Department of Criminal Justice

Mission Statement

The Department of Criminal Justice (http://www.apu.edu/bas/criminaljustice) prepares students to apply knowledge of criminal justice and critical analysis of social problems to promote the equitable application of the law for all people and become ethical Christian leaders in public and private organizations that intend to make communities safer. The department provides an academically rigorous focus within a liberal arts education, developing criminal justice professionals who embody Christian social justice perspectives.

About the Department

Criminal justice is an interdisciplinary social science involving the study of crime and societal responses to it. The Department of Criminal Justice seeks to foster an environment of inquiry, innovation, and lifelong learning. Students of criminal justice recognize, critically examine, and solve social problems related to crime and criminal behavior. By examining the policies and systems designed to control criminality, students learn the sociopolitical context of crime and explore the historical and contemporary theories of violent and antisocial behavior. In addition to learning academic theories and analyzing criminal justice practices, students develop practical skills such as writing for criminal justice audiences, locating relevant laws and regulations, and understanding courtroom procedures.

The department provides foundational courses for understanding contemporary criminological theory and criminal justice practice with scholarly appraisal of law enforcement, the courts, and corrections. The department also offers elective courses that encourage the reflection, critical thinking, and ethical decision making essential to becoming responsible practitioners and leaders in the criminal justice field.

Career Opportunities

Graduates of the criminal justice program are prepared to enter a broad range of career paths in the criminal justice field, as well as graduate study in criminology/criminal justice, forensic psychology, forensic science, and law.

What Students Learn

Students of criminal justice analyze methods to reduce crime; advance police practices; improve prison, jail, and parole policies; and make society safer. Completion of the program enables students to:

1. Demonstrate comprehension of traditional and contemporary theories.
2. Explain how major components of the criminal justice system (police, courts, and corrections) respond to crime, criminals, and victims.
3. Employ data and methods of social science research to respond to contemporary criminal justice issues.
4. Illustrate ways in which social inequalities are linked to differential justice within criminal justice systems.
5. Demonstrate a Christian worldview in recognizing, understanding, and applying ethical reasoning skills in criminal justice.

Criminal Justice Major (http://catalog.apu.edu/undergraduate/school-behavioral-applied-sciences/criminal-justice/criminal-justice-major)

CJ 110, Introduction to Criminal Justice, 3 Units

This course will provide an overview of the field of criminology/criminal justice as an academic discipline. The academic discipline of criminal justice involves the scientific study of theoretical perspectives on crime and justice. In this course students will consider the respective roles of law, rehabilitation, public health, morality, and justice in the study of why crime occurs, how society responds to crime, and the scientific methods criminologists use to measure the extent of crime. The people who commit crime, the crimes they commit, and society’s response to those actions cannot be fully understood outside the context of the larger criminal justice system, how it operates, the differential treatment of certain racial/ethnic groups, and the systems necessity in society. These issues are discussed throughout this course. Meets the General Education Requirement: Social Science.

CJ 200, Criminal Justice, Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility, 3 Units

This course provides an experiential introduction to the criminal justice system. Issues of ethics, justice, and poor relations between criminal justice professionals and community members, are issues every 21st century criminal justice professional must be prepared to address. In this course students are introduced to types of civic engagement in a democracy as it relates to the criminal justice system. Students will organize community forums to address issues in policing, the courts, and the reintegration of offenders into the community. Meets the General Education Requirement: Civic Knowledge and Engagement.
CJ 220, Police and Society, 3 Units
This course provides an introduction to the history of policing and examination of major trends in contemporary law enforcement. By comparing community policing, problem-oriented policing, evidence-based policing and many others, students will identify the legal framework of policing and administration of police work. This course also includes an in-depth examination of police behavior, police discretion, and societal attitudes towards law enforcement.
Prerequisite: CJ 110

CJ 240, Introduction to Corrections: Jails and Prisons, 3 Units
Prisons are total institutions that exert control over inmates' daily lives. This course provides an in-depth introduction to the historical evolution and current state of incarceration and detention in the United States. By focusing on the theories and ideologies informing punitive practices, the goals of deterrence, rehabilitation, and incapacitation will be explored. Students will take a critical look at life in prison by exploring how incarceration affects the inmate and the potential consequences for society. Special emphasis is given to current controversies in jail and prison policy, such as overcrowding and violence.
Prerequisite: CJ 110

CJ 250, Juvenile Justice, 3 Units
This course is designed to familiarize students with the juvenile justice system. This course will educate students on: types of delinquency, causes of delinquency (why a minor would engage in delinquent behavior), gang culture, social problems contributing to delinquency, law enforcement agencies that address delinquency, court proceedings and courts orders. Interventions that can be utilized with children who engage in delinquency and prevention programs that reduce the risk factors contributing to delinquency will also be discussed.
Prerequisite: CJ 110

CJ 251, Criminal Law, 3 Units
A study of the principles and doctrines embodied in the criminal law. Topics such as substantive crimes, justification, complicity and liability, causation, and inchoate crimes will be explored and emphasized.
Prerequisite: CJ 110

