

**CJ 3303: Crime & Justice in the Movies**  
**Sul Ross State University - Fall 2022**

**Instructor** : Ismail Gunes, Ph.D.  
**E-mail** : [ismail.gunes@sulross.edu](mailto:ismail.gunes@sulross.edu)  
**Telephone** : (432) 837 8166  
**Class Room & Hours** : MAB 205 & Wednesday, 6:00 PM - 8:50 PM  
**Office & Office Hours** : MAB 109 & Tuesday and Thursday, 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM and by appointment.

**Required Texts**

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- 1) American Psychological Association (October 2019), Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 7th Edition, <https://apastyle.apa.org/products/publication-manual-7th-edition-spiral>
- 2) Additional readings (e.g., articles, reports) will be posted on Blackboard.

Regarding scientific journal articles, Byrian Wildenthal Memorial Library of SRSU has an extensive database infrastructure. You can get detailed information and advising from libraries website <https://library.sulross.edu> Once you logged in to your Sul Ross Account on Blackboard you should be automatically connected to the library webpage as well. Thus, you can browse the online databases of the University and reach the articles on the additional reading list. The Sul Ross Library offers FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website. Off-campus access requires your LoboID and password. Check out materials using your photo ID. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email ([srsulibrary@sulross.edu](mailto:srsulibrary@sulross.edu)), or phone (432-837-8123).

**Course Description**

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Movies play a central role in shaping our understanding of crime and the world generally, helping us define what is good and bad, desirable and unworthy, lawful and illicit, strong and weak. Crime movies raise controversial issues about the distribution of social power and the meanings of deviance, and they provide a safe space for fantasies of rebellion, punishment, and the restoration of order. This course examines theories and themes of criminology through the lens of this popular culture. The course examines how current themes in crime films both reflect and shape our views of crime in society and how theories and current trends in criminology and criminal justice studies manifest themselves on film.

**Class Caveat:** Students are warned that the films in this course contain graphic depictions of violence, profanity, nudity, and sexual behavior. Any given movie may have realistic and disturbing portrayals of murder, mayhem, torture, rape, and other acts of extreme or brutal violence. Documentaries may contain images of actual dead and tortured bodies as well as accounts of severe and excessive violence. Students who do not wish to be exposed to such scenes should reconsider taking this class.

### Course Learning Objectives

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The point of this course is to examine how film represents, distorts, and/or filters crime and justice issues. This class will have the “critically-thinking student look” at films in a different manner. Students will be provided with a structure for viewing the film. That is, students will be asked to reflect, analyze, discuss, and answer questions.

After the course the student will be able to:

1. Have the skills to analytically view crime films and recognize the construction of crime and justice (e.g., police, attorneys, judges, courts, corrections, and prisons) within such films.
2. Identify and analyze film issues as they relate to crime, criminal behavior, the law and sentencing, the criminal justice system, law enforcement, courts, and corrections.
3. Analyze films depicting aspects of the criminal justice system and separate entertainment value from realistic portrayals of the principal aspects and agents of the criminal justice system.
4. Understand the basic theoretical perspectives on crime and relate these perspectives to film portrayals of the causes of crime.
5. Understand the contemporary and historical issues regarding the criminal justice system.
6. Demonstrate an understanding concerning the impact that film has on society's perceptions of the criminal justice system and how these perceptions can impact criminal justice policy and law.
7. Analyze and evaluate the media portrayal of the criminal justice system.

### Criminal Justice Undergraduate Program Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

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**UG-CJ-SLO1:** Student will be able to demonstrate knowledge of specific areas of the U.S. Constitution as it relates to specific legal liabilities.

**UG-CJ-SLO2:** Student will be able to demonstrate knowledge of criminological theories, and apply those theories to an analysis of practical criminal justice events.

**UG-CJ-SLO3:** Student will be able to demonstrate a working knowledge of the specific language of the Criminal Justice System, ability to identify the individual parts and costs

associated with the Criminal Justice System, and demonstrated knowledge in recognizing the political influences on the CJ system.

### General Classroom Policies

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Students are encouraged to attend the class, ask questions and express opinions; however, talking among students and disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. You may bring beverages to class with you, but not food. Reading outside materials such as newspapers or other course work is not permitted during class time. Students should be prepared to engage in discussion over the assigned readings, and for possible pop quizzes. Electronic devices are never allowed to use in class in a way to distract the instructor and other students. Keep your mobile phone in silent mode, otherwise switch it off. There will be one general rule in class which applies to all situations. This is also called “golden rule”. TREAT OTHERS AS YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE TREATED.

