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I. **Introduction and General Overview of the Assessment Study**

As per the Masters Program in Criminal Justice’s assessment plan, during the academic year 2011-2012, **Criminal Justice 793: The Comprehensive Review Course** was assessed.

Students in the program are required to complete five core courses—CRJ 710-711, Issues in Criminal Justice; CRJ 715, Research Design and Methods; CRJ 716, Using Computers in Social Research; and CRJ 730, Policy Analysis in Criminal Justice, a specialization consisting of three electives drawn from select categories, three to four additional electives of their choice and either write a thesis or pass a comprehensive exam which tests students’ knowledge of subjects taught in the five core courses and reviewed in CRJ 793. The vast majority of students, approximately 95 percent, choose to take the comprehensive exam instead of writing a thesis.

The comprehensive review course is one of two capstone courses in the master’s degree program in criminal justice; the other one is the thesis preparation course. The comprehensive review course is intended to serve as a culmination of students’ academic experience in that it integrates and consolidates prior coursework in the master’s program. Therefore, this course reflects the overall learning outcomes of the master in criminal justice program.

Students enrolled in CRJ 793 receive a grade for the course only by taking the comprehensive review examination, which tests students’ knowledge of subjects taught in the program’s five core courses, at the end of the course.

**Catalogue Description:**

**Comprehensive Review**

**CRJ 793**

30 HOURS PLUS CONFERENCES, 3 CREDITS. (OFFERED EVERY SEMESTER)

Presents a series of weekly guest faculty lecturers who review the key concepts and major areas of criminal justice. Provides the recommended (but not required) preparation for the end-of-the-term comprehensive examination for those who have chosen the exam option to complete the requirements for the master’s degree.

**Prerequisite:** A GPA of 3.0 or higher at the time of registration for the course and completion of all required courses for the program at the end of the semester for which the student registers for CRJ 793

The master’s program in criminal justice runs one section of CRJ 793 per semester with an enrollment between 80 and 100 students. The class, which is held once a week from 6:15-8:15 PM, presents a series of weekly guest faculty lecturers who review the key concepts from major areas of criminal justice. Two class sessions are dedicated to each of the following topics—criminology, corrections, policing, the law and policy analysis—and the research methods is covered in three classes. Each guest lecturer assigns readings that provide the foundation for his or her lecture. The syllabus for the course (see the Appendix A) clearly lays out the course goals and the examination process.
II. Learning Objectives:
During the Fall of 2010, instructors in the program’s five core courses (CRJ 710, 711, 715, 716, and 730) met to adopt learning objectives for their courses. A set of objectives was agreed upon by the graduate faculty in December 2010.

Criminal Justice 793: The Comprehensive Review Course is the capstone course for the master’s degree program in criminal justice. As such, the course’s learning objectives are identical to those of the program as a whole and its core courses.

A. Students should be able to explain theoretical and empirical findings about crime and the institutions of criminal justice.

1. To meet or exceed the goals of the criminological theory objective, students will be expected to:
   a. Demonstrate knowledge of key criminological theories.
   b. Be able to apply theory to specific context.

2. In order to meet or exceed the goals of the policing objective, students will demonstrate an understanding of:
   a. The how and why of the police function, including the history of policing and the role of training
   b. Theories about police deviance and the police subculture
   c. The significance of organizational structure for the operation of modern police departments
   d. Use of force rules for police officers,

3. In order to meet or exceed the goals of the corrections objective, students will demonstrate an understanding of:
   a. The history of corrections and the rationale for various forms of punishment including the significance of community corrections
   b. Principles of effective institutional treatment,
   c. The significance of organizational structure for the operation of modern corrections departments,
   d. Use of force rules for corrections officers and the role of training programs in corrections departments.

B. Students should be able to use legal materials relevant to criminal justice.
In order for students to meet or exceed expectations, student will be able to demonstrate an understanding of:

1. The difference between criminal law and procedure
2. The central elements of criminal law (in particular the elements of culpability and also justifications and excuses)
3. The bearing of constitutitional doctrine on the criminal process,
4. Retributive and deterrence-based theories of punishment.

C. Students should be able to develop policy proposals for reducing crime within the context of a general commitment to preserving the values of a liberal society.
In order to meet or exceed expectations, students will demonstrate an understanding of:
1. The constitutional and political context of policy-making in criminal justice,
2. Philosophical concepts relevant to criminal justice policy-making,
3. The significance of pragmatic/consequentialist analyses of the criminal justice system that come under the heading of “what works?”
4. Program evaluation criteria

**D. Students should be able to employ appropriate research methods for the investigation of social phenomena in criminal justice.**

A student that meets or exceeds this learning goal will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of:

1. How to formulate practical and meaningful research questions
2. The most widely used methods of collecting data and the methodological difficulties inherent in researching crime and deviance.
3. The principles of scientific inquiry, including the steps taken when conducting empirical research including the process of hypothesis formation and key concepts such as variables, indicators, levels of measurement, operationalization, correlation, causality, reliability, internal and external validity, and the distinction between independent, intervening, and dependent variables,
4. How to interpret data

