

WESTFIELD STATE UNIVERSITY



Thinking about taking Introduction to Criminal Justice as an online course?

Here's some information about the course to help you decide.

Course description:

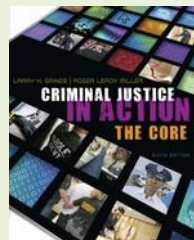
The purpose of this course is to survey the American Criminal Justice System as a sociological, psychological and political institution. The police, criminal courts, correctional and rehabilitative endeavors will be analyzed within the framework of theoretical and empirical perspectives of the social sciences. The course is designed to expose the student to the theoretical bases, as well as the structure and function of our system of justice.

Course Objectives:

1. To cover an introduction to the administration of Criminal Justice in America.
2. To identify the definitions of crime.
3. To identify the various means of measuring crime.
4. To familiarize the student with the body of knowledge regarding the causes of crime.
5. To review the functions of the various agencies within the justice system including but not limited to- Police, Courts, Corrections and Juvenile Justice.
6. The course will cover these topics all within the context of ethical decision making and will also incorporate explanations of how race and gender influence justice systems.

Required text:

Gaines and Miller (2012) Criminal Justice in Action- The Core. 6th Edition. Thomson Wadsworth Publishing. The ISBN is different depending if you rent it, buy the ebook version or buy the Kindle version. The text can be purchased through Amazon.com, barnesandnoble.com or any other online distributor for about \$102 for a new hard-copy. You can also purchase an electronic version (good for six months viewing) of the text through the Publisher's site-[click here](#) for about \$56. Look around as prices vary. The book can also purchased by chapter for \$6.50 per chapter at the publisher's site. The book has 15 chapters. If you find a used copy



of the 5th edition you can use that also.

Additional web based readings will be made available on the course website.

Course Format and Instructor Availability:

This is an asynchronous class, meaning that both students and the instructor will sign in to the course pages on their own schedules and work independently of each other, but there are certain minimum requirements to insure that this course is a good choice for you.

1. Have stable internet access, intermediate-level computer skills, and familiarity with the PLATO course environment. Inability to access the site, navigate the pages, or open files will not excuse you for missed or late assignments.
2. Complete all the assigned readings, assignments and quizzes.
3. Have basic skills in Microsoft Word (or a similar word processor)
4. Check in to the course several times per unit and post responses to the discussion topics for the week. Students who complete all of their postings on the same day, or who do not post until the end of the unit, will receive lower grades.
5. Start each unit's assignments towards the beginning of the unit, so as to work out any problems (technological or otherwise) as early as possible.
6. Contact the instructor if they have any difficulties.

I will generally check the course page every day, usually in the morning, and respond to e-mail at that time. You can almost always expect a response to e-mail within 48 hours.

The content of the course will be presented online in weekly modules. Each module will generally correspond to the chapter(s) in the text. Along with reading assignments from the text, each module may include supplementary reading, weekly projects, chapter quizzes and discussion questions.

Topics to be covered:

An introduction to the CJ system

Why do people commit crime?

How do we define and measuring crime?

What is criminal law?

The history and contemporary organization of American law enforcement

Police and the Constitution

The American court system

Pretrial proceedings and the criminal trial

Punishment and sentencing

Probation and community corrections

Jails and prisons

The juvenile justice system

Grading:

Grading generally will break down this way-

Quizzes	12 X 25	300 points
Assignments	12 X (varying amounts)	400 points
Discussion posts	6 X 50	300 points
		1000 total points available

Instructor and contact information:

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