USC Price
Sol Price School of Public Policy

PPD 342: *Crime and Public Policy*

Section 51118
Units: 4
Fall 2024, Tuesday and Thursdays, 4:00 – 5:50 p.m. PST
Location: Verna and Peter Dauterive Hall (VPD) 116
Instructor: Candice Cobarrubias (she/her)
Office Hours: Tuesdays 3:00pm to 4:00 pm by appointment. Can be held virtually.
Contact Info: *ccobarru@usc.edu*

Course Description

This course will seek to develop a student's knowledge of the criminal justice system, the law and how they intersect into the framework of public policy. The course will examine relevant and current topics in the legal system and how they influence the public policy making process (setting agendas, formulating alternatives, and implementation of policies in a crime specific focus). The intent of the course will seek to intermingle contemporary examples with the intellectual foundation of policy analysis and public policy creation.

Learning Objectives

1. Describe how scientific research guides policy and evaluates criminal justice policies with established methodologies.

2. Evaluate policy implementation strategies which incorporate evaluative models and anticipate potential policy reform.

3. Prepare a criminal justice policy brief, which will include policy recommendations.

Course Focus and Orientation

Public Policy is a long-standing mechanism for solving a myriad of societal problems and is accomplished in a variety of contexts, cultural, social, economic, demographic, constitutional, legal, and intergovernmental. Public policy has a clear and definitive role in our everyday existence but many of us overlook its impact or importance. There are three major aspects to public policymaking: public policy agenda-setting, formulation of public policy alternatives and implementation of public policy. Legal sanctions are to be the primary focus of this course.

Criminology is the study of making the laws, violation of the law, and the reaction to each. Whenever a crime or law is violated, a variety of entities come into play (law enforcement, social services, courts, and corrections).

What lies underneath the system is the intersection of criminology and public policy. This will be the focus of PPD 342. The focus of society has remained steadfast on the law enforcement mechanism without further consideration into the public policy method that created the system in the first place. This course will attempt to show how the two disciplines share a highly co-dependent relationship with one another and the greatness of their impact. We will deal with the etiology of crime and what each branch of government (local, state, federal) can do, choose to do, and choose not to do. Within the criminal justice forum, there have been significant public policy issues which have caused major distress in the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. Issues such as the appropriateness and effectiveness of the death penalty; gun control; public health mandates; domestic terrorism, bail reform and the legalization of drugs and narcotics.

In this course, the student will be provided with an opportunity to review, discuss, and evaluate cultural, historical, political, and economic factors to determine what is truly possible and probable in the creation of a public policy. Written exercises will be given to stimulate discourse and challenge every day thought and belief. The students will problem solve and then create policy based on their discussions and interpretations which will be supported and collaborated by their research. (Annex B)

Crime and Public Policy will intermingle problem solving and policy analysis and demonstrate the challenges they present when crafting a sound public policy doctrine and show how incredibly vital crime and public policy are to the way we act and live.

Course Goals

The purpose of this course is for the student to examine criminal issues within the United States judicial system and how they interconnect with the public policy making process. Upon the completion of this course, the student will understand:

a. a fundamental basis for justice and law.
b. the American societal response through public policy and its criminal justice system to the challenge of crime in a free society.
c. the relationship between public policy, crime and the criminal justice system.
d. the application of the scientific method to the study of (1) public policy, (2) crime and the criminal justice system; and,
e. the discrepancies which exist between the American explanations of crime and criminality and the public policy responses to this phenomenon

Overall, the student will be able to analyze the public policy-making process in its application to crime and criminal justice and, to some degree, evaluate the effectiveness of the judicial system and its response to policy issues in the United States.

Required Materials

Any required reading materials will be provided by the instructor.

American Psychological Association. (2009). Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (6th ed.). Washington, DC.

Course Requirements

Attendance

This course will be in person for most of the semester. Online sessions will only happen based on necessity, however, that will not be the norm for class sessions. The students will be required to attend the course in person. A zoom course link will only be provided to those students who have a medical necessity or have made other arrangements in advance with the professor. Other than that, this course will be in person and not available virtually.

All students are expected to be on time and remain until the completion of the class; unauthorized early departure or late arrivals will constitute a grade reduction. Students are expected and required to participate in classroom sessions. Participation allows students to apply the content gleamed from the course and engage in healthy discussion with their peers and faculty. Benefits of participation include interacting with resident experts, gaining an understanding of peer perspectives, building community, and strengthening communication abilities.