**E. Students should be able to write grammatically sound, coherent essays about criminal justice.**

In order to meet or exceed this learning goal students will be expected to demonstrate:

1. A capacity to think analytically, including an ability to apply categories developed by social scientists and judges while discussing unfamiliar fact-patterns
2. An ability to write grammatical English and to produce coherent, well-organized essays

**III. Performance Measures:**

All methods used for assessing what students have learned and or retain are problematic. Grading essay exams, even with a rubric, is a subjective endeavor. Student who understand the nuances of a topic, can argue the strengths and weakness of a position, its relationship to other positions, and questions its implications for society in class or on the street may freeze during a timed exam or they may know the topic in such depth that they run out of time before they cover even a small fraction of what they know. Other students may obsess over remembering a particular phrase or name and fail to complete the exam. Some students, on the other hand, may have only a cursory understanding of a subject, but know enough buzz words that in an hour they can appear to have knowledge. Rubrics that contain lists of terms or concepts and multiple choice tests tend to favor these students and students with well developed vocabularies and logic skills.

Understanding these limitations, two methods were employed to assess whether or not CRJ 793, Comprehensive Examination Review students were meeting the course’s learning goals [see section II, p. 2-4]—(A) the administration of the comprehensive exam and (B) three and a half months after the exam was given two faculty members re-graded all the answers written by a 10 percent sample of test takers.

A. The comprehensive examination: Since students who enroll in CRJ 793 must take the comprehensive examination to receive a grade for the course and the exam covers materials taught in courses required for the master’s degree, the exam is an appropriate assessment device.
Although it is not mandatory for students to take CRJ 793 prior to taking the comprehensive exam, out of the 95 students who took the exam in December 2011, 78 of the 80 students enrolled in CRJ 793 that semester took the exam (Five of the 95 students who took the exam were enrolled in CRJ 793 Spring semester 2011). Therefore, 83 of the 95 students who took the exam may have audited the class. Of the 78 students who took the comprehensive exam in Spring 2012, 46 were enrolled in the course Spring 2012 and 10 students audited the class and submitted practice answers. Eight students were enrolled in the course in Fall 2011 (five of whom audited the class in Spring 2012), and two were enrolled Spring 2011.

The comprehensive examination was administered over two days at the end of the fall semester —December 14 and 16, 2011.

The first part of the examination was given over a two hour period on December 14, 2011 (which allots students one hour to answer each question). Students were to choose one question to answer from each of two sets of two questions (one set based on materials drawn from Policy Analysis materials and the other set of questions focused on Criminology). In other words, students were allotted one hour to answer each question from each topic area in Part 1. Part 2 of the exam was administered on December 16, 2011. It consisted of three one-hour periods to answer questions on research methods, the courts/law and corrections. To decrease the risk of grader’s bias, students’ names were not placed on any of the exams. Instead, students’ exams were identified by a number that was assigned when students signed in for the exam on the first day of the exam.

Each of the five topic areas was worth a total of 20 points and was graded by two faculty members with expertise in that subject area on a scale of 1-10 (10 as the highest grade). If the two faculty members’ grades for a particular student’s answer varied by more than two points and the difference in the score would make a difference in whether or not a student would pass the exam, a third party would determine the grade. Once all questions were graded, the director of the program totaled the student’s score. Students with a score above 70 out of a possible 100 points passed the exam and the course.

B. Approximately four months after the exam was originally given, two master’s program faculty met to grade all answers in a 10% sample of the exams (exams 1, 11, 21, 31, 41, 51, 61, 71, 81, 91) using the grading rubric (See Appendix B). By using the rubric, these graders assessed exam takers writing in three categories: subject matter, introduction and thesis statement, and structure and mechanics. The Sample only Graders were the only individuals to directly assess students’

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1 Students are told that the comprehensive exam will include questions on research methods, policy analysis and three of the four following subject areas covered in CRJ 710 (courts/law and criminology) and CRJ 711 (corrections and policing)—Issues in Criminal Justice. For the last several years, the exam has always contained questions on courts/law and criminology and has alternated the appearance of questions on corrections and policing.

2 The law/courts portion of the exam was graded by only one person. The score assigned by this person was doubled so students could potentially earn 20 points in the law section of the exam.

3 During the spring semester 2012, each of the five topic areas was worth a total of 200 points instead of 20 points because graders used the grading rubric in Appendix B. Therefore, the highest score a student could receive in Spring 2012 was 100 points. A passing grade was 700 points.

4 For Research Methods, exams 2, 12, 22, 32, 42, 52, 62, 72, 82, and 92 were used.
ability to grammatically sound coherent essays. The grades assigned at this time were compared to the grades assigned by the Initial Graders. It should be noted that three of the exams in the sample received failing grades. This fact was not known by the graders of the sample.

