

Syllabus
Spring 2007

CJUS 416-01: **Contemporary Issues: Gangs**. Three (3) credit hours
M, W, F: 1200-1250, 218 Stubbs

Instructor: Dr. Jeffrey P. Rush

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Office Hours: M, W: 0900-1200; T: 1200-1400; Th: 1000-1200 and by appointment (or just come by, I'm there unless I'm not). **Note:** Meetings, official university business and other situations may necessitate a change in or cancellation of office hours.

Texts: Valdez, Al. (2005). *Gangs: A Guide to Understanding Street Gangs*, 4th edition. San Clemente: LawTech.

Sikes, Gini. 1997. *8 Ball Chicks*. New York: Anchor.

Queen. William (2005). *Under and Alone*. NY: Random House

Recommended: Johnson, Jr., W. A., Rettig, R. P., Scott G. M. & Garrison, S. M. (2005). *The Criminal Justice Student Writer's Manual* (3rd Ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall. You can (and should) purchase this text from <http://www.amazon.com> or <http://www.barnesandnoble.com>

Coplin, Bill (2003). *10 Things Employers Want You To Learn In College*. Berkeley: Ten Speed Press. This is a great book that identifies the ten basic know how groups, how to improve your skill level in these areas and how to boost your know how score. I heartily recommend it, especially if you are a freshman or sophomore (although its applicable for everyone, regardless of class level). You can (and should) purchase this text from <http://www.amazon.com> or <http://www.barnesandnoble.com> or from Ten Speed press itself <http://www.tenspeed.com/catalog/tenspeed/find.php3?cat=4> .

Course Objectives: This course will provide an overview into the characteristics and mentality of gang members. Students will learn how to recognize ganging, and understand the ganger's mentality and influence in America today. In addition, this course will explore gang reduction initiatives, divided roughly into policies (legislative, institutional, and judicial) and programs (social interventions, police deterrence measures, etc.).

Your active participation in all aspects of this course will assist you in improving your know how score in

- establishing a work ethic,
- communicating verbally and in writing,
- influencing people,
- gathering information, and
- asking and answering the right questions

This course will use class discussion, videos, current events, and the text to achieve the above. **NOTE 2:** Class discussion will not necessarily be a repetition of material in the chapters; however should you have questions feel free to bring them up

during class discussion or with me in the office. It is your responsibility to read and know the information in the texts.

NOTE 3: Videos watched in class might not be able to be made up!

It is my philosophy that real learning takes place outside the classroom. The purpose of the classroom is to HELP focus on major issues, to assist in the synthesis of knowledge, to engage in constructive criticism, and to interject material not found in the reading assignments.

The burden of becoming educated lies with you. To be successful in this course, you will need to engage in active learning.

Grading: Your grade for this class will come from the following:

Jeopardy assignment	10pts see below for due dates and information
Sikes book review	30pts due NLT 2400 18 February 2007 (NOTE 5: this will be your posted mid-term grade)
Queen book review	30pts due NLT 2400 18 March 2007
Movie review	15pts due NLT 2400 29 April 2007
Final experience	15pts available the week of 1-8 May. Unavailable at 2400 8 May 2007

The Jeopardy assignment

Your assignment, should you decide to accept it is to prepare five one page summaries of a non-criminal justice news story, at least one of which must be an International story. Each summary is worth two points each and are **due NLT than 2400 28 January, 11 February, 4 March, 25 March and 1 April.**

The book review

Is an analysis of the book, NOT a summary. If you absolutely, positively have to summarize the book, you may do so in the first paragraph. The rest of your 500-750 word paper must be an analysis. The **reflective book review** will answer two fundamental questions “What is the book trying to do?” and “How well is it doing it?” What did you think about what the author had to say, how did it compare with other cj books you might have read, how did the book read, would you recommend this book to other classes?

The movie review

Is an analysis of any self selected movie whose primary theme is gangs. Again, it is an analysis not a summary. You may devote only one paragraph to this 250-500 word essay. How were gangs portrayed, how was criminal justice portrayed, would recommend this movie to others?

Feel free to check out <http://townhall.com/BooksMovies/> for really good examples of both book and movie reviews.

NOTE 4: All written assignments must be typed, double spaced throughout with standard margins (1.5" on left, 1" at the top, bottom and right) and include pagination. Assignments will be graded using a holistic method (more information can be found on Blackboard). **Writing proficiency is required for a passing grade in this course.** Written assignments must follow an APA style format.

Whenever in doubt as to writing mechanics, take a look at the journals *Justice Quarterly* or *American Journal of Criminal Justice* and follow that style. Use a recent issue, one published within the past year.

