



## Sul Ross State University—Rio Grande College

### Criminal Justice 4309 Current Issues in Criminal Justice Fall 2014

**Professor:** Martin Guevara Urbina, Ph.D.  
**Classroom:** Web  
**Class Meeting:** Online

**Office:** B-109  
**Phone:** 830/758-5017 (office, direct line)  
**Hours:** Monday and Tuesday, 12:00 to 5:00p.m. Even though this is an online course, you are welcome to visit the Professor's office anytime.  
**E-mail:** murbina@sulross.edu

#### **Program Learning Outcomes:**

1. Demonstrate proficiency in the application of legal concepts, theoretical applications, scientific principles, and historical trends in the criminal justice arena.
2. Demonstrate competency in the application of basic research methods, to include: research design, statistical analysis, and uses of empirical findings and interpretations.
3. Demonstrate the application of organizational principles, cultural, social and behavioral knowledge, critical thinking skills and cognitive thought processes within the criminal justice arena.

**Course Description and Objective:** *Current Issues in Criminal Justice* will offer a criminological, historical, philosophical, sociological, and theoretical analysis of the nature and scope of the ethnic and American experience over the years, focusing on various pressing historical issues, like conquest, colonialism, law, and social control, including capital punishment in the United States. Specifically, the intent of this course is to provide the student with a detailed understanding of **12 main topics**, which are best expressed in the following questions:

1. What are the driving “forces” shaping and reshaping the ethnic experience? What are the major factors/forces governing the overall American experience?

2. How are ethnic minorities situated within America's main institutions (e.g., education, politics, employment, health care, and media)? How have America's main institutions impacted the everyday life of minorities, and how have ethnic and racial minorities influenced U.S. institutions?
3. In the quest for social transformation, what has changed, what has not changed, how much have things changed over the years?
4. Analyzing the historical record, from conquest to the new millennium, what are the pressing shifts, trends, and issues?
5. Considering shifting demographic trends, what's the America of tomorrow?
6. With various social control movements currently in place, what are the primary motives behind social control, particularly executions? What is capital punishment—the death penalty? And, by extension, why do “we” utilize capital punishment?
7. How has the death penalty evolved in the United States? A series of secondary questions include the following: What are the links between capital punishment, time, and space? What role have historical events played in the application of the death penalty? What role do external and internal factors play in the application of the sentence of death?
8. What philosophical, theoretical, and ideological forces have driven and/or continue to drive capital punishment in America? And, by extension, why?
9. Who has played the most significant role in “shaping” and “re-shaping” the death penalty? What is the driving force behind capital punishment?
10. What influence has social control legislation played on capital punishment? Again, there are a series of related questions that help shape our response to the first one: What have been the main “benefits” of past social control legislation? What, if any, have been the ramifications of prior social control legislation? How do the “benefits” compare to the “negative consequence” of past legislation? What is the significance of current social control legislation, especially since capital punishment is the most punitive sanction?
11. What has been the role of the “ultimate” criminal sanction: execution? Secondary questions include: What do advocates of an execution see as its main utility and function? What do the critics of an execution see as its main weaknesses? Is there a need for executions? Should capital punishment be retained? Or, should we do away with the death penalty?
12. How successful have sanctions, particularly capital punishment, been in achieving intended goals? What myths surround capital punishment, especially actual executions? And, what are their implications of executions? What role has the media played in the evolution of capital punishment? What is the future of capital punishment, including actual executions?

The next set of questions is essentially definitional in nature. It is essential that we share the same definitions of issues, events, situations, or problems if we are to come to a common understanding of both the problem and any possible remedies or solutions. As such, the class's first segment deals with defining *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, as it pertains to the ethnic/racial experience in the U.S. and placing it in a global context.

The last set of questions is more analytical. A particular truism about the American experience, human behavior, criminal justice, criminological, sociological, and theoretical aspects of the nature of society is as follows: There are many typologies of criminological, sociological, and legal theories as there are authors writing textbooks about the subject.

The final question has policy overtones. First, we must briefly look at the nature and process of human behavior, in the context of American history and the U.S. criminal justice system, with a focus on safety, due process, equality, and justice, as well as civil, statutory, and constitutional rights. Next, we turn to the more difficult task of linking the ethnic (and American) experience with criminal justice policy, sociological, psychological, and criminological theory, particularly those we will review, to human behavior, legal rights, research, and practices.

