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SOCI 438.01: Rural Crime and Justice

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Sociology 438: Rural Crime and Justice (Spring 2012)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This seminar course is designed to encourage discussion and analysis of a number of specific questions with regard to crime and justice in rural and small-town America, including:

What is rural?

Are rural areas different in terms of crime?

What are the patterns and trends of crime in rural and small-town areas?

How is policing, criminal adjudication, and corrections different in rural areas?

Specific objectives:

1. Students will develop a more thorough understanding of the nature of rural crime and justice by reading the text and associated articles, participating in class discussions, and doing library research.
2. Students will enhance their oral communication skills by active engagement in class discussions.
3. Students will further develop their writing skills by writing two essay exams and drafting and revising a paper to be completed in four parts.

READINGS

The required books for this class are:

Weisheit, Ralph A., David N. Falcone, and L. Edward Wells. 2006. *Crime and Policing in Rural and Small-Town America*. Long Grove, Illinois: Waveland Press.

Hacker, Diana. 2008. *A Pocket Style Manual, 5th Edition*. Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Ten additional articles will be assigned throughout the semester. These articles can be downloaded from the course website through the ERes system at Mansfield Library.

QUIZZES

To encourage students to come to class well prepared, five quizzes will be administered without warning throughout the semester. Quizzes are worth a total of 25 points and will cover the current reading assignment.

PAPERS

Each student will be required to write a 12 to 16 page (double-spaced) paper that will be completed in four stages. The paper will examine the differences between rural and urban areas with regard to some aspect of crime or the operation of the criminal justice system. For each part of the paper, the student can initially earn up to 15 points. After receiving comments, students will revise and resubmit each part to earn up to 10 additional points. Because this course fulfills the upper division writing expectation for Sociology majors, the papers will be graded based both on the content and on how well they are written. Students are required to use the ASA format. The paper assignment is worth a total of up to 100 points. Students are expected to work with the tutors from the UM Writing Center

CLASS DISCUSSIONS

Since much of the learning in this course will take place through guided class discussion, active and informed participation in such discussions is required. I will evaluate each student's level of participation for each day of the class on a 0 to 1 point scale. A student not present will receive 0 points for that day. Students present but participating only minimally will earn ½ point. Students who fully participate will earn 1 point. The maximum number of participation points available is 25. In order to fully participate in class discussions, students are required to read the assignment prior to the class during which that particular material will be discussed.

EXAMS

There will be two essay exams which will test comprehension of the course material. The first will be administered toward the middle of the semester; the second will be administered on the during finals week. Each exam is worth 75 points.

GRADING

There are a total of 300 points available:

	Possible points
Quizzes	25
Papers	100
Participation in class discussions	25
Exam #1	75
Exam #2	75

A student's grade will be based on the total number of points achieved. Plus/minus grading will not be used in this class. Final grades will be assigned as follows:

270 points or above	A	180 to 210 points	D
240 to 270 points	B	179.5 points or below	F
210 to 240 points	C		

A FEW OTHER CLASS POLICIES

No "extra credit" assignments or projects will be allowed.

To receive a grade other than an F, a student must take all of the tests and complete the legal research exercise.

If a student will not be able to take a test on time, prior notification of the professor is required. A message can be left on voice mail or email 24 hours a day. Failure to provide prior notification can result in the student receiving zero points for that exam.

Those taking the class on a Credit/No Credit basis must earn at least 202 points in order to receive credit.

Attendance and active class participation are expected and may be taken into consideration in the assignment of final grades in marginal cases.

The third test for this class will take place on Tuesday, May 8th at 8 AM, during finals week. Students should plan their schedules accordingly.

To protect privacy, test scores and course grades will not be given out over the telephone or via email. Students must approach the instructor in person.

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The code is available at: http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php.