

**Criminology 4700**  
**Contemporary Topics in Criminology and Criminal Justice**

**Spring 2020**  
**Blair Hall, Room 2103**  
**Credit Hours: 3**  
**TH, 11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.**

**Instructor:** Dr. Stevens

**Email:** jstevens3@eiu.edu

**Office Location:** Blair 3148

**Office Hours:** Office Hours: Mondays, 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.; Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:15 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.; By appointment

**Required Texts:**

Kappeler, Victor E. and Gary W. Potter. 2018. *The Mythology of Crime and Criminal Justice*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

*Other readings will be posted to D2L.*

**Course Description:**

The course will explore contemporary topics in criminology and criminal justice. The course provides opportunities for the integration and synthesis of theory, research, and concepts learned in the criminology and criminal justice major.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Recognize and describe contemporary issues in criminology and criminal justice in the United States.
2. Analyze the relationship between current events related to criminology and the criminal justice system.
3. Apply criminological theory and methods to contemporary issues in crime and criminal justice.
4. Utilize scholarly methods to critically analyze issues in criminology and criminal justice.

**Course Expectations:**

Students are expected to come to every class period prepared and ready to participate. Respect for the instructor and other classmates should be demonstrated at all times. Cell phones, laptops, and other electronic devices (including smart watches and headphones) should be turned off or silenced (not on vibrate) and put away prior to the beginning of each class. No photos or recordings should be taken during class without the instructor's permission. Failure to follow the electronics policy could result in being asked to leave the class or to make a class presentation.

Students who are unable to attend a class session should contact another student to obtain a copy of the notes they missed. While I believe it is important for you to catch up on any information that you miss, other students' notes should not be used to complete any activities or assignments that were assigned during the class period that was missed. For example, if you miss class on a

day when a guest speaker visits, you should get the notes from a classmate, but you should not use those notes to complete an activity or assignment related to the guest speaker. Students are responsible for any announcements that they miss in class. *If you miss a class, ask another student what you missed before approaching the instructor. Do not ask the instructor if you missed “anything important.” If it weren’t important, it wouldn’t be part of the class.*

This class is meant to be a largely discussion based class. This only works if you come to class prepared and ready to actively participate. Make sure you have read all assignments prior to the class for which they are assigned.

If you would like to request a letter of recommendation, please ask me at least two weeks in advance. I will also ask you to provide a current resume and a short description of what you are applying for and why you are applying. If I do not think I can provide you a strong letter, I may encourage you to contact another professor. Please do not list me as a reference without first asking.

College classes are similar to many other pursuits in life in that you will get out as much as you put into it. The classes you take at EIU are important elements of your degree. Take responsibility for your own engagement and success in these courses. It’s *your* responsibility to know due dates, course policies, and assignment requirements.

### **Course Communication:**

Email is the best method for reaching me. Please include the course and section number in the subject line of the email (CRM 4700). Provide some context for your email. Do not just write things like, “Hey, what did I miss in class?” I have many students and multiple classes, so be as specific as possible. Also, emails should follow professional standards of communication – including addressing emails to me as Dr. Stevens (see tips here: <https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2015/04/16/advice-students-so-they-dont-sound-silly-emails-essay>). If an emergency arises and you do not have access to email, please call the sociology office and leave a message. If I need to contact you regarding the course, I will use your EIU email account. Please make sure to check that account regularly. I strive to answer all emails within 24 hours during the business week. If you have a question about an assignment, I strongly encourage you to email me at least 24 hours in advance of the due date during the week. Make sure that all emails are professional and include specific information about your request for assistance. Please email me through Panthermail and not D2L. This will ensure the fastest response.

### **Grade Postings/Concerns:**

All grades will be posted on D2L. If a student has a concern about a grade or feels that there is a discrepancy between the posted grade and the grade awarded, the instructor must be contacted via email within one week of when the grade was posted. Grade concerns will not be considered after one week has passed. All grades are posted on D2L, so that students can calculate their grades at any time. I will not calculate grades for you. However, I’d encourage you to Google “Weighted Grade Calculator” for many online calculators that can help you determine your grade at any time. If you need a grade report for a school organization or team, please contact me 24 hours in advance via email.