Overall, this course is designed to introduce you to the twists and turns of the minority and American experience as well as the nature and dynamics of social control (i.e., capital punishment) within the context of the criminal justice system and, by extension, social interactions in a broad context and, ultimately, human behavior in the world. By introducing you to influential issues that provide the frameworks to studying a wide variety of phenomena, I intend this course to be a basis for further, more in-depth study in the areas that interest you.

**Course Context:** As an upper-level course, this class may include controversial, sensitive, and/or adult material. Students are expected to have the mentality and readiness for upper-level content and rigor.

**Course Structure:** This course will be presented in modules. Please note that the ENTIRE course will be taught online via Blackboard.

**Required Texts:**

Urbina, Martin Guevara (2012). *Capital punishment in America: Race and the death penalty over time*. El Paso, TX: LFB Scholarly Publishing.  
[ISBN: 978-1-59332-445-2]

Urbina, Martin Guevara, Joel E. Vela, and Juan O. Sanchez (2014). *Ethnic realities of Mexican Americans: From colonialism to 21<sup>st</sup> century globalization*. Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas, Publisher Ltd.  
[ISBN: 978-0-398-08780-7]

**Optional Readings:**

Beckett, Katherine and Theodore Sasson (2003). *The politics of injustice: Crime and punishment in America*. Second edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Chambliss, William and Marjorie Zatz, eds. (1993). *Making law: The state, the law, and structural contradictions*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Dershowitz, Alan M. (2004). *America on trial: Inside the legal battles that transformed our nation*. Warner Books: New York.

Foucault, Michel (1995). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. New York: Vintage Books.

- Garland, David (1990). *Punishment and modern society*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Gilroy, Paul (1993). *The black atlantic: Modernity and double consciousness*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gomez, Laura E. (2007). *Manifest destinies: The making of the Mexican American race*. New York: New York University Press.
- Groves, W. Byron and Graeme Newman (1986). *Punishment and privilege*. New York: Harrow and Heston.
- Johnson, Robert (2005). *Death work: A study of the modern execution process*. Second edition. Belmont: West/Wadsworth.
- Kairys, David, ed. (1998). *The politics of law: A progressive critique*. Third edition. New York: Basic Books.
- Liebman, James, Jeffrey Fagan, and Valerie West (2000). "A broken system: Error rates in capital cases, 1973-1995." Available: [://www.law.columbia.edu/news/PressReleases/liebman.html](http://www.law.columbia.edu/news/PressReleases/liebman.html).
- Newman, Graeme (1995). *Just and painful: A case for the corporal punishment of criminals*. Second edition. New York: Harrow and Heston.
- Newman, Graeme (1978). *The punishment response*. Second edition. Philadelphia: Lippincott.
- Randa, Laura, ed. (1997). *Society's final solution: A history and discussion of the death penalty*. Lanham: University of America.
- Reiman, Jeffrey and Paul Leighton (2009). *The rich get richer and the poor get prison: Ideology, class, and criminal justice*. Ninth edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Robinson, Matthew, ed. (2008). *Death nation: The experts explain American capital punishment*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall.
- Rusche, Georg and Otto Kirchheimer (1939). *Punishment and social structure*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Spitzer, Steven (1975). "Toward a Marxian theory of deviance." *Social Problems* 22:638-651.

## **Recommended Readings**

### **Books:**

- Urbina, Martin Guevara (Forthcoming). *Kylor's adventure through the rainforest: A journey of courage and faith*. A Children's Book: Bilingual Edition.
- Urbina, Martin Guevara and Sofia Espinoza Alvarez, eds. (2015). *Latino police officers in the United States: An examination of emerging trends and issues*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Urbina, Martin Guevara, ed. (2014). *Twenty-first century dynamics of multiculturalism: Beyond post-racial America*. Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas, Publisher Ltd.

