

**CRM 4700 – Senior Capstone (3 credit hours)**  
Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminology  
Eastern Illinois University  
Spring 2024

**Professor:** Dr. Caitlin Lynch

**Meeting Time:** MWF 9:00-10:50AM

**Meeting Location:** Blair Hall 2103

**Email:** [clynch2@eiu.edu](mailto:clynch2@eiu.edu)

**Office Hours:** MW 1:00-2:00,

TR 10:00-12:00PM, and by appointment

**Office Location:** Blair Hall 3131

**Course Description:** This course explores contemporary topics in criminology and criminal justice. As a senior capstone course, students are expected to demonstrate knowledge of how criminological and sociological theories inform contemporary topics in criminology and criminal justice, identify which qualitative and quantitative methods are best used to gain a richer understanding of these topics, and utilize critical thinking skills to create and articulate an informed opinion of criminological and criminal justice-related events.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Identify relevant and contemporary issues in criminology and criminal justice
2. Utilize criminological and sociological theories to explain contemporary issues related to crime and the criminal justice system
3. Understand the methods used to measure the nature and extent of crime
4. Analyze current research on contemporary issues discussed in class
5. Utilize critical thinking skills to create and articulate (both orally and in writing) an informed opinion about contemporary issues
6. Demonstrate an ability to articulate an understanding of contemporary topics in criminology and criminal justice both orally and in writing

**Required Readings:** Kappeler and Potter (2018). *The Mythology of Crime and Criminal Justice* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Waveland Press.

Additional readings will be posted on Desire2Learn (D2L) in the “Supplemental Readings” folder or are available via hyperlink in the syllabus.

**Desire 2 Learn (D2L):** This course uses D2L for course management purposes. Students are expected to check D2L and PantherMail prior to each class meeting period for announcements and other course material.

**Work Requirements:**

Midterms (100 Points)  
Research Proposal (10 Points)  
Criminological Theory Assignment (20 Points)  
Research Assignment (20 Points)  
Policy Assignment (20 Points)  
Presentation (30 Points)  
Final Paper (100 Points)

**Grading Scale:**

A: 269-300 points  
B: 239-268 points  
C: 209-238 points  
D: 179-208 points  
F: < 178 points

**Total: 300 points**

**Exams (100 Points):** Midterm exams will be administered online via D2L in lieu of a class meeting period and will consist of ten short-answer essay questions worth five points each, with opportunity for partial credit when available. Students will have one hour to complete the exam once it has been opened and the exams will be available from 6:00AM to 11:59PM on exam day. A review guide for both exams is available in the “course resources” folder in D2L.

- Midterm Exam 1 – Friday, February 23
- Midterm Exam 2 – Friday, April 12

**Project (200 Points):** As a capstone course, this class serves as a culminating experience designed for students to showcase the knowledge collected throughout their time as a Criminology and Criminal Justice (CCJ) major. As such, the bulk of this course is devoted to creating a research project written in several stages throughout the semester and resulting in a final presentation and a final paper at the end of the semester. All written portions of the project are due by 11:59PM on their assigned due date.

First, students shall select a criminal justice-related issue of interest (Project Proposal: 10 Points—due Sunday, January 21). Then, identify *one* criminological theory that best describes how and why this phenomenon occurs (Criminological Theory Assignment: 20 Points—due Sunday, February 11). Next, conduct an exhaustive search of the most recent research on the issue (Current Research Assignment: 20 Points—due Sunday, March 10). Then, provide an overview of what policy changes need to be implemented to prevent further incidents from occurring (Public Policy Assignment: 20 Points—due Sunday, March 31). The final two weeks of the semester will be devoted to student presentations on their research project, in accordance with the University’s Speaking Assessment for Senior Seminar (30 points). Finally, all the abovementioned written assignments will come together in one final paper due in lieu of a final exam (Final Paper: 100 Points—due Monday, April 29).

Additional resources for all stages of the project can be found in the “project resources” folder in D2L.

For students interested in submitting their final paper to EIU's Electronic Writing Portfolio (EWP), additional information about the EWP can be found [here](#).

**Late Policy:** Exams and papers are due no later than 11:59PM on their assigned due date. While extenuating circumstances may grant a professor-approved extension without penalty *in advance of the due date*, all other late assignments will be accepted for partial credit (80% of earned score) if submitted within 48 hours of the date. Late work submitted after 48 hours but within one week of the due date will be accepted for 50% of the earned score.

