

# **CJ 3753 Contemporary Issues in Criminal Justice**

## **Chaminade University of Honolulu**

**Instructor:** Melvin D. De Costa  
**Location:** Tripler  
**Date:** Tuesday's 5:30pm to 9:40pm  
**Phone:** Kahala Mall #732-7736

### **Biographical Statement**

Retired from the Honolulu Police Department as a Captain after 28 years of service (1989). Formerly, the Director of Security and Safety at the Sheraton Royal Hawaiian Hotel. Presently, the Director of Security at Kahala Mall. Also, President and Owner of DC Investigative Services. BA and Masters Degrees in Justice Management from Chaminade University. Adjunct Professor at Chaminade University 1995 to present.

### **Course Description**

An examination of issues currently faced by the Criminal Justice System focusing upon contemporary issues which are projected to have a major impact upon the quality of life for the community and the ability of the Criminal Justice System to provide services to the community.

### **Course Objectives**

The objective of CJ375 is to stimulate the student to consider the operation of the Criminal Justice System in the United States, the purpose of laws, and the justice received by certain groups within society. The aim of the class is to develop critical thinking skills, which can be applied to solve problems in Public Administration and Criminal Justice. At the conclusion of this course it is expected that the student will be able to:

1. Clearly and logically describe a problem
2. Evaluate the arguments and facts related to a problem
3. Assess the seriousness of a problem
4. Arrive at a reasonable conclusion to the problem and present that solution either orally or in writing in a persuasive manner

### **Recommended Textbook**

Joseph L. Victor, Editor (1999-2000) Criminal Justice, Annual Edition, Dushkin/McGraw-Hill, ISBN 0-07-033007-7.

## **Attendance**

Attendance is an expected and necessary requirement of this course. It is recognized that there are times when the student will not be able to attend class. Absence from class will impact the student's grade. This class is conducted as a seminar class and participation in each class session is considered important to the learning process. Missing a class is not an excuse for not being prepared for the next class, completing reading assignments or other projects that were assigned during the missed class. Certain presentations and assignments are of such a nature that it may be impossible to make them up if missed due to absence. If this is the case, the student will not receive credit for the presentation and the grade will be recorded as an "F".

## **Reading Assignments**

It is absolutely necessary that reading assignments be completed prior to class or the student will not be prepared to participate meaningfully in discussions. The student's grade may be adversely impacted by evidence of failure to read assignments prior to class. Students should be prepared with pertinent text and materials and other research such as the Internet.

## **Grading**

Grades are assigned based upon evaluation of the following portfolio items:

1) Participation in class and attendance	30 points
2) 3 written position papers and 3 oral position presentations	<u>180 points</u>
<b>TOTAL POINTS</b>	<b>210 points</b>
A	180 points
B	160 points
C	140 points
D	125 points

## **Requirements of the Position Paper**

Position papers should be approximately 175 to 250 words in length. The paper should state a single thesis sentence or position and provide logical argumentation to support your position.

## **Disclaimer**

This instructor reserves the right to make slight adjustments to this syllabus as may be necessitated by course developments or circumstances. Any adjustments will be announced to the class prior.

## Course Outline

- 1) Syllabus Review. Argumentation to distinguish between fact and opinion. Video. The media influences public perception of crime.
- 2) Topic I: The Death Penalty. Review and discussion.
- 3) Topic II: **Legalization of Drugs**. Review and discussion.  
1st oral position due on the Death Penalty (Group).
- 4) Topic III: **Privatization of Prisons**. Review and discussion.  
1st written position paper due on Legalization of Drugs.
- 5) Topic IV: Workplace Violence Issues. Review and discussion.  
No paper on this subject.  
2nd oral position due on Privatization of Prisons.
- 6) Topic V: **Juvenile Crime** - Treat them as adults. Review and discussion.
- 7) Topic VI: Gun Control. Review and discussion.  
2nd written position paper due on Juvenile Crime.
- 8) Topic VII: Domestic Violence. Review and discussion.  
3rd oral position due on Gun Control.
- 9) 3rd written position paper due on Domestic Violence.
- TOTAL: 3 Written Position Papers:
  1. Legalization of Drugs
  2. Juvenile Crime
  3. Domestic Violence  
3 Oral Positions:
  1. Death Penalty
  2. Privatization of Prisons
  3. Gun Control
- 10) Make-ups due.  
Extra credit: Optional student oral position presentations.