- Urbina, Martin Guevara, Joel E. Vela, and Juan O. Sanchez (2014). *Ethnic realities of Mexican Americans: From colonialism to 21<sup>st</sup> century globalization*. Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas, Publisher Ltd.
- Urbina, Martin Guevara (2012). *Capital punishment in America: Race and the death penalty over time*. El Paso, TX: LFB Scholarly Publishing.
- Urbina, Martin Guevara, ed. (2012). *Hispanics in the U.S. criminal justice system: The new American demography*. Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas, Publisher Ltd.
- Urbina, Martin Guevara (2011). *Capital punishment and Latino offenders: Racial and ethnic differences in death sentences*. El Paso, TX: LFB Scholarly Publishing.
- Urbina, Martin Guevara (2008). *A comprehensive study of female offenders: Life before, during, and after incarceration*. Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas, Publisher Ltd.
- Urbina, Martin Guevara (2003). *Capital punishment and Latino offenders: Racial and ethnic differences in death sentences*. New York: LFB Scholarly Publishing.

#### **Book Chapters:**

- Urbina, Martin Guevara and Sofia Espinoza Alvarez (2015). "Situating the current state of research on Latino police and ethnic community in twenty-first century America." In *Latino police officers in the United States: An examination of emerging trends and issues*, edited by Martin Guevara Urbina and Sofia Espinoza Alvarez. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Alvarez, Sofia Espinoza and Martin Guevara Urbina (2015). "Bridging the gaps and future research: Thinking ahead." In *Latino police officers in the United States: An examination of emerging trends and issues*, edited by Martin Guevara Urbina and Sofia Espinoza Alvarez. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Urbina, Martin Guevara, Ferris Roger Byxbe, and Sofia Espinoza Alvarez (2015). "Policy recommendations: Toward a new police force." In *Latino police officers in the United States: An examination of emerging trends and issues*, edited by Martin Guevara Urbina and Sofia Espinoza Alvarez. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Alvarez, Sofia Espinoza and Martin Guevara Urbina (2015). "The future of Latino officers in the American police." In *Latino police officers in the United States: An examination of emerging trends and issues*, edited by Martin Guevara Urbina and Sofia Espinoza Alvarez. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Alvarez, Sofia Espinoza and Martin Guevara Urbina (2014). "From the shadows of the past: Revolutionizing multiculturalism in the midst of globalization—A twenty-first century challenge." In *Twenty-first century dynamics of multiculturalism: Beyond post-racial America*, edited by Martin Guevara Urbina. Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas, Publisher Ltd.
- Urbina, Martin Guevara (2014). "It's a new world: The changing dynamics of multiculturalism." In *Twenty-first century dynamics of multiculturalism: Beyond post-racial America*, edited by Martin Guevara Urbina. Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas, Publisher Ltd.

- Urbina, Martin Guevara (2014). "The future of U.S. multiculturalism: Si se puede." In *Twenty-first century dynamics of multiculturalism: Beyond post-racial America*, edited by Martin Guevara Urbina. Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas, Publisher Ltd.
- Peña, Ilse Aglaé and Martin Guevara Urbina (2012). "The legacy of capital punishment: Executing Latinas and Latinos." In *Hispanics in the U.S. criminal justice system: The new American demography*, edited by Martin Guevara Urbina. Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas, Publisher Ltd.
- Urbina, Martin Guevara (2012). "The dynamics of education and globalization in the new millennium: The unspoken realities." In *Hispanics in the U.S. criminal justice system: The new American demography*, edited by Martin Guevara Urbina. Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas, Publisher Ltd.
- Urbina, Martin Guevara (2012). "Ethnic constructions: The making of the upcoming majority, Latinas and Latinos." In *Hispanics in the U.S. criminal justice system: The new American demography*, edited by Martin Guevara Urbina. Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas, Publisher Ltd.
- Urbina, Martin Guevara (2012). "Indigent defendants and the barriers they face in the U.S. court system." In *Hispanics in the U.S. criminal justice system: The new American demography*, edited by Martin Guevara Urbina. Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas, Publisher Ltd.
- Urbina, Martin Guevara (2012). "Life after prison: Ethnic, racial, and gender realities." In *Hispanics in the U.S. criminal justice system: The new American demography*, edited by Martin Guevara Urbina. Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas, Publisher Ltd.
- Urbina, Martin Guevara (2012). "The American criminal justice system and the future of Latinos and Latinas." In *Hispanics in the U.S. criminal justice system: The new American demography*, edited by Martin Guevara Urbina. Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas, Publisher Ltd.
- Nieling, Sara and Martin Guevara Urbina (2008). "Epilogue: Thoughts for the future." In *A comprehensive study of female offenders: Life before, during, and after incarceration*, by Martin Guevara Urbina. Springfield, IL: Charles C Thomas, Publisher Ltd.
- Urbina, Martin Guevara and Leslie Smith (2007). "Colonialism and its impact on Mexicans' experience of punishment in the United States." In *Race, gender, and punishment: From colonialism to the war on terror*, edited by Mary Bosworth and Jeanne Flavin. Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

