

**Syllabus**  
**Spring 2008**

**CJUS 416: Contemporary Issues: Gangs.** Three (3) credit hours  
Online

**Instructor:** Dr. Jeffrey P. Rush

**Office:** 210 Stubbs, [rush@ulm.edu](mailto:rush@ulm.edu), 318.342.1441

**Office Hours:** M, W: 0900-1000, 1100-1400, T: 0900-1100; 1230-1400 and by appointment (or just come by, I'm there unless I'm not although generally not on Thursdays or Fridays). **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

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	10 pts see below for information
Sikes book review	15 pts due NLT 2400 8 February 2008
Mid Term experience	15 pts 25-27 February 2008
Queen book review	15 pts due NLT 2400 7 March 2008
American Gangster	15 pts due NLT 2400 4 April 2008
Final experience	15 pts available the week of 1-8 May. Unavailable at 2400 8 May 2007
Discussion Forum	15 pts

Total: 100

*Undergraduate mid-term grades will be posted on-line for students to view via Arrow. Mid-term grades indicate a student's status at mid-semester only and do not indicate the final performance outcome of a student*

#### The Jeopardy assignment

Ten questions that reflect current events in the areas of national, international and entertainment, maybe even sports!

#### 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?

#### American Gangster

Is an analysis of the BET series *American Gangster*. It's available on DVD, and is periodically rerun on BET and on Jazz. It too is an analysis, not a summary. In this 500-750 word essay, you are to react to any three episodes. What do you think about the gagsters portrayed? What do you think about the fact that the gangsters portrayed were all minorities and they victimized "their own" as much as anyone else? How were gangs portrayed, how was criminal justice portrayed, what if any biases were detected? Would recommend this movie to others? Feel free to check out

[http://www.bet.com/BETShows/americangangster.htm?wbc\\_purpose=Basic&WBCMODE=PresentationUnpublished](http://www.bet.com/BETShows/americangangster.htm?wbc_purpose=Basic&WBCMODE=PresentationUnpublished) for more information.

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

### **Writing**

All written assignments must be typed, double spaced throughout with standard margins (1.5" on left, 1" at the top, bottom and right) a font of 12 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.

The folder, "Writing," located in course materials has a number of articles that will help you in your writing; you should take the time to check them out.

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.

All papers will be submitted and checked by Turnitin. Any paper with 30% or more of the work plagiarized will receive a failing grade. If you don't know how to write without plagiarism or do not know what plagiarism is, then ask for help.

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."

### **Submissions**

You are expected to have a working knowledge and capability with your computer before entering this class.

Please remember to save all files in the Office 2003 format in either .doc or .rtf so that I can open them up. Files can be saved to the old format by choosing the "Save As" menu choice after clicking on the Microsoft Office button (the one in the upper left corner with the multicolored-squares logo on it) and selecting "Office 97/2003 Document" format. Click on the "Save" button to complete the operation. If I can't open it, I can't grade it, and if I can't grade it...well, you know.

Please submit all papers and materials through the appropriate location on Moodle. If the section does not appear, it probably means you are late with your assignment. **NOTE 2: any assignment submitted anywhere other than it's section – without instructor approval – will not be graded.**

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: Yourlastname230bookrev.doc

#### Late Policy

All papers are due by the beginning of class. Papers submitted by 1200 the next day will receive a five percent reduction

A ten percent deduction will be taken for each day late thereafter. After four days, the assignment WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED! Each day starts at 1201.

***All papers will be submitted to turnitin.com and any paper with a 30% or higher comparison rate will receive a grade of F and will not be allowed a do over.***

**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 Experiences

The experience will cover material presented in class and in the Valdez book.

#### Discussion Forums

You must reply to the initial question posed by me. Your response must be substantive in nature and go beyond "good post," "I agree," etc.

You have plenty of time for each assignment; therefore **NO ASSIGNMENT WILL BE ACCEPTED LATE.** Individual problems will be dealt with individually.

#### **Important dates:**

4-6 February	Mardis Gras Holidays
11-15 March	ACJS
22-28 March	Spring Holidays
2 May	Last day of classes

**Reminders:** The **Academy of Criminal Justice Science's** annual meeting is 11-15 March 2008 in Cincinnati, OH. 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 Moodle.

The **Southern Criminal Justice Association** will be meeting in Nawlins in September 2008. 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 Moodle.

**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.