**Late Work:**

Reaction papers, the discussion leader paper, and the take-home exam will not be accepted late. For the final project, a 10% deduction will be taken for each day that the paper is late, up to 72 hours (i.e. 1 min to 23 hours and 59 minutes late is a 10% deduction, 24 hours to 47 hours and 59 minutes late is a 20% deduction, etc.). The late period begins immediately after the deadline. This deduction will be taken off the grade you would have received had the paper been turned in by the deadline. Seventy-two hours after the due date has passed, papers will no longer be accepted. Since you can submit all written assignments via D2L, the 72 hours includes weekends. Assignments will not be accepted after the 72 hour cut off. Assignments will not be accepted in incorrect formats or via email. Assignments submitted incorrectly are considered late, including assignments that have corrupted files. Check your files before and after submitting!

Extensions for legal or medical emergencies (that can be documented) may be given at the discretion of the instructor. To clarify, legal emergencies may include jury duty, being subpoenaed, etc. *Extensions will be extremely rare.* If such an event occurs, please contact the instructor before an assignment is due to discuss the situation. Extensions after a due date has passed will rarely be granted.

**Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:**

Academic dishonesty in any form (plagiarism, cheating, lying, stealing, etc.) will **NOT** be tolerated in this course. Academic dishonesty includes signing in for students who are not present in class or including an absent classmate's name on an in-class assignment. Students who turn in the work of other students either past or present will be in violation of this policy. All work in this class must be original. Papers from previous classes should not be submitted in this class. The regulations for academic conduct set forth in the Code of Conduct will be strictly enforced. If you are found to be violating these expectations, you could fail the assignment, fail the course, and/or be reported to the Office of Student Standards. All assignments will be submitted through TurnItIn to check for plagiarism. Not properly citing your work is a form of plagiarism and will be treated as such. Familiarize yourself with in-text citation and visit the Writing Center if you need assistance. The methods of acceptable citation in this class are ASA and APA Styles.

**Academic Integrity:**

Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards.

**Students with Disabilities:**

If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

**The Student Success Center:**

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center ([www.eiu.edu/~success](http://www.eiu.edu/~success)) for assistance with time management, test

taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to 9<sup>th</sup> Street Hall, Room 1302.

**Assignment Submission:**

All assignments completed outside of class must be submitted in Microsoft Word documents via D2L. Microsoft Word is the only acceptable format for submitting assignments (not Microsoft Works, Pages, or PDFs). If assignments are not submitted in Microsoft Word, they will be considered late. Do not wait until the last minute to submit assignments as this is when problems are most likely to occur. Back up your work and have a “Plan B” if your computer malfunctions. Computer labs are located throughout campus if you need Microsoft Word or have issues with your personal computer.

**Course Requirements:**

Grades will be assigned based on the following requirements.

**Course Engagement**

This is a 4000-level, capstone class, which means that you are expected to come to class ready to participate and with insights to share. This is a chance to demonstrate what you have learned and mastered. Participation in the class will count toward your grade. To be clear, participation means that you are actively engaging in the class. Attending class is not the same thing as participating in class.

The course engagement score has two parts: 1) Participation and discussion and 2) Course activities. The first part of your course engagement score will be based on your participation and discussion in the class. Engagement means not only coming to class but also being prepared, making thoughtful comments, and contributing positively to the course environment. Students who are unprepared, are frequently absent or tardy, do not actively participate, do not relate comments to course readings, leave class frequently or early (without accommodations for doing so), take the course discussion off-track, and/or are disruptive (including but not limited to tardiness, talking out of turn, using electronic devices, not being prepared when called upon, etc.) will have points deducted from this score. It is important to be on time, prepared, and ready to make insightful comments to do well in this area. Students will be evaluated on this measure at three different points during the semester. Keep in mind that your discussion score is not just based on quantity of participation, but quality of participation, meaning that you need to have insightful things to say about the readings for the course.

The second part of your course engagement score will be based on class activities/essays/quizzes. Throughout the semester, students will complete activities pertinent to the class information. These activities will be announced in class. Some activities will be completed in class and some will be taken home and turned in prior to the following class. Any activities that are assigned to be completed out of class will be due on D2L at 11:00 a.m. on the due date unless otherwise indicated. Email submissions will not be accepted. Late submissions will not be accepted. *You may not make up any activities that you miss unless you have a documented university excuse.* If you have a documented university excuse, you must contact the instructor within one business day to make up the assignment.