**Refereed (Peer-Reviewed) Journal Articles:**

- Urbina, Martin Guevara and Sofia Espinoza Alvarez (Forthcoming). "Neoliberalism, criminal justice, and Latinas: The contours of neoliberal economic thought and policy on criminalization." *Latino Studies*, in progress.
- Byxbe, Ferris Roger and Martin Guevara Urbina (2014). "The global epidemic of prescription drug abuse: The American experience." *International Journal of Liberal Arts and Social Science*, 2: 208-216.

- Byxbe, Ferris Roger and Martin Guevara Urbina (2013). "The globalization of crime in American schools: An assessment of emerging trends in the twenty-first century." *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2: 1-13.
- Byxbe, Ferris Roger and Martin Guevara Urbina (2013). "In loco parentis: The contours of the Fourth Amendment in American public schools." *International Journal of Arts and Commerce*, 2: 11-26.
- Urbina, Martin Guevara and Ferris Roger Byxbe (2012). "Capital punishment in America: Ethnicity, crime, and social justice." *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2: 13-29.
- Urbina, Martin Guevara and Ferris Roger Byxbe (2011). "Interacting forces in the judicial system: A case study in American criminal law." *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 1: 141-154.
- Byxbe, Ferris and Martin Guevara Urbina (2011). "Sexual harassment: Crossing the lines within the ranks." *Police Forum*, 20: 4-12.
- Byxbe, Ferris, Martin Guevara Urbina, and Patricia Nicosia (2011). "Community oriented policing and partnerships: A recipe for success!" *Police Forum*, 20: 4-16.
- Urbina, Martin Guevara and William Sakamoto White (2009). "Waiving juveniles to criminal court: Court officials express their thoughts." *Social Justice: A Journal of Crime, Conflict & World Order*, 36: 122-139.
- Urbina, Martin Guevara (2007). "Latinas/os in the criminal and juvenile justice systems." *Critical Criminology: An International Journal*, 15: 41-99.
- Ruddell, Rick and Martin Guevara Urbina (2007). "Weak nations, political repression, and punishment." *International Criminal Justice Review*, 17: 84-107.
- Urbina, Martin Guevara (2005). "Transferring juveniles to adult court in Wisconsin: Practitioners voice their views." *Criminal Justice Studies: A Critical Journal of Crime, Law and Society*, 18: 147-172.
- Urbina, Martin Guevara (2004). "Language barriers in the Wisconsin court system: The Latino/a experience." *Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice*, 2: 91-118.
- Urbina, Martin Guevara (2004). "A qualitative analysis of Latinos executed in the United States between 1975 and 1995: Who were they?" *Social Justice: A Journal of Crime, Conflict & World Order*, 31: 242-267.
- Urbina, Martin Guevara and Sara Kreitzer (2004). "The practical utility and ramifications of RICO: Thirty-two years after its implementation." *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 15: 294-323.
- Ruddell, Rick and Martin Guevara Urbina (2004). "Minority threat and punishment: A cross-national analysis." *Justice Quarterly*, 21: 903-931.
- Urbina, Martin Guevara (2003). "Race and ethnic differences in punishment and death sentence outcomes: Empirical analysis of data on California, Florida and Texas, 1975-1995." *Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice*, 1: 5-35.

Urbina, Martin Guevara (2003). "The quest and application of historical knowledge in modern times: A critical view." *Criminal Justice Studies: A Critical Journal of Crime, Law and Society*, 16: 113-129.

Urbina, Martin Guevara (2002). "Furman and Gregg exist death row?: Un-weaving an old controversy." *The Justice Professional*, 15: 105-125.

**Encyclopedia, Magazine, and Other Publications:**

Alvarez, Sofia Espinoza and Martin Guevara Urbina (2014). "Capital punishment on trial: Who lives, who dies, who decides—A question of justice?" *Criminal Law Bulletin*, 50: 263-298.

Urbina, Martin Guevara (2014). "Education and globalization in the new millennium: The power to exclude and oppress." In progress.

