



JOHN JAY COLLEGE
THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Criminal Justice BA Assessment Plan

Draft – December 13, 2011

Contents

- I. Mission Statement and Essential Learning Outcomes
- II. Background and Assessment Philosophy
- III. Timetable, Transition, and Assessment Cycle
- IV. Direct Assessment Instruments
- V. Indirect Assessment Instruments

Appendices

- A. Pre-test and Post-Test Instrument for CJBA 111
- B. Instructions and Example for CJBA 220
- C. Instructions for CJBA 340
- D. Rubric for CJBA 400-401/410-411

I. Mission Statement and Essential Learning Outcomes

According to its mission statement, the criminal justice BA views crime as a social problem and seeks to develop in its students the capacity to critically assess the normative structure of the existing criminal justice system with an aim to improving its condition and function. The emphasis of the major is on developing analytical skills, ethical reasoning, and a capacity for solving problems. It aspires to cultivate creative and original thinking about one of the most challenging social problems of our time. Specifically, students should be able to: (1) Apply analytical, ethical, and critical reasoning skills to quantitatively, qualitatively and morally assess and evaluate the role and function of institutions engaged in the mission of crime control; (2) Articulate how institutions achieve social goals and understand and describe how to effectuate change within institutions; (3) Consider how race, ethnicity and ethnicity impact the construction and effectuation of crime control; (4) Have a broad, multidimensional focus on moral questions and be able to express the ethical implications of policy decisions; (5) Be facile with data and prefer original research to secondary sources, and (6) Think creatively and originally as evidenced by the ability to write well, construct and implement an original research design, and apply this research to present innovative solutions and insights to complex policy questions.

Consistent with this philosophy the criminal justice department has identified the following six measurable outcomes, which students should display at the conclusion of the program:

1. The capacity to critically evaluate ethical arguments regarding criminal justice policy decisions.
2. The capacity to critically evaluate the impact of race, gender, and ethnicity on criminal justice policy decisions.
3. The ability to construct an original research question, manifesting a familiarity with the existing literature, and an implementable research design.
4. The ability to implement that research design through the collection and interpretation of data, and to articulate proposals for policy reform.
5. Clarity of expression.

II. Background and Assessment Philosophy

On April 13, 2011, the College Council ratified a proposed revision of the BA in criminal justice. This revision was the product of nearly three years of discussion and collaborative effort, and represents a major new direction for criminal justice education both at John Jay and nationally.

Historically, a fundamental tension has divided criminal justice educators. At one end of the spectrum is a vocational model, often credited to William Wiltberger at University of California, Berkeley, and sometimes to police educators August Vollmer, O. W. Wilson, and V. A. Leonard. These pioneers advocated professionalizing criminal justice fields, and modeled their programs on the police academy. On this view, criminal justice education exists primarily to prepare students for law enforcement work. Justice is defined as the American practice of crime control.

At the other end of the spectrum, criminal justice education is a liberal arts curriculum in which students are equipped with skills from the social sciences and asked to question basic values. On this view, criminal justice education has a broader mandate. It is intended to inspire curiosity, to develop a general spirit of inquiry, and to cultivate and enhance a mental attitude or probing exploration.

Both nationally and at John Jay, the vocational model has by and large prevailed. As the president of ACJS said in his 2001 address, “we have no uniform theoretical infrastructure.” Many faculty members fear that criminal justice undergraduates are not up to more. Professors are reluctant to offer courses perceived as “too academic for criminal justice.”

Our research, consisting of an examination of national data, college data, focus groups with students, and discussions with leading practitioners suggests that an untapped demand exists for criminal justice practitioners with the capacity to analyze data, structure research questions, and to comment critically on matters of social policy. We believe that nurturing this new sort of undergraduate requires a fundamental rethinking of criminal justice education. The emphasis must be less on factual knowledge and more on analytical skills. Students must be trained to be empiricists, problem solvers, and most importantly, empowered to think beyond the status quo. Students must be taught to do, and do, original research. In the ultimate extension of this vision, questions of crime control are addressed by professionals and a cadre of well-mentored students who bring to bear analytical skills and exposure to a variety of perspectives and modes of thought, with the aim of generating original and ethical solutions to vexing social problems. In this ideal, criminal justice functions like any well-established social-scientific discipline.