### **Discussion Leader Assignment**

For this assignment, each student will be assigned a specific week of the course in which he/she will serve as a discussion leader. Discussion leaders will lead the class in discussion and move the conversation forward.

Discussion leaders will be responsible for finding a current criminal case or issue in the USA (from a credible source(s) – think journal articles, government statistics, New York Times, CNN, etc., not Wikipedia, blogs, etc.) that exemplifies a crime myth and relates to the weekly topic. These should be recent examples (think last 5-10 years). Students will apply the information from the reading for the week to that topic in a written paper of 750-1000 words. Additionally, the paper should include analysis of how this crime myth was constructed, what statistics/research was used to support it, and how sound the research is that is being used to support it. A discussion of claimsmakers should also be incorporated. Additionally, students should discuss the impact that this crime myth has on society as a whole.

Students will use their example and other relevant information from the text to lead a discussion on Thursday of their assigned week. The student will be responsible for leading a 35-45 minute class discussion. Based on the size of the class, this may be completed in pairs/small groups. Therefore, he/she should be prepared with lots of insights, examples, and questions that can be used to generate discussion. Audio/visual aids are encouraged.

Discussion leaders are encouraged to submit information that might be interesting to incorporate into the discussion prior to the assigned class. If you'd like your fellow students to review an article, video, etc. about your issue/case before class, send to me by Tuesday of your assigned week and I will distribute it to the class. Discussion leaders will be graded on submitted materials as well as participation during their assigned weeks. Papers will be due on Tuesday of the assigned week at 11:00 a.m. and must be submitted via D2L. Due to the timeliness of the discussion, these papers will not be accepted late.

### **Reaction Papers**

Throughout the course of the semester, you will be required to write two response papers on the weekly topics. These papers should be 500-700 words and address a critical thinking question that is posed for the week. Your response should incorporate the information that you have been assigned to read and be thoughtful and well-supported. I encourage you to use information from the textbook and other outside sources to support your arguments. You can choose which weeks you would like to react. The papers will be due on D2L before class begins on the Tuesday of your chosen week. Keep in mind that the papers will address a question for the upcoming week's reading. Since you can choose which weeks you would like to react, these papers will not be accepted late for any reason. (This means that if you wait until the last two eligible weeks, you are taking a chance!) The papers should follow APA or ASA style and include appropriate citations. They must be submitted in a Word document via D2L to be considered. The first two submitted papers will be counted for a grade. No further submissions will count toward your grade. Eligible weeks and questions for this assignment will be distributed in class. At least one reaction paper must be completed on or before Week 7.

### **Take-home Exams**

There will be two essay take-home exams. It will be provided to students at least two days before the due date and will cover questions related to the readings that have been assigned in the course. Students are expected to incorporate information from the readings into their answers and cite appropriately. Students are also expected to work on the assignments without the aid of anyone else. Working with anyone else on this assignment will be considered academic dishonesty and will be treated as such.

### **Research Project**

Students will be required to complete a research project on an issue related to myths of criminology and criminal justice. A brief presentation will be required during the finals exam time slot. More details will be available later in the class.

### **Insights**

In order to aid in your participation, you will be expected to bring a typed sheet of paper to each class, which includes insights that you learned from the weekly reading. The insights sheet should follow a 3-2-1 format. Three main ideas or insights you have from the readings in short paragraphs, two discussion questions you have for the class, and one critique you have of the reading in a short paragraph. The critical thinking questions are questions that could be used to get the class talking and discussing an interesting topic. (Questions that are reviews of the vocabulary or could be asked on a multiple choice test are not appropriate for this.)

Write these thoughts out in complete sentences that are fully developed. Make sure your insights/questions address all assigned readings. These should be brought to every class on a typed sheet, with your name, that can be handed to the professor. You may be called on to ask a question or share an insight. I will collect these and the associated points will count toward your course engagement grade. This means that you should be prepared and have read the weekly readings prior to class! Handwritten assignments will not be accepted. You will be asked to submit a cumulative file with your insights at three different points in the semester. Be sure to save your files!