Byxbe, Ferris Roger, Donna Byxbe, Martin Guevara Urbina, and Patricia Nicosia (2011). "Prescription drugs: Generation Rx in crisis." *LAE Journal*, 34-36.

Byxbe, Ferris, Martin Guevara Urbina, and Patricia Nicosia (2010). "Community oriented policing and partnerships: A recipe for success!" *LAE Journal*, 22-25. (A reprint.)

Urbina, Martin Guevara (2005). "Puerto Rican nationalists." *Encyclopedia of Prisons & Correctional Facilities*, Vol. 2: 796-798. Edited by Mary Bosworth. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Urbina, Martin Guevara (2003). "Good teachers never die." *Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education Magazine*, 13: 31-32.

Urbina, Martin Guevara (2002). "Death sentence outcomes." *Encyclopedia of Crime and Punishment*, Vol 2: 482-485. Edited by David Levinson. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

**Weekly Assignments:**

There will be ten (10) *Weekly Assignments*, each worth 10 points for a total of 100 points. The "Weekly Assignments" will be discussed further the first week of class. Please do NOT panic! Handouts will be posted to assist you as you prepare your weekly assignments.

**Activities/Participation:**

Please complete the **reading** assignments as assigned to avoid falling behind, and, more fundamentally, to capture the essence of the class. During the semester, I will be posting a question or a statement for you to **respond** (100 points) and post for ALL students to read. Again, please do NOT panic! If you do the reading, you should be fine. Participation in these "exercises" will be equated into your final grade.

**Book/Article Reviews:**

For your *Book/Article Reviews* you are asked to read and make critical judgment about three (3) books/articles (20 points each). In particular, select your readings (1 book and 2 articles OR 2 books and 1 article) from the followings lists (see above):

“Optional Readings” and “Recommended Readings.” **Note:** Some exceptions will be noted in class!

As you will see, the books vary in length. Hence, be prudent about the size of the books vis-a-vis your class load. In the Book/Article Reviews for this course, keep in mind that you are limited to 3 typed pages. The logistics of the Book/Article Reviews will be discussed in class and handouts will be posted to assist you with the writing assignments.

**Required Project:**

The logistics of the project, which will be submitted as a formal paper, will be discussed in detail during the first part of the class. Illustration: some agencies allow citizens to go in and observe. Some law enforcement agencies, for instance, allow “ride alongs.” Hence, you could arrange to participate in a series of “field” activities. At the end of the shift/session, write down what you observed. Describe how it compares with what you have learned in class (like ethnic/racial profiling or police brutality, policy implications, and consequences). For instance, based on your observations, what are the links between social control, media, age, gender, race, ethnicity, research, and practice?

Your project, which is **required** (100 points), **will be shared with the rest of the class at the end of the semester**, allowing other students to provide feedback (vis-à-vis a short reaction comments), if time allows. Papers (approximately 8 to 12 pages in length) must be typed. Late papers will **not** be accepted. Do not submit (post) your only copy of any paper without **saving** your essay in case assignments are lost or destroyed. In effect, make sure that you have a backup copy of the latest version. Note: The project will be discussed further in class.

**Mini-project:**

This should be a fun exercise that allows you to explore (critically) some aspect of the minority or overall American experience in greater depth with less evaluation anxiety than you would have in a full-length paper assignment. I would like you to try to and choose a project that you will enjoy, and that will stimulate your thinking about the concepts covered in this course.

Mini-projects are **optional**. You will receive “extra credit” points for completing mini-projects. If your mini-project is **adequate**, you will receive one percentage point. This point(s) will be added on to your final grade at the end of the semester.

You may turn in your mini-projects any time during the semester. The projects will be of greater value if they are done thoughtfully. Thus, you may not submit more than three (3) mini-projects.

There is no minimum or maximum length requirement. Typically you will submit a three to five page typed paper as the final product of each mini-project. Some projects, however, may require longer (or shorter) write-ups. Your analysis should illustrate or explore some phenomenon relevant to the course, while knowledgeably using concepts, principles, and language in the context of *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*.

Attached to the end of the syllabus are descriptions of some mini-project options. Some of them will make more sense to you as we progress through the course. If you think of an **alternative** you would like to do as a mini-project, please feel free to ask me about it. Again, I am looking for you to implement class material—especially critical issues/perspectives—when describing the phenomena you choose to explore.

