Course Description:

In the past 30 plus years, corrections has become a critical policy issue. Legislators have passed much tougher sentencing policies, probation caseloads have “swelled,” prisons now are at maximum capacity, and the death penalty has faced multiple challenges as the Supreme Court has outlawed gas chambers and several states have halted executions in the face of evidence that its application is “flawed.” We now confront a larger than ever parolee population as more and more people “reenter” society from overcrowded prisons. This course will introduce you to important issues in Corrections and Public Policy from multiple perspectives. You will read writings by academics, practitioners, and inmates/parolees. You will see videos that illustrate the “prison” experience, and we will take an in-depth look at the theories that govern these correctional practices.

Course Materials:

This semester there are a variety of readings that you will be assigned for this course. Largely they will be comprised of academic journals, but there are two books that you must purchase and read, in addition to the articles. The academic articles are posted on Blackboard and you are responsible for purchasing the required books. The books required for purchase are as follows:


The readings posted on Blackboard are divided by week and focus on the theme for that week. Please pay attention to which week we are on and come to class prepared and ready to discuss the topics of the day.
Assignments and Grading:

The course is reading, writing, and speaking intensive. The successful student’s work product will evidence (1) an understanding of the general doctrines of the American correctional system; (2) an ability to think and write analytically as demonstrated by written assignments, (3) involvement in the learning process by preparedness for class, participation in class discussion, and initiative in timely completion and submission of all assignments.

However, because enrollment is low I am treating this class as a hybrid. Therefore, you will be working at home every other week on writing assignments, and when you are in class with me, we will focus more on the discussion and presentation elements of the class. Since we are such a small group, you can expect us to have light days and not spend the entire 3 hours in class.

1) **Discussion notes and questions on the weekly readings** (30 pts each, 180 points total)

Graduate classes by nature are reading and discussion intensive. These readings will help guide you toward the comprehensive exam and thesis processes. In an effort to guide the discussions, I believe that students should take an active role in weekly classes. Therefore, each week you should come to class with a set of notes and a variety of questions that promotes discussion of the readings. There can be overlap among students and myself dependent on the week’s topic. All of you will be expected to be able to discuss the readings intelligently each week (see participation below). Therefore, before class you should prepare 1) detailed notes on the reading and 2) have a list of 6-7 discussion questions to prompt discussion for that day (these are not questions about fact, but rather open ended questions). You may use these notes as a guide for the class discussion but you MUST turn in both the notes and the questions to me by 5:00pm the night before class (the Wednesday night before we meet for class). If your questions and notes are late, then I will deduct 5 points from your score. Everyone is required to do this for the first week of class and will serve as a trial run for the semester.

2) **Attendance and Participation** (70 pts total)

In graduate courses, attendance is critical, because the class interaction stimulates ideas. I expect you to attend every in-class meeting and to be on time. We will not go the full three hours, but I expect you to give me your attention for the time that we are in class. I also expect you to be prepared (meaning having read the readings!) and participate in discussion. Each day, I will log whether you attend and whether or not it is clear from your participation in discussions that you have read the readings. If it is not clear to me that you have read, you will not get full credit for participation for that week. However, since you have completed notes and have written out questions for class, this shouldn’t be a problem whatsoever. You may miss one class without penalty, but only for legitimate reasons and you must alert me to the absence as soon as possible (e.g., conferences, medical). You all should be so completely prepared for class that I take a back seat to your discussions and you talk amongst yourselves for the duration of the discussion.

3) **One presentation of a weekly topic** (60 pts total)

Each of you will give one short presentation on a class topic (approved by me) that fits in with that week’s schedule. There will be 1-2 presentations per week, but once a week fills then you will no longer be able to choose that topic, so if something catches your eye you should try to
grab it before anyone else. For this presentation, you should find an academic article of substantial length (15+ pages) and create a presentation that addresses the study, the key findings, and how it applies to the topic for the week. **You should not use materials that have been assigned or given to you in class.** The presentation should be no more than 15 minutes. I strongly suggest that you be creative as possible and use PowerPoint presentations. Videos and other visual media are optional (if you choose to use a video as part of your presentation, please sent it to me first). Be aware that videos do not count toward your 15 minutes. On the day that you present, you will need to give me copies of the materials used during your presentation as well as a list of references.