### **Extra Credit**

Throughout the course, extra credit opportunities may arise. These will be announced in class. *Extra credit cannot be made up for any reason (including any excused absences mentioned above).* Extra credit assignments will be made available to the whole class. Any requests for individual extra credit will be denied to be fair to the entire class. Please note: Extra credit can help raise your grade, but it cannot be used to pass the class. In other words, extra credit will not be used to raise your grade from an F to a passing grade. Extra credit may be associated with attendance on randomly selected days.

### **Electronic Writing Portfolio**

The research project is the only assignment eligible for the EWP. It must be submitted prior to the finals time slot for the class.

**The final course grade will be composed of:**


Research project	= 30%
Research project presentation	= 5%
Take-home exams 2@10%	= 20%
Reaction Papers 2@5%	= 10%
Discussion Leader	= 20%
Course Engagement	= 10%
Insights	= 5%

**Grading Scale**

90-100%	= A
80-89%	= B
70-79%	= C
60-69%	= D
0 – 59%	= F

### Course Schedule\*:

**Assignments (including reading) are due at the beginning of the course for which they are assigned, unless otherwise indicated.**

Date	Topic(s)	Readings/Assignment(s) Due
Week 1 1/14, 1/16	Introduction to the course	Thursday: Overview of criminology theories (D2L); Citation basics (D2L)
Week 2 1/21, 1/23	Social Construction of Crime Myths	Kappeler & Potter: Ch 1  Best: Reading from Social Problems (D2L)
Week 3 1/28, 1/30	Crime Waves, Fears, and Social Reality	Kappeler & Potter: Ch 2  Best: Reading from Damned Lies and Statistics (D2L)
Week 4 2/4, 2/6	Myth and Fear of Missing Children	Kappeler & Potter: Ch 3
Week 5 2/11, 2/13	Stalkers: Spreading Myth to Common Crime	Kappeler & Potter: Ch 4  <b>Engagement evaluation 1, Insights for Weeks 1-5 must be submitted on D2L by Thursday, 2/13, at 11:00 a.m.</b>
Week 6 2/18, 2/20	Corporate Crime and “Higher Immorality”	Kappeler & Potter: Ch 6
Week 7 2/25, 2/27	Apocalypse Now: The Lost War on Drugs	Kappeler & Potter: Ch 7
Week 8 3/3, 3/5	Apocalypse Now: The Lost War on Drugs (continued)	Kappeler & Potter: Ch 7  <b>Take-home exam due on Thursday, 3/5 at 5:00 p.m.</b>
Week 9 3/10, 3/12	Juvenile Superpredators: Myths of Killer Kids	Kappeler & Potter: Ch 8
Week 10 3/16 – 3/20		



Week 11 3/24, 3/26	Battered and Blue Crime Fighters: Myths and Misconceptions of Police Work	Kappeler & Potter: Ch 9  <b>Engagement evaluation 2, Insights for Weeks 6-11 must be submitted on D2L by Thursday, 3/26 by 11:00 a.m.</b>
Week 12 3/31, 4/2	Order in the Courts: The Myth of Equal Justice	Kappeler & Potter: Ch 10
Week 13 4/7, 4/9	Mythical Utility of Punishment	Kappeler & Potter: Ch 11
Week 14 4/14, 4/16	Myth of a Lenient Criminal Justice System	Kappeler & Potter: Ch 12
Week 15 4/21, 4/23	Research Week	<b>Take-home exam due on Thursday, 4/23 at 5:00 p.m.</b>
Week 16 4/28, 4/30	Capital Punishment	Kappeler & Potter: Ch 13  <b>Engagement evaluation 3, Insights for Weeks 12-16 must be submitted on D2L by Thursday, 4/30 at 11:00 a.m.</b>  <b>Research Project due <span style="color: red;">Thursday</span>, 4/30 by 11:59 p.m. on D2L.</b>
Finals Week 5/4 – 5/8	Finals Week: Presentations	<b>Finals Slot: Tuesday, May 5 2:45 – 4:45 p.m.</b>

\*I reserve the right to make changes to this course outline as needed. Any changes made will be announced in class and posted on D2L.