

YOUNG OFFENDERS AND JUSTICE CRIM 254

Instructor: Kelli Moorhouse, M.C.J. (in progress)
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Course Description:

An examination of juvenile offending, its extent, impact, and treatment. This includes an exploration of causation, legal process, and prevention and treatment programs. A detailed and critical analysis of Young Offenders (YCJA) legislation will be undertaken to reflect the current focus of juvenile justice in Canada.

Learner Outcomes:

After successfully completing this course, you should be able to:

- identify and evaluate the concept of juvenile delinquency / youth crime and the range of behaviours included under this concept;
- report in depth on the magnitude and impact of youth crime in Canada;
- identify and critically assess the theories purported to explain juvenile delinquency / youth crime;
- evaluate in depth juvenile justice legislation (Youth Criminal Justice Act) in terms of underlying philosophies and current interpretations (e.g. definitions and legal processes);
- identify and review current and critical issues relating to youth justice in Canada;
- identify future trends in social responses to youth crime and youth justice;

Required Materials:

Bell, S.J. (2003) *Young Offenders and Juvenile Justice. A Century After the Fact* (2nd edition). Toronto: ITP Nelson.

Youth Criminal Justice Act (Pocket Criminal Code)

Course Format:

It is expected that you will share your thoughts about the material as it is presented. Guest speakers, audio-visual presentations, and small group discussions complement the basic lecture-discussion delivery of this course.

Instructional Policies:

1. Attendance and Participation

Regular attendance and active participation are required. It is expected that you will arrive on time, be attentive, non-disruptive, constructive and respectful to others in their class participation. I encourage you to bring in current events that relate to the course.

2. Class Preparation

Students are expected to complete the assigned readings before coming to class. You are also expected to participate in class discussions and activities based on the readings.

3. Late Penalty

All assignments must be completed and submitted on the date assigned. All late written work will be penalized 20% per day unless an extension is legitimately warranted and approved by me in advance of the assignment due date.

4. Written Assignment requirements

All assignments must be handed to me by you, personally, at the beginning of class. Assignments put under the door or by mail, or otherwise submitted **will not be accepted**. Do not have someone else hand in your assignment.

5. Plagiarism, Cheating, and Academic Dishonesty

See the College calendar!

Remember that homework assignments must be completed individually.

6. Grade Description (FYI)

A: Designates a “superior level of achievement”; A letter grade of “A” is awarded to the student who surpasses course expectations by doing additional reading and providing well thought out and clearly articulated idea on exams and assignments. The student demonstrates outstanding organizational, analytical, and critical thinking skills and shows added resourcefulness and initiative in meeting course requirements.

B: Designates a “high level of achievement”; A letter grade of “B” is awarded to the student who exhibits substantial comprehension of the course readings and lecture materials and is able to reflect this knowledge verbally and in writing. The student demonstrates concrete analytical thinking skills and clearly performs above average in meeting course requirements.

C: Designates a “satisfactory level of achievement”; The “C” student meets all course requirements satisfactorily and has a competent understanding of course materials. Further improvement is attainable with effort and the refinement of reading, writing, organizational, and analytical skills.

D: Designates a “minimum level of achievement”; The “D” student generally performs below average and does not show signs of having read the assigned readings and/or is unable to present ideas in writing or with sufficient clarity or detail. The student may need remedial assistance to elevate reading and writing skills.

F: Designates “below a minimum level of achievement”; The “F” student fails to meet most or all course requirements which may be due to poor or non-attendance at lectures, hastily prepared assignments, not having done the required readings or some other problem.

7. Course Completion Requirements

You must complete all evaluative requirements to receive a passing grade in this course. Unfortunately, if you don’t complete all requirements, you will receive an F grade.

Course Evaluation:

Participation – 5%
Examinations – 50%
Class Presentation – 15%
Essay – 30%

1. Participation (5%)

The mark for participation is for the quality and quantity of your contribution to the learning that takes place in the classroom. It also includes the completion of approximately 5 homework assignments.

2. Examinations (50%)

There are three examinations in this course; examinations #1 and #2 are worth 15% each, and examination #3 during the final examination week is worth 20%.

The exams are based on readings, student presentation materials, videos, guest speakers, and lecture notes.

The format includes true/false, fill in the blank, multiple choice, matching, and short answer.

Review questions for readings and lecture notes will be available online approximately 1 week before the exam date.

3. Class Presentation (15%) and Essay (30%)

You will prepare a presentation and write an essay on a current Canadian youth justice topic. You will be selecting one of the following topics (or something pre-approved by me) and **describing and analyzing** it with particular emphasis on applying theories to explain the behaviour (see Bell text, chapters 5, 6, 7).