**Attendance Policy:** While attendance is not formally taken, students are expected to be in class and on-time to be successful on exams and writing assignments. If an absence is inevitable, students must obtain notes from a classmate or visit office hours to get caught up on missed material. There is no need to notify the professor of an absence unless it warrants an extension on an assignment or exam.

**Academic Fraud:** Plagiarism and cheating are academic fraud. Academic fraud is a serious matter and will result in an automatic F in the course, in addition to being reported to the Student Standards Board for further disciplinary action. For more information refer the "Student Conduct Code" which can be found [here](#).

### Course Overview and Expectations:

Module	Module-Level Learning Objectives and Student Expectations
<b>Introduction to the Capstone Experience</b> Week 1: January 8-12	This module provides students with an overview of the course, along with a comprehensive review of CCJ fundamentals. The first week also serves as an opportunity for students to provide input on desired topics of discussion. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read "Criminological Theory and Social Policy" and "Critical Perspectives on Intersectional Criminology: An Intro" (PDFs in D2L)</li></ul>
<b>Fear of Crime</b> Week 2: January 17-19	This module examines how the fear of crime dictates everyday life, the social construction of crime, and the mythology of crime and the CJ system. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read Kappeler &amp; Potter Ch.1-2</li><li>• NO CLASS JAN. 15 (MLK DAY OBSERVED)</li><li>• <b>Proposal due Sunday, January 21</b></li></ul>
<b>The Culture of Punishment</b> Week 3: January 22-26	This module analyzes the culture of punishment and how punitive attitudes are shaped and informed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read <a href="#">The Era of Punitive Excess</a> and <a href="#">How Punitive Excess is a Manifestation of Racism in America</a></li></ul>
<b>America's True Crime Obsession</b> Week 4: January 29-February 2	This module discusses the genre of true crime, citizen sleuths, and the cost and consequences of society's morbid curiosities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read <a href="#">Why Do We Love True Crime?</a> and <a href="#">The Gross Spectacle of Murder Fandom</a></li></ul>
<b>The System on Trial</b> Week 5: February 5-9	This module provides students with an overview of the criminal justice system, with special attention paid to opportunities for miscarriages of justice. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Read Kappeler &amp; Potter Ch. 10-12</li><li>• <b>Theory Assignment due Sunday, February 11</b></li></ul>

<b>Realities of Police Work</b> Week 6: February 12-14	This module examines many common misconceptions about the everyday happenings of police operations in the United States. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read Kappeler &amp; Potter Ch. 9 and <a href="#">It's Time We Talk About Police Suicide</a></li> <li>NO CLASS FEB. 16 (LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY OBSERVED)</li> </ul>
<b>The War on Drugs, Police Militarization, and For-Profit Policing</b> Week 7: February 19-23	This module analyzes how the War on Drugs gave rise to the militarization of the police, for-profit policing, and exacerbated the "us versus them" occupational culture of the police. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read Kappeler &amp; Potter Ch. 7 and <a href="#">Why I Hated Being a Cop</a></li> <li><b>Midterm Exam #1 (Friday, February 23)</b></li> </ul>
<b>Mass Incarceration and the Prison Industrial Complex</b> Week 8: February 26-March 1	This module continues the discussion on the War on Drugs and examines how it helped fill America's prisons and incentivize incarceration. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">50 Year War on Drugs Imprisoned Millions of Black Americans</a> and <a href="#">Prison Policy Initiative - Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie, 2023</a></li> </ul>
<b>Life Without Parole and Capital Punishment</b> Week 9: March 4-8	This module examines sentencing guidelines and decision-making behind LWOP and capital punishment, along with the implications of these sentences. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read <a href="#">Prison Journalism Project: LWOP is America's Hidden Death Penalty</a> and "The Death Penalty in 2022: Year End Report" (PDF in D2L)</li> <li><b>Current Research Assignment due Sunday March 10</b></li> </ul>
<b>Aging, Mentally Illness, and the Lived Realities of Disabled Persons Behind Bars</b> Week 10: March 11-15	This module discusses lived realities of incarcerated people, with specific attention paid to specialized populations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read "Mortality in State and Federal Prisons (2001-2019)" (PDF in D2L), <a href="#">Prison Journalism Project: The Graying of America's Prisons</a>, and <a href="#">I Survived Pregnancy and Post-Partum Depression in Jail</a></li> </ul>
SPRING BREAK: MARCH 18-22	
<b>The Mark of a Criminal Record</b> Week 11: March 25-29	This module examines the collateral consequences of incarceration and contact with the criminal justice system. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read <a href="#">Words from Prison: The Collateral Consequences of Incarceration</a>, <a href="#">How Criminal Records Hold Back Millions of People</a>, and <a href="#">My Life After 44 Years in Prison</a></li> <li><b>Policy Assignment due Sunday March 31</b></li> </ul>
<b>Juvenile Superpredators and America's Unforgiving Juvenile Justice System</b> Week 12: April 1-5	This module examines the myth of the Juvenile Superpredator, the punitive shift in dealing with youthful offenders, and the implications of juvenile waivers to adult court. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read Kappeler &amp; Potter Ch. 8 and <a href="#">Juvenile LWOP: An Overview</a></li> </ul>
<b>Harm Reduction and Alternatives to the Criminal Justice System</b> Week 13: April 8-12	This module discusses the practice of restorative justice and correcting behaviors in ways that emphasize healing rather than punishment. Read <a href="#">Trends in Harm Reduction and Substance Use in the CJ System</a> and <a href="#">Restorative Justice: They Agreed to Meet Their Mother's Killer</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Midterm Exam #2 (Friday, April 12)</b></li> </ul>
<b>Final Presentations</b> Week 14: April 15-19 Week 15: April 22-26	The last two weeks of the semester are devoted to final presentations. Additional resources on how to complete the final presentation can be found in D2L. Information on EIU's Speaking Assessment can be found <a href="#">here</a> .
<b>Final Paper due via D2L by Monday, April 29th at 11:59PM</b>	