The need for a revision of the BA in criminal justice was made clear in the last external review of the criminal justice majors in 2001. Professor Albert Roberts wrote:

B.A. v. B.S. is in reality a long time feud between the B.A. and B.S. faculties. Its historical roots go back to when there were not enough students to fill all classes. Now that the undergrad population has increased considerably, the same turf wars still exist and need to stop.

This revision resolves the conflict. The criminal justice B.S., which is also being substantially revised, will continue to serve the population it has historically served. The B.A., on the other hand, will take a giant step in a new direction, aimed at equipping students with the skills required to be policy analysts, that will serve them in graduate school. John Jay has a large enough student population to support both majors,

Our assessment plan focuses on five critical points in a student's progress through the new major: 1) the conclusion of the introductory course, 2) the conclusion of the course on race and ethnicity, 3) the conclusion of the advanced course on research methods, 4) the outset of the senior research project, and 5) the conclusion of the senior research project, which is the capstone experience. Note that all students must complete a research project, although there are two tracks. Under Track A, students are required to design an original research project, implement the project, and collect and present data. Under Track B, students may pursue an internship experience. Under both tracks the research and writing requirement remains the same. The student must design and implement an institutional analysis, and present their written product at the conclusion of the second semester.

The courses in question – CJBA 110/11, CJBA 220, CJBA 340, CJBA 400/410, and CJBA 401/411 will be taken by all students within the major. As discussed below, in combination they will offer substantial insight into the effectiveness of the new major. In addition they will provide an important measure of individual student progress, and an opportunity to identify students who are not performing well at an early point. The map below links the courses to the learning outcomes of the major.

MAP

Learning Outcome	Course
1. The capacity to critically evaluate ethical arguments regarding criminal justice policy decisions.	CJBA 110/CJBA 111 CJBA 220 CJBA 340 CJBA 400/CJBA 410 CJBA 401/CJBA 411
2. The capacity to critically evaluate the impact of race, gender, and ethnicity on criminal justice policy decisions.	CJBA 110/CJBA 111 CJBA 220 CJBA 400/CJBA 410 CJBA 401/CJBA 411
3. The ability to construct an original research question, manifesting a familiarity with the existing literature, and an implementable research design.	CJBA 110/CJBA 111 CJBA 220
4. The ability to implement that research design through the collection and interpretation of data, and to articulate proposals for policy reform.	CJBA 110/CJBA 111 CJBA 220 CJBA 400/CJBA 410 CJBA 401/CJBA 411
5. Clarity of expression.	CJBA 110/CJBA 111 CJBA 340 CJBA 400/CJBA 410 CJBA 401/CJBA 411

III. Timetable, Transition, and Assessment Cycle

The revised criminal justice BA will begin in Fall 2012, and we will begin phasing in assessment activities immediately. At that point, there will be only one cohort, so it will be only possible to assess CJBA 111. With each passing year, an additional cohort will be admitted, until the 2015-16 academic year when the new BA will be fully functional.¹ Generally speaking, we will focus our assessment activities in the spring, with the exception of the research proposal, CJBA 400/410, which will be conducted at the conclusion of the course. We anticipate these assessment activities being concentrated in the fall.

2011-2012 Academic Year

- Drafting of Assessment Plan
- Collect data on CJ 410 (old BA)

2012-2013 Academic Year

- Implement direct assessment of CJBA 110/111

2013-2014 Academic Year

- Evaluation of assessments of CJBA 110/111
- Implement Assessment of CJBA 220
- Direct assessment of CJBA 110/111 (spring)

2014-2015 Academic Year

- Evaluation of assessments of CJBA 110/111 and CJBA 220
- Implement Assessment of CJBA 340 (spring)
- Direct assessment of CJBA 110/111 and CJBA 220 (spring)
-

2015-2016 Academic Year

- Evaluation of assessments of CJBA 110/111, CJBA 220, CJBA 340
- Implement Assessment of CJBA 400/410 (fall)
- Implement Assessment of CJBA 401/411 (spring)
- Direct assessment of CJBA 110/111 and CJBA 220 (spring)

Indirect Assessment: Learning objectives will also be assessed using responses to items in the periodic *National Survey of Student Engagement* and the *John Jay College Student Evaluation of the Major*.

¹ Last year we assessed the capstone course of the old BA, CRJ 410, under the rubric for the new BA. CRJ 410 will remain a requirement under the new revised BS degree, which is administered by the department of Law & Police Science. Thus, responsibility for assessing CRJ 410 will shift to that department.