Topics to choose from include:

- Youth gangs - male
- Youth gangs - female
- Child abuse and youth crime connection
- Drugs and youth crime connection
- Female youth crime
- Street youth and crime
- Adolescent sexual offenders
- Adolescent prostitutes
- Aboriginal youth in conflict with the law
- Youth violent crime

Basic criteria includes:

1. A Canadian focus (except for the theories);
2. A minimum of five references (primary); this does not include your textbook;
3. Use of a minimum of three theories in your analysis;

The Presentation:

- is to be a minimum of 45 minutes
- is to include questions to ask the audience
- videos are available on some topics (see me or do a media search in the library)
- provide the instructor with a brief (outline) of the presentation
- each person in the group must present something

Audience

- in preparation for this presentation, as a minimum, you will need to read all relevant materials found in your textbook

Audience etiquette

- be respectful
- be involved and attentive
- write notes; ask questions

Grading of Presentation:

Your presentation is graded by both the class and by me (50% by each);
The class will establish the criteria for evaluating the presentations (we will do this in the second week of classes);

The Essay:

- ✓ you have a choice of writing one essay as a group, an individual essay, or submitting an essay that 2 or 3 or 4 of you have written together;
- ✓ approximately 10 pages (extreme maximum 15 pages)
- ✓ 1.5 line spacing, 1 inch margins, 12 font in Times Roman or Arial
- ✓ Cover page; Work cited page (not a bibliography);
- ✓ Referencing in APA (see CJ Handbook)
- ✓ Essay format (no table of contents)

The paper is due at the start of class, one week after the presentation; late papers are penalized 1% per day late [off of the 30%]

Grading of the Essay:

The following are basic guidelines that I use when evaluating essays or papers.

A-, A, A+

The paper demonstrates effective organization, a complete and substantial argument, sound judgment and criticism, and a polished, virtually error-free style. It often will have something special that distinguishes it from a solid B+ paper - a sense of profound thought, original research or approach, exceptionally sound research, or a special way with words.

Another central characteristic of an "A" paper is full content which gives the reader a sense of being taught by each thought and explanation. The style will be interesting, the phrasing is not clichéd or dull, and the essay flows smoothly from idea to idea. Assertions are fully supported by quotations and explanations, leaving no question as to the source and significance of ideas.

B-, B, B+

The paper is competent, but not exceptional. Its content, organization, and style are basically sound, but it does not have the sense of something special in richness of content or style which is essential to "A" work. A "B" essay is interesting and offers solid ideas and information. The thesis is clear and reasonably original, and its support is logical and quite well organized. Word choice is more appropriate and varied than in the "C" essay, and the number of stylistic and grammatical errors is still very low.

C, C+

The paper contains some fairly major flaws of argument, style or structure. The reader tends to feel that the essay has some interesting points, but that they have not been clearly expressed or fully thought through. Examples of "C" papers include papers which have ideas or information that seem weak or unoriginal, which have major grammatical or writing errors consistently, which do not deal with the issue fully, which wander from the subject or thesis, which are disorganized or difficult to follow, or which are "well-padded".

F

Major qualities of the “F” paper include frequent writing errors, faulty logic, vague or confusing style, a lack of organization, lack of quotations or explanatory support, or content with little to do with the topic. Finally, papers which are obviously “last-minute” or do little other than list quotations with an introduction and conclusion also fit into the “F” category.

CLASS SCHEDULE (subject to revision)

OVERVIEW OF YOUNG OFFENDERS IN CANADA

Jan. 10 Introduction to the course

Jan. 12 The Concept of "Young Offender"

Read before this class Bell, pp. 7-26

Also, visit <http://www.bellyoungoffenders2e.nelson.com> and write down what this site provides to you as a student

Jan. 17 Trends and Patterns in Youth Crime
/19/24

Read ahead Bell, Chapter 3

Also, before this class visit

<http://canada.justice.gc.ca/en/ps/yj/information/mythreal.html>

and write down the first two myths stated at this site about youth crime, and what the actual reality is.

Jan. 26 Young Offenders and the Media

Read before this class Bell, pp. 31-2; 70-2

Also, bring to this class a news clipping addressing something to do with crime and youth in Canada (try a google search)

ATTEMPTING TO UNDERSTAND YOUTH AND OFFENDING

Jan. 31 An Introduction and overview

Video: Chasing Away Rain Clouds

Review theories found in Bell, Chapter 5, 6, 7

Feb. 2 Presentation Topic: _____

Feb. 7 Presentation Topic: _____

Feb. 9 **Examination #1**

Feb. 14 Presentation Topic: _____

Feb. 16 Presentation Topic: _____

Feb. 21 Presentation Topic: _____

Feb. 23 Presentation Topic: _____

Feb. 28 Presentation Topic: _____

Mar. 2 Presentation Topic: _____

THE APPLIED PERSPECTIVE: YCJA

Mar. 7 Creating a Juvenile Justice System

Read ahead Bell, Chapter 2

Mar. 9 Principles and Philosophy of the YCJA

Review Bell Chapter 2; YCJA

Also, before this class, write down the sections of the YCJA that address its principles and philosophy and summarize what is found in each of these sections

Mar. 14 **Examination #2**

Mar. 16 Video: Youth Justice: A New Approach (45 minutes)

Mar. 21/23 Legal Processing Under the YCJA: Police

Read ahead, Bell Chapter 8; YCJA

*there may be a homework assignment for this section; it will be given out in advance

Mar. 28 *EASTER MONDAY - NO CLASS*

Mar. 30 Youth Court
/Apr. 4

Read ahead Bell Chapter 9; YCJA

*there may be a homework assignment for this section; it will be given out in advance

Apr. 6/11 Adjudication and Disposition

Read ahead Bell Chapter 10; YCJA

*there may be a homework assignment for this section; it will be given out in advance

Apr. 13 YCJA - various topics

Course Wrap Up

Examination Week **Examination #3**