

# *Moravian College*

## **SOC 292 – ST: Crime, Justice, and the Social Order**

**Dr. Joel Nathan Rosen, Assistant Professor in Sociology**

**PPHAC 311**

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**Office Hours: T/Th 3:30p – 4:30p/W 4p – 6p or By Appointment**

**\*\*Check Black Board (Bb) Site Daily\*\***

### **Course Description and Objectives:**

This special topic course was originally intended to serve as an examination of the historical, organizational, and functional developments behind the definition and practices of the modern criminal justice system against the backdrop of contemporary social phenomena, and especially given the political maneuvering that will be playing out in front of us throughout this particular semester. Among the many topics broached will be a more grounded exploration of the social world as a whole, and in as much of a comparative frame as possible, the expansion of such law enforcement matters as, for example, a presumed growth of a prison industry and its place amongst a heightened awareness of the role of basic civil liberties, the efficacy and ramifications of racial and ethnic profiling, community policing, and “zero-tolerance” policies as they continue to intersect with contemporary life. This list, however, is far from being exhaustive. In fact it is this instructor’s hope that your individual and collective interests will drive us toward even more fertile ground.

**Specific objectives** of this course include, but are not limited to, the following:

- to explore critically the rudiments of what we can reasonably refer to as a *social order*
- to explain and de-mythologize the perception of justice in both historical and contemporary forms
- to expand toward a more intellectually-grounded interpretation of how contemporary social, cultural, and political shifts inform our notion of what constitutes the meanings of legal v illegal, acceptable v taboo behaviors, etc.
- to articulate in both written and oral form the nature of the social world relative to criminal justice systems in the US and elsewhere

### **Required Texts:**

Füredi, Frank. *Invitation to Terror: The Expanding Empire of the Unknown*. New York: Continuum, 2007.

Fiorina, Morris P. *Culture War?: The Myth of a Polarized America*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. With Samuel J. Abrams and Jeremy C. Pope. New York: Pearson Longman, 2006.

\*Supplemental readings to be announced/distributed throughout the semester

### **Recommended Text(s):**

Bishop, Bill. *The Big Sort: Why the Clustering of Like-Minded America Is Tearing Us Apart*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 2008.

Füredi, Frank. *Politics of Fear: Beyond Left and Right*. New York: Continuum, 2005.

### **Course Requirements:**

Students will be asked to construct an annotated bibliography based on the negotiated group project that will have both a group as well as a *solo* writing component, take a final exam, which will be cumulative, and perform other tasks, including writing article reviews, take unannounced quizzes, participate etc., as befitting this type of course. The midterm will be spaced at approximately half of the way through the course—fair warning will precede it. The final exam **must** be taken at the assigned period as outlined in the college schedule.

The breakdown of final grades is as follows:

Misc. Work, Reviews, Quizzes, Participation, etc.	25%
Group Project (combined paper and presentation)	25%
Bibliography Assignment	25%
Final Exam Grade	25%

As I typically employ letter grades on written assignments, I offer the below list of how each letter translates numerically:

- A+=100/A= 96/A-=93
- B+=89/B=86/B-=83
- C+=79/C=76/C-=73
- D+=69/D=66/D-=63
- F=55-50 [actual score depends on the severity of the error(s)/student will be notified]
- Failure to turn in work translates into a *ZERO*

### **Grade Scale:**

- A=100-94/A-=93-90
- B+=89-88/B=87-84/B-=83-80
- C+=79-78/C=77-74/C-=73-70
- D+=69-68/D=67-64/D-=63-60
- F=59...

**Grade Advisory** – While I respect that students have to be grade conscious, it is imperative that students understand that:

## ***I treat evaluations as professional—not personal!***

Do not ask from me anything that steps outside the boundaries, and do not wait until *Zero Hour* to inquire as to your status. Moreover, it is your responsibility to keep abreast of your own grade calculations, and unless the circumstances are unique, I'll leave you to your own devices on that matter. Lastly, to save us all needless heartache, and in the interest of propriety and mental health, I also have to insist on a twenty-four hour grace period before I will speak to you about any returned work. You may find that this cooling off period is exactly what we both need to come together rationally and in the spirit of liberal learning.

### **Classroom Decorum and Expectations:**

**Attendance** – Class attendance is mandatory and vitally important to your success. Failure to attend on a regular basis not only puts your grade in jeopardy but may also be met with a lowered mark for participation.

- There are no excused absences. If you have a legitimate emergency, it is your responsibility to bring it to the attention of your instructor at your earliest convenience.

**Tardiness** – Tardiness to class is not only detrimental to the learning process but quite disruptive and unfair to those who make it to class on time regularly. Recurring tardiness shows a lack of respect for the classroom, the instructor, and one's fellow students and will not be tolerated. Therefore, once the door has been shut, you will not be permitted to enter.