IV. Direct Assessment Instruments

As described above, this Plan entails the assessment of student progress in five critical courses: CJBA 110/11, CJBA 220, CJBA 340, CJBA 400/410, and CJBA 401/411. In this section, the direct assessment tools are outlined.

A. Direct Assessment of Student Progress at Conclusion of CJBA 111

The goal of CJBA 110/111 is to acquaint the students with policy questions, familiarize them with the use of data, and equip them to critically assess institutions and their function. In addition, the course has the indirect goal of familiarizing students with the major institutions of criminal justice. We will use a standardized test to assess student outcomes. We envision this course being taught as a large section. Hence it should be easy and appropriate to administer the exam to all students in the course.

In connection with our ongoing assessment of large sections we have developed and piloted an instrument, which will serve as a model. Sample questions are attached as Appendix A. The instrument is divided into two parts: a multiple choice and a short essay section. Students can earn a maximum of ten points on the multiple choice section and twenty points on the short essay. The multiple choice and essay items were developed using non-esoteric type questions that tap the student's abilities to think through and formulate their answers using analytic, moral or ethical reasoning. The multiple choice questions are graded at five points a piece for correctly answering the twenty questions.

The essay questions are graded using a standard rubric that we have adopted, which generates subscores mapping to the learning outcomes of the major. Up to twenty points are awarded in each of the following categories:

Learning outcome 1: Up to 10 points awarded if the answer states an ethical dimension of the problem. Up to 10 additional points awarded if the statement offers a cogent framework for thinking about the problem (utilitarianism, retribution, etc.)

Learning outcome 2: Up to 10 points awarded if the answer articulates a racial or ethnic component to the problem. Up to 10 additional points awarded if the answer offers a cogent framework for thinking how that problem might be resolved.

Learning outcome 3: Up to 10 points awarded if the answer shows a familiarity with prior research. Up to 10 additional points if the answer indicates the deficiency of the prior research.

Learning outcome 4: Up to 10 points awarded if the answer indicates how the question could be further studied. Up to 10 additional points if the answer indicates how that design might be implemented.

Learning outcome 5: Up to 10 points awarded for a minimally competently written essay. Up to 20 points awarded for a well written answers.

These scores are intended to be independent of one another. In other words, points are to be awarded with respect to learning outcome 1 solely on the clarity of the student's ethical thinking. Quality of expression bears predominantly on learning outcome 5. We will hold annual group grading sessions, so that scores are calculated according to consistent principles.

In the aggregate, a maximum of 100 points can be earned on each component part of the exam. We view a score of 90-100 as exceptional; 75-89 as satisfactory, and 75 or less as unsatisfactory. The test will be annually reviewed and revised by our department curriculum committee.

B. Direct assessment of Student Progress at Conclusion of CJBA 220

CJBA 220 is an essential course for exposing students to the racial and related ethical dimensions of criminal justice problems. We will assess the course through the final exam. The final exam will be developed by instructors in accordance with principles and an example set forth in appendix B. It measures the specific learning outcomes of the major, as indicated below, and will be evaluated according to the following rubric:

Learning outcome 1: Up to 10 points awarded if the answer states an ethical dimension of the problem. Up to 10 additional points awarded if the statement offers a cogent framework for thinking about the problem (utilitarianism, retribution, etc.)

Learning outcome 2: Up to 10 points awarded if the answer articulates a racial or ethnic component to the problem. Up to 10 additional points awarded if the answer offers a cogent framework for thinking how that problem might be resolved.

Learning outcome 3: Up to 10 points awarded if the answer shows a familiarity with prior research. Up to 10 additional points if the answer indicates the deficiency of the prior research.

Learning outcome 4: Up to 10 points awarded if the answer indicates how the question could be further studied. Up to 10 additional points if the answer indicates how that design might be implemented.

Learning outcome 5: Up to 10 points awarded for a minimally competently written easy. Up to 20 points awarded for a well written answers.

A maximum of 100 points can be earned on each component part of the exam. We view a score of 90-100 as exceptional; 75-89 as satisfactory, and 75 or less as unsatisfactory. The test will be annually reviewed and revised by our department curriculum committee.

C. Assessment of Student Progress at Conclusion of CJBA 340

The conclusion of CJBA 340 is a critical point for assessing a student's capacity to design and carry out the capstone research experience. We will assess the course through the final exam. The final exam will be developed by instructors in accordance with principles and an example set forth in appendix C. This instrument is principally a measure of progress toward learning outcomes 3 and 4.. The assessment criteria map to learning outcomes as follows.

