


**CRIJ 4330 Seminar on Correctional Problems  
(8-Week On-line Version)  
March 21 through May 14, 2022**

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**MAIN TEXTBOOK FOR PURCHASE:**

 Todd R. Clear, Michael D. Reisig, Carolyn Petrosino & George F. Cole (2016).  
American Corrections in Brief (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), Cengage Learning

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Examination of the most important obstacles faced by corrections in America. Emphasis on professional shortcomings, system deficiencies, and public inadequacies.

**Prerequisites**

There are no prerequisites for this course.

**Technical Skills Required for This Course**

As with all online courses, students must be able to operate a computer and have the necessary technical skills to navigate around a web page. Additional technical skills are not a prerequisite for this course. However, your computer must meet certain [minimum requirements to operate Blackboard](#).

**Time Spent on this Course**

Students can expect to spend a minimum of 10 hours per week to complete all readings and assignments. The lessons themselves take as long as it requires the student to read the materials and watch or listen to media presentations.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES/LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

When you finish this course, you should be able to:

- **Module 1:** Describe the various roles of corrections. Understand the development of the penitentiary system in the United States. Also understand the various models of corrections utilized in the United States from the nineteenth century to the first two decades of the twenty-first century.
- **Module 2:** Understand the four **justifications** for punishment for criminal conduct. Describe the classical school of criminology that arose out of the Enlightenment in the second half of the eighteenth century. Also recognize the types of sentences that a judge may impose and the different criminal sanctions that can be used in the contemporary United States justice system. Describe the types of bail that may be set by a magistrate and some of the problems that critics have identified with the

bail bond process. Understand the difference between jails and prisons. Also describe the functions of a county jail and the types of inmates who are housed in jails. Finally understand pre-trial diversion programs.

- **Module 3:** Describe the history of community supervision in the United States and its current functions. Recognize the difference between probation and parole. Describe the two functions of probation. Recognize the concept of a continuum of sanctions and the types of intermediate sanctions that can be imposed. Understand the purpose of pre-sentence investigation reports. Also understand risk-needs assessments and supervision strategies. Describe what is “evidence-based practices.” In addition, understand what a revocation for a technical violation means. Finally describe specialty courts.
- **Module 4:** Understand the various models of prisons found in the United States since the beginning of the twentieth century. Describe the types of designs used for prisons in the United States and their classifications. Discuss the recent use of private prisons. Understand the trends in prison incarceration in the United States since 1980 and some of the issues stemming from mass incarceration.

Understand prison culture. Also understand how contemporary prison society is organized. Describe the adaptive roles that inmates adopt when incarcerated in prisons. Recognize the differences between female inmates and male inmates. Describe the subculture of women’s prisons.

- **Module 5:** Describe the purpose of prisons. Also identify the three principles used to organize the functioning of hierarchical structures of prisons. Describe what quality of life that should be maintained in a prison. Explain the different types of violence that may be found in prisons.

Describe the impact that elderly inmates have on the delivery of health care, the provision of correctional programs and the physical environment of prisons. Describe the problems of dealing with inmates with mental health issues and understand the medical costs for treating inmates with chronic conditions such as HIV/AIDS, diabetes, cancer and heart disease. Describe how prisons deal with sexual minorities. Finally, what are the issues facing military veterans in prison?

- **Module 6:** Understand what re-entry is and how it is ended. Describe the common forms of prison release. Describe the four harsh realities of an offender’s post-release life. Identify the common barriers to success. Describe the four elements of a successful re-entry into the community. Explain what a “blue warrant” is. Recognize why orders of expunction and nondisclosure orders are generally unavailable to parolees in Texas
- **Module 7:** Understand the “hands off” policy that the Courts followed in prison litigation until the latter part of the 1960’s. Recognize the four primary amendments to the United States Constitution that the Courts have use in

determining whether certain practices in a prison are unconstitutional. Understand 42 United States Code Section 1983. Describe the constitutional rights afforded an inmate in a major disciplinary hearing. Describe the test the Courts use when determining if prison conditions violate the Eighth Amendment (Cruel and Unusual Punishment) Understand the prisoners' rights movement and the passage of the Prison Litigation Reform Act of 1995.

Understand the two major Supreme Court decisions that first held that the current framework for imposing the death penalty was unconstitutional and the later holding allowing the states to re-instate the death penalty. Discuss subsequent Supreme Court holdings that have restricted the imposition of the death penalty under certain circumstances.