### Course Assessment

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**1 - Reaction and Analysis Essays (130 points – 10 points each):** You will write 13 weekly essays in this course. Each essay will worth 10 points. These writing assignments are intended to require you to engage in critical thinking and logical reasoning as well as to further assist you in developing your written communication skills.

During the course, we will watch thirteen movies. These films were chosen to show how particular aspects of the criminal justice system are portrayed in film, including prisons, police, crime causation, and aspects of the court system.

Each critical analysis essay should include two parts – Reaction and Analysis. The due dates for the papers will be Sunday 11:59 PM of that week.

#### Reaction:

A reaction essay is as its name proposes—a paper explaining your reaction to a film. This type of paper requires the student to think carefully about what he/she feels or thinks about a film. The student needs to question his/her knowledge and beliefs.

While you are watching the film, think about the following questions:

- ✓ How do you feel or think about what you are watching?
- ✓ What do you agree or disagree with?
- ✓ Can you identify with the movie or characters in the movie?
- ✓ What is your assessment of the situation in general?
- ✓ What did you find significant, educational, or uncharacteristic about the film?

Analysis:

The second part of your essay should include a critical analysis of the film, in terms of how well the film portrayed the criminal justice system, criminals, victims, or criminology.

While you are watching the films, think about the following questions:

- ✓ In what ways does the film accurately portray the aspect of criminal justice it depicts?
- ✓ In what ways does the film fall short of recreating the aspect of criminal justice it depicts?
- ✓ If you did not know anything about the criminal justice system, how would this film (good or bad) affect your perceptions about the criminal justice system, criminal justice practitioners, crime victims, or criminology?

Reaction and Analysis papers must meet the following criteria:

- ✓ 1 - 2 pages in length (not including the title page and the reference page).
- ✓ Utilize the APA style writing.
- ✓ 1.5-spaced, 12-point font, Calibri font.
- ✓ Title page – (APA Manual pg. 32).
- ✓ Proofread carefully the following: grammar, spelling, mechanics, citations, etc. This will be part of your grade. Throughout the paper, the film's title should be italicized.

Always remember that the paper is primarily about the film, not about you. Avoid summarizing the plot. Any movie watcher can get the plot from viewing the movie. There is no "value added" in the paper when the essay merely summarizes the plot, and the paper will offer little to a reader if it mainly retells the story. Therefore, DO NOT retell the story.

Suggested techniques that can help you avoid retelling the story:

- ✓ Choose a narrow thesis, focusing on a single scene, for example, or perhaps on a secondary character(s). If you focus on a central theme or major characters, you're more likely to follow them through the whole film and tell the whole story again.
- ✓ Be cognizant of and utilize thoughtful topic sentences in your paragraphs - make sure that each paragraph has a point to make, supported by relevant details or evidence supporting your point and that it is not just advancing the plot.
- ✓ A more mechanical approach is to arbitrarily limit your plot summary to a single short paragraph.
- ✓ Assume that your reader has already seen the film, which in the case of this class, the reader/audience will have seen the film; therefore, you do not want to waste the reader's time with what he/she already knows.
- ✓ Tell your reader (that's me) something he/she does not already know.

Grading Criteria for Reaction and Analysis Essays:

- ✓ Is there an explicit thesis statement that controls the direction of the paper and narrows the scope of the ideas presented in it?
- ✓ Does the paper have a strong introduction that invites the reader to further reading?
- ✓ Are the ideas presented in a logical and intelligible sequence that makes sense?
- ✓ Is there a definite conclusion drawing the ideas together leaving the reader satisfied?
- ✓ Does the paper avoid a disproportionate plot summary?
- ✓ Does the paper offer appropriate details or enough examples drawn from the film to clarify major points and make them compelling?
- ✓ Is the paper’s language accurate and effective making ideas clear?
- ✓ Are the sentences clear and direct? Use of active voice and past tense is recommended.
- ✓ Is the paper void of major grammatical errors?
- ✓ Does the format of the paper match the APA format?

**2 - Attendance (20 points):** Attendance is important! Attendance demonstrates maturity, responsibility and a serious attitude toward education. I believe that regular and punctual attendance is an integral part of the learning process. Attendance will be taken daily and absences cannot be made up. Students should be in class on time and should be prepared to stay for the entire class period. If I have begun class by the time you enter, you should make sure that I counted you as present by checking with me after class.