Assessment Criteria	Learning Outcome
1. The answer shows an	4

understanding of basic statistical operations such as mean, median, and mode.	
2. The answer shows an understanding of correlation and regression.	4
3. The answer shows an ability to examine the strengths and weaknesses of a research design.	4
4. The answer shows an ability to improve upon a research design.	4
5. The answer shows an ability to interpret the data and marshal the data to assess the problem on which it bears.	3

Subscores will be calculated to reflect student progress to individual learning goals. Scoring these outcomes at two points each, a maximum of 10 points can be earned. In the aggregate, we view a score of 10 as exceptional; 8-9 as satisfactory, and 7 or fewer as unsatisfactory.

D. Assessment of Student Progress in CJBA 400-410 and CJBA 401-411

CJBA 400/410 and 401/411 are the capstone experiences to the major. Each asks the student to design an original research project and to carry out that analysis. For 400-410, the analysis is empirical. For 401-411 the project is based on an institutional analysis. The main requirement for 400 and 401 is a thesis proposal. The main requirement for 410 and 411 is a thesis. The thesis proposal must be at least 5,000 words and include a literature review, a statement of the question presented, a methodology, and a bibliography. The thesis must be at least 10,000 words and include a literature review, a statement of the question presented, a methodology, results, interpretation of the results and a bibliography.

Thesis proposals and theses will be evaluated according to the rubric set out in Appendix D. The rubric mirrors the rubric employed in the introductory courses, and will allow, through subscores, for comparison of student progress at earlier points in the major. The rubric generates a maximum score of 100, with subscores will be calculated according to each learning objective. In the aggregate, a score of 90-100 is regarded as exceptional, 75-89 as satisfactory, and 74 or less as unsatisfactory.

V. Indirect Assessment Instruments

The assessment reports for our learning objectives will also include responses from Criminal Justice BA majors to the following items from the *National Survey of Student Engagement* and the *John Jay College Student Evaluation of the Major*. The following table also indicates the learning outcome onto which each item maps. This data will be reviewed annually by the department's curriculum committee.

National Survey of Student Engagement (2008-2009)

Item (Location in Survey)	Learning Outcome				
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>
<i>How often have you done each of the following: (Table 2)</i>					
Made a class presentation					X
Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignments...					X
Worked on a paper or project that required integrating ideas from sources			X		
Included diverse perspectives in class discussions or writing assignments		X			
Put together ideas or concepts from different courses...			X		
Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with faculty members...					X
<i>How much has your coursework emphasized... (Table 3)</i>					
Analyzing the basic elements of an idea...					X
Synthesizing and organizing ideas...					X
Making judgments about the value of information...					X
Applying theories or concepts...	X				
<i>How much reading and writing have you done: (Table 4)</i>					
Number of books read ... for personal enjoyment or academic enrichment			X		
Number of written papers or reports 20 pages or more					X
Number of written papers or reports between 5 and 19 pages					X
Number of written papers or reports fewer than 5 pages					
<i>Which of the following have you done... (Table 5)</i>					
Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue	X	X			X
Tried to better understand someone else's views...	X	X			X
Learned something that changed the way understood an issue or concept	X	X			
Work on a research project with a faculty member...			X	X	
<i>Contributed to your development in the following areas: (Table 9)</i>					
Acquiring a broad general education					
Writing clearly and effectively					
Speaking clearly and effectively					
Thinking critically and analytically	X	X			
Analyzing quantitative problems			X	X	
Solving complex real-world problems	X	X	X	X	

APPENDIX B

Instructions and Example for CJBA 220

To Instructors:

The final examination for CJBA 220 serves a dual function: as a measure of student's successful completion of the course and as an assessment of the learning goals of the major. We ask that your examination include an essay component that asks the student to evaluate a criminal justice problem with a racial dimension. The question should invite students to critically assess the problem and to bring data to bear.

Example:

In *McCleskey v. Kemp*, the Supreme Court rejected a challenge to the death penalty on the basis of statistical evidence of racism. Assess the Court's decision. Is racism a compelling argument against capital punishment? What problems might there be in the Supreme Court taking such a position. In your answer, summarize the empirical evidence, and address the strength and weaknesses of the principal studies.

Evaluation:

Learning outcome 1: Up to 10 points awarded if the answer states an ethical dimension of the problem. Up to 10 additional points awarded if the statement offers a cogent framework for thinking about the problem (utilitarianism, retribution, etc.)

