

Criminal Justice
Course Description and Expectations, 2021-2022
Mr. Zeman

Contact Information:

E-mail: jzeman@d94.org
Phone Extension: (630) 876-6453
Room: 2226

Course Description:

In Criminal Justice, we will work together to better understand our legal and Constitutional rights. We will examine current legal questions and controversies and their effects on American society. In particular, we will study the American criminal justice system, from the criminal incident through sentencing. We will explore the roles of the police, attorneys, and judges, but our focus will be on the rights of the accused. We will analyze landmark Supreme Court decisions related to these rights. Throughout all of our studies, we will focus on our rights and responsibilities within this system. In addition to learning about the United States' legal system, our goals include enhancing skills in critical thinking, reading, and writing.

Unit Schedule:

Unit 1: Introduction to Law
Unit 2: Criminal Law
Unit 3: Criminal Justice Process
Unit 4: Sentencing & Corrections

Required Materials:

You should bring the items below to class *everyday*:

- Your **charged** Chromebook
- Notebook or binder & loose-leaf dedicated to Criminal Justice
- Class readings/handouts necessary for class
- Pen, pencil, and highlighter

Attendance:

I expect you to be in class every day unless you have an excused absence. If your absence is justified then it is **your responsibility to find out what work you need to make-up.**

Homework:

I do not assign homework. **However**, I do assign work to be done in class that we might talk about the following day. If you do not use your time wisely to complete an assignment in class you will have to finish on your own time before the due date.

Grading:

This year I am a part of a pilot program exploring some new grading ideas with the aim of making grading more equitable for all students. Since this is a pilot program I may need to make some slight adjustments along the way. Please be assured that I will provide many safety nets along the way and will do everything I can to make sure your grade is fair and accurately reflects your performance in class. Please note the scale below does not reflect “points” but a 50 point scale NOT a traditional 100.

- A 90%-100%
- B 80%-89%
- C 70%-79%
- D 60%-69%
- F 59%-50%

Class Participation/Work:

- **Daily assignments:** Each week, you will have assignments such as readings, videos, or activities that must be done in order for us to discuss and move on as a class. There will also be periodic “quizzes” and “checks for understanding” during each unit that count as practice. I will not collect any daily work or in class assignments for a grade. This does **not** mean that the work is not important. It means quite the opposite as it will help prepare you for the assessments and better understand the content we are learning. I believe that your grade will reflect the time and effort you dedicate in class, regardless of whether each individual assignment is graded. **Please note this means the entirety of your grade will depend on your performance on assessments.**
- **Participation:** This course relies on student participation in class discussions, debates, mock trials, and moot court simulations. You will learn more and enjoy the class if you are an active participant! I will provide clear instructions on how to earn these points prior to the activities.

Assessments:

- **Unit Assessments:** At the end of each unit, there will be an assessment covering all of the readings, discussions, and in-class activities from that unit. Each unit assessment may be worth up to 100 points. Assessments may include multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.
- **Projects & Written Assignments:** Throughout the course, you will learn to critically analyze legal scenarios and prepare “decisions” on the issues at hand. Projects and/or written assignments may be assigned in place of or in addition to your unit assessments. You will have plenty of time both in and out of class to complete these assignments. Expectations will be communicated individually for each assignment.
- **Final Exam:** You will not have a traditional final exam. I have a final exam project at the end of the semester that will allow you to demonstrate your knowledge of the criminal justice system as well as apply critical thinking and key concepts we learned and developed throughout the semester.

Behavior:

Students are expected to follow the rules of a productive classroom. You are expected to be respectful to each other, have an open mind, do not talk over one another, and limit possible distractions so that we can all enjoy the learning process. This course is an elective and should be enjoyable as you chose to take the class! That being said, it is expected that you do the work and participate as if this was a required course. It is my hope that everyone gets something out of this class as it is a unique opportunity and students who do not care about the course should not ruin it for those who do.