CJ 280, American Court System, 3 Units
This course provides an analysis of the structure, process, and personnel involved in the American Court system. By examining both state and federal courts, students will be exposed to the relationship between the judiciary and other criminal justice functions. Special emphasis is given to current court reform programs and the role of technology in the court room.
Prerequisite: CJ 110

CJ 310, Criminological Theories, 3 Units
In this course the student will identify different perspectives of crime causation, and critically assess why people commit crimes. Included are the ideas, worldview, and theories common to criminal justice professions regarding criminal motivation, what is considered a criminal act, how those acts should be handled, and the role of professionals in the criminal justice system.
Prerequisite: CJ 220, CJ 280, CJ 240

CJ 340, Victimology, 3 Units
This course provides advanced study and critical appraisal of the theories and recent research on victims of crime. This analysis often focuses on the physical, emotional, and financial harm people suffer because of criminal activities and the role of the victim in the criminal justice system. By exploring the relationships between the offender, the victim, and the criminal justice system, students will gain a greater understanding of the frequently forgotten member of crime. This course will also discuss the programs and policies that have resulted from society's increasing concern about the rights of victims.
Prerequisite: WRIT 262

CJ 350, Race, Ethnicity and Crime, 3 Units
Race, and companion factors such as race, ethnicity, social economic class (SES), gender and age are critical factors in the administration of criminal justice in the US. This course critically examines race, ethnicity and SES within the U.S. criminal justice system. The course will provide an overview of the history and background of the experiences of different racial and ethnic groups with different facets of the criminal justice system (policing, juvenile justice, sentencing, courts, etc.). This course will also introduce students to theories about the treatment of the poor compared to the non-poor in criminal offending; and will examine theoretical issues of race and justice. Empirical understandings of the intersectional relationship between race, class and gender and the criminal justice system will also be discussed.
Prerequisite: CJ 310

CJ 351, Criminal Procedure, 3 Units
This course offers a study of specific criminal procedural concepts, such as the right to counsel, exclusionary rule, search warrants, permissible warrantless searches, stop and frisk, entrapment, wiretapping, confessions, lineups, jury selection, voir dire, negotiated pleas, and postconviction relief.
Prerequisite: CJ 110
CJ 355, Gender & Crime, 3 Units
This course explores the intersection between gender (with special focus on women) and crime. We will discuss such topics as gender differences in offending, theoretical explanations for female offending, the social construction of offending, women as victims of crime and violence, the sexualization and criminalization of women's bodies, women's experiences with prison and the criminal justice system, and women working in criminal justice fields.
Prerequisite: CJ 110 and Junior or Senior standing

CJ 450, Forensic Psychology for Criminal Justice Professionals, 3 Units
This course provides an in-depth introduction to the science of psychology applied to the criminal justice system. Students will explore the psychological principles related to eyewitness testimony, lineups, police interrogations, jury decision making, competence, insanity, and future dangerousness. Special emphasis is given to current research findings in forensic psychology.
Prerequisite: CJ 310 and PSYC 110

CJ 460, Criminal Justice Internship, 3 Units
The purpose of the internship program is to provide advanced student majors with practical experience working in the field of criminology and criminal justice. Classroom time focuses on processing your learning in the field, addressing any questions, challenges or concerns regarding the experience, and facilitating thinking about professional and graduate work in related fields. As such, classroom time is spent in a small group facilitated discussion format. Students in this course will apply their learning experience practically within a criminal justice professional setting. Class assignments will assist students in looking at different professional experiences from the lens of multiple criminal justice professionals (e.g. law enforcement officers, prosecutors/defense attorneys, probation officers, etc.). Additionally, this allows students to make contact with professionals who might later serve as references or points of contact, and it also allows students to gain actual experience which can be included on a resume or job application. Meets the General Education Requirement: Integrative and Applied Learning.
Prerequisite: Criminal Justice Majors Junior or Senior status.

CJ 495, Special Topics in Criminal Justice, 3 Units
This course addresses topics of current interest in criminal justice not covered by the core and elective courses. Topics vary from semester to semester and may reflect new issues in the criminal justice system, theories, or faculty research interests in the field. This course may be taken more than once as topics change.
Prerequisite: CJ 110

CJ 496, Writing 3: Senior Capstone in Criminal Justice, 3 Units
This course provides students an opportunity to combine their learning experience from multiple courses in criminal justice into a research project that demonstrates their learning. This course will focus on writing instruction for students entering criminal justice professions. Students will expound on a contemporary issue in criminal justice and present their findings to professionals in the criminal justice field. Meets the General Education Requirement: Writing 3: Writing in the Disciplines.
Prerequisite: WRIT 262 (Writing 2) and a minimum of 90 units

Faculty
Department Chair and Associate Professor
Deshonna Collier-Goubil (http://www.apu.edu/bas/faculty/dcollier), Ph.D.

Assistant Professors
Candice Hodge (http://www.apu.edu/bas/faculty/chodge), Ph.D.
Analicia Mejia Mesinas (http://www.apu.edu/bas/faculty/amejiamesinas), Ph.D. (Cand.)
Aris Rodriguez (http://www.apu.edu/bas/faculty/arodriguez), JD
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Adjunct Faculty
Sam Gonzalez (http://www.apu.edu/bas/faculty/sggonzales), M.A.
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