SOCI 2120 Introduction to the Criminal Justice System

Fall 2026

Instructor: James. H. Gadberry, PhD

Email: jgadberry@unm.edu

Office Hours: I will answer emails within 24 hours. There is a Virtual Office located in Canvas. You can post questions anytime, but I will real-time monitor this discussion area every Monday from 9:00am to 10:00am (MS or by appointment.

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to social issues that are currently affecting the criminal justice system in the United States. The course will cover the history of the US criminal justice system and how our system compares to other countries. We will address how the US criminal justice system attempts to create and preserve a balance between sustaining order, maintaining individual rights, and promoting justice.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Identify and explain sociological theories concerning the criminal justice system.
2. Describe and identify the influences of policy and ideology on the criminal justice system.
3. Describe how various sociological theories informs the US criminal justice system.
4. Identify important ethical issues concerning the operation and outcomes of the US criminal justice system.

Course Materials

There are no books required for this course.

Assessments

UNM-conducts ongoing assessments of student learning so that we can continue to improve the curriculum to give students the best education possible. The data collected for this assessment will be selected by the instructor or the department and may come from exams, projects, or other assignments. The assessment will focus on the learning outcomes in this syllabus (listed above).

The data from this assessment will be collected and reported anonymously. Data summaries will be reported to the department, to the Office of Instruction, and posted on the web. The information collected will be used to make improvements to curriculum and teaching. This assessment is not a reflection of your grade and is not a grading exercise; it is simply an evaluation of how well students are mastering certain skills.

Instructional Methods

Welcome to our class! Online classes are very fast paced. If you have completed online courses you already know this fact. If you are new to online classes you will soon learn what the others already know. The key is to not panic. Stay up with your readings, plan some time to study, complete your work on time, and, add to the class discussion. These things will take you down the road to success.

Let me start with a discussion concerning what I expect from each of you in this class. Online classes can be a bit confusing. I hope this introduction helps clear up some of that confusion.

Discussion Assignments

1. There will be two (2) discussion assignments in each Learning Module. Additionally, there will be one (1) introduction discussion in the "Start Here" area due the first week of class.

2. Each discussion will open on Sunday at 11:59pm. You must post your initial post answering the discussion question no later than Wednesday at 11:59pm. This will leave the remaining time for replies to classmates before closing on Sunday at 11:59pm.

2. You are required to reply to no less than three of your classmate's posts on at least two separate days. Of course, I encourage you to reply to more than three classmates and enjoy the discussions more than two days. You must post your initial answer to each discussion question before you will be allowed to reply to classmates. Refer to the Discussion Grading Rubric for more details.

3. Discussion assignments are designed to be less formal. These discussions are our chance to explore and debate the course material. The grading rubric says that you need to use course

material in the discussions. You can also use other source material that you find for the discussion topic. Keep in mind that you must use the material in your work. This means that you need to have original thoughts leading to the use of your material. Simply adding a citation to your work without context/analysis is not "using" your source. Speaking of citing your use of material, this does not need to be as formal as using a writing style (such as APA). In the discussions you can cite your material in any way that you want. This can be an informal mention of the material, a link to your source, or the use of APA (7th ed.) citation style.

Thought Papers:

1. There will be one thought paper per module in Learning Modules 1 and 3.

2. These assignments may vary from short writing assignments to interactive and hands on type work.

3. You must use APA (7th ed.) to document the use of your sources. There are several online sources about APA (7th ed.) writing style.

4. Thought paper instructions will be posted in the Learning Module.

Grades and Grading Policies

Evaluation will be based on the following course activities and components:

Discussions: 9 @ 5 points each = 45 points (18%)

Thought Papers: 2 @ 100 points each = 200 points (82%)

Total Points: 245 points (100%)

Note: See the "Rubrics" in the Modules tab for details concerning the grading of the assignments.

Late work will be assessed the following points penalty:

1 to 24 hours late = 5% deduction

25 to 48 late = 10% deduction

49 to 72 hours = 15% deduction

73 hours to 120 hours = 20% deduction

More than 120 hours = 25% deduction

Discussion assignments cannot be made up.

All late work must be turned in before the start of final exam week.

