

Common Course Outline
CRJU 101
Introduction to Criminal Justice
3 Credits

Community College of Baltimore County

Description

CRJU 101 – Introduction to Criminal Justice discusses the history, philosophy and social development of police, courts, and corrections in a democratic society. It covers identification and operations of local, state and federal agencies, while emphasizing criminal justice career orientation.

3 Credits

Prerequisites: ACLT 052

Co-requisite: ACLT 053

Overall Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

1. relate the components of the criminal justice system to the collective goal of public safety in the United States and other industrialized countries;
2. analyze the historical development of Anglo-American law and its impact on contemporary substantive and procedural law;
3. compare the three major methods of crime measurement, including how the data is used in the criminal justice system and how it reports demographic information about offenders;
4. evaluate major theoretical perspectives that attempt to explain criminal behavior including the impact of socio-economic status, race, and cultural influences;
5. examine the role of crime victims in the criminal justice system and their legal rights;
6. analyze the structure and role of law enforcement in America, including issues related to diversity within police agencies;
7. distinguish between the jurisdiction of the state and federal court systems in America;
8. describe the factors which influence sentencing options available to the court, especially as they relate to sentences imposed in other countries;
9. summarize the historical development of institutional corrections and current issues related to the inmate population, including its relationship to global incarceration rates;
10. define the goals and responsibilities of community corrections;
11. analyze the unique characteristics of juvenile justice and issues related to delinquency and juvenile offenders;
12. evaluate the future of the criminal justice system under crime control/due process models;
13. correlate the discretion that is exerted throughout the criminal justice process with the importance of ethical decision-making at each step; and
14. present a concise overview of a career opportunity in this field.

Major Topics

- I. Crime and justice in the United States
 - A. An institution of social control
 - B. Components of the criminal justice system
 - C. Importance of ethical decision-making throughout each step of crime process
- II. Crime and its consequences
 - A. The elements and measurements of crime
 - B. Costs of crime
 - C. Demographics of offenders
 - 1. Disproportionate representation of minorities
 - 2. Impact of age, socio-economics and gender
 - D. The extent of fear of crime in the U.S.
 - E. Victimization trends and victims
- III. Criminological theory
 - A. Classical and neoclassical
 - B. Positive, biological, sociological and critical approaches
 - C. Explanations that focus on socio-economic status and race
- IV. The rule of law
 - A. Criminal and civil law
 - B. Substantive and procedural law
 - C. Procedural rights
- V. American law enforcement
 - A. Origin and development
 - B. Structure, role and functions of police
 - C. Community policing
 - D. Recruitment and training (including efforts in diversity)
- VI. The court system
 - A. Types and purposes of each court
 - B. The stages of the trial process
 - C. Types and purposes of sentencing
 - D. Comparison of sentences to other industrialized countries
- VII. Institutional corrections
 - A. Historical developments
 - B. Organization and programming
 - C. Characteristics of the inmate population (race, age, gender)
 - D. Rights of inmates
 - E. Release policy and recidivism
 - F. Relationship to incarceration in other countries
- VIII. Community corrections
 - A. Goals and responsibilities
 - B. Parole and intermediate sentencing
- IX. Juvenile justice
 - A. History
 - B. Delinquency patterns and profile (including race, gender, socio-economic background)
 - C. Juvenile adjudication and corrections

X. Predicting the future of criminal justice

- A. Crime control model
- B. Due process model

XI. Research a career in the field

- A. Write a paper following guidelines presented in class
- B. Conduct a class presentation of paper or post on discussion board (if online)

Course Requirements

Grading/Exams: Grading procedures will be determined by the individual faculty member but will include the following:

A minimum of two tests; quizzes can be given as determined by the instructor

Writing: A writing assignment is required that directs students to examine a career opportunity in the field, write a research paper and conduct a class presentation OR online discussion. The assignment should be the Criminal Justice Career Presentation and Research Paper or a similar assignment that has been approved by the Criminal Justice Studies Program. The writing assignment must address and assess all of the General Education program skills. Students are required to utilize appropriate academic resources.

One other writing assignment is required and suggestions are as follows:

- Summaries of current events and their relation to course material;
- Evaluation of a criminal trial that was observed;
- Analysis of a specific problem that is apparent in the criminal justice system;
- Overview of ways in which this class changed perceptions about the Criminal Justice System and/or myths that were dispelled as a result of taking this class.

At least one class assignment will be given that requires collaboration between students.

Examples of this activity are:

- Examination of ethical decisions routinely faced by law enforcement officers and group activity to address impact and possible solutions;
- Evaluation of statistics found in Uniform Crime Report, National Crime Victimization Surveys and self-report surveys;
- In a small group, write a law that makes a specific behavior illegal and includes all of the elements required for an act to be deemed illegal in the United States;
- Debate about imposition of death penalty and morality of execution;
- In a small group, analyze impact of plea bargaining in justice system and compare/contrast potential violations of Constitutional rights.

Other Course Information

This course is a Criminal Justice core course and an approved General Education and Diversity course in the Social Science category. It is taught in the classroom and online using a variety of instructional techniques.