**Make-up Work:** A **tentative** schedule of assignment will be provided (posted) at the beginning of the semester. However, it is possible that the schedule will be **modified** during the semester. Hence, if you fail to log on as discussed herein, it is the student’s responsibility to check with the Professor (or the Professor’s website) regularly to determine the deadlines for weekly readings, assignments, and activities. To this end, as noted above, make-up exercises will NOT be given, unless otherwise specified. For missed readings, weekly assignments and activities (i.e., “special circumstances”), it is the student’s responsibilities to find out what make-up work is required. If you have any difficulties getting the assignments or making the deadlines, please contact me right way.

**Note:** Unless otherwise specified, all assignments and activities are due on the scheduled due date. **No late assignments will be accepted.**

**Grades:** There are a total of 360 points available in this course. Grades will be based on the total points for the semester. Specifically, grades will be assigned by comparing your performance to the best possible score (360) as follows:

Weekly Assignments:	100 points*
Book/Article Reviews:	60 points
Required Project:	100 points
Activities/Participation:	100 points**
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<b>Total.....</b>	<b>360 points</b>

\*Tentatively, Weekly Assignments will count for 100 points. However, it is possible that the total possible points (i.e., 100) will be increased, or reduced. If increased, the TOTAL POSSIBLE points discussed herein (i.e., 360) will add to more than 360 points. If reduced, the TOTAL POSSIBLE points discussed herein (i.e., 660) will add to less than 360 points.

\*\*Similarly, if the 100 Activities and Participation points are either increased or reduced, only the total possible points for Activities/Participation that are utilized will be equated in the final grade distribution. In such case, the TOTAL POSSIBLE points discussed herein (i.e., 360) will add to less (or more) than 360 points. **Note:** Mini-project points will be added to your point total at the end of the course.

**Grade Distribution:**

90-100%	= A (Excellent)
80-89%	= B (Better than Average)
70-79%	= C (Average)
60-69%	= D (Below Average)
Below 60%	= Failing

Please be aware of **class expectations, rules, and University/College Policies**, which follow:

**Attendance Policy:**

This course is “**Web**” based. Students are expected to log-on regularly, check the calendar for due dates and respond to all emails. Thus, it is to your advantage to log-on regularly. For instance, if you do not participate, you cannot learn the discussed material. Additionally, you will not be able to discuss the assigned readings. Much of the learning in class is through discussion with other students. In the process, feel free to ask questions and/or make comments that might enhance our understanding of *Current Issue in Criminal Justice*. Also, do not hesitate to share experiences that may help to enhance our understanding of the nature and significance of the American experience within the context of the criminal justice system. (Please reference Sul Ross State University—Rio Grande College Catalog for additional information.)

**Punctuality:** It is of extreme importance that you complete the readings and writing assignments on time to avoid falling behind. I understand that it is not possible at times, but please do not make it a routine.

**Classroom etiquette:** Above all, always **respect** yourself and others; be **patient**; be willing to explore new ideas (perspectives); and restrict questions and comments to the topic being discussed.

**Incomplete Grades:**

PLEASE AVOID INCOMPLETE GRADES. ALL ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE ON THE DATES OUTLINED IN THE SYLLABUS. It is the responsibility of students to notify the Professor if they cannot make an assignment or will not be able to log-on to the class. Please call me at 830/758-5017 if you do not plan to participate in a class discussion question or feel you will be missing an assignment. If I do not hear from you in regards to missed assignments, I will not allow an excuse for the missed work.

**Class Responsibilities and Conduct:**

You will be responsible for all information posted anytime during the semester. You will be responsible for obtaining announcements or amendments you may have missed. Any student who is intentionally abusive, disruptive, or disrespectful vis-à-vis posted discussions, activities, or emails will be asked immediately amend such communication, AND possibly dropped from the course. Any student who has been asked to amend “unjustified” communication twice will be reported to the Department Chair or Academic Dean. You are expected to show respect to yourself, other students, and your Professor.

**Academic Honesty (Reference Sul Ross State University—Rio Grande College Catalog):**

Rio Grande College expects its students to maintain high standards of personal and academic conduct. Students who take part in academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary action. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. The faculty member is responsible for initiating action for each case of academic dishonesty. Discover any academic dishonesty by a student, may be reported to the Department Chair or Academic Dean.