IV. Collecting of Supplementary Material:

A. Eight faculty members who graded the comprehensive exams met on January 30, 2012 to consider ways to improve the course (CRJ 793) and to improve the exam itself. They were asked to read a sample of Fall 2011 exam answers that covered topics that they did not grade and discuss the strengths and weakness of the exam answers and questions.

B. A grading rubric was used by all graders of the Spring Comprehensive examinations. Of the 78 students who took this exam, 72 passed. Ten of the 78 students who the Spring 2012 examination failed the Fall 2011 exam (7 of the 10 passed this time). Only one of the students enrolled in CRJ 793 in Spring 2012 failed the exam.

V. Results and Discussion

In both the Fall 2011 and Spring 2012 exam, there were differences (sometimes significant) in the scores graders assigned, which highlights some of the problems inherent in grading, even when using a rubric. In fact, a few students had grades that varied significantly on a given topic. This may be attributed to how the student’s ability to express themselves more than their knowledge of the subject matter. One grader may have been better able to understand what the student was attempting to convey than the other grader. Therefore, the program purposely uses two graders for each section of the exam and has a safety valve in case the two faculty members’ grades for a particular student’s answer varied by more than two points and the difference in the score would make a difference in whether or not a student would pass the exam. In that instance, a third party will determine the score.

Seventy-seven of ninety-five individuals (81% — one student only sat for the exam on the first day) who took the comprehensive exam in the Fall 2011 received passing grades, as did seventy-two of the seventy-eight students (92%) who took the exam in Spring 2012. Eleven students who failed the Fall 2011 exam sat for the Spring 2012 exam. Eight of the eleven passed the exam this time (seven of whom audited the Comprehensive Review class in Spring 2012 and answered sample questions). Three individuals also failed the exam in Spring 2012 (one never attended classes either semester).

Two individuals who took the exam in Spring 2012 were registered for the Comprehensive Review Course in Spring 2011 and two were registered for the class in Fall 2011 but did not take the exam until Spring 2012. Of the six students who failed the Spring 2012 exam, three never took the class, one failed the after taking the class in Spring 2012 and two failed after taking the class in Fall 2011 and auditing the class in Spring 2012. Only one of the students enrolled in CRJ 793 in Spring 2012 failed the exam.

The results of the various sections of the comprehensive exams can be found below. The grading of each section of the Fall 2011 comprehensive exam immediately after the exam was administered by two individuals with expertise in that subject area (Initial Graders) can be found in subsection (a) of each subject area; the grading of the 10 percent sample of the Fall 2011 exam by two graduate faculty members who graded all answers of a 10% sample of the Fall 2011 exam (Sample only Graders) and the grades given by the Initial Graders for the sample exams are found in subsection (b); and the results of the Spring 2012 exam are located in subsection (c). It should be noted that “Corrections”
will not be included in subsection (c) because students were not tested on that subject in Spring 2012. Instead, they were examined on their knowledge of “Policing.”

The grades were not rounded up to the next highest whole number when calculating the percentage of exams that Exceeds Expectations, Meets Expectations, Approaches Expectations, Does Not Meet Expectations, except for grades from the Spring 2012 exam (A score of 89.5 would be considered a 90 and a score of 79.7 would be counted as 80).

A. Students should be able to explain theoretical and empirical findings about crime and the institutions of criminal justice. (CRJ 710 and 711).

1. Criminology
Students are expected to demonstrate knowledge of key criminological theories and be able to apply theory to specific context.

a. Initial Graders of Fall 2011 Exams
The graders of the criminology section of the exam developed and used their own rubric to grade the exams.

*Initial Grader 1*—Eleven exam answers (12%) exceeded expectations, eighty (84%) met expectations, three (3%) approached expectations, and one (1%) did not meet expectations. Average grade=7.85

*Initial Grader 2*—Twenty-two exam answers (23%) exceeded expectations, sixty-three (66%) met expectations, seven (7%) approached expectations and three (3%) did not meet expectations. Average grade=7.84

When the scores of the two graders were combined to assess whether or not a student passed the criminology section of the exam, four (4.2%) of the exam answers exceeded expectations, eighty-two (86.3%) met expectations, eight (8.4%) approached expectations and one (1 percent failed) to meet expectations. Approximately 91 percent of the exams met or exceeded expectations.

N=95

b. 10 Percent Sample
It should be noted that two of the exams included in the example received failing grades for the exam as a whole.