**Accommodations for Students with Accessibility Needs:** Students with accommodation needs are encouraged to contact the Office of Accessibility and Accommodations (217-581-6583) to discuss any necessary academic accommodations. Additional information about the various services available at EIU can be found [here](#).

**Student Success Center:** For students who experience difficulties achieving academic goals, EIU's Student Success Center offers a variety of services, including workshops, tutoring, time management strategies, study tips, and more. Additional information about the Student Success Center can be found [here](#).

**Early Alert System:** EIU's Early Alert System is designed to notify students of when they are falling below academic standards, including excessive absences, late or missing work, and poor performances on assignments and/or exams. This course utilizes the Early Alert System on a case-by-case basis when appropriate.

**Student Well-Being:** EIU is committed to supporting and advancing the mental health and well-being of our students. Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal mental health and well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, anxiety, depression, alcohol or other drugs, identities, and finances.

If you are experiencing concerns, seeking help is a courageous thing to do for yourself and those who care about you. Below is a list of available campus resources to assist with student well-being:

- [EIU Counseling Clinic](#): Human Services Building, 1<sup>st</sup> floor; 217-581-3413; for after-hours urgent support, call 1-866-567-2400. The Counseling Clinic offers individual and group counseling, emergency services, and resources.
- [Online Mental Health Screening](#): online, private screening tool for depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and alcohol and substance misuse.
- [EIU Health Clinic](#): Human Services Building, 1<sup>st</sup> floor; 217-581-3013. The Health Clinic services include lab work, pharmacy, and women's health and men's health programs.
- [Health Education Resource Center](#) (HERC): 2201 Blair Hall; 217-581-7786. The HERC offers health programming in the areas of alcohol, tobacco and other drug prevention and education, flu and cold prevention and education, nutritional analysis and education, and sexual health education, in addition to other health-related topics.
- [Center for Gender and Sexual Diversity](#) (GSD): Stevenson Hall, lower level; 217-581-7117. The GSD Center provides services such as the Trans\*formation Station, a large library full of books and movies, year-round programming, and a comprehensive Safe Zone Training program.

- [EIU Campus Food Pantry](#): 1347 McAfee. The EIU Campus Food Pantry is a means to support students and the campus community by alleviating barriers to consistent, adequate, and healthful food. Anyone with a Panther Card can visit the pantry two times per month.
- [Student Legal Service](#): MLK Jr University Union Room 2420; 217-581-6054. Student Legal Service can assist with off-campus housing issues, traffic violations, misdemeanor criminal offenses, municipal ordinance violations, and expungement.
- [Financial Aid and Scholarships](#): Student Services Building East Wing; 217-581-6405, Fax: 217-581-6422, [finaid@eiu.edu](mailto:finaid@eiu.edu). The Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships provides information and guidance to secure the necessary financial resources to meet educational goals and financial obligations to the university.

**This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.**