**Sul Ross State University**

**Criminal Justice 3309**  
**Juvenile Law**  
**Summer I: 2019**

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

- **Office:** 201 (Faculty Building)  
- **Phone:** 830/703-4820 (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 (Catalog) Description:** Study of juvenile deviant behavior; deviancy theories; juvenile statutory and case law; judicial processes; policies and police practices related to juvenile justice.

**Objective:** Juvenile Law will offer an historical, sociological, and criminological analysis of the nature and scope of juvenile justice system (to include law, order, and justice) 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. Pragmatically, philosophically, politically, economically, culturally, and socially, what is the juvenile justice system, as we know it today?

2. How has the juvenile justice system evolved in the United States? A series of secondary questions include the following: What are the links between time and space? What role have historical events played in the juvenile justice system?

3. What FORCES (including the media) have driven and/or continue to drive the juvenile justice system? And, by extension, why?

4. Who has played the most significant role in “shaping and reshaping” the juvenile justice system?

5. What influence has juvenile legislation played on juvenile crime and justice? 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 juvenile legislation? What, if any, have been the ramifications of prior juvenile legislation? How do the “benefits” compare to the “negative consequence” of past legislation? What is the significance of current juvenile legislation on juvenile (in)justice?

6. What has been the role of the juvenile justice system in shaping the nature deviance and public opinion? Secondary questions include: What do advocates of the juvenile justice system see as its main utility and functions? What do the critics of the juvenile justice system see as its main weaknesses? Is there a need for a juvenile justice system? Should the juvenile justice system be retained, modified, or both? Or, should we do away with the juvenile justice system?

7. What is the scope and nature of current “critical” issues/questions in juvenile justice? For instance, should juveniles be held to the same standards as adults? Secondary questions: Should juveniles be incarcerated with adult offenders? Should juveniles be executed? In the case of delinquent females, should pregnant girls be institutionalized (and give birth in a juvenile detention center, or prison)?

8. How successful have programs been in achieving intended goals?

9. What myths surround the juvenile justice system? And, what are their implications?

10. What are the implications and ramifications of “globalized legislation and sanctions” on the juvenile justice system?

11. What are the options/avenues for the establishment of a logical, effective, and just system of law?

12. What is the future of the juvenile justice system and related laws?

The next set of questions is essentially definitional in nature. It is essential that we share the same definitions of an issue, event, situation, or problem if we are to come to a common understanding of both the problem and any possible solutions/remedies. Consequently, the class’s first segment deals with defining “Juvenile Law,” as it pertains to the juvenile justice system and placing it in a global context.

The last set of questions is more analytical. A particular truism about 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 five-fold approach we will take is an amalgam of several such typologies:
History—When deemed appropriate, we will make use of historical events, situations, and circumstances to better understand the subject matter by its totality. It is essential that we obtain an understanding and appreciation for historical ruptures and discontinuities as we try to bridge existing gaps. According to an African proverb, “Until lions have their own historians, histories of the hunt will glorify the hunter.”

Theory—Theoretically, we must investigate which theories provide the best guidance in our search for “truth and reality.”

Law and Society—In a society where most behavior is governed by some type of law, it is vital that we explore the relationship between law and society. To some scholars, laws are a measure of culture; crime, another element of all known cultures, is the violation of those laws. In essence, why do we have laws? Do we need laws? Does law make a difference?

Philosophy—While sociological and criminological theories might serve as “road maps” to everyday life, philosophy gives “meaning” to human existence. It enables us to better appreciate what matters most at the END of the day.

Poetry—Even though poetry is one of the oldest forms of dialogue, it is seldom mentioned in academic discussions. Yet, poetry allows us to transcend the unknown … it allows us to dream the impossible … to dream the impossible dream. “Invent the age, invent the metaphor. Without a credible structure of law a society is inconceivable. Without a workable poetry no society can conceive a [person].” --Archibald MacLeish, Apologia, 1972.

The final question has policy overtones. First, we must briefly look at the nature and process of human behavior, in the context of the juvenile justice system, in the United States. Next, we turn to the more difficult task of linking jurisprudence and sociological and criminological theory, particularly those we will review, to both behavior (deviance and crime) research and practices. What we discover is that few scholars explicitly make this link. Rather, it has been the critical scholar, particularly sociologists, responding to the demands of stricter societal demands and government laws (and less forgiving policy analysts), that have linked sociological/criminological theory and practice, via both pure and applied research.

