PPD 342: Crime and Public Policy
Units: 4
Spring 2025—Tuesday and Thursday; 2:00pm to 3:50pm PST
Location: Verna and Peter Dauterive Hall (VPD LL101)
Instructor: Candice Cobarrubias (she/her)
Office: Verna and Peter Dauterive Hall
Office Hours: One hour before start of class; or virtual by appointment
Contact Info: ccobarru@usc.edu

Course Description:
This course is designed to enhance students' understanding of the criminal justice system, legal frameworks, and their integration into public policy. Students will examine current and relevant topics in the legal system and analyze their influence on the policymaking process, including agenda-setting, formulating alternatives, and implementing policies with a focus on crime-related issues. By combining contemporary examples with foundational concepts in policy analysis and public policy development, this course aims to provide students with a comprehensive perspective on the interplay between law, criminal justice, and public policy. Students will develop critical thinking and analytical skills essential for evaluating and creating effective public policy solutions.

Course Notes:
This course explores the intersection of criminology and public policy, examining how these two disciplines are deeply interconnected and their significant impact on society. While the focus of society often remains on law enforcement, this course shifts attention to the public policy frameworks that underpin the criminal justice system. Key topics include the etiology of crime and the roles of government—local, state, and federal—in addressing, enabling, or neglecting solutions to criminal justice issues. Students will analyze public policy challenges that have caused significant strain across the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Through this course, students will:

- Critically evaluate cultural, historical, political, and economic factors shaping public policy.
- Engage in written exercises and discussions designed to challenge conventional beliefs and stimulate intellectual discourse.
- Develop practical problem-solving skills by designing policies supported by collaborative research and analysis.

By the end of the course, students will be equipped to assess and propose informed, realistic, and actionable public policy solutions to address contemporary issues in criminology and criminal justice.

Crime and Public Policy combines problem-solving and policy analysis to explore the challenges involved in developing sound public policy frameworks. This course highlights the critical role that crime and public policy play in shaping societal behavior and the ways we live and interact.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required
Most lectures will be in person and only by way of zoom when necessary. Lectures will not be recorded due to the nature of the material covered in class. Announcements, lecture materials, reading materials and any other class materials will be provided to the student in the Brightspace forum. Any student in need of accommodation will inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester to ensure the student receives the necessary aid to have a successful experience.   For any other technology support, please use the following links: Zoom information for students, Brightspace help for students, Software available to USC Campus.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

APA Publication Manual, 7th Edition (Available online by Amazon or USC Bookstore)
Papers will be formatted according to American Psychological Association guidelines.
Besides the APA Manual, there will be no books assigned to students during this class.
The class is meant to be a discussion and participatory experience.

Assignments and Presentation

This course includes four written assignments and a class presentation:

1. **Paper 1:** An analytical paper based on the lectures and theories covered in the course.
2. **Paper 2 & Class Presentation/Debate:** A position paper that aligns with your stance during a class debate on a recent criminal event. This debate and accompanying paper will serve as the midterm assessment.
3. **Paper 3:** A public policy memo where you draft a concise and actionable policy proposal.
4. **Final Paper:** A comprehensive program or policy that you develop to address a crime of your choosing, applying the concepts and skills learned throughout the course.

Each assignment is designed to build your critical thinking, research, and policymaking skills, while encouraging active engagement with course material.

Attendance and Participation Policy

This course will primarily be conducted in person, with online sessions occurring only when necessary; however, these will not be the norm. Students are expected to attend all in-person sessions, arrive on time, and remain for the duration of the class. Unauthorized late arrivals or early departures may result in a grade reduction. Roll call will be taken within the first 10 minutes of each class session. Active participation in class discussions is a crucial component of this course. Participation enables students to apply course concepts, engage in meaningful dialogue with peers and faculty, and foster a collaborative learning environment. Benefits of participation include exposure to diverse perspectives, opportunities to interact with subject-matter experts, and development of critical communication skills. Attendance and participation will account for **10% of your final grade**.

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

Grading Breakdown

Assessment Tool (assignments)	% of Grade
Paper #1 Theory Paper	15
Paper #2 Position Paper & Class Debate	30
Paper #3 Policy Memo	15
Paper #4 Final Paper/Policy Project	30
Participation/Attendance	10
TOTAL	100

Grading Scale
Course final grades will be determined using the following scale:

Letter grade	Corresponding numerical point range
A	95-100
A-	90-94
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
F	59 and below

Assignment Submission Policy
All written assignments will be sent via **Brightspace** on their respective due date. If there is a problem with sending your paper on time, make sure you email me and submit your paper, but it must be on time or provide an acceptable and reasonable explanation as to why it was not on time.

