-and-answer exchanges to understand and evaluate the readings. I will facilitate these discussions and ensure that we cover as full a range of issues as possible. We will rely on several books (see below) and a number of articles (which will be available via Canvas). Given the amount of reading, you must learn to skim and focus on critical points and issues. Taking notes on your observations and discussing the readings with others will help you to absorb the material. I may include additional readings as the semester progresses. Please bring the material to class, as we will collectively wrestle with specific passages in the readings. Depending on student interest, we can focus on additional or different topics of interest to the class.

## **REQUIRED TEXT AND READINGS**

There are several required texts for the course and, separately, a set of readings that will be available online through the course library. The required books are:

Mears, Daniel P. 2010. American Criminal Justice Policy: An Evaluation Approach to Increasing Accountability and Effectiveness. New York: Cambridge University Press. ISBN-13: 9780521746236.

Decker, Scott H., and Kevin A. Wright, eds. 2018. Crime and Public Policy: Putting Theory to Work. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press. ISBN-13: 9781439916582.

Groopman, Jerome. 2007. How Doctors Think. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. ISBN: 9780618610037.

## RECOMMENDED TEXTS

These are a selection of books that are not required but that you might find interesting and informative in learning about criminal justice policy and evaluation.

Blomberg, Thomas G., Julie M. Brancale, Kevin M. Beaver, and William D. Bales, eds. 2016. Advancing Criminology and Criminal Justice Policy. New York: Routledge.

Mears, Daniel P. 2017. Out-of-Control Criminal Justice: The Systems Improvement Solution for More Safety, Justice, Accountability, and Efficiency. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Mears, Daniel P., and Joshua C. Cochran. 2019. Fundamentals of Criminological and Criminal Justice Inquiry: The Science and Art of Conducting, Evaluating, and Using Research. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Tonry, Michael H., ed. 2009. The Oxford Handbook of Crime and Public Policy. New York: Oxford University Press.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Observations (5 percent): Each week, a 1-page, single-spaced (Times New Roman, 12-point font, 1-inch margins) observation is due in class by the start of class. Each observation should discuss (1) a key idea that interested you in the assigned readings for that week (e.g., the week 2 observation should discuss the week 2 readings), with citations as appropriate to specific passages, *and* (2) two questions that you have about the readings that you would like the class to discuss. *Observations are not due the first day of class or on exam weeks.*

Proposal (45 percent): Students will present their initial ideas for a proposed policy evaluation—on a policy of their choosing—on *February 6*. A one-page outline of your proposal outline is due, and will be presented, in class on *March 6*. The class will provide feedback on it. *Your 10-15 page single-spaced final proposal then is due March 27*. The proposal should follow the criteria used by the National Institute of Justice (<https://www.nij.gov/funding/pages/welcome.aspx>), including (1) a title, (2) an abstract, (3) introduction, (4) background (literature review and broader social, political, and research context), (5) statement of the problem, (6) goals and objectives, (7) expected benefits, (8) data, (9) evaluation design and methodology, (10) staffing, (11) timeline, and (12) budget. You do not have to do the research, just propose the research you would do if funded. I will discuss guidelines for proposal-writing. The proposal will be graded using the criteria that typically would be used for a paper; the grading rubric can be found at the end of this syllabus.

**Exam (50 percent):** A take-home essay-based exam that covers material from the course. The goal of the exam is to help you understand and develop a critical perspective on the course material. In class, we will discuss the types of questions that may appear on the exam. Priority will go to questions that overlap with the readings and class discussions. The grade will be based on how well you: address all parts of each question; present the logic and evidence to support your answers; incorporate all relevant material that was assigned (including material that we discuss and material that we may not have had time to discuss in class); present your answers (i.e., the quality of writing—clear and complete sentences, word choice, etc.); adhere to the formatting requirements. The grading rubric can be found at the end of this syllabus.

## GRADING SCALE

The grading scale for each element of the course and for the course overall is as follows:

A	=	93.0	to	100
A-	=	90.0	to	< 93.0
B+	=	87.0	to	< 90.0
B	=	83.0	to	< 87.0
B-	=	80.0	to	< 83.0
C+	=	77.0	to	< 80.0
C	=	73.0	to	< 77.0
C-	=	70.0	to	< 73.0
D+	=	67.0	to	< 70.0
D	=	63.0	to	< 67.0
D-	=	60.0	to	< 63.0
F	=	<60.0		

All grades will be posted via the Canvas grade book.