Authorized absences include those involving participation in preapproved University activities, religious holidays, and medical contingencies. Students are responsible for obtaining the information covered during their absence from class, whether authorized or not.

Chat GPT/Google Translate/Open AI/Other AI Chatbots

Chat GPT and other are useful tools but submitting text written by such or any AI Chatbots constitutes a violation of academic integrity. Students are expected to write their own submissions. Students can use such AI Chatbots to assist in crafting ideas or formulating concepts that will help them overcome any type of "writer's block." They may use Google Translate as a dictionary and not as a substitute for your own written work. Submitting written work without input of your own is not acceptable and will be deemed as a potential violation of academic integrity.

If you are unsure of how to use Chat GPT or any other AI support, please ask me. I would rather have an open conversation about this and go over it together to show how it can be used to benefit you rather than hinder your academic professionalism.

Participation Grading

Students will be expected to participate in class. Participation is marred into attendance. Class discussion will be determined by such participation and attendance and that is why it is critical to be in class. Participation and Attendance will account for 10% of your total grade.

Active Participation	Moderate Participation	Low Participation
Exhibits evidence of having completed all assignments and activities according to guidelines that were assigned	Attempts to participate and has completed most assignments and activities	Exhibits lack of preparation and noncompletion of required assignments
Initiates discussion and supports points using page specific references to readings or other materials	Supports points during discussion but uses general references to readings and other materials	Rarely initiates discussion and is not able to reference required readings or other materials

Furthers the discussion and builds on the ideas of others; comments and questions reflect having thought deeply about the material	Furthers the discussion and builds on the ideas of others; general or limited references to course materials	Comments do not further the discussion and do not exhibit careful reflection on the material

Written Work

There will be four written papers assigned throughout the course. The papers will be given at different times throughout the semester and constitute the majority basis of your grade. The papers will be in Word format as well as PDF format. They will be submitted via Blackboard to the professor no later than 9 p.m. (PST) on the respective due date.

Papers submitted late will not be accepted absent exigent circumstances -- verifiable extreme medical contingencies (e.g., student in hospital for operation). Papers must be submitted in Word as well as in PDF format. The paper must be double-spaced with 1" margins. No other media will be accepted.

Student Grading and Evaluation

Grade requirements serve two purposes:

   a. to provide the student and instructor with a means to assess achievements of the course goals; and,
   b. to serve as a forum of feedback on the student's performance.

Judgment of student performance will be based solely on the student's ability to achieve pre-determined standards, specifically the course goals and performance objectives which will be defined during the first day of class. Student work will be judged on meeting those standards, and not by way of comparison with other students. There will be no grading "curve" for this class. You will be graded based on your written assignments, participation, and examinations. Individual performance alone will determine the final grade.

The course requirements and the weighing of the graded requirements are as follows:

Participation and Attendance	10 points
Mid Term Examination	20 points
Written Assignments	40 points
• 2 assignments @ 20 pts	
Final Written Exam	30 points
_____	
Total:	**100 points**

There are no push points (extra credit points) for this class. Students are required to attend, be prepared for, and participate in class.

Letter grades for each requirement and the final course grade will be determined using the following criteria:

Letter Grade	Points
A	92 - 100
A-	89 - 91.9
B+	87 - 88.9
B	85 - 86.9
B-	83 - 84.9
C+	80 - 82.9
C	77 - 79.9
C-	73 - 76.9
D	67 - 72.9
F	Fewer than 67

Course Evaluation by Students

Students should share with the instructor suggestions which would improve the quality of the course. These suggestions may be made at any time. The student will also receive a request to complete a formal questionnaire about the course at the end of the semester.

Accommodation

Any student requesting academic accommodation based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodation can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards"

https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/

Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct

Academic Integrity

SCampus, the USC student guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code and information on Academic Integrity. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with and abide by these guidelines, which are found at https://scampus.usc.edu/. A summary of behaviors violating University standards can be also found at: https://scampus.usc.edu/b/11-00-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call

http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740- 9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call

https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) - (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298

https://equity.usc.edu/

Information about how to get help or help a survivor of harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following protected characteristics: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity |Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776

http://dsp.usc.edu/

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs

USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710 https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101 https://diversity.usc.edu/

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

http://dps.usc.edu/

http://emergency.usc.edu/

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call

http://dps.usc.edu/

Annex A
Written Assignments

Writer's Guide:
It is essential that the student follow a standard writer's guide such as Element of Style (Strunk and White), A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations (Turabian), or the McGraw-Hill College Handbook (Marius and Weiner). To avoid plagiarism, it is necessary that the source(s) of non-original materials and ideas be identified.