*Initial Grader 1*’s grades on the 10 percent sample of exams—two exam answers (20%) exceeded expectations, six (60%) met expectations, and two (20%) approached expectations. Average grade on the sample = 78.5

*Initial Grader 2*’s grades on the 10 percent sample of exams—three exam answers (30%) exceeded expectations and seven (70%) met expectations. Average grade on the sample =80

Combined scores indicate that eight (80%) met expectations and two (20%) approached expectations.
Sample only Grader 1—Five answers (50%) met expectations, four (40%) approached expectations, and one (10%) failed to meet expectations. Average grade on the sample = 74.05

Sample only Grader 2—100 percent of exam answers met expectations. Average grade on the sample = 79.3

Combined scores by Sample only Graders indicate that nine students taking the exam (90%) met expectations and one (10%) approached expectations. N=10

c. Spring 2012 Exam

Grader 1—Nine exam answers (12%) exceeded expectations, sixty-four (82%) met expectations, two (3%) approached expectations, and three (4%) did not meet expectations. The average grade was 80.68

Grader 2—Two exam answers (3%) exceeded expectations, sixty-six (85%) met expectations, nine (12%) approached expectations and one (1%) failed to meet expectations. The average grade was 73.97

The combined scores indicate that sixty-nine exams (88%) met expectations, seven (9%) approached expectations, two (3%) failed to met expectations. N=78

d. Discussion

A higher percentage of students passed the criminology portion of the exam than any other section of the exam except for the law section—91% in Fall 2011 and 88% in Spring 2012 and the pass rate in the sample was between 80% and 90%. This may be attributed to the fact that criminological theory is introduced in CRJ 710, is reinforced in several courses throughout the masters program, and is covered during two class periods during the Comprehensive Review Course.

2. Corrections

Students are expected to demonstrate an understanding of the various forms of punishment including the significance of community corrections, the principles of effective institutional treatment, and the significance of organizational structure for the operation of modern corrections departments. Since one student did not take this portion of the exam, the percentages were calculated based on 94 instead of 95 exams.

a. Initial Graders of the Fall 2011 Exam

Initial Grader 1—Nine exams (10%) exceeded expectations, fifty-one (54%) met expectations, fifteen (16 %) approached expectations, and nineteen (20%) failed to meet expectations. Average grade=6.723

Initial Grader 2—Three exams (3%) exceeded expectations, forty-seven (49%) met expectations, thirty-one (33%) approached expectations and thirteen (14%) failed to met expectations. Average score =6.5479.

When the scores of the two graders were combined to assess whether or not a student passed the corrections section of the exam, forty-six (49%) of the exam answers met
expectations, twenty-nine (31%) approached expectations, and nineteen (20%) did not meet expectations.  
N=94

b. **10 Percent Sample**  
It should be noted that two of the exams included in the example received failing grades for the entire exam.  
*Initial Grader 1’s* grades on the 10 percent sample of exams—Two answers (20%) exceeded expectations, seven (70%) met expectations and one (10%) failed to meet expectations. Average grade for the sample was 7.3.

*Initial Grader 2’s* grades on the 10 percent sample of exams—No one exceeded expectations, five (50%) of the exam answers met expectations, two (20%) approached expectations and three (30%) failed to meet expectations. Average grade for the sample was 6.4.

Based on the two graders’ combined scores for the sample’s answers, five (50%) met expectations, four (40%) approached expectations, and one (10%) failed to meet expectations.

*Sample only Grader 1*—Two exam answers (20%) exceeded expectations, six (60%) met expectations, one (10%) approached expectations and one (10%) failed to meet expectations. Average grade given was 7.84

*Sample only Grader 2*—100 percent of the exams met expectations. Average grade given was 7.98

The combined scores from the *sample only graders* indicate that nine exams (90%) met expectations for this segment of the exam and one (10%) approached expectations.  
N=10

c. **Spring 2012 Exam**  
Students were not asked questions on corrections for the Spring 2012 exam.

d. **Discussion**  
The corrections portion of the examination was administered during the Fall semester only. About half of the students who took the exam passed the corrections section, which means about half failed. The *Sample only Graders* passed a higher percentage of students, but they are not experts in the field. It is interesting to note that that twenty-seven (73%) of the thirty-seven students who failed the corrections section of the exam also failed the policy section, fifteen (41%) failed the comprehensive exam, and only three (3%) received a failing grade (a grade less than 7) from only one or both of the graders of the correction section of the exam.

Only conjecture can be offered in an attempt to explain students’ poor performance in this subject area. Many students are not exposed to the subject after taking CRJ 711 until they take the Comprehensive Review Course. They know that the comprehensive exam will test them on criminology, policy analysis, law, and research methods, but are not sure if they will be tested on policing or corrections, so they may not invest as much study and reading time focusing on the topic.
B. Students should be able to use legal materials relevant to criminal justice.
This section had only one grader whose score was doubled. Since one student did not take this portion of the exam, the percentages were calculated based on 94 instead of 95 exams.

1. Initial Graders of the Fall 2012 Exam
In this section, two answers (2%) exceeded expectations, ninety-one (97%) met expectations and one (1%) approached expectations. Average grade was the equivalent of 7.68.
N=94

2. 10 Percent Sample
Initial Grader—One answer (10%) exceeded expectations and nine (90%) of answers met expectations. Average grade = 7.65
All students in this sample passed this section of the exam.