Learning outcome 2: Up to 10 points awarded if the answer articulates a racial or ethnic component to the problem. Up to 10 additional points awarded if the answer offers a cogent framework for thinking how that problem might be resolved.

Learning outcome 3: Up to 10 points awarded if the answer shows a familiarity with prior research. Up to 10 additional points if the answer indicates the deficiency of the prior research.

Learning outcome 4: Up to 10 points awarded if the answer indicates how the question could be further studied. Up to 10 additional points if the answer indicates how that design might be implemented.

Learning outcome 5: Up to 10 points awarded for a minimally competently written essay. Up to 20 points awarded for a well written answers.

APPENDIX C

Instructions for CJBA 340

To Instructors:

The final examination for CJBA 340 serves a dual function: as a measure of the student's successful completion of the course and as an assessment of the learning goals of the major. Specifically, this is the gateway to the undergraduate research course. We ask that the examination present student with data and ask them to perform essential statistical analyses and critically evaluate the results.

Grading:

Answers should be assessed according to the following rubric:

1. The answer shows an understanding of basic statistics operations such as mean, median, and mode.
2. The answer shows an understanding of correlation and regression.
3. The answer shows an ability to examine the strengths and weaknesses of a research design.
4. The answer shows an ability to improve upon a research design.
5. The answer shows an ability to interpret the data and marshal the data to assess the problem on which it bears.

Subscores will be calculated to reflect student progress to individual learning goals. Scoring these outcomes at two points each, a maximum of 10 points can be earned. In the aggregate, we view a score of 10 as exceptional; 8-9 as satisfactory, and 7 or fewer as unsatisfactory.

APPENDIX D
Rubric for CJBA 400-401/410-411

Learning Outcome	0-8 points (Poorly)	9-12 points (Satisfactory)	13-16 points (Highly Satisfactorily)	17-20 points (Exceptionally)
1. The capacity to critically evaluate ethical arguments regarding criminal justice policy decisions.				
Does the proposal address the ethical implications of the problem being studied? Does it demonstrate a mastery of ethical frameworks? Does it articulate an alternative? An exceptional answer accomplishes all of these goals. A highly satisfactory answer accomplishes two of these goals. A satisfactory goal accomplishes one of these goals.				
2. The capacity to critically evaluate the impact of race, gender, and ethnicity on criminal justice policy decisions.				
Does the proposal or thesis consider the relevance of race and ethnicity to the question being studied? Does it explain how empirical evidence can be brought to bear on these questions? Does it articulate and evaluate a policy alternative? An exceptional answer accomplishes all of these goals. A highly satisfactory answer accomplishes two of these goals. A satisfactory goal accomplishes one of these goals.				
3. The ability to construct an original research question, manifesting a familiarity with the existing literature, and an implementable research design.				
Does the proposal or thesis demonstrate a mastery of the previous research on the question being studied? This will be expressed primarily through the literature review. Does the proposal or thesis demonstrate a mastery of basic statistical concepts? Does the proposal demonstrate a mastery of the basic elements of research design? Is the hypothesis well structured? Is the research likely to produce relevant results? An exceptional answer accomplishes all of these goals. A highly satisfactory answer accomplishes two of these goals. A satisfactory goal accomplishes one of these goals.				
4. The ability to implement that research design through the collection and interpretation of data, and to articulate proposals for policy reform.				
With respect to a completed thesis, was the proposal implemented in accordance with the research design? Does the interpretation of the				

<p>results suggest mastery of the material? Does the student offer helpful suggestions for reform? An exceptional answer accomplishes all of these goals. A highly satisfactory answer accomplishes two of these goals. A satisfactory goal accomplishes one of these goals.</p>				
<p>5. Clarity of expression.</p>				
<p>Is the proposal or thesis well written and grammatical? Specifically, does the proposal state a clear hypothesis and conclusion? Does it employ subheadings and topic sentences so as to present the argument in an orderly manner? Does the proposal or thesis use a consistent, neutral frame of reference? Is the language clear enough so that lay readers can comprehend the material being presented? Does the thesis or proposal reflect an understanding of the format for presenting research findings? Specifically, does it include an abstract, a literature review, research questions, methodology, findings, explanation of the contribution made, theoretical conclusions, deficiencies of the study, and further questions for study? An exceptional answer accomplishes all of these goals. A highly satisfactory answer accomplishes all but one. A minimally satisfactory answer accomplishes at least three of these goals.</p>				