Do not be late and do not procrastinate. No late papers will be accepted.

All issue papers must meet acceptable University standards for grammar, composition, syntax, spelling, and citations for non-original materials.

Chat GPT and other are useful tools but submitting text written by such or any AI Chatbots constitutes a violation of academic integrity. Students are expected to write their own submissions. Students can use such AI Chatbots to assist in crafting ideas or formulating concepts that will help them overcome any type of "writer's block." They may use Google Translate as a dictionary and not as a substitute for your own written work. Submitting written work without input of your own is not acceptable and will be deemed as a potential violation of academic integrity.

If you are unsure of how to use Chat GPT or any other AI support, please ask me. I would rather have an open conversation about this and go over it together to show how it can be used to benefit you rather than hinder your academic professionalism.

Grading Criteria for Papers

Grades will be assigned based on the following criteria.

"A" Paper

The principal characteristic of the "A" paper is its rich content: "meaty," "dense," "packed." The information delivered is such that one feels significantly taught by the author, sentence after sentence, paragraph after paragraph. The "A" paper is also marked by stylistic finesse: the title and opening paragraph are engaging; the transitions are artful; the phrasing is tight, fresh, and highly specific; the sentence structure is varied; the tone enhances the purposes of the paper. It is completely free from grammatical or typographical errors. Finally, the "A" paper, because of its careful organization and development, imparts a feeling of wholeness and unusual clarity. Not surprisingly, it leaves the reader feeling bright, thoroughly satisfied, and eager to reread the piece. An "A" paper clearly takes a stand and argues and defends that stand to completely persuade the reader, without leaving dangling questions and unexplored avenues of discussion. It is complete unto itself.

"B" Paper

It is significantly more than competent. Besides being almost free of mechanical errors, the "B" paper delivers substantial information in quantity, interest, and value. Its specific points are logically ordered, well developed, and unified around a clear organizing principle that is apparent early in the paper. The opening paragraph draws the reader in; the closing paragraph is both conclusive and thematically related to the opening. The transitions between paragraphs are smooth, and the sentence structures are pleasingly varied. The diction of the "B" paper is typically more concise and precise than that found in the "C" paper. Occasionally, it even shows distinctiveness—finesse and memorability. Overall, a "B" paper makes the reading experience a pleasurable one, for it offers substantial information with few distractions. It establishes a stand on an issue and for the most part clarifies and defends that stand, leaving few unanswered questions and unexplored angles. It is successful in convincing the reader.

"C" Paper

It is overall competent: meets the assignment, has few mechanical errors, and is well organized and developed. However, its information seems thin and commonplace. One reason for this is that the ideas are cast in the form of vague generalities that prompt the confused reader to ask marginally, "In every case?" "Exactly how large?" "Why?" "But how many?" Stylistically, the "C" paper has little to draw the reader in the final paragraphs are often bumpy; the sentences, besides being a bit choppy, tend to follow a predictable (hence, monotonous) subject-verb-object order; and the diction is marred by unconscious repetitions, redundancy, and imprecision. The "C" paper will get the job done but lacks both imagination and intellectual rigor. It attempts to establish a stand on an issue but achieves only average success. It leaves ideas dangling and opens as many doors for further questions as it closes. It is not a very convincing read.

"D" Paper

Its treatment and development of the subject are yet rudimentary. While organization is present, it is neither clear nor effective. Sentences are frequently awkward, ambiguous, and marred by serious mechanical errors. Evidence of careful proofreading, if any, is scanty. The whole piece gives the impression

of having been conceived and written in haste. Or the paper, while of standard writing, missed the assignment completely by achieving something other than requested, such as presenting a summary of an article rather than an analysis and opinion derived from the article.

"F" Paper

Its treatment of the subject is superficial; its theme lacks discernible organization; its prose garbled or stylistically primitive. Mechanical errors are frequent. In short, the ideas, organization, and style fall far below what is acceptable college-level writing.

Annex B
Policy Analysis & Problem Solving

Policy Analysis continues to have the following characteristics:

- Seeks knowledge about the causes and effects of government policy
- Seeks to formulate problems about how something should and could be done
- Seeks to give advice to those in authority that are decision makers
- It is objectively diagnostic and subjectively judgmental

Problem Solving has the following characteristics:

- Problems are formulated within a framework of available solutions
- Effectiveness is the primary goal of the process
- Basic causes are usually beyond the ability of a legislator to change
- Persuasion rather than analysis often determines which decrees get implemented