Sample only Grader 1—Two answers (20%) exceeded expectations, four (40%) met expectations and four (40%) approached expectations. Average grade = 7.59

Sample only Grader 2—no students exceeded expectations, nine (90%) met expectations, and one (1%) approached expectations. Average grade = 7.72

The combined scores for each student in the sample graded by the sample only graders, one answer (10%) exceeded expectations, six exams (60%) met expectations for this segment of the exam and three (30%) approached expectations.
N=10

3. Spring 2012 Exam
Sixty-eight answers (87%) met expectations, nine answers (12%) approached expectations, and one (1%) did not meet expectations. The average grade was 76.24.
N=78

4. Discussion
Although the average grade given for the law section of the exam was virtually identical in Fall 2011 (76.5) and Spring 2012 (76.2) a greater percentage of students passed this section of the exam in the Fall (99%) than in the Spring (87%) when the grader used a grading rubric.

The average grade given by the Initial Grader for the 10% sample was 7.65 while the Sample only Graders gave an average grade of 7.59 and 7.72 respectively for a combined average of 7.65. However, pass rate for the Sample only Graders was only 70% compared with the pass rate of 100% for the Initial Grader indicating that there was less variability in the grades given by the Initial Grader. Nonetheless, it appears that well over 70 percent of the exam takers have met the programs expectations.

C. Students should be able to develop policy proposals for reducing crime within the context of a general commitment to preserving the values of a liberal society.

1. Initial Graders of the Fall 2011 Exam
Initial Grader 1—Eighteen answers (19%) exceeded expectations, thirty-three (35%) met expectations, twenty-five approached expectations, and nineteen (19%) did not meet expectations. Average grade was 6.82.
Initial Grader 2—Twenty-two answers (23%) exceeded expectations, fifty-six (59%) met expectations, sixteen (17%) approached expectations, and one (1%) failed to meet expectations. Average grade was 7.57.

Based on the combined scores for each student, eighteen answers (19%) exceeded expectations, thirty-four (36%) met expectations, twenty-nine (31%) approached expectations, and fourteen (15%) failed to meet expectations. Therefore, a total of 52 (55%) of the answers met or exceeded expectations.

N=95

2. 10 Percent Sample
Initial Grader 1—One answer (10%) exceeded expectations, five (50%) met expectations, one (10%) approached expectations and three (30%) failed to meet expectations. Average score=6.2

Initial Grader 2—Two answers (20%) exceeded expectations, five (50%) met expectations, two (20%) approached expectations, and one (10%) did not meet expectations. Average score=7.4

The combined scores the initial graders for the sample indicate the one (10%) exceeded expectations, five (50%) met expectations, one (10%) approached expectations, and three (30%) failed to meet expectations.

Sample only Grader 1—Seven answers (70%) met expectations, two (20%) approached expectations and one (10%) failed to meet expectations. Average score was 7.17

Sample only Grader 2—Ten (100%) of the answers met expectations. Average score=8.06

The combined scores from the sample only graders indicate that eight exams (80%) met expectations for this segment of the exam and two (20%) approached expectations. Average score was 80.6

N=10

3. Spring 2012 Exam
Grader 1—Twenty answers (26%) exceeded expectations, forty-one (53%) met expectations, sixteen (21%) approached expectations and one (1%) failed to met expectations. Average grade=77.7

Grader 2—One answer (1%) exceeded expectation, sixty-six (84%) met expectations, nine (12%) approached expectations and two (3%) did not meet expectations. Average score=77

The combined scores indicate that two answers (3%) exceeded expectations, fifty-nine met expectations (76%), fifteen (19%) approached expectations and two (3%) failed to meet expectations. Therefore, 61 (78%) exam answers met or exceeded expectations.

N=78

4. Discussion
While 82% of the students who took the comprehensive exam in Fall 2011 passed, only fifty-one students (51%) passed this policy segment of the test.
Although there was a fair amount of variability in grades assigned by the *Initial Graders* and *Sample only Graders* tended to give higher grades, it is important to note that of the forty-one students who failed the policy portion of the Fall 2011 exam (received a grade less than 7), thirty-one (76%) received failing grades from multiple graders, twenty-seven (66%) failed the corrections portion of the exam, seventeen (41%) failed the comprehensive exam and nine (22%) received a failing grade from only one or both of the policy graders. Everyone who failed the comprehensive exam, failed the policy portion of the exam.

In Spring 2012, student did better. Sixty-one (78%) percent of the students who took the exam passed the policy section. Still, one would have hoped that a higher percentage of students would have passed the policy section because 92% of students who took the comprehensive exam at that time passed.