Discuss the process for handling a juvenile case, including a disposition. Recognized how the approach to dealing with juvenile offenders is different from the approach for adults. Understand the difference between delinquent conduct and a finding of a child in need of supervision (CINS finding). Understand the process and circumstances for certifying a juvenile to be tried as an adult. Discuss the differences in juvenile programs from those of adults. Understand juvenile probation and police-probation partnerships. Examine and compare juvenile crime rates with the crime rates for adults.

- **Module 8:** Recognize how the understanding of corrections in the United States has changed over the years. Identify the five core dilemmas facing corrections in the future. Also identify the four most important forces now shaping corrections. Understand the three challenges for the future of corrections. Describe a national strategy for reducing crime. Recognize the importance of correctional leadership in shaping the future of corrections.

## **GRADING POLICY:**

A student's final grade will be based upon the point breakdown below. You may approach me at any point during the semester, and I will provide you with feedback on your progress in the class. However, you will be given feedback with all assignments when they are graded and returned to you. Therefore, please "keep track" of your points throughout the semester.

<b>Module Tests (33.3%)</b>  The instructor requires <u>each individual student</u> to take a set of lesson-based fundamental tests (all multiple-choice questions) at the conclusion of each Module.	<b>240 points</b> (Possible points 30 per Test)
<b>Module Essay Assignments (33.3%)</b>  The instructor requires <u>each individual student</u> to focus on lesson-based fundamental questions at the conclusion of each Module.	<b>240 points</b> (Possible points 30 per Assignment)
<b>Discussion Forums (33.3%)</b>  The instructor requires <u>each individual student</u> to discuss current critical issues related to American corrections at the conclusion of each Module.	<b>240 points</b> (Possible points 30 per Discussion)
<b>Total</b>	<b>720 points</b>

## ***Final Grade***

<b><u>Grade</u></b>	<b><u>Cumulative Points</u></b>
A	648 to 720 (equal to 90 -100 %)
B	576 to 647 (equal to 80 -89 %)
C	504 to 575 (equal to 70 -79 %)
D	432 to 503 (equal to 60 -69 %)
F	431 and below (equal to 59 % and below)

## **MAKE-UP EXAMS:**

No make-up exams will be given.

## **COURSE ORGANIZATION**

### **Module One**

#### **Chapter 1**

We will consider the question, “What is Corrections?” We will examine the current state of corrections in the United States and the growth in incarceration since the mid-1970’s. We will also review the history of corrections in the United States.

The video part of this course will examine corrections in Texas, especially since 1980 and the response of state policy makers over the last several decades to deal with overcrowding issues.

The essay question attempts to answer the question “What is Corrections?” It will also ask the student why he or she is interested in the course and what he or she hopes to get out of it.

Discussion – same as the essay questions

### **Module Two**

#### **Chapters 2 and 3**

We will examine the transference of punishment in Europe from primarily corporal punishment to more humane practices based on the reforms influenced by the Enlightenment in the second half of the eighteenth century. We will also examine the four underpinnings to rationalize and justify punishment in a modern social, i.e., retribution, deterrence, incapacitation and rehabilitation. Finally, we will examine new approaches to punishment in the United States.

We will then shift to examining the contemporary jail in the United States. We will examine what level of government is responsible for the operation of jails, what are the purposes for having jails, and the challenges in operating jails, including dealing with medical costs, treating mental health issues, and overcrowding issues. Finally, we will review alternatives to incarceration in jails, such as release on personal bond, home arrest, and weekend confinement.

The video portion for this module will discuss jails in Texas and their unique challenges and those that are common with jails in other states.

The essay will discuss that four objectives of modern day punishment, what the student sees as the strengths or weaknesses in each justification for punishment, whether the student sees these four objectives as in conflict with each other or can be harmonized, and whether the student agrees with one justification for punishment over the others.

Discussion – same as the essay questions.

## **Module Three**

### **Chapters 4 and 5**

This module will cover adult probation, in Texas known as community supervision and corrections. We will examine why community corrections is considered a beneficial alternative to incarceration. We will also understand how contemporary community supervision practices and goals differ from the practices and goals of community corrections in the 1970's. We will review the variety of intermediate sanctions utilized in community corrections as well as examine the concept of continuum of sanctions. Finally, we will consider what are the weaknesses in the utilization of community corrections.