4) **At-Home Written Assignments** (30 pts each, 150 pts total)

As stated earlier, because of the low enrollment this class will be set up with a hybrid structure. Every other week, you will work from home and complete the readings for that week like you normally would. Instead of taking detailed notes and creating written questions, you will complete a short paper that discusses the reading assignments and court cases if assigned. At the end of each in-class session, I will provide you with a writing prompt, which you will be required to submit by 6:00pm – when class begins the following week. You should submit the papers via Blackboard.

Each paper should be between 2-3 pages long, single-spaced, 12-point TNR font, and should have 1" margins. You must talk about each of the readings in-depth, give equal attention to each of the readings, and successfully answer each of the prompts. You should properly cite the articles, book chapters, or court cases that you are assigned to read in APA format. Additionally, if you choose to use outside information you must properly cite that as well. Please do not use Wikipedia to as an outside informational source.

5) **Practitioner Plan** (75 pts total)

Field practitioners often have to implement policy that has been made far from the “front lines” and often without much input from those who do corrections work. Administrators at correctional sites (e.g., Wardens, Assistant Wardens) and field offices (e.g., Chief Probation or Parole Officers, Deputy Chiefs) have the difficult task of making policy “work” in the real world. For this assignment, you will put yourself in the role of a practitioner who must take newly implemented policy and make it work in the daily structure of prison, probation, or parole practice. This paper will be your description to your staff of how this policy will be implemented in your office/location. It must be brief, clear (no jargon, no “wordiness”), and easy for your line staff to understand. See the provided practitioner plan tips pages that are on Blackboard for more information.

6) **Semester Paper – Literature Review, Research Questions, and Methodology Options** (15-20 pages + grid) (75 pts total)

For your semester paper, I would like you to think about these issues in terms of research and your role as a researcher. Consequently, for one assignment, you will do the “up front” part of a research project that you can use in the future if you would like to pursue research in this area (with or without my help). For this assignment you will (1) write a comprehensive literature review on a correctional topic of your choice (approved in advance by me), a critical one would be best. Then, in grid form, (2) make a list of research questions that you believe still need to be addressed in the literature for that topic and a detailed list of methodological options that would allow you to address those research questions with an explanation for how those approaches would answer the questions (and if they would do so differently, how and why). The more detail
you have regarding these methodological options the better. This will, of course, also include a list of references attached to the back. We will discuss this in more depth in class.

Grading Scale

1) Class discussion (30 points each) 180 points
2) Attendance and participation (10 points each) 70 points
3) Presentation on a weekly topic 60 points
4) At-home writing assignments (30 points each) 150 points
5) Practitioner plan 75 points
6) Semester paper + research grid 75 points

Point Total for Semester 510 points total

Letter Grades will be assigned as follows:

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<th>Total Points</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Grade Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>559.5 – 535</td>
<td>C</td>
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Additional Policies

Classroom Behavior
The College of Arts and Sciences encourages classroom discussion and academic debate as an essential intellectual activity. It is essential that students learn to express and defend their beliefs, but it is also essential that they learn to listen and respond respectfully to others whose beliefs they may not share. The College will always tolerate diverse, unorthodox, and unpopular points of view, but it will not tolerate condescending or insulting remarks. When students verbally abuse or ridicule and intimidate others whose views they do not agree with, they subvert the free exchange of ideas that should characterize a university classroom. If their actions are deemed by the professor to be disruptive, they will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include being involuntarily withdrawn from the class.

Plagiarism and Cheating
Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else’s work as your own. 1) When you borrow someone else’s facts, ideas, or opinions and put them entirely in your own words, you must acknowledge that these thoughts are not your own by immediately citing the source in your paper. Failure to do this is plagiarism. 2) When you also borrow someone else’s words (short phrases, clauses, or sentences), you must enclose the copied words in quotation marks as well as citing the source. Failure to do this is plagiarism. 3) When you present someone else’s paper or exam (stolen, borrowed, or bought) as your own, you have committed a clearly intentional form of intellectual theft and have put your academic future in jeopardy. This is the worst form of plagiarism.