In accordance with current SRSU policy, when a student misses a total of 9 hours of class (3 classes), the presumption is that the student will be dropped from that class with an “F”. Please note that it is the student’s responsibility to inform the instructor prior to any University event that would cause an absence. Failure of the student to inform the instructor will result in that absence being recorded as unexcused.

Below is the points that you will receive as your attendance grade:

Full attendance	: 20 points	2 Missed classes	: 10 points
1 Missed class	: 15 points	3 Missed classes	: 5 points

\*\*\*4 Missed classes: Your final grade will be “F” according to SRSU Attendance Policy\*\*\*

**Academic Integrity**

Sul Ross State University students are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the “[Sul Ross Student Handbook](#)”. Sul Ross State University and the instructor of this course both place a high priority on the academic integrity of their student scholars. As a result, all institutional guidelines and instructional policies concerning academic integrity will be strictly and uniformly enforced with all students regardless of context.

Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. A scholar is expected to be punctual, prepared, and focused;

meaningful and pertinent participation is appreciated. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to:

- turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor;
- turning in another person's work as one's own;
- copying from professional works or internet sites without citation;
- collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden.

### **APA Style**

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This course will use the American Psychological Association (APA) Seventh Edition formatting and style guide for all written assignments. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the use of APA a number of resources have been provided below. Please note that all external sources must be appropriately cited. A failure to do so constitutes plagiarism and is a violation the course academic honesty standards. Beside numerous online sources you can also visit the following link for help with APA

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/apa\\_style/apa\\_style\\_introduction.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.html).

### **Student Support Services**

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Sul Ross State University has established a variety of programs to help students meet the challenges of college life. Support to students includes advising, counseling, mentoring, tutoring, supplemental instruction, and writing assistance. For a complete list of academic support services, visit the Student Support Services at <https://www.sulross.edu/section/311/student-support-services>. For more information, students are encouraged to contact SSS at (432) 837-9118 or visit Ferguson Hall Room 105.

### **Students with Special Needs - Americans with Disabilities Act as Amended (ADAAA)**

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SRSU Disability Services: Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Rebecca Greathouse Wren, LPC-S, SRSU's Accessibility Services Coordinator at 432-837-8203 (please leave a message and we'll get back to you as soon as we can during working hours), or email [rebecca.wren@sulross.edu](mailto:rebecca.wren@sulross.edu). Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall (Suite 112), and our mailing address is P.O. Box C-122, SUI Ross State University, Alpine. Texas, 79832.

### Late Assignment Submission Policy

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Students are supposed to finish their coursework on time and assignments must be submitted before the deadlines. In principle, I do not accept late work and do not believe in allowing students to turn in work after the due date. My position is that everyone knows the rules of engagement at the beginning of the term and that it is the student's responsibility to ensure that they plan accordingly to submit their assignments and take their exams in a timely manner. If an assignment/exam is missed or late the students are expected to show an appropriate cause for this issue. Late assignments will not be accepted unless there is an excuse that is recognized by the university. Students are encouraged to frequently review the syllabus and remain aware of the deadlines for all assignments and exams.

### Departmental Bachelor's Degree Program Marketable Skills

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The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) sets statewide goals through the 60x30TX initiative. The THECB plan includes four major goals in 60x30TX: Educated Population, Completion, Marketable skills, and Student debt. The [60x30TX](#) plan was designed to tie together all four student-centered goals. 60x30, which measures the educated population in Texas, is the overarching goal at the center of the plan and calls for 60 percent of 25- to 34-year-olds in Texas to hold a credential or degree by 2030. The 60x30 goal is supported by the other three goals (completion, marketable skills, student debt) that will get Texas to 60 percent by 2030.

By 2030, all graduates from Texas public institutions of higher education will have completed programs with identified marketable skills. Students who can effectively market their skills to potential employers can secure employment that pays competitively. Marketable skills include interpersonal, cognitive, and applied skill areas, are valued by employers, and are primary or complementary to a major. Marketable skills are acquired by students through education, including curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities. Marketable skills are often called "employability skills" in other countries, or "transferable skills" here in the states. They include both technical and soft skills.