We will examine the nature and role of supervision in community corrections. We will review the various investigative functions in community corrections and also the supervisory functions. We will further understand the concept of risk and needs assessments and the development of supervision strategies. In turn we will be consider the question, "Is community supervision effective?"

The video part of this module will discuss community corrections as it is found in Texas.

Essay – Does community supervision provide a useful component to the corrections system as a whole?

Discussion – What are the positive elements in community supervision. What are its weaknesses?

## **Module Four**

### **Chapters 6 and 7**

The next two modules will examine the penitentiary system. We will understand how prisons are designed and the classification of prisons. We will also discuss the utilization of private prisons and their future prospects. Finally, we will examine the problems of overcrowding, mass incarceration and recidivism.

Afterwards we will examine the prison experience from the viewpoint of someone incarcerated. We will understand the "inmate code," gang affiliations in prison units, prison subculture, and adaptive roles in prison. We will also consider women in prison and how their subculture differs from male inmates. Finally, we will examine what programs and services are offered in prisons.

The video portion will examine the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, its various divisions and then examine the correctional institution division, i. e., the prison system and its various components. We will examine how the prison system is organized at both the prison level (wardens), and at the management level. Then we will review what the prison system actually does besides housing inmates. We will discuss medical services, manufacturing and agriculture services, and educational and rehabilitation programs.

Essay: Discuss whether private prisons are a positive or negative aspect of community corrections and explain your position.

Discussion: Discuss the operations of the Correctional Institution Division and the State's reliance on private prisons. Should private prisons offer the same programs and services as offered by the Correctional Institution Division? Should private prisons get to house a "better class" of inmates? Are there other services or operations that the Correctional Institution Division should privatize?

## **Module Five**

### **Chapters 8 and 9**

In continuing our examinations of prisons we will next turn to the topic of prison management. We will discuss how prisons are organized, what the mission of prisons is (or should be) in respect to the inmates, and how prisons are governed. We will also examine issues that confront management in prison such as violence, sexual assault, and gangs.

Chapter 9 deals with special populations in prisons. We will examine the growing elderly population in prisons, why it is so difficult to house or release them and the growing medical costs in treating the elderly inmates. We will also examine inmates with mental health issues, those with chronic health conditions such as AIDS, cancer, cardiovascular problems or diabetes. We will also examine how prisons deal with sexual minorities, including sexual victimization. Finally, we will discuss issues specific to military veterans incarcerated in prisons.

The video portion of this module will focus on the Texas Department of Criminal Justice and the problems and challenges prison officials face in administering prisons in Texas including dealing with special populations.

Essay: Discuss three areas of importance to the operation of prisons in Texas that offer a serious challenge to the management of the Correctional Institution Division in order of priority and discuss why you believe these are the most critical areas of concern to management.

Discussion: Discuss the problem of attracting and retaining personnel for the Texas prison system. Should prison officials accept less qualified employees in order to maintain full staffing? What security concerns would you have for a unit with inadequate or less than desirable staffing? Are there steps that prison officials could take, other than increases in salaries, that would make it more attractive to be a corrections officer?

What steps would you take to control health costs in prisons. What would you do about prison gangs? What would you do about corrections officers bringing contraband into the prison unit? How would you handle vulnerable inmates in the prison? Would you segregate them, place them in a special unit, or place them in administrative segregation (solitary confinement)?

## **Module Six**

### **Chapter 10**

In this module we will be examining re-entry into the community, better known as parole, at the state level. We will also examine what has replaced parole in the federal system. We will learn parole's origins and what exactly is parole; i.e., how it differs from probation. We will also discuss parole revocations, the legal rights guaranteed to parolees at revocation hearings, and alternatives to revocations, such as intermediate sanctions. We will also examine the challenges to parolees released into their communities.

The video portion will examine parole in Texas. It will review how parole is organized under the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, the role and function of the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles, issuance of "blue warrants," what civil rights of parolees are lost and possibly regained after release from parole, the difference between expunctions and orders of nondisclosure and why they are difficult to obtain by parolees in Texas, and finally the establishment of re-entry councils in larger urban areas of the State.

**Essay:** Do you think that parole plays a meaningful role in corrections in Texas or should it be abolished? If you believe it should be abolished, would you replace it with any other form of supervision? Would you still place inmates on parole but simply not supervise them? If you required inmates to serve their full sentence in prison, how would you pay for prison expansion; how would you deal with overcrowding; how would you increase security for inmates and staff?

