

## **CRIMINAL JUSTICE 5331 CJ AND THE MEDIA**

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### **Texts:**

Potter, Gary W. and Kappeler, Victor E. (2006) *Constructing Crime: Perspectives on Making News and Social Problems*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) Waveland Press. ISBN: 9781577664468

**Course Description:** This course will cover topics relating to crime and criminal justice coverage in the media. Discussion will include choice of coverage by media outlets, positive and negative coverage, impact of coverage on fear of crime, various media outlets including social media, and the role of social factors such as race/ethnicity and gender in coverage. Students will develop the ability to analyze content of media items for accuracy in the individual item and the overall impact of the items presented. Students will also be able to analyze the impact of what is not covered by the media.

### **Criminal Justice Graduate Program Learning Objectives (PLOs):**

**PLO 1.** Demonstrated knowledge of specific Legal Liabilities for Criminal Justice professionals. The ability to recognize violations of an individual's rights based on Constitutional protections, and the awareness of the consequences of those violations to individuals and agencies. The ability to apply basic legal research skills to identify and compare current court rulings on criminal justice policies.

**PLO 2.** Applicable knowledge of specific Criminological theories. The ability to identify and apply Criminological theories to criminal events. A working skill set of Criminological theory, with the ability to compare and contrast competing theoretical arguments.

**PLO 3.** Workable knowledge of the process and application of the methods of scientific research. The ability to critique a piece of research based on its methodology. The ability to identify bias within a research model. The ability to apply research into criminal justice policy.

This course will be contained within the Blackboard format and will not meet in person during the term. Students are expected to log in regularly to complete assignments. Students should familiarize themselves with all of the sections of blackboard available for this course. Assignments and tests will be listed under the appropriate subheading. Students will also need to become familiar with the discussion board for completing some of this work.

As this is a graduate course, students will be expected to be self-motivated, and work independently. Standards for graduate courses are higher than those for undergraduate work – students will engage in more research, reading, and writing.

Technical problems can be reported to me - through e-mail is usually the best idea, and/or to the Help Desk at 432-837-8888 locally, 8888 from on campus or 1-888-837-2882 from out of area. You can also log into the LTAC system and create a ticket by going to <https://techassist.sulross.edu/> If you report an issue through the Help Desk or create a ticket by logging into the system, you should send me an email with a description of your issue and the ticket number so I can help ensure that technical issues are addressed and do not negatively affect your grades. If you do not promptly report your technical problems, you will not get credit for any work affected by the problem.

**Requirements:** Final grades for this course will be based on your performance on the following items: 2 Exams (30% each), Discussion Questions (25%), 2 news assignments (15%).

**Tests:** The exams for this course will consist of essay (at least 3 paragraphs - intro, body, conclusion) questions. The Exam schedule is posted under the Quiz, Test, Exam section of the course. **There will be no make-ups for these exams.** Each exam will also relate to the questions on the Discussion Board. As such students are expected to read the responses to the Discussion Questions carefully and to do any research needed to master the information presented.

**News Assignment:** Students are required to find 2 news items related to elements of criminal justice in the media (police, courts, corrections, etc.) – one of these articles should show the system in a **positive light** and one should show the system in a **negative light**. Students should summarize the main points and post it to the discussion board. Each student will then be required to comment in a meaningful way on at least 3 of these posts for each assignment. Students are not required to comment on all of the posts. Rules are available under the assignment section of the course.

**Discussion Questions:** Each week there will be 1-2 discussion questions posted on the discussion board of Blackboard. Students will need to log frequently in order to deal with these questions in a timely manner. Students will also be expected to respond to the information posted by other students which may mean logging in several times a week. Rules for the content of the responses will be posted under the assignment section for this class. Students are expected to contribute in significant ways to the discussion boards, based on the readings, but also on personal experience and knowledge gained through other course work, media reports, etc. This portion of the course is expected to replace the normal dialog that would occur within an in-class course and students will be expected to have a thorough knowledge of the subjects being discussed. This should mean that students will have to do outside research.

**Student Café:** To enhance the discussion of the course and ensure that students have a mechanism to seek answers to both course related and outside questions, a Student Café area has been posted in the Discussion Board area. Students may post any question or helpful information they wish to share with their fellow students and the professor. It is not required that students post anything here and this is not a part of the course grade. It is for student benefit only.

**Code of Conduct:** This is a graduate level course and students are expected to behave as professional adults. Students are expected to do their own work on all tests and assignments. Cheating and plagiarism on tests or assignments will result in a grade of “F” on that part of the course, a possible grade of “F” for the entire course, and possible recommendation for suspension from the university.

Plagiarism consists of presenting the work of another as one’s own (i.e., without proper acknowledgment of the source) and submitting examinations or other work in whole or in part as one’s own when such work has been prepared by another person or copied from another person (see the Student Handbook).

Open discussion of course issues is encouraged, however, abusive, offensive or otherwise inappropriate language will not be tolerated – this includes profanity, racial/ethnic slurs, personal attacks on other members of the course, etc. Part of the learning process is learning to communicate effectively and professionally. A direct quote from a published source may occasionally contain such language, but use of the quote should be limited and explained – why is it necessary to use such quote?

Any assignment containing abusive, offensive, or profane language, or creating an offensive environment in the course will result in a grade of 0 for that assignment. The introductory question and the student café are not graded; however occurrences in these areas will result in 20 points per occurrence being subtracted from the overall Discussion Question grade – just like getting a 0 on one of the graded questions.

**Distance Education Statement:** Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university’s academic support services, library resources, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should submit online assignments through Blackboard or SRSU email, which require secure login information to verify students’ identities and to protect students’ information. The procedures for filing a student complaint are included in the student handbook. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website.

**Important!**

See your instructor promptly if you are having problems with your course work or are in need of special assistance.

Qualified students with disabilities needing academic or other accommodations to ensure full participation in the programs, services and activities at Sul Ross State University should contact the Accessibility Services Office, Ferguson Hall 112, Box C-122, (432) 837-8203.

**Tentative Course Schedule  
(Subject to change as needed)**

**Week 1 – July 7** –Intro Discussion Question, Discussion Question 1,  
Modified due dates due to the short week – Original Response Due by  
Saturday, Responses to others Due by Sunday

**Week 2 – July 11** – Discussion Questions 2 and 3, readings – Chapters 1-5  
Normal Due Dates for Discussion Questions

**News Assignment 1 Original Post Due July 14**

**Week 3 – July 18** – Discussion Questions 4 and 5, readings – Chapters 6-9

**News Assignment 2 Original Post Due July 21**

**Test 1 July 21-25**

**Week 4 – July 25** - Discussion Questions 6-7, readings – Chapters 10-14

**News Assignment 1 Responses to Others Due July 28**

**Week 5 – August 1** - Discussion Question 8-9, readings – Chapters 15-18

**News Assignment 2 Responses to Others Due August 4**

**Test 2 – August 4-8**

**Week 6 – August 8** – Semester is over and grades turned in by August 12