**Disability Services:**

Students who have special instructional needs because of a physical handicap or a learning disability should discuss their special needs with the office of Student Disabilities Services. You may also see the University/College Catalog for more information. Please do so before the end of the first week of class.

**Drop Policy:**

If you discover that you need to drop this class, you must contact the Records Office and ask for the necessary paperwork. Professors cannot drop students; this is always the responsibility of the student. The Record's Office will give a deadline for which the paperwork and form, if required, must be returned, complete and signed. If you discover that you are still enrolled, FOLLOW-UP with the Records Office immediately. You are to attend class until the procedure is complete to avoid penalty for absence. Should you miss the deadline or fail to follow the procedure, you will receive an **F** in the course.

**Library Services:**

Library information and technology focus on research skills that prepare individuals to live and work in an information-centered society. Librarians will work with students in the development of critical reasoning, ethical use of information, and the appropriate use of secondary research techniques including: exploring information resources such as library collections and services, identify sources such as subject databases and scholarly journals, executing effective search strategies, retrieving, recording, and citing relevant results correctly, and interpreting search results and deciding whether to expand the search.

**The Rio Grande College Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP):**

Sul Ross State University Rio Grande College is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). As part of the reaffirmation process, SACS requires every institution to develop a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) that enhances student learning. Rio Grande College has developed a QEP called *Putting Your Words to Work* that requires students to write different kinds of papers and deliver oral presentations for courses in all departments. Rio Grande College is committed to enhancing students' written and oral communication skills which means that students should be writing and speaking significantly more in courses across all departments.

To prepare for the increased number of written assignments, students should make every effort to enroll in English 3312 in their first semester at RGC. Students should expect to write and speak professionally in all courses, not just English classes. In this course, *Current Issue in Criminal Justice*, students will write various papers and present student work to other students and the Professor, as discussed herein. If you have questions about the QEP, please contact Dr. Sarah Moreman, QEP Coordinator, at [smoreman@sulross.edu](mailto:smoreman@sulross.edu).

Again, I want this class to be useful to you in your future careers. As such, if I can assist you in any way, please stop by and see me or call/e-mail me. If a problem is to arise during the semester, please contact me immediately so that we can work out a solution. Do not wait until it is too late to remedy the problem.

**Tentative\***  
**Schedule of Classes and Assignments**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>
Week 1	<p><b>Lecture focus:</b> Detail class expectations; provide a foundation for the study of the history of the U.S. criminal justice system and related issues; &amp; provide an introduction &amp; broad overview of the subject matter: history of criminal justice.</p> <p>Explore “Urbina Links”:</p>	The “Urbina Links” will be provided!
Week 2	<p>“Ethnic Constructions: The Making of the Upcoming Majority, Mexican Americans”</p> <p>“Situating Conquest, Colonialism, Slavery, Ethnic Identity Formation, Citizenship, and Criminal Law in America”</p> <p><b>Lecture focus:</b> Analyze the historical significance of race, ethnicity, and gender over time, within the context of multiculturalism, focusing on policing, as one of the three major components of the U.S. criminal justice system.</p>	Urbina et al.: Foreword and  Chapter s1 & 2
Week 3	<p>“The Mexican Conquest: Ethnic Realities under Colonialism”</p> <p><b>Lecture focus:</b> Detail the dynamics, implications, and ramifications of colonialism, placing the ethnic and racial experience within an historical, global, and multicultural context.</p>	Urbina et al.: Chapter 3
Week 4	<p>“The Invisible Empire: Mexican Americans and the Fiery Cross, in the Shadows of the Night”</p> <p><b>Lecture focus:</b> Explore the Mexican and overall Latina/o experience under “hooded” America, with corresponding legal and law enforcement elements.</p>	Urbina et al.: Chapter 4
Week 5	<p>“Mexicans, the KKK, and Religion: The Power to Exclude and Oppress”</p> <p><b>Lecture focus:</b> Analyze the significance and implications of religious views by the KKK in its anti-minority movement.</p>	Urbina et al.: Chapter 5
Week 6	<p><b>“Reflection Week”:</b></p> <p><b>Focus:</b> “Reflection Week” is designed to give students the opportunity to reflect (think and act) on what has transpired during the first half of the semester, and, more fundamentally, how things “fits” into their broader academic career, professional life, and personal life.</p>	
Week 7	<p>“Criminalizing Mexican Identity: Privilege, Power, and Control Over Time”</p> <p><b>Lecture focus:</b> Detail the contours and dynamics of privilege, power, and control in America, as exercise by America’s main institutions, to include the legal, political, and educational system.</p>	Urbina et al.: Chapter 6
Week 8	<p>“Borders and Dreams: The Chicano Fight for Equality and Justice”</p> <p><b>Lecture focus:</b> Examine the historic Chicano Movement and the overall Latina and Latino movement for equality in all segments of social life.</p>	Urbina et al.: Chapter 7