## COURSE POLICIES

- **University attendance policy.** If you miss class, you will not receive credit for the assignments unless exceptional circumstances exist or you provide prior written notice that attendance to the class is not possible for legitimate reasons, as defined by the University. Students must provide, when possible, advance notice of absences. After an absence, students must provide relevant documentation within one week of missing class; the missed assignment also must be completed within that week. The University’s attendance policy will be followed in determining whether a missed assignment is due to legitimate reasons. The University’s attendance policy (<https://facsenate.fsu.edu/Curriculum-Resources/syllabus-language>) states: “*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.*”
- **Late assignment policy.** Late assignments will not be accepted unless: (1) Notification is

provided to the instructor within 24 hours of a missed assignment, and (2) a legitimate reason is provided for why the assignment was late. Written documentation for the excuse may be required. *If you do not follow this procedure, you will receive a zero on the assignment.* When a legitimate reason exists, the assignment must be submitted within one week of the assignment's original due date.

- **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. Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Office of Accessibility Services; (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. 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 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](mailto: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>

Counseling and  
Psychological Services  
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>

- **Class recordings.** Students are permitted to make recordings of class lectures for a class in which the student is enrolled for personal educational use. A class lecture is defined as an educational presentation delivered by the instructor as part of a university course intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject. *Recording class activities other than class lectures—including but not limited to lab or recitation sessions; student presentations (whether individually or part of a group); class discussions (except when incidental to the lecture); clinical practica and presentations involving patient histories and other protected health information; academic exercises involving student participation; test or examination administrations; field trips; and private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty member—is prohibited.* Recordings may not be used as a substitute for class participation and class attendance and *recordings may not be published or shared without the written consent of the faculty member.* Failure to adhere to these requirements may constitute a violation of FSU's Student Code of Conduct and possibly have legal consequences. Students who record class lectures are asked to do so in ways that do not make others feel reluctant to ask questions, explore new ideas, or otherwise participate in class. Students must monitor their recording so that they do not include participation by other students without permission. Students with disabilities will continue to have appropriate accommodations for recordings as established by the Office of Accessibility Services. Source: [Office of Faculty Development and Advancement](#) (07/30/21).
- **Courtesy, respect, and professionalism.** Please arrive at class on time prepared to discuss the materials assigned. During class, please do not be disruptive or engage in side conversations or activities. Please do actively contribute to and engage in class discussions.
- **Free tutoring from FSU.** On-campus tutoring and writing assistance is available for many courses at Florida State University. For more information, visit the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) Tutoring Services' comprehensive list of on-campus tutoring options—see <http://ace.fsu.edu/tutoring> or contact [tutor@fsu.edu](mailto:tutor@fsu.edu). High-quality tutoring is available by appointment and on a walk-in basis. These services are offered by tutors trained to encourage the highest level of individual academic success while upholding personal academic integrity.
- **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

Readings assigned for a given week should be read by the start of class (e.g., the week 2 readings should be read by the start of class in week 2).