D. **Students should be able to employ appropriate research methods for the investigation of social phenomena in criminal justice.**

1. *Initial Graders of the Fall 2011 Exam*
   - *Initial Grader 1*—Eight answers (9%) exceeded expectations, fifty-six (60%) met expectations, twenty-six (28%) approached expectations and four (4%) did not meet expectations. Average grade=7.0
   - *Initial Grader 2*—Eight answers (9%) exceeded expectations, sixty-nine (73%) met expectations, fourteen (15%) approached expectations, and three (3%) failed to meet expectations. Average=7.54

   Based on the combined scores for each student, one exam (1%) answer exceeded expectations, sixty-four (68%) met expectations, twenty-four (26%) approached expectations and five (5%) did not meet expectations. In total, 69% of the students passed this section of the exam. N=94

2. *10 Percent Sample*
   - *Initial Grader 1*—Seven answers (70%) met expectations and three (30%) approached expectations. Average=6.85
   - *Initial Grader 2*—Eight answers (80%) met expectations, one (10%) approached expectations, and one (10%) failed to meet expectations. Average=7.35

   Based on the combined scores, seven (70%) met expectations, two approached expectations, and one (10%) failed to meet expectations.

   *Sample only Grader 1*—Eight answers (80%) met expectations and two (20%) failed to meet expectations. Average =7.19

   *Sample only Grader 2*—Nine answers (90%) met expectations and one (10%) approached expectations. Average=7.61

   Based on the combined scores for each student in the sample graded by Sample only graders, eight (80%) met expectations, one (10%) approached expectations, and one (10%) did not meet expectations. N=10
3. **Spring 2012 Exam**
   
   **Grader 1**—Twenty answers (26%) exceeded expectations, forty-one (53%) met expectations, sixteen (21%) approached expectations, and one (1%) failed to meet expectations. 

   Average=77.2

   **Grader 2**—One answer (1%) exceeded expectations, sixty-six (85%) met expectations, nine (12%) approached expectations, and two (3%) did not meet expectations.

   Based on the combined scores for each student, sixty-four answers (82%) met expectations, ten answers (13%) approached expectations, and four (5%) failed to meet expectations. 

   Average=74.7

4. **Discussion**

   Approximately seventy percent of students taking the comprehensive examination in Fall 2011 passed the research methods section of the exam by all three measures—the combined scores of the **Initial Graders** and the combined scores of the 10% sample by **Initial Graders** and **Sample only Graders**. In Spring 2012, eighty-two percent of students passed the research methods section of the exam. Three of the seventeen students (18%) who failed the comprehensive exam received passing grades in the research methods section of the exam.

   **E. Students should be able to write grammatically sound, coherent essays about criminal justice.**

   **Sample only Graders** evaluated students’ writing in each section of the sample from the Fall 2011 exams. Grader 2 did not assign a grade for writing lower than a 7, which indicates that all essays met or exceeded expectations for written expression. Grader 1, on the other hand, downgraded 40% of the essays for having disorganized introductions and 13% for having consistent problems with sentence structure, grammar and punctuation. (Grader 1’s greater propensity to downgrade exams for grammatical problems may account for the grader’s lower average grades.) Most students who received a grade of approaching expectations received that grade in only one or two sections of the exam. However, Grader 1 downgraded one student in several sections of the exam. In total, two of the students that Grader 1 found particularly problematic, were two of the three students in the sample who failed the exam.

   With only one exception, students who failed the comprehensive exam in Fall 2011, received failing grades in at least three sections of the exam and from four graders. This would seem to indicate that the students just did not know the material—or, more likely, had difficulty communicating their knowledge in an organized concise manner.

   **Supplementary Materials**

   1. Eight faculty members who graded the comprehensive exams met on January 30, 2012 to consider ways to improve the course (CRJ 793) and to improve the exam itself. The group recognized that how CRJ 710 and CRJ 711 depends, to a large part, on who is teaching the class. They questioned whether or not exam questions should be formulated to cover concepts fundamental to criminal justice field or be more narrowly tailored to the class lectures.

      a. It was believed that the examination, as it is currently administered, is not sufficiently devoted to review of past materials. It was also recognized that faculty differ in their focus when teaching introductory courses. To provide some coherence in what is covered in the introductory classes, a suggestion was made that graders from each key area of the exam develop a required reading list that would provide about 40% of the readings for when the
core concepts were taught. Faculty rejected this idea, but developed a list of suggested, but not required reading.

b. After reading questions which the faculty members did not grade, there was a discussion about the specificity or lack thereof, of exam questions. The consensus was that questions should not be too vague—write about “x” policy—or too specific—use Young’s interpretation of Merton to explain “Y.”

c. Discussion focused on the need for greater coordination among the faculty who teach various methods classes.

2. It was decided that all the graders for the Spring 2012 exam should use the grading rubric (see Appendix B) to grade their portion of the exam.

3. To aid students in studying for the exam, it was decided that the course lectures be video recorded and that previous exam question continue to be made available at the library.

V. Recommendations
The first three recommendations (A-C) were adopted at the January 30, 2012 meeting.

A. Technological Improvements
It was agreed that comprehensive review course lectures should be videotaped and that a library of lectures should be made available to students.