Week 9	<p>“The Last Frontier: Mexican Americans and Education in the New Millennium”</p> <p><b>Lecture focus:</b> Document the ethnic and racial experience within the context of criminal justice and education.</p>	Urbina et al.: Chapter 8
Week 10	<p>“Mexican Americans in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Globalization”</p> <p>“THE FUTURE OF MEXICAN AMERICANS IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY”</p> <p><b>Lecture focus:</b> Examine the American experience within the context of multiculturalism and globalization.</p>	Urbina et al.: Chapter 9 and Afterword
Week 11	<p>The dynamics of capital punishment</p> <p><b>Focus:</b> Detail class expectations; provide a foundation for the study of capital punishment and related issues; &amp; provide an introduction &amp; broad overview of the subject matter: capital punishment.</p>	Preface Chapter 1
Week 12	<p>History of U.S. race &amp; ethnic relations &amp; the death penalty</p> <p><b>Focus:</b> Explore major historical forces defining, shaping, and re-shaping the dynamics of punishment, including executions, in the U.S.: cultural, financial, political, legal, philosophical, ideological, and the like.</p>	Chapter 2
Week 13	<p>Furman &amp; Gregg exist death row (article)</p> <p>Death sentencing &amp; death sentence outcomes studies: Analyzing the death penalty <b>literature</b></p> <p><b>Focus:</b> Analyze research methodologies of prior empirical studies used to investigate the dynamics of executions, and examine the major studies to better understand the scope and nature of the death penalty.</p>	Article: Will be provided Chapter 3
Week 14	<p>Research findings: What does the data show?</p> <p><b>Focus:</b> Examine the possible pragmatic implications, consequences, and utility of research findings, and how research findings can be considered in social and criminal justice policy, particularly in the twenty first-century.</p>	Chapter 5 See execution distribution, page 261
Week 15	<p>The role of race, ethnicity, and gender in capital punishment</p> <p>Transforming an historical culture of executions</p> <p>The future of capital punishment</p> <p><b>Focus:</b> Carefully examine the possible influence of gender, race, and ethnicity to better understand the nature of capital punishment, searching for gaps, limitations, etc., as we seek to provide a sound and holistic analysis, in its totality.</p>	Chapter 6 Chapter 7 Afterword See distribution, page 261 (See race/ethnicity distribution on page 329)

Week 16	<p>“Neoliberalism, Criminal Justice, and Latinos: The Contours of Neoliberal Economic Thought and Policy on Criminalization.” (article)</p> <p><b>Focus:</b> As the final week of class, the various topics discussed during the semester will tied together, placing them within a broader framework. Concluding with recommendations for the future, as we continue the discourse on capital punishment.</p> <p><b>Final Exam: TBA</b></p>	Article: Will be provided
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\*The syllabus is likely to be amended during the semester at the discretion of the Professor!

Note: Please check Calendar on Blackboard for **due dates!**

### **Mini-Project Suggestions**

1. With fellow students, family members, or friends, discuss the issue of what could possibly be the DRIVING force behind the death penalty, including actual executions, in the US.
2. With fellow students, family members, boy-friends, or girl-friends, discuss the issue of whether issues like politics, culture, religion, morality, and the media are influential in the dynamics of capital punishment. WHY? Or, WHY NOT?
3. Find interesting stories in newspapers and magazines pertaining to the death penalty in your community, like Del Rio, Eagle Pass, Del Rio, or other community, and detail a brief report. Explain what you find interesting about the stories, as projected through the lens of the media.
4. Watch a documentary, video, or movie that vividly documents that history of capital punishment, possibly actual executions, and write a brief reaction paper.
5. With fellow students, family members, or friends, discuss the nature and scope of capital punishment within an historical, theoretical, and philosophical context.
6. With fellow students, family members, boy-friends, or girl-friends, discuss the utility and ramifications of the death penalty.