The marketable skills of Homeland Security and Criminal Justice BS Program are listed as follows:

1. Students Develop Verbal and Written Communication Skills.
2. Students Access Resources with Crime Data and Work with Numbers and Demonstrate Quantitative Skills.
3. Students Use Critical Thinking and Observation.
4. Students Use Teamwork and Work Collaboratively.
5. Students Develop Multicultural Understanding.
6. Students Analyze the Factors Contributing to Crime.
7. Students Know Legal Codes & Procedures and Safety.

### **Classroom Climate of Respect**

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Students are expected to respect their classmates' and instructors' privacy and the work or comments they produce. Importantly, this class will foster free expression, critical investigation, and the open discussion of ideas. This means that all of us must help create and sustain an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for the viewpoints of others. Similarly, we must all learn how to probe, oppose and disagree without resorting to tactics of intimidation, harassment, or personal attack. No one is entitled to harass, belittle, or discriminate against another on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, or sexual preference. Still we will not be silenced by the difficulty of fruitfully discussing politically sensitive issues.

### **Diversity Statement**

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I aim to create a learning environment for my students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, socioeconomic class, age, nationality, etc.). I also understand that the crisis of COVID, economic disparity, and health concerns, or even unexpected life events could impact the conditions necessary for you to succeed. My commitment is to be there for you and help you meet the learning objectives of this course. I do this to demonstrate my commitment to you and to the mission of Sul Ross State University to create an inclusive environment and care for the whole student as part of the Sul Ross Familia. If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you.

### **Other Course Expectations**

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- Remember that this is a college course, therefore, college level work will be expected which includes proper APA format, proper grammar, sentence structure, and organizational structure.
- Review the syllabus so that you may be aware of assignments and papers; contact me for any clarifications.



**Grading**

13 Reaction and Analysis Essays (10 points each)	130 points
Attendance	20 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>150 points</b>

**Final Grading Scale**

**A 150 - 135**

**B 134 - 120**

**C 119 - 105**

**D 104 - 90**

**F 89 & below**

**Tentative Movie List**

Films will be adjusted as necessary. This is a list of possible films we will be watching

**List of Movies for CJ 3303: Crime & Justice in the Movies Course**

Number	Film Title	Number	Film Title
1	A Clockwork Orange	20	Law Abiding Citizen
2	A Time to Kill	21	Lincoln Lawyer
3	American Gangster	22	Mobsters
4	American History X	23	Monster
5	American Psycho	24	Mystic River
6	Blow	25	Narc
7	Casino	26	Pulp Fiction
8	Dahmer	27	Reservoir Dogs
9	Dead Man Walking	28	RoboCop
10	Dirty Harry	29	Scarface
11	Eastern Promises	30	Serpico
12	Fargo	31	Seven
13	Fracture	32	Silence of the Lambs
14	Gacy	33	The Shawshank Redemption
15	Goodfellas	34	The Town
16	Heat	35	To Kill A Mockingbird
17	Heat of the Night	36	Training Day
18	Henry Portrait of a Serial Killer	37	Untouchables
19	L.A. Confidential	38	Zodiac Killer

**Tentative Course Schedule**

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Week 1	August 24	Syllabus and other course requirements
Week 2	August 31	Movie 1 - Paper 1 is due on September 4
Week 3	September 7	Movie 2 - Paper 2 is due on September 11
Week 4	September 14	Movie 3 - Paper 3 is due on September 18
Week 5	September 21	Movie 4 - Paper 4 is due on September 25
Week 6	September 28	Movie 5 - Paper 5 is due on October 2
Week 7	October 5	Movie 6 - Paper 6 is due on October 9
Week 8	October 12	Movie 7 - Paper 7 is due on October 16
Week 9	October 19	Movie 8 - Paper 8 is due on October 23
Week 10	October 26	Movie 9 - Paper 9 is due on October 30
Week 11	November 2	Movie 10 - Paper 10 is due on November 6
Week 12	November 9	Movie 11 - Paper 11 is due on November 13
Week 13	November 16	Movie 12 - Paper 12 is due on November 20
Week 14	November 23	Thanksgiving Day Holiday (No Class)
Week 15	November 30	Movie 13 - Paper 13 is due on December 4
Week 16	Finals Week December 2, December 5 - 7	

**End of Course Evaluations**

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Student evaluations of faculty are administered online at the end of each term/session for all courses with five or more students. Students will receive an email containing a link to a survey for each course in which they are enrolled. All responses are anonymous.

*\*\*\*Syllabus is subject to updates and changes by announcement, always look to the course announcements and reminders for updates. The faculty member reserves the right to amend this syllabus as needed\*\*\**