

Course Syllabus

Senior Seminar In Criminal Justice (CRJ 4990W), Fall 2021, Prof. Jeff Seymour

Updated 9/7/2021

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Senior Seminar In Criminal Justice (CRJ 4990W, Section 01), 4 Credits Criminal Justice Program - Carthage College

Note: this course also fulfills the Senior Seminar requirement for SOC majors.

Course and Professor Information

When: Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays; 9:15 a.m. to 10:20 a.m.

Course Location: Hedberg Library 217A.

Website for Schedule, Assignments, Grades, Readings, etc.: [Schoolology](https://lms.carthage.edu) [lms.carthage.edu].

Instructor: Prof. Jeff Seymour, Ph.D. (he/him/his).

Email or iMessage: jseymour@carthage.edu.

Office: Lentz Hall 426. Please note that I'd prefer all our *one-on-one* interactions to be virtual.

Virtual Office Hours: Click [link](#) to schedule an appointment.

Book an appointment with Prof. Seymour with your Carthage Gmail account to have a conversation about anything related to academics, advising, or Carthage. Soon after you book your slot I'll manually add a video chat invite that will sync with your Google Calendar.

Mondays & Wednesdays: 3 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. and 9 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Tuesdays & Thursdays: 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Statement of Inclusive Learning

I strive to be welcoming, honest, and fair. Your success is important to me and the Carthage community. If aspects of this course prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible so that I can learn to improve my teaching. I encourage you to make an office hours appointment or [email me](#) at any time--day or night--and I should be able to respond within 24 hours on weekdays. Together we'll develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course.

Carthage seeks to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers due to a disability (e.g., mental health, learning disorders, and/or chronic medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations for disabilities, you also need to register with the [Director of Learning Accessibility Services](#), Diane Schowalter (contact her at dschowalter1@carthage.edu or 262-551-5802). Additionally, please contact me or any other trusted Carthage faculty or staff member if you lack financial resources to meet your basic

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needs (e.g., food, shelter, transportation, technology, textbooks); we'll try to help you as best we can.

There are also other resources on campus available for all students, including the [Brainard Writing Center](#), [Peer Tutoring](#), [Academic Coaching](#), and the [Center for Student Success](#) for academic support; the [Health and Counseling Center](#) for free and confidential help for your physical, mental, and emotional well-being (including [After Hours / Crisis Care](#)); [Equity and Inclusion](#) for a directory of diversity-related resources including information on our [Bias Education Response Team](#); [Title IX Coordinators](#) for concerns about sex discrimination or sexual violence; the [Aspire Program](#) for vocational needs; and the [Big Red Book Fund](#) and [Luther's Lunchbox](#) for students facing financial and/or food insecurity.

Official Course Description

Official catalog description: The capstone experience for all majors in the department, the primary emphasis of this course will be writing the senior thesis. An oral presentation of the thesis is required for this course.

Additional notes specific to this section for SOC majors: The primary goal of this seminar is to facilitate the production of a significant research project (i.e., your "thesis") on a topic of sociological inquiry. Acting as the culmination of your *formal* studies in sociology at Carthage, you'll be asked to combine skills from Sociological Research, Social Theory, Data Analysis, Logic of Sociological Inquiry, and other sociology courses into a semester's worth of sustained research experience. This might seem overwhelming to some, but this is your chance to learn about *anything* you find interesting and important. While I prefer you conduct an original but feasible research project over the next few months (e.g., content analysis, secondary survey data analysis, existing statistics analysis, or even conducting interviews or a small-scale survey), it's also *possible* to complete our seminar's objectives through a comprehensive review of literature and critique relating to a significant research question.

Additional notes specific to this section for CRJ majors: Students will choose one of the following options for completing their senior project:

- 1) *Investigate a Problem and Intervention*: Review scholarly research related to a particular problem within criminal justice. Justify why this is a problem that people should care about. If relevant, describe, apply, and evaluate one or more theoretical perspectives to better understand the root cause(s) of your problem. Use existing scholarly and institutional research to discuss and evaluate options for policy or cultural change that seek to address your problem. Apply these lessons to a contemporary case study that illustrates a successful or unsuccessful intervention for your particular problem.
- 2) *Describe a Significant Change, Trend, or Shift*: Review scholarly research related to a significant change, trend, or shift within criminal justice. If relevant, describe, apply, and evaluate one or more theoretical perspectives to better understand the root cause(s) of this change, trend, or shift. Justify why this change, trend, or shift is something people should care about. Use existing scholarly and institutional research to discuss the impact(s) of this change, trend, or shift. Highlight a contemporary case study that

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illustrates how criminal justice practitioners, politicians, activists, or scholars exemplify or respond to this change, trend, or shift.