**Discussion:** Discuss the role of parole officers. Do they have a harder or easier job than community supervision officers? Explain why. Do you believe that parole officers in general are effective in the supervision of parolees regarding rehabilitation, recidivism, re-entering the community? Are we asking too much of parole officers?

## **Module Seven**

### **Chapters 11 and 12**

Module Seven covers three very different topics in corrections, what legal rights are afforded to inmates, capital punishment and juvenile justice. In regards to legal rights for inmates, we will discuss earlier courts' reliance on a "hands off" policy in the litigation of inmate rights, the erosion of this policy in the 1960's, and what rights are now afforded to inmates under the First, Fourth, Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution and how these rights are enforced, i.e., 42 U. S. Code Section 1983 lawsuits. Finally we will review the Prison Litigation Reform Act of 1995 and its purpose to limit the filing of inmate lawsuits.

In regards to capital punishment we will examine the constitutional justification for allowing the imposition of the death penalty at the federal level and by the various states. We will also review United States Supreme Court cases that have restricted the imposition



of the death penalty under certain circumstances; i.e., based on the age of the offenders, on offenders who are mentally retarded or insane, and for crimes not resulting in a homicide.

In regards to juvenile justice, we will discuss how the objectives in the juvenile justice system differ from those in the adult system. We will also discuss the seminal case of In re Gault, the types of circumstances that bring a child into the juvenile justice system; i.e., delinquent conduct and CINS (children in need of supervision) offenses. We will examine the various ways that juvenile cases can be diverted or disposed of. Finally, we will examine detention facilities at both the local and state level and how a juvenile may be “certified” to be tried as an adult.

Once again, the video portion of module seven will examine the issues raised in the module as it applies to Texas. This video will examine two important lawsuits affecting Texas prisons and practices arising in the 1970’s and 1980’s, Ruiz v. Estelle and Alberti v. Harris County. We will also review the efforts to expand and reform the Texas prisons under the Ann Richards Administration and the efforts to reform the juvenile justice system under the George W. Bush Administration.

In regards to the death penalty in Texas, the video portion will examine the circumstances under which an offender is “death penalty” eligible, the findings that a jury must make in order for the death penalty to be imposed, and changes in the law that have reduced the imposition of the death penalty in Texas.

In regards to juvenile justice in Texas the video portion will provide an overview of the Juvenile Justice System, the crisis with the Texas Youth Commission in 2007 and the reforms to the system that have been made since then. We will discuss that a person in Texas is considered an adult at the age of 17 and efforts to “raise the age” to 18. We will also discuss police-probation partnerships in Texas, why they are much more common in the juvenile system than the adult, and Project Spotlight, a police-probation partnership that was initiated in the Bush Administration in the late 1990’s.

Essay: Do you believe that the mission and goals of the juvenile justice system should be the same or different from the adult system?

Discussion: Discuss whether there are significant differences between juvenile offenders and adult offenders? Should the socio-economic circumstances of a juvenile offender be taken into account in assessing criminal responsibility? Does peer pressure have a greater impact on juvenile offending than it does on adult offending? On the whole is it preferable to treat juvenile offenders in their community or place them in a half-way house or confine them in a state facility? What would be the circumstances, if any, that a juvenile offender should be removed from his/her community and placed in a residential facility or a state operated facility? Should the nature of the offense alone determine whether a juvenile should be placed in a residential facility or sent to a state facility? Are there other factors than the nature of the offense that would warrant placement outside of the juvenile’s community?

## Module Eight

### Chapter 13

Module Eight concludes this course by examining the future of corrections. We will examine the five dilemmas facing corrections, as outlined in the textbook. In addition to discussing the mission and structure of corrections, we will pay particular attention to the issues of personnel, costs, and technology. We will also review the past promises of corrections, whether these promises were kept and whether corrections can build upon past promises in the future. As such we will discuss “what works” or “evidence-based practices,” whether corrections can attract a new generation of professionals with a vision, and whether corrections can ever attract the necessary funding and political and public support to make meaningful changes in the system.

The video portion of this module will discuss contemporary challenges to corrections in Texas, what have been the public and Legislative responses to past challenges, and the future of corrections in Texas.