The grades will be based on the following scale:

A+ = 97 – 100%, A = 93 – 96%, A- = 90 – 92%

B+ = 87 – 89%, B = 83 – 86%, B- = 80 – 82%

C+ = 77 – 79%, C = 73 – 76%, C- = 70 – 72%

D+ = 67 – 69%, D = 63 – 66%, D- = 60 – 62%

Below 60% = F

Additional Thoughts Concerning Discussions

You may find it useful to respond as you read the posts and your thoughts are fresh. At times, you may want to think about a response for a day or two before adding your post. It is often best to compose your discussion and responses off line using a word processor. This allows you to take your time composing your work. An additional advantage to this method is that you will be able to check the work for spelling and grammar. If you complete your responses this way you will also have a saved record of all your submissions.

You may choose to answer a post directly from the discussion board. Be sure to review your work for clarity and spelling before you hit the submit button.

You are expected to be the sole author of your work. If you use the work of someone else you must properly cite and reference that contribution. This requirement includes Internet materials. Be especially careful when you use the Internet as a source. Be sure to recognize all copyrights. Penalties for plagiarism are extensive. They can range from non-acceptance of the work to expulsion.

Be courteous in your discussions. Do not post anything illegal, erotic, harassing, threatening, embarrassing, racially or ethnically offensive or insensitive.

I will not respond to every post. I want to let the class develop its own paths. When necessary, I will join in. This may be to add material, provide guidance, encourage, or to redirect. I will read each and every post.

Academic Honesty Policy

You are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in academic and professional matters. The University reserves the right to take disciplinary action, including dismissal, against any student who is found responsible for academic dishonesty. Any student who has been judged to have engaged in academic dishonesty in course work may receive a reduced or failing grade for the work in question and/or for the course. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, dishonesty on quizzes, tests, or assignments; claiming credit for work not done or done by others (plagiarism); and hindering the academic work of other students. A brief guide to what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it can be found here: http://losalamos.unm.edu/library/docs/avoiding-plagiarism.pdf.

Email Etiquette

When emailing a professor:

1. Include your class and what the email is regarding in the subject line.
2. Address your professor appropriately using their professional title (Hi Dr. Gadberry). And don't misspell their name.
3. Try to keep the email brief and to the point.
4. Write in a positive tone.
5. Be clear about what you are asking. Do not ask for extra credit or for me to change your grade at the end of the semester.
6. Check for spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors before clicking Send.
7. Use a professional font, not decorative.
8. Use sentence case. DO NOT USE ALL CAPITAL LETTERS, all lower case letters, or lots of colors.
9. Do not use "text speak" in an email. In other words, use complete and grammatically correct sentences.
10. Keep graphic symbols/emojis to a minimum and use only when appropriate.
11. Use a signature (identify yourself) that includes contact information.
12. Re-read your message before sending it.

You should check Announcements each time you log in to the online classroom. You will receive information about campus emergencies via LoboAlerts. Confirm that you are signed up to receive notifications on http://loboalerts.unm.eduLinks to an external site..

Learning Commons: Tutoring Services

Tutoring is available to you in math, science, writing, and other subjects through the Learning Commons: Learning and STEM Centers and Writing Center. In person tutoring is in these centers in the LRC (the building that also has the library). Tutoring in Zoom and, for writing, through email, is also available.

Making use of tutoring is a fantastic way to use your resources and set yourself up to learn deeply and well in your courses.

To schedule an appointment, please go to: Learning Commons Bookings

If you are making an email appointment with the Writing Center, email your draft to tutor@unm.edu after you fill out the form above.

If you have difficulty with the scheduling link above, would like an appointment in a subject not listed at that link, or have a question, email tutor@unm.edu. You'll get answers during business hours Monday through Friday.

The webpage, with more details about available hours, is here: Learning Commons: Tutoring Services webpage.

Accommodations:

UNM is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for students with documented disabilities. As your instructor, it is my objective to facilitate an inclusive classroom setting, in which students have full access and opportunity to participate. To engage in a confidential conversation about the process for requesting reasonable accommodations for this class and/or program, please contact Accessibility Resource Center at arcsrvs@unm.edu or by phone at 505-277-3506.

Credit-hour statement:

This is a three credit-hour course delivered in an entirely online modality over 8 weeks during the Spring 2025 semester. Please plan for a *minimum* of 18 hours per week to learn course materials and complete assignments.

Title IX:

In an effort to meet obligations under Title IX, UNM faculty, Teaching Assistants, and Graduate Assistants are considered "responsible employees." This designation requires that any report of

gender discrimination which includes sexual harassment, sexual misconduct and sexual violence made to a faculty member, TA, or GA must be reported to the Title IX Coordinator at the Office of Equal Opportunity (oeo.unm.edu). For more information on the campus policy regarding sexual misconduct, see: https://policy.unm.edu/university-policies/2000/2740.html