- 3) *Original Research Project*. See “Additional notes specific to this section for SOC majors” above and complete a qualitative or quantitative research project on some topic within criminal justice.

Course Prerequisites

You should have earned enough credits to be at “senior standing.” Additionally, SOC majors should have completed these three courses: Sociological Research (SOC 3020), Logic of Sociological Inquiry (SOC 3240), and Social Theory Seminar (SOC 4010). CRJ majors should have completed Criminology (CRJ 2260).

Course Learning Objectives

As a result of this course, you should be able to:

- 1) Compose a *narrow* and answerable research question relevant to your area of study.
- 2) Clarify the *importance* of your particular research question (i.e., the “so what?” question).
- 3) Identify and acquire substantial peer-reviewed sources relevant to your research question / topic.
- 4) Engage in strategies of “structural reading” vs. “close reading” of peer-reviewed sources.
- 5) Apply and evaluate theoretical perspectives to your research question / topic.
- 6) Contribute to academic conversations within your chosen area of inquiry (i.e., “they say... I say...”).
- 7) Improve your writing’s clarity by considering and incorporating peer and instructor feedback.
- 8) Mirror the structure and professionalism of academic writing within the social sciences in regard to format, tone, and citation (i.e., APA format) in a polished formal document.
- 9) Present your findings in a clear and competent manner during a virtual presentation.

Required Texts

There are no required texts to purchase/rent. Various documents that will help in researching and composing your project will be posted on Schoology.

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Methods of Evaluation

Course Component	Percent of Final Grade
Project Brainstorm / Outline (1 page)	3%
Project "Elevator Pitch" Presentation	2%
Project Proposal (5 pages with references)	10%
Literature Review Matrix (15 journal articles)	10%
2 x Project Document Drafts	20%
2 x Project Document Draft Response Memos	5%
One-on-One Meetings with Prof. Seymour	10%
2 x Peer Review	5%
Final Project Document	25%
Final Project Presentation	10%

Course Policies

Academic Discourse Expectations

Borrowed from [Evelyn Alsutany](#): "Each student is encouraged to take an active part in class discussions and activities. Honest and respectful dialogue is expected. Disagreement and challenging of ideas in a supportive and sensitive manner is encouraged. Hostility and disrespectful behavior is not acceptable. Just as we expect others to listen attentively to our own views, we must reciprocate and listen to others when they speak, especially when we disagree with them."

Grades

Grades are updated on Schoology. Midterm grades are only reported for students with low performance (i.e., grades of "D" or "F"). Your final grade is calculated with [weighted](#) means of each course component's mean score resulting in a letter grade:

A+	Not awarded	B+	87 - 89.99	C+	77 - 79.99	D+	67 - 69.99	F	0 - 59.99
A	93 - 100	B	83 - 86.99	C	73 - 76.99	D	63 - 66.99		
A-	90 - 92.99	B-	80 - 82.99	C-	70 - 72.99	D-	60 - 62.99		

Borderline final grades that fall within one tenth of the next level will be adjusted upward to the next level (e.g., 92.90 becomes an "A") if you fulfill both criteria: 1) Turn in *all* assignments on

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time with no extensions, and 2) Have perfect attendance (i.e., no unexcused absences beyond your two personal days).

[Incomplete grades](#) are generally only given in exceptional cases of illness or other uncontrollable factors and must be approved by me before final exam week.

Late/Make-up Work

If you know you cannot make a particular deadline, contact me beforehand and we'll discuss if an alternative deadline is appropriate. Otherwise, material submitted past the deadline listed on Schoology will be marked down 10% for each 24-hour period after the due date. Assignments that are 10 days late will receive 0%. All missing assignments before the last day of the semester will be 0%.

“Extension Bank” for Late Work

All students will experience circumstances outside class that make it difficult to turn in assigned work on time. Because of this, I've created an “Extension Bank” that you can “withdraw” from throughout the semester. With “no-questions-asked,” you have up to five days to use for extensions.

Visit [this link](#) before the assigned due date if you want extra time to complete an assignment. You can use these five days however you choose, dividing them up between different assignments or using them all on one assignment. Do note that these extensions shouldn't be used for in-class assignments.