Here is another explanation from the 2010, sixth edition of the Manual of The American Psychological Association (APA). Plagiarism: Researchers do not claim the words and ideas of another as their own; they give credit where credit is due. Quotations marks should be used to indicate the exact words of another. Each time you paraphrase another author (i.e., summarize
a passage or rearrange the order of a sentence and change some of the words), you need to credit the source in the text. The key element of this principle is that authors do not present the work of another as if it were their own words. This can extend to ideas as well as written words. If authors model a study after one done by someone else, the originating author should be given credit. If the rationale for a study was suggested in the Discussion section of someone else’s article, the person should be given credit. Given the free exchange of ideas, which is very important for the health of intellectual discourse, authors may not know where an idea for a study originated. If authors do know, however, they should acknowledge the source; this includes personal communications. (pp. 15-16). Consult the Writing Center or a recommended guide to documentation and research such as the Manual of the APA or the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers for guidance on proper documentation. If you still have doubts concerning proper documentation, seek advice from your instructor prior to submitting a final draft.

Penalties for Plagiarism: Should a faculty member discover that a student has committed plagiarism, the student will receive a grade of ‘F’ in that course and the matter will be referred to the Honor Council for possible disciplinary action. The faculty member, however, has the right to give freshmen and sophomore students a “zero” for the assignment and to allow them to revise the assignment up to a grade of “F” (50%) if they believe that the student plagiarized out of ignorance or carelessness and not out of an attempt to deceive in order to earn an unmerited grade. This option is not available to juniors, seniors, or graduate students, who cannot reasonably claim ignorance of documentation rules as an excuse.

Penalties for Cheating: Should a faculty member discover a student cheating on an exam or quiz or other class project, the student will receive a “zero” for the assignment and not be allowed to make the assignment up. The incident must be reported to the chair of the department and to the Honor Council. If the cheating is extensive, however, or if the assignment constitutes a major grade for the course (e.g., a final exam), or if the student has cheated in the past, the student should receive an “F” in the course, and the matter should be referred to the Honor Council. Under no circumstances should a student who deserves an “F” in the course be allowed to withdraw from the course with a “W.”

UT Tyler E-Mail
UT Tyler E-mail is the official means of communicating course and university business with students and faculty – not the U.S. Mail and not other e-mail addresses. Students must check their UT Tyler e-mail accounts regularly, if not daily.

Students with Disabilities
University of Texas at Tyler seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for all qualified persons with disabilities. This University will adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required to afford equal education opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to register with the Director of Student Counseling and to contact the faculty member in a timely fashion to arrange for suitable accommodations.

Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment in any form will not be tolerated. For more information on this issue consult the Student Handbook.

Incompletes
The College policy for “Incompletes” discourages them. They are appropriate, however, when the following requirements are met:
The student cannot complete the class because of a severe illness to self or immediate family member at the very end of the semester (after the date for withdrawal from class) or because of a traumatic event in the student's life (e.g., death of or serious injury or illness to an immediate family member) at the end of the semester, AND

The student is passing the class at the time he or she cannot complete the semester, AND

The student has completed either 85-90% of the course requirements or is missing only major assignments due after the final date for withdrawal from class and after the onset of the illness or traumatic event (e.g., assignments such as the final exam for the course or a research paper), AND, finally,

The faculty member must have the approval of the department chair before giving an Incomplete.

**Student Responsibility for Dropping a Course**
It is the responsibility of the STUDENT to drop the course before the final date for withdrawal from a course. Faculty members, in fact, may not drop a student from a course.

**Grade Changes & Appeals**
Faculty are authorized to change final grades only when they have committed a computational error, and they must receive the approval of their department chairs and the dean to change the grade. As part of that approval, they must attach a detailed explanation of the reason for the mistake. Only in rare cases would another reason be entertained as legitimate for a grade change. A student who is unhappy with his or her grade on an assignment must discuss the situation with the faculty member teaching the course. If students believe that they have been graded unfairly, they have the right to appeal the grade using a grade appeal process in the Student Handbook and the Faculty Handbook.