Week	Date	Topics and Readings
Week 1	1/9 (M)	<b>Introduction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mears (2010, ch. 1)</li> </ul>
Week 2	1/23 (M)	<b>Basic vs. Applied Research</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mears (2010, chs. 2 and 3)</li> <li>Blumstein, Alfred. 1997. "Interaction of Criminological Research and Public Policy." <u>Journal of Quantitative Criminology</u> 12:349-362.</li> </ul>
Week 3	1/30 (M)	<b>Needs Evaluations (illus. = mass incarceration, sex crime laws)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mears (2010, ch. 4)</li> <li>Sample, Lisa L., and Timothy M. Bray. 2003. "Are Sex Offenders Dangerous?" <u>Criminology and Public Policy</u> 3:59-82.</li> </ul>
Week 4	2/6 (M)	<b>Theory Evaluations (illus. = supermaxes, faith-based programs)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mears (2010, ch. 5)</li> <li>Mears, Daniel P., Caterina G. Roman, Ashley Wolff, and Janeen Buck. 2006. "Faith-Based Efforts to Improve Prisoner Reentry: Assessing the Logic and Evidence." <u>Journal of Criminal Justice</u> 34:351-367.</li> </ul> <b>PROPOSAL IDEAS PRESENTED</b>
Week 5	2/13 (M)	<b>Implementation Evaluations (illus. = transfer, mandatory arrest)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mears (2010, ch. 6)</li> <li>Davis, Robert C., Barbara E. Smith, and Bruce Taylor. 2003. "Increasing the Proportion of Domestic Violence Arrests that Are Prosecuted: A Natural Experiment in Milwaukee." <u>Criminology and Public Policy</u> 2(2):263-282.</li> </ul>
Week 6	2/20 (M)	<b>Outcome and Impact Evaluations (illus. = drug courts, gun laws)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mears (2010, ch. 7)</li> <li>Sevigny, Eric L., and Jonathan P. Caulkins. 2004. "Kingpins or Mules: An Analysis of Drug Offenders Incarcerated in Federal and State Prisons." <u>Criminology and Public Policy</u> 3(3):401-434.</li> </ul>
Week 7	2/27 (M)	<b>Cost-Efficiency Evaluations (illus. = comm. policing, privatization)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mears (2010, ch. 8)</li> <li>Bales, William D., Laura E. Bedard, Susan T. Quinn, David T. Ensley, and Glen P. Holley. 2005. "Recidivism of Public and Private State Prison Inmates in Florida." <u>Criminology and Public Policy</u> 4(1):57-82.</li> </ul>
Week 8	3/6 (M)	<b>PROPOSAL OUTLINES &amp; PRESENTATIONS DUE</b>
Week 9	3/20 (M)	<b>Decisionmaking in the Criminal Justice System</b>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Groopman (2007)</li> <li>• Mears, Daniel P., and Sarah Bacon. 2009. "Improving Criminal Justice through Better Decisionmaking: Lessons from the Medical System." <u>Journal of Criminal Justice</u> 37:142-154.</li> </ul> <p><b>School Bullying</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Álvarez-García, David, Trinidad García, and José Carlos Núñez. 2015. "Predictors of School Bullying Perpetration in Adolescence: A Systematic Review." 2015. <u>Aggression and Violent Behavior</u> 23:126-136.</li> <li>• Fox, James A., and Emma E. Fridel. 2016. "The Tenuous Connections Involving Mass Shootings, Mental Illness, and Gun Laws." <u>Violence and Gender</u> 3:14-19.</li> <li>• Mears, Daniel P., Melissa M. Moon, and Angela J. Thielo. 2017. "Columbine Revisited: Myths and Realities about the Bullying-School Shootings Connection." <u>Victims and Offenders</u> 12:939-955.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 10</b>	<b>3/27 (M)</b>	<p><b>Citizen-Police Interactions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engel, Robin S., Hannah D. McManus, and Tamara D. Herold. 2020. "Does De-Escalation Training Work? A Systematic Review and Call for Evidence in Police Use-of-Force Reform." <u>Criminology and Public Policy</u> 19:721-759.</li> <li>• Mears, Daniel P., Miltonette O. Craig, Eric A. Stewart, and Patricia Y. Warren. 2017. "Thinking Fast, Not Slow: How Cognitive Biases May Contribute to Racial Disparities in the Use of Force in Police-Citizen Encounters." <u>Journal of Criminal Justice</u> 53:12-24.</li> <li>• Weitzer, Ronald, and Rod K. Brunson. 2009. "Strategic Responses to the Police among Inner-City Youth." <u>The Sociological Quarterly</u> 50:235-256.</li> </ul> <p><b>PROPOSALS DUE</b></p>
<b>Week 11</b>	<b>4/3 (M)</b>	<p><b>Deterrence and Prison Time</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mears, Daniel P., Joshua C. Cochran, William D. Bales, and Avinash S. Bhati. 2016. "Recidivism and Time Served in Prison." <u>Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology</u> 106:83-124.</li> <li>• Morris, Robert G., and Alex R. Piquero. 2013. "For Whom Do Sanctions Deter and Label?" <u>Justice Quarterly</u> 30:837-868.</li> <li>• Stafford, Mark C., Louis N. Gray, Ben A. Menke, and David A. Ward. 1986. "Modeling the Deterrent Effects of Punishment." <u>Social Psychology Quarterly</u> 49:338-347.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 12</b>	<b>4/10 (M)</b>	<p><b>Diversion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Klein, Malcolm W. 1979. "Deinstitutionalization and Diversion of Juvenile Offenders: A Litany of Impediments." <u>Crime and Justice</u> 1:145-201.</li> <li>• Mears, Daniel P., Joshua J. Kuch, Andrea M. Lindsey, Sonja E. Siennick, George B. Pesta, Mark A. Greenwald, and Thomas G.</li> </ul>

		<p>Blomberg. 2016. "Juvenile Court and Contemporary Diversion: Helpful, Harmful, or Both?" <u>Criminology and Public Policy</u> 15:953-981.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Na, Chongmin, and Denise Gottfredson. 2013. "Police Officers in Schools: Effects on School Crime and the Processing of Offending Behaviors." <u>Justice Quarterly</u> 30:619-650.</li> </ul>
<b>Week 13</b>	<b>4/17 (M)</b>	<p><b>Crime Prevention—Using Theory to Improve It</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decker and Wright (2018)</li> <li>• Decker, Scott H. 2015. "From Theory to Policy and Back Again." Pp. 380-394 in <u>The Handbook of Criminological Theory</u>, edited by Alex R. Piquero. New York: Wiley.</li> <li>• Welsh, Brandon C., Gregory M. Zimmerman, and Steven N. Zane. 2018. "The Centrality of Theory in Modern Day Crime Prevention: Developments, Challenges, and Opportunities." <u>Justice Quarterly</u> 35:139-161.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Evaluation Hierarchy Revisited</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freedman, David H. 2010. "Lies, Damned Lies, and Medical Science." <u>The Atlantic Monthly</u> (November) 306(4):76-85.</li> <li>• Review Mears (2010, chs. 2 [again] and 9)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 14</b>	<b>4/24 (M)</b>	<b>EXAM 2 DISTRIBUTED</b>