**Deadlines** – Assignment deadlines are exactly that. Students are expected to comply with deadlines in accordance with all rules, guidelines, and expectations of each assignment proffered. Failure to do so will result in a tendering of no-grade for work not done to expectation or submitted on time. The policy for late papers is as follows:

- On minor assignments, you will be allowed to turn in one late assignment as long as it is within twenty-four hours for a ten point deduction. After your one exception, you will no longer enjoy this luxury
- Do not expect me to have to chase you down in order to turn in assignments!

**Participation** – Classroom discussions are a big part of the learning process. Your participation is not requested—it is required. Failure to do so is both in bad taste and could conceivably be detrimental to your ability to learn effectively.

**Disruptions** – Disruptive behavior, including talking, unengaged behavior, i.e. reading a book,

magazine, or newspaper, sleeping, chronic tardiness alongside loud entrances, and any other unfortunate breach will not be tolerated. Learning is an active process, and failure to actively engage not only threatens the individual's ability to learn but also affects others.

**Academic Honesty** – You are all responsible for knowing and adhering to the code of academic honesty here at Moravian College. For those of you unfamiliar with this code, it can be found on pages fifty-two through fifty-seven in your student handbook.

**Please Note:** It is your responsibility to see to it that these expectations and guidelines are met satisfactorily and consistently. I take the classroom quite seriously, and I expect all of you to do the same as well.

### **Out of Class Submission Expectations:**

- a title page with a suitable title, your name, the course, section, and my name all spelled correctly
- 12 font (in black) with default margins and spacing set at 1.5 to double
- page numbers
- a *References* section (if necessary) at the end of the work done in the most recent citation form of your choice (depends on your major and other factors)<sup>1</sup>
- for every unedited internet site there must be at least two published sources
- with few exceptions, single & two-digit numbers (zero *through* ninety-nine) are to be spelled out; three digits are to be written numerically
- be wary of overuse of abbreviations and/or contractions
- a staple in the upper left hand corner (no frilly covers)

**\*\*Please Note that all in-class work must be done in blue or black ink\*\***

### **On Writing and Research:**

As this instructor is particularly driven by written expression, you should expect that there will be an emphasis placed on written expression in this course. I should also like you to know from the start that I spend a great deal of time pouring over your writing and expect that you will read and explore my commentary on all things ranging from content to grammar, punctuation, and syntax. Please try to check your ego at the doors and realize that this is a learning experience while convincing yourself that blips and missteps are all part of the process.

You should also note that where applicable, this instructor expects his students to deal directly with all matters relating to the citation process. Failure to do so will be dealt with harshly with penalties ranging from a zero on work not properly documented to a formal report to the proper academic disciplinary committee.

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<sup>1</sup> Work not properly cited will not be graded and could be brought to the Academic Standards Committee under a charge of plagiarism. If you have questions, please seek me out. Also, *Wikipedia* and other types of non-academic encyclopedias will under no circumstances be considered legitimate sources!

### **A Note on Individual Accommodations:**

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Mr. Joe Kempfer, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Disability Support, 1307 Main Street (extension 1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the office of Learning Services.

“Because politics rests on an irreducible measure of coercion, it can never become a perfect realm of perfect love and justice.”<sup>2</sup>  
—C. Lasch

## **Course Sketch Outline:**<sup>3</sup>

### **Unit I – Establishing a Coherent Platform for Discussing Law within the Larger Social Order (Fiorina, etc.)**

Topics:

- The Language of Crime & Justice – how do we discuss crime rationally?
- The Nature of Crime – Is it a fluid concept?
- Misunderstanding, Misapprehension, and Misapplication on the Law
- Criminalizing the Citizenry
- (In)Security in the Modern Mind & Spirit
- The Role of Civil Liberties under Heightened Awareness
- Is there a right to be offensive?
- A Personal Constitution – What if we could write our own scripts?

### **Annotated Bibliographies Due**

### **Unit II – Crime in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – Real or Imagined? (Füredi, etc.)**

Topics:

- Fear, Crime, and the Contemporary Fascination with Danger
- A Mid-Range between Good & Evil?
- Terror – The New Ball of Confusion
- Universal Adversaries – who are they, or do they even exist?
- On Violence – is this really a more dangerous world?
- Transgression and an Epochal Character
- Who Really Hates Whom?
- The Social, Political, Cultural, and Economic Ramifications of a War on Terror

### **Group Presentations**

### **Reviews**

### **Final Exam**

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<sup>2</sup> Lasch, Christopher. “What’s Wrong With the Right?” *Tikkun*. Vol. 1. 1987:29.

<sup>3</sup> I find that a sketch outline allows us to work to our strengths and our own rhythms as a group. I prefer not to be bogged down by day to day expectations, and I trust you’ll get over your initial fears once we get rolling.