B. Improve the Content of the Exam

1. In General
It was agreed that questions posed about topics other than research methods should be more specific about what graders want covered in the answers so the students can demonstrate their knowledge of assigned material. For example, instead of asking students to write an essay on policy, the question should indicate that students must support their position with appropriate readings and theory.

2. Research Methods
   a. It was agreed that, in research methods, students should be asked to interpret hypothetical data and graphs.
   b. It was agreed that there should be more coordination between 715 (Research Design and Methods) and 716 (Using Computers in Social Research) instructors in their CRJ 793 presentations, in drafting questions, and in developing the grading key for their questions.

C. Improve Grading
It was agreed that a generic grading rubric should be prepared and distributed to students in the course and also to instructors grading questions.

D. Improving on Course Readings—Will poll faculty Fall 2012
To aid students, faculty in each area of the exam is to develop a recommended, but not required, reading list for each of the core courses (CRJ 710, 711, 715, 716, and 730). This list is to be reviewed periodically.

E. Time Constraints—Will discuss with faculty Fall 2012
Faculty should discuss whether or not an hour provides students enough time to read and comprehend a question and demonstrate that they meet or exceed expectations.
F. Improve Catalog Description—Will present to the Committee on Graduate Studies Fall 2012

Considering that one of the goals of the program is to produce students who can write grammatically sound, coherent essays, it is suggested that the current catalogue description of the course be changed from:

“Presents a series of weekly guest faculty lecturers who review the key concepts and major areas of criminal justice. Provides the recommended (but not required) preparation for the end-of-the-term comprehensive examination for those who have chosen the exam option to complete the requirements for the master’s degree.”

to the following:

“This course presents a series of weekly guest faculty lecturers who review the key concepts discussed in the program’s core courses. It provides the recommended (but not required) preparation for the end-of-the-term comprehensive examination for students who have chosen the exam option to complete the requirements for the master’s degree.”

Prerequisites for the course remain the same.
Appendix A

JOHN JAY COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE
The City University of New York

CRIMINAL JUSTICE 793:
Preparation Course for the Comprehensive Review Examination
Spring 2011
Professor William C. Heffernan
(Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 2 to 3:30, Rm. 422/15, Tel.: 237-8376
Email address: william.heffernan@jjay.cuny.edu

Course Requirement: Students enrolled in the course must take the comprehensive review examination. The examination will be given in two stages. The first part of the examination, which will consist of two one-hour questions (one on policy analysis, the other on a substantive portion of the core curriculum), will be given on Wednesday, May 18th from 6:20 to 8:20 p.m. The second part, which will consist of three one-hour questions (one on research methods, the other two on substantive portions of the core), will be given on Friday, May 20th from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Option for Students Enrolled in the Course: Students will be given a copy of a past examination and will be encouraged to write at least one practice answer in order to prepare for the end-of-term examination. Each student’s practice answer will be evaluated in a private conference.

Assignments: Assignments are listed below. Students are expected to purchase a book on research methods for the lectures on this topic. A recent edition of Babbie’s book will satisfy this requirement.

All other assignments will be available in the reserve book section of the library. Books placed on reserve must be requested by library call number. Articles and excerpts from books can be requested by asking for the appropriate number typed in boldface.

Assignments followed by an asterisk are also available at the John Jay library website. To gain access to these assignments on the internet, a student should go to http://www.lib.jjay.cuny.edu. At the library home page, the student should look at the left side and click on electronic reserves. When asked for a password, the student should respond by typing comp. To read some of the documents, a student will need Adobe Reader software. This is available free from the site at http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep.html. Two warnings: First, the larger files download slowly. Second, to print successfully, it is essential to use either an inkjet or a laser printer.

Administration of the Comprehensive Review Examination

Eligibility to Take The Examination Students who have completed or are in the process of completing their core courses in the semester in which the examination is offered are
eligible to take the examination. Students are not required to register for CRJ 793 to take the examination. All students taking the examination are urged, however, either to take CRJ 793 for credit or to audit the course lectures. The audit option is open to any student who satisfies the eligibility requirements mentioned at the beginning of this section.

*Sign-In for the Examination* Sign-in for the examination will be conducted in the lobby of the 445 West 59th building in the 60 minutes preceding the first stage of this semester’s comprehensive administration. Students will receive an examination number on signing in. The examination number is to appear on all test booklets each student completes. No student’s name is to appear on an examination booklet. *No student with a GPA of less than 3.0 may take the examination.*

*Consequences of Signing In for the Examination* Once a student has signed in, the student is deemed to have taken the examination for which the sign-in is being conducted. Even if the student does not take, or does not complete, the examination after signing in, the student is deemed to have taken the test.

