

**University of Massachusetts Dartmouth**  
CJS 321/ WGS 321  
Women, Crime and the Law  
Syllabus

**Instructor:** Susan T. Krumholz, J.D., Ph.D.

Summer 2019

**E-Mail:** [skrumholz@umassd.edu](mailto:skrumholz@umassd.edu)

**Course Overview:**

In this course we will explore the impact that women have on the criminal justice system, as well as the impact that the system has upon women's lives. For this endeavor, we will rely upon the growing body of academic literature written by feminist criminologists.

Despite women's involvement in all aspects of the criminal justice system, criminology and criminal justice research have historically focused on the roles of men. This course will serve to broaden our study and provide an alternative to the traditional focus of criminal justice courses. We will explore issues relevant to understanding the experiences of women and girls as both offenders and victims. In addition, we will look at the changing roles of women as prison guards, police officers and other officers of the court.

The objectives of this course are:

1. To develop an understanding of feminist criminological theory.
2. To be able to apply theory to pertinent issues in criminal justice.
3. To improve critical thinking abilities.
4. To learn and apply at least one new technological skill.

**Note:** It is expected that students have knowledge of either criminological theory or feminist theory prior to taking this class.

**Required Texts:**

- Stacy L. Mallicoat, *Women, Gender and Crime: Core Concepts*
- McCorkel, Jill A., *Breaking Women: Gender, Race and the new Politics of Imprisonment*
- Jon Krakauer, *Missoula: Rape and the Justice System in a College Town*
- Additional required readings may be made available on MyCourses

## Grading:

Participation	30 pts.
Assignments (20 pts. each)	60 pts.
Advocacy Project	10 pts.

## Course Requirements

### Participation (30 pts.)

Includes making at least **eight** substantive posts per week in a discussion forum. Substantive means that your comments create new space for more discussion by introducing new questions and ideas. It does not include "I agree!" or "Good post!" although these comments are welcome if you are moved to make them.

The purpose of the discussion is not for you to answer my question, but for you to speak to one another about the course content. As such **AT LEAST TWO** of your posts each week must be a thoughtful and developed response to a classmates post--and yes, questions can be thoughtful responses. You will receive two participation grades--one mid-semester and one at the end of the semester.

### Assignments (60% of grade or 20 pts. each)

There will be three assignments over the (short) semester. Each will be posted two weeks in advance of the due date. See Course Calendar for due dates.

### Advocacy Project (10 pts.)

Pence (2001) explains *individual case advocacy* in domestic violence as "characterized by an advocate who tries to help one woman get what she wants and needs - either from a local agency or an entire institution... This advocate takes up the woman's situation as one case to be managed and resolved by the state." In contrast, she explains *systems or institutional advocacy* as occurring when "an advocate takes up many cases as one representative unit and tries to alter the practices that produce unfair outcomes for battered women as a group (p. 329)."

During this semester you will engage in one advocacy activity. Of course you are not limited to the field of Domestic Violence. Your activities need only be related to course material (female as offender, victim, worker in CJ field). They may be either individual case advocacy or systems advocacy. Below are *examples* of possible activities. You may also design your own activity; however, you must get approval for your idea either in writing or via e-mail. For more information see Assignment.

### *Volunteer Work*

You may engage in a new volunteer activity or task related to women and the criminal legal system. This may be in a setting where you are already an employee or volunteer, however, you must engage in an activity that is not typically part of your role. Activities can include office tasks, providing support to agency clients, or any other activity that would help the organization's day-to-day functions, assist individual survivors, children, and/or batterers, or help create change in the community. (Please be aware that most organizations have their own rules regarding volunteer roles, training, and time commitments. You *must* abide by the organization's policies.) Upon completion of your volunteer task, you will write a 2-5 page summary of your experience. This summary will include:

- \* your supervisor's name and contact information
- \* the date(s) of your activities
- \* a brief description of your activities  
For example, if you assisted with a mass mailing for a program, you should include who the mailing was to, and what kinds of information was included in the mailing. How did the organization hope to benefit from the mailing? How might it impact the community?
- \* an integration of your activities with coursework  
For instance, was the mailing related to a topic discussed in class? How did your experience fit with what you have learned in the classroom? (This could also include situations where the coursework is *not* consistent with your experience.)
- \* a reflection on your activities  
What knowledge did you gain from this activity? Do you feel like you learned or benefited from it? Do you feel like the community did or will benefit from it? How did your family or friends react when you told them about what you did?

### *Write a Letter*

You may write a letter to your state or federal representative(s) regarding a criminological policy and its impact on women. The topic of the letter and your position is entirely up to you, although you must include justification for your position in the letter. For information on federal legislation, you can go to <http://www.thomas.loc.gov> and search keywords such as violence or abuse. Information on Massachusetts legislation can be found at <http://www.mass.gov>.

Websites such as <http://www.endabuse.org> (The Family Violence Prevention Fund), <http://www.sentencingproject.org> (The Sentencing Project), or <http://www.nowldef.org> (The NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund) often have organized letter-writing campaigns, as do many other organizations. These and other organizations are often good starting places for learning about federal legislation. They also may have pre-written letters on particular legislative issues. For this assignment you will:

- \* compose your own letter to your legislator(s) (see Tips on last page).

You will also support your arguments with course material or your own independent research on the topic.

- \* write a 1-2 page reflection on the letter-writing process.

For instance, why did you select this particular issue? Was writing this letter challenging? In what ways? Do you feel like you had an impact? Did your legislator respond?

### *Attend a Public Awareness Activity*

You may attend a public activity related to topics covered in this course. Some events will be announced on the class website, but also keep your eyes open for other announcements. After you attend the event, you will write a 2-5 page summary of your experience. This summary will include:

- \* the date you attended the event

- \* a brief description of the event.

What was the event about? Who sponsored it? What happened while you were there? What did the speaker(s) speak about? Who was there?

- \* an integration of the event with coursework

How did the event fit with what you have learned in the classroom? (This could also include situations where the coursework is *not* consistent with your experience.)

- \* a reflection on the event

What knowledge did you gain from this activity? Do you feel like you learned or benefited from it? Do you feel like the community did or will benefit from it? How did your family or friends react when you told them about the event? What could the event organizers have done better?

### *Other Ideas!!!!!!*

You could write an editorial for the campus paper, raise awareness in your dorm, or community, or engage in any number of other individual or systems advocacy activities. Please get creative!!