Late papers will not be accepted absent exigent circumstances -- verifiable extreme medical contingencies (e.g., student in hospital for operation).

I maintain this policy for several important reasons. This course does not include assigned readings beyond the research required for your papers. As such, effective time management is essential for balancing this course with your other responsibilities. Since the majority of the work is completed during class sessions, the expectation of submitting papers on time is reasonable and non-negotiable. Punctuality in meeting deadlines reflects both academic discipline and real-world time management skills, which are critical for success.

Course Specific Policies
Can you submit a paper you have already turned into another class if the topics are the same or similar?
NO. This seems to have come up and I want to address it by way of syllabus, and it will be covered in class as well. It is a form of plagiarism, and it is important to know why that is. According to the student handbook in Part B, Section 11.11 under "Behavior Violating University Standards" it defines Plagiarism as presenting someone else's ideas **as your own**, either verbatim or recast in your own words as a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Here is the link: 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
The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form).

This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the USC Student Handbook. All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work

prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Other violations of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

Academic dishonesty has a far-reaching impact and is considered a serious offense against the university. Violations will result in a grade penalty, such as a failing grade on the assignment or in the course, and disciplinary action from the university itself, such as suspension or even expulsion.

For more information about academic integrity see the student handbook or the Office of Academic Integrity's website, and university policies on Research and Scholarship Misconduct.

Please ask if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

Use of AI Generators
This course aims to develop creative, analytical, and critical thinking skills. Therefore, all assignments should be prepared by the student working individually or in groups. Students may not have another person or entity complete any substantive portion of the assignment. Developing strong competencies in these areas will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, using AI-generated text, code, or other content is prohibited in this course, will be identified as plagiarism, and will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

If found responsible for an academic violation, students may be assigned university outcomes, such as suspension or expulsion from the university, and grade penalties, such as an "F" grade on the assignment, exam, or in the course.]

Course Content Distribution and Synchronous Session Recordings Policies
USC has policies that prohibit recording and distribution of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

Recording a university class without the express permission of the instructor and announcement to the class, or unless conducted pursuant to an Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) accommodation. Recording can inhibit free discussion in the future, and thus infringe on the academic freedom of other students as well as the instructor. (Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook, page 13).

Distribution or use of notes, recordings, exams, or other intellectual property, based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study. This includes but is not limited to providing materials for distribution by services publishing course materials. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relation to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the internet, or via any other media. Distributing course material without the instructor's permission will be presumed to be an intentional act to facilitate or enable academic dishonesty and is strictly prohibited. (Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook, page 13).

Course Schedule

	Topics Covered
Week 1	Introductions/Syllabus Review/Paper Assignments/APA requirements Crime & Criminal Justice
Week 2	Criminology Neo Classical Theory
Week 3	Trait and Social Structure Theory Criminal Profiles
Week 4	Developmental Theory/Interpersonal Violence Serial Killers/Mass Shootings
Week 5	Paper Review **Paper Due 2.13.25**
Week 6	Victimless Crimes/Drugs/Prostitution Morality and Public Policy
Week 7	Is it Murder if it is for the common good? Case Studies **Guest Speaker – Homicide Detective 2.27**
Week 8	Transparency, Accountability and Body Worn Cameras **Guest Speaker – Use of Force Expert 3.6.25**
Week 9	Debate Prep **Position Paper and Debate 3.13.25**
Week 10	Spring Break No Classes
Week 11	Policing in the 21st Century
Week 12	What makes good policy Mental Health and Public Policy
Week 13	Campus Neutrality and Student Safety
Week 14	Policy Memo Review **Policy Memo Due 4.17.25**
Week 15	Final Policy/Program Review
Week 16	Last week of Classes Student Evaluations/Recap of Course
Week 17	**Final Project/Policy Paper will be due May 8th**

Course Evaluations

It would be highly welcomed and appreciated if students shared any 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.

Statement on University Academic and Support Systems

Students and Disability Accommodations: USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as

possible as accommodation is not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Student Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress: To be eligible for certain kinds of financial aid, students are required to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward their degree objectives. Visit the Financial Aid Office webpage for undergraduate- and graduate-level SAP eligibility requirements and the appeals process.

Support Systems:
Counseling and Mental Health - *(213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call*
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline - *988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call*
The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline consists of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - *(213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call*
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX) - *(213) 740-5086*
Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - *(213) 740-2500*
Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) - *(213) 740-0776*
OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - *(213) 740-0411*
Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - *(213) 740-2101*
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*
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) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call*
Non-emergency assistance or information.

[Office of the Ombuds](#) - *(213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)*
A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - *(323) 442-2850 or* otfp@med.usc.edu
Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.