## PROPOSAL GRADING RUBRIC

	<b>Excellent (A)</b>	<b>Good (B)</b>	<b>Improvement Needed (C)</b>	<b>Poor to Failing (D-F)</b>	<b>Points (100)</b>
Goal	Proposal contains a clear goal.	Goal is not clearly conveyed.	Goal is difficult to discern.	No goal presented.	15
Evidence	Provides compelling and accurate evidence, including theory and research, with no gaps in reasoning, that convinces reader to accept study goal.	Provides necessary evidence, with few gaps in reasoning, to convince reader of most aspects of study goal.	Not enough evidence is provided to support argument for study goal, or evidence is incomplete, incorrect, or oversimplified.	No evidence is provided, or there are numerous factual mistakes, omissions or oversimplifications.	20
Counter-argument	Counter-evidence and alternative interpretations of theory, research, and logic are discussed and evaluated.	Counter-evidence and alternative interpretations acknowledged but not systematically or carefully discussed.	Counter-evidence or alternative interpretations acknowledged but discussed only partially.	Limited to no acknowledgement of counter-evidence or alternative interpretations is provided.	15
Organization and presentation	Clear introduction, including roadmap for proposal with all relevant sections. Effective use of headings and sub-headings, as well as tables or figures, to convey argument and main points. Topic clearly conveyed to class.	Introduction conveys goal and relevant sections, but not clearly. Headings and sub-headings present but do not clearly convey argument and main points. Topic moderately well-conveyed to class.	Introduction does not clearly convey goal or relevant sections. Headings and sub-headings missing or do not logically convey argument and main points. Topic not clearly conveyed to class.	Paper has no clear introduction or sections and/or is poorly organized, with few or no headings or devices to convey argument and main points. Topic not presented to class.	20
Sources	Evidence is used from a wide range of sources, including scholarly books and journal articles. All evidence is properly cited and referenced.	Evidence is used from many sources, but few scholarly sources or too much reliance on a limited few sources. Some incomplete citations or references.	Uses only a few scholarly sources. Some pieces are unreferenced or inaccurately referenced. Incomplete citations and references.	Minimal to no use of scholarly sources. Citations and references missing or incomplete.	10
Writing, clarity, and style	All sentences are grammatically correct and clearly written. Clear transitions. Key terms defined. No writing errors. Objective (scientific) presentation of information.	All but a few sentences are grammatically correct and clearly written. Good transitions. Most key terms defined. A handful of writing errors. Largely objective tone.	Many sentences are grammatically incorrect or unclearly written. Weak transitions. Key terms left undefined. Tone is not objective in many places.	Grammatical errors permeate paper. Key terms unmentioned or undefined. Tone is not objective (scientific).	20

## EXAM GRADING RUBRIC

<b>Each objective below is worth a maximum of 20 percent of the exam grade (per question)</b>	<b>20 points =</b>	<b>10 points =</b>	<b>0 points =</b>
1. Effectively addresses all parts of question(s).	Excellent job of directly answering all parts of question logically, completely, and in detail; reasoning is explained and defended through reference to theory, logic, and research.	Addresses only some parts of the question, the logic is incomplete, and/or provides insufficient detail.	Does not address the question being posed.
2. Cites all relevant assigned readings.	All relevant assigned readings are included in posting. Any additional material is directly relevant to the question.	Some relevant assigned readings are cited, but others are missing. Extraneous information included.	No assigned readings are cited.
3. Discusses all relevant cited and assigned readings.	All cited materials are discussed and coherently integrated into the answer. Logical and clear and complete, using theory, research, and other evidence to support answer.	Some of the cited materials are discussed, but other relevant readings not discussed. Unclear logic and incomplete explanation of argument and supporting theory, research, or other evidence.	None of the cited materials are discussed.
4. Writing is clear, concise, and professional in nature; no grammatical errors.	Clearly expressed ideas. No grammatical errors or other writing problems.	Difficult-to-follow post; disorganized; some grammatical errors and writing problems.	Major grammatical errors; incomplete sentences; difficult to understand.
5. Organization.	Exam is well-organized, using clear headings, sub-headings, and transitions. Answers flow in a linear manner that addresses the question directly.	Exam is choppy and lacks coherent organization. Limited or no headings or sub-headings or clear transitions. Question not directly answered.	Exam is difficult to follow; ideas are not well linked together. No headings, sub-heading, or transitions. Question not answered or not directly answered.
<b>Total possible points</b>	<b>100 points</b>		