Overall, this course is designed to introduce you to the nature of juvenile law within the context of the juvenile justice system and, by extension, social interactions 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. For instance, should institutionalized girls, now under the custody of the state, have the constitutional right of an abortion (which might be tied to other polemic issues, like AIDS/HIV or rape)? Thus, 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:**

[ISBN: 9780534521585]

**Optional Readings:**


**Recommended Readings**

**Books:**


**Book Chapters:**


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


Encyclopedia, Magazine, and Other Publications:


Weekly Assignments: There will be five (5) Weekly Assignments, each worth 20 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 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.

Mini-project: This should be a fun exercise that allows you to explore (critically) some aspect of human behavior as it pertains to juvenile law 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, though, 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 hand in 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 the juvenile justice system.
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 and 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, 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 200 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 (200) as follows:

Weekly Assignments: 100 points*
Activities/Participation: 100 points**
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Total: 200 points

*Tentatively, Weekly Assignments will count for 100 points. However, it is possible that the total possible points (i.e., 200) will be increased, or reduced. If increased, the TOTAL POSSIBLE points discussed herein (i.e., 200) will add to more than 200 points. If reduced, the TOTAL POSSIBLE points discussed herein (i.e., 200) will add to less than 200 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., 200) will add to less (or more) than 200 points.

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

Note: Mini-project points will be added to your point total at the end of the course.
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 the **juvenile justice system** and related issues. Also, do not hesitate to share experiences that may help to enhance our understanding of the nature and significance of delinquent behavior and law within the context of the juvenile justice system. (Please reference Sul Ross State University (SRSU) Catalog for additional information regarding this important issue.)

**Punctuality.** It is of extreme importance that you complete the readings and writing assignments on time to avoid falling beyond. 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 and 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):**
Sul Ross State University 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 additional 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.

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Theories &amp; measurement of delinquency</td>
<td>Chapters 1-2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Focus:</strong> Detail class expectations; provide a foundation for the study of juvenile law and related issues; &amp; provide an introduction &amp; broad overview of the subject matter: the juvenile justice system.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Juveniles and law enforcement; Intake and diversion; and Status offenders, dependent &amp; neglected youths, &amp; victimization of youths</td>
<td>Chapter 3, 4, 5</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Focus:</strong> Explore major historical forces defining and shaping juvenile behavior, law, and punishment, including critical issues involving dependent and neglected children.</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Detention &amp; transfer to adult court; The national &amp; juvenile court system; Adjudication of juveniles</td>
<td>Chapter 6, 7, 8</td>
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<td><strong>Focus:</strong> Carefully examine the existing literature to better understand the nature of detention and juvenile transfers to adult court, searching for alternatives, improvements, effectiveness, etc., as we seek to provide a sound and holistic analysis, in its totality.</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Disposition &amp; appeal; Juvenile Probation and Parole</td>
<td>Chapter 9, 10</td>
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<td><strong>Focus:</strong> Analyze the nature of juvenile dispositions, trends, experiences, and consequences and examine the significance of appeals as well as the utility of probation and parole.</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Juvenile correctional institutions; Capital punishment</td>
<td>Chapter 11, 12</td>
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<td><strong>Focus:</strong> Examine the institutional experience and 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.</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Schools; Past, present, &amp; future of juvenile law; Reflections, thoughts for the future, &amp; conclusion</td>
<td>Chapter 13, 14</td>
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<td><strong>Focus:</strong> As the final week of class, the various topics discussed during the semester will tie together, placing them within a broader framework. Concluding with recommendations for the future, as we continue the discourse on juvenile law.</td>
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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 whether status offenses discriminate against juveniles and, therefore, ought to be abolished.

2. With fellow students, family members, boy-friends, or girl-friends, discuss the issue of whether the juvenile justice system ought to be abolished and that juvenile offenders be treated as adults.

3. Visit different juvenile correctional facilities in your community, both community-based facilities and institutional facilities. Compare what you see with the descriptions in this class. Volunteer to work in a community-based juvenile correctional facility in your community. Keep a diary of your experience.

4. Find interesting juvenile justice stories in newspapers and magazines, and report on them in class. Explain what you find interesting about the stories.

5. From newspapers and magazines, cut out or copy advertisements for juvenile justice jobs. Describe how the advertisements are alike and how they are different. Write your own advertisement. Exchange your advertisement with those written by fellow students and evaluate them.

6. Read a nonfiction book containing some sociological/criminological element. Try to analyze the book in the context of what is discussed in class. Good choices of books include John Howard Griffin’s *Black like me*, Luis Rodriguez’s *Always Running*, and Martin Guevara Urbina’s *A Comprehensive Study of Female Offenders: Life Before, During, and After Incarceration*.

7. Watch a video/movie on the juvenile justice system. Discuss the behaviors, attitudes, mentalities, and implications.

8. Identify some of the programs and events in your community. Evaluate them in light of what you have learned in class.