Another great reference is Johnson, Jr. et.al., *The Criminal Justice Student Writer's Manual* (3rd ed).

Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in a grade of F (if graded at all).

In writing for this class, remember the words of Winston Churchill, "Say what you have to say as clearly as you can and in as few words as possible" (Hayward, 1997: 106). This was Churchill's commandment and should be yours as well.

You should also keep these words from Robert Ringer in mind as you write for this class: "Simplicity is crucial. I learned this gem from William Strunk's timeless little classic *The Elements of Style*. This book has been around for decades, and everything in it holds true today, especially the little jewel that follows:

'Vigorous writing is concise. A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts. This requires not that the writer make all his sentences short, or that he avoid all detail and treat his subjects only in outline, but that every word tell.'

Simplicity is a crucial aspect of quality writing. I often remind would-be writers that the power of the understatement is enormous. I'm always amazed by how many extraneous words and sentences people leave in their finished literary offerings - from books to e-mails. Extraneous words and sentences can actually detract from a writer's main point."

You must be able to save word processing files in a .doc (Microsoft Word), .rtf (Rich Text Format), or .txt (Text) format for sharing files. You are expected to have a working knowledge and capability with your computer before entering this class.

Please submit all papers and materials through the appropriate location in the assignments folder on blackboard. Blackboard can be found at <http://blackboard.ulm.edu/> or through the ULM website "quick links." If the section does not appear, it probably means you are late with your assignment. **NOTE 5: any assignment submitted anywhere other than it's section – without instructor approval – will not be graded.**

In addition, class announcements, the final experience and other important information will be posted on Blackboard. It would be in your best interest to check it out at least once a week if not more frequently.

All submissions must have your name in the header of the document and in the file name as well. Please add the appropriate extension to the file name before submitting. The attachments **must** be in one of the following formats: .doc or .rtf and submitted in the following manner: [last name][course number][assignment].[extension - .doc, .rtf, .txt] For example: Yourlastname416bookrev.doc

--**Submissions not in this format will NOT be accepted or graded (as I won't be able to open them or to tell whose they are).**

REMEMBER: Computers are strange animals, and things don't always work out the way they are supposed to, so be redundant. *Individual problems will be dealt with individually and at the discretion of the instructor.* Remember also, that a failure to plan on your part *does not* constitute an emergency on my part. **Computer and printer problems are not accepted as vital excuses** as there are computer labs all across campus.

The Experience

The experience will be online, and will cover material presented in class and in the Valdez book. You will have at least one week to complete it.

Attendance: Your attendance and participation in class discussions is encouraged and expected. You cannot participate if you are not here, and simply being here is not conducive to participating. There will be material covered in the lecture that is not covered in the text, and not all reading assignments will be discussed in class. Beginning with the third class, attendance will be taken on a regular basis, and **attendance will determine all borderline grades!**

When in Blackboard for this course, you will see a series of "buttons" down the left side. The following buttons will have the following information:

Announcements: Self Explanatory. Keep in mind that some announcements are permanent (and appear at the top) and others are not (they appear below the permanent ones and "disappear" after some period of time). You can, however, view all the announcements simply by clicking on "all announcements."

Syllabus: Guess what? The syllabus will be located here.

Course Material: Links to articles of interest for this class (which may or may not necessarily have anything to do w/gangs) and other potential subject links.

Assignments: More information regarding the assignments for this class.

Communication: How you send email to class members and/or me.

Discussion Board: Where your discussion board assignments will be located.

Tools: Where the Digital Drop Box is, where you can (probably) check your grade, etc.

Class schedule:

Pease begin reading in Valdez, noting the comments above.

Important dates:

19-21 February NO CLASS

12-16 March ACJS meeting: Check BB for assignment(s)

6-13 April SPRING BREAK

Others may be announced in class (and/or on Blackboard, so pay attention!)

Reminders: The **Academy of Criminal Justice Science's** annual meeting is 12-16 March 2007 in Seattle, WA.. If you are interested in attending, please talk with your parents, significant other or whoever must grant permission and/or help fund the trip and let me know. Links to their site are also under external links on BB.

The **Southern Criminal Justice Association** will be meeting in Savannah, GA in September 2007. If you'd like to participate in that meeting, again please talk with your parents, significant other or whoever must grant permission and/or help fund the trip and let me know. Links to this site are also on BB.

Notice: This syllabus does not constitute a contract. It is possible that I will make changes to fit changing circumstances. If there are modifications, students are responsible for updated information.