*Permission of the Course Instructor Required for Students Who Have Failed the Examination Twice and Wish to Take it a Third Time* Students are permitted to take the examination twice *without* the course instructor’s permission. If a student wishes to take the examination for a third time, the student must alert the course instructor at the beginning of the semester in which he or she wishes to take the examination, work with the instructor throughout that semester in preparing for the examination, and obtain the instructor’s permission prior to taking the examination for a third time.

*Consequence of Failing the Examination for a Third Time* If a student fails the examination for a third time, that student is not eligible to receive a master’s degree in criminal justice from John Jay College.

*Course and Program Learning Objectives* This is the capstone course for the master’s degree program in criminal justice. As such, the course’s learning objectives are identical to those of the program’s core courses. The course learning objectives listed below are thus the objectives mentioned in syllabi of the program’s core courses. In the inventory of objectives for the course, however, learning objectives have been rearranged by noting writing and quantitative skills that must inform work in all facets of the program. Content objectives have been organized in terms of the six subject-areas that define the program core.

**Skills Objectives I: Writing and Analytic Skills**

(i) A capacity to think analytically, including an ability to apply categories developed by social scientists and judges while discussing unfamiliar fact-patterns,

(ii) An ability to write grammatical English and to produce coherent, well-organized essays

**Skills Objectives II: Quantitative Skills**
(i) An understanding of the nature and structure of quantitative data, including concepts such as variables, levels of measurement, and units of analysis;
(ii) An understanding of the basic concepts of probability, data distribution, sampling, and inferences;
(iii) An ability to explain the nature, purposes, and limitations of various statistical techniques;
(iv) A capacity to interpret the outputs of significance tests;
(v) An ability to discuss statistical findings accurately and meaningfully in the context of broader policy issues.

**Content Objectives: Criminological Theory**

An understanding of

(i) Methods used in gathering maintaining crime statistics,
(ii) Key theories of positivist criminology (in particular, learning theory, strain theory, and social control theory)
(iii) The presuppositions of rational choice and routine activities theories,
(iv) The presuppositions of critical criminology.

**Content Objectives: The Law and Criminal Justice**

An understanding of

(i) The distinction between criminal law and procedure,
(ii) The central elements of criminal law (in particular the elements of culpability and also justifications and excuses)
(iii) The bearing of constitutional doctrine on the criminal process,
(iv) Retributive and deterrence-based theories of punishment.

**Content Objectives: Policing**

An understanding of

(i) The how and why of the police function,
(ii) Theories about police deviance and the police subculture,
(iii) The history of policing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,
(iv) The significance of organizational structure for the operation of modern police departments,
(v) Use of force rules for police officers,
(vi) The role of training programs in police departments,
(vii) The significance of community policing.

**Content Objectives: Corrections**

An understanding of

(i) The rationale for incarceration,
(ii) Principles of effective institutional treatment,
(iii) The history of corrections in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,
(iv) The significance of organizational structure for the operation of modern corrections departments,
(v) Use of force rules for corrections officers,
(vi) The role of training programs in corrections departments,
Content Objectives: Policy Analysis in Criminal Justice
An understanding of
(i) The constitutional and political context of policy-making in criminal justice,
(ii) Philosophical concepts relevant to criminal justice policy-making,
(iii) The significance of pragmatic/consequentialist analyses of the criminal justice system that come under the heading of “what works?”
(iv) Program evaluation criteria

Content Objectives: Research Methods in Criminal Justice
An understanding of
(i) The importance of the ideal of objectivity in empirical social research,
(ii) The possibility that empirical research can challenge conventional wisdom,
(iii) The principles of scientific inquiry, including the steps taken when conducting empirical research,
(iv) Key concepts such as variables, indicators, levels of measurement, operationalization, correlation, causality, reliability, internal and external validity,
(v) The distinction between independent, intervening, and dependent variables,
(vi) The process of hypothesis formulation, including the concepts associated with the development of a testable, falsifiable hypothesis, alternative hypothesis, and a null hypothesis,
(vii) The process of inquiry associated with secondary analysis of existing data,
(viii) The methods used in interviewing, conducting focus groups, and undertaking systematic field observation.

Date and Lecturer  Topic and Assignment

Policy Analysis I  Deterrence
February 2  Prof. Heffernan


Peter Greenwood et al., Diverting Children from a Life of Crime: Costs and Benefits (Santa Monica, Cal.: Rand Corporation, 1996)

Mark A. R. Kleiman, When Brute Force Fails: How to Have Less
Courts I  
February 9  
Prof. Heffernan  
Crime and Less Punishment (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), Chaps. 2 and 3 1/6 and 1/7

The Fourth Amendment Exclusionary Rule


Courts II  
February 16  
Prof. Heffernan  
Retributive vs. Deterrent-Based Justifications of Punishment

George P. Flectcher, Basic Concepts of Criminal Law, Chap. 2 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998) 35/1


Roper v. Simmons, 543 U.S. 551 (2005)


Corrections I  
March 2  
Prof. Horn  
Punishment by Means of Imprisonment


Policy Analysis II  
March 9  