Disputed Grades

Contact me in writing if you feel you have been incorrectly awarded a particular grade to begin a conversation regarding your grades. Include a paragraph describing:

- 1) How your work fulfills the assignment's expectations,
- 2) What specific components of your work are deserving of a higher grade,
- 3) What text and page numbers you based your original work on, and
- 4) What you believe your modified grade should be.

Attendance

Although this semester presents continued challenges to consistent attendance, I still hope you will attend every class session when you're healthy enough to do so.

Plan on attending every scheduled class period as well as every scheduled one-on-one meeting. Each student is allowed two no-questions-asked “personal days” before they begin to accumulate unexcused absences. A student with more than eight unexcused absences from scheduled class periods will not earn a passing grade.

Accommodations for Religious Observances

Provide me with a written request within the first three weeks of class to better accommodate any course conflicts with specific religious observances.

Extra Credit

There will be no opportunities for extra credit.

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Academic Honesty

I will follow the [Academic Honesty Guidelines](#) in Carthage's Community Code. The following acts are never acceptable: plagiarism, cheating, unauthorized cooperative work, false citation, unauthorized resubmission of your work prepared for a separate class, false data, and submitting work prepared by others. Penalties for academic dishonesty can include warnings, point deductions, failure of assignments, failure of the course, or dismissal from the college. These penalties are dependent on the extent of the violation, history of violations, and instructor discretion.

The most common forms of academic dishonesty seem to be the intentional use of uncited information from Google searches and the use of online paraphrase tools in writing assignments. Both are easily detectable through programs like [CopyLeaks](#). You should avoid these techniques and instead do the following: 1) Rely on the information in your assigned materials instead of turning to Google, and 2) Be transparent in where you get your information by acknowledging the inclusion of someone else's ideas or words with an appropriate citation and reference even if you don't use direct quotations. A major goal of this course is for you to *interact with* others' ideas and words, *not* to simply repeat others' words and ideas.

The American Psychological Association (APA) citation method is **required** for this class (see <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/02/> for an overview), but any citation method that gives credit to the original authors is sufficient.

Masks On Campus

Due to the ongoing pandemic, Carthage College has adopted a policy requiring masks to be worn by all individuals in all buildings. Masks must be worn at all times in the classroom, laboratory, studio spaces, hallways, bathrooms, and during in-person meetings. The face covering must conform to CDC guidelines and must cover both the nose and mouth at all times. Note that bandanas, neck gaiters, and masks with exhalation or external valves are not acceptable and are not sufficient for protection of others or yourself. Acceptable masks tie behind the head or loop behind the ears, fit snugly over the nose and chin, and can include cloth masks, medical/surgical masks, and N95s or KN95s. Eating and/or drinking are prohibited while in the classroom (because those activities interfere with consistent mask wearing).

Any student who refuses to wear a mask or consistently forgets one will be dismissed from the class and not be given an opportunity to make up missed work. The student will also be referred to the Dean of Students, as outlined by the process on Carthage's Stay Safe website.

Stay Safe Guidelines: <https://www.carthage.edu/carthage-covid-19/stay-safe-carthage/>

Technology

We'll frequently use your laptop computers in class. If you do not have a reliable laptop please let me know as soon as possible. Please be "present" in class and keep your smartphone activities to a minimum. When you're using your computer for class try to focus on the academic task at hand.

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Course Schedule

Our course schedule will *only* be updated on Schoology. The “Calendar” link on Schoology seems to be the clearest way to present assignments and other important information about scheduling.

I encourage you to embrace both patience and grace within the uncertainty that this semester will inevitably bring. Just know that I value each one of you as students, and I feel not only obligated but privileged to be here for you as best I can.

About one week in - Project Brainstorm / Outline Due (Schoology)

About two weeks in - Project “Elevator Pitch” Presentation

About three weeks in - Project Proposal Due (5 pages with references) (Schoology)

About five weeks in - Literature Review Matrix Due (15 journal articles) (Schoology)

About seven weeks in - Project *Draft* 1 Due (Schoology) (Peer Review and Memo to Follow)

About ten weeks in - Project *Draft* 2 Due (Schoology) (Peer Review and Memo to Follow)

~~Week before final exams (December 6 – December 10) – Final Project Presentations~~

Thursday, December 16 @ 10 a.m. - Final Project Document Due (Schoology)