Essay: The final essay is based on all the other information and discussions found in this course: are you optimistic or pessimistic about the future of corrections? What would be your grounds for optimism? What would be your grounds for pessimism? What are the facts and data that will support your position?

Discussion: What are the challenges facing corrections in the future? Is corrections able to meet these challenges? If crime rates and therefore incarceration rates continue to diminish, how will this affect corrections in the future? Is a career in corrections something that you find appealing or meaningful? If you could predict the future what would have the greatest impact on the future of corrections: 1) the mission of corrections, 2) its structure and bureaucracy, 3) personnel issues, 4) costs to operate corrections and the adequacy of funding, or 5) emerging technology?

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **Module One**

#### **Chapter 1**

- Test, Essay Assignment, & Discussion Forum due by 10 p.m. on Saturday, March 26

### **Module Two**

#### **Chapters 2 and 3**

- Test, Essay Assignment, & Discussion Forum due by 10 p.m. on Saturday, April 2

### **Module Three**

#### **Chapters 4 and 5**

- Test, Essay Assignment, & Discussion Forum due by 10 p.m. on Saturday, April 9

### **Module Four**

#### **Chapters 6 and 7**

- Test, Essay Assignment, & Discussion Forum due by 10 p.m. on Saturday, April 16

### **Module Five**

#### **Chapters 8 and 9**

- Test, Essay Assignment, & Discussion Forum due by 10 p.m. on Saturday, April 23

### **Module Six**

#### **Chapters 10**

- Test, Essay Assignment, & Discussion Forum due by 10 p.m. on Saturday, April 30

### **Module Seven**

#### **Chapters 11 and 12**

- Test, Essay Assignment, & Discussion Forum due by 10 p.m. on Saturday, May 7

### **Module Eight**

#### **Chapter 13**

- Test, Essay Assignment, & Discussion Forum due by 10 p.m. on Saturday, May 14

## **IMPORTANT DATES**

**March 21:** 2<sup>nd</sup> 8-Week Term begins.

**March 29:** 2<sup>nd</sup> 8-Week Session “W” period begins – Drops and withdrawals will now be recorded on transcripts.

**April 28:** Last Day to Drop/Withdraw from the 2<sup>nd</sup> 8-Week Term – The appropriate form must be submitted by 5:00 pm. Central Time.

## **UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

### **Academic Integrity**

Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding and complying with the university [Academic Honor Code](#) and the [ASU Student Handbook](#).

### **Accommodations for Disability**

The Student Life Office is the designated campus department charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing requests for reasonable accommodations based on a disability, and it is the student's responsibility to initiate such a request by contacting the Student Life Office at (325) 942-2191 or (325) 942-2126 (TDD/FAX) or by e-mail at [Student.Life@angelo.edu](mailto:Student.Life@angelo.edu) to begin the process. The Student Life Office will establish the particular documentation requirements necessary for the various types of disabilities.

### **Student absence for religious holidays**

A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. A student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence.

### **Title IX at Angelo State University**

Angelo State University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind. In accordance with Title VII, Title IX, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE), and other federal and state laws, the University prohibits discrimination based on sex, which includes pregnancy, and other types of Sexual Misconduct. Sexual Misconduct is a broad term encompassing all forms of gender-based harassment or discrimination and unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature. The term includes sexual harassment, nonconsensual sexual contact, nonconsensual sexual intercourse, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, stalking, public indecency, interpersonal violence (domestic violence or dating violence), sexual violence, and any other misconduct based on sex.

You are encouraged to report any incidents involving sexual misconduct to the Office of Title IX Compliance and the Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator, Michelle Boone, J.D. You may submit reports in the following manner:

**Online:** [www.angelo.edu/incident-form](http://www.angelo.edu/incident-form)

**Face to Face:** Mayer Administration Building, Room 210

**Phone:** 325-942-2022

**E-Mail:** [michelle.boone@angelo.edu](mailto:michelle.boone@angelo.edu)

*Note, as a faculty member at Angelo State, I am a mandatory reporter and must report incidents involving sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator. Should you wish to*

*Speak to someone in confidence about an issue, you may contact the University Counseling Center (325-942-2371), the 24-Hour Crisis Helpline (325-486-6345), or the University Health Clinic (325-942-2171).*

For more information about resources related to sexual misconduct, Title IX, or Angelo State's policy please visit: [www.angelo.edu/title-ix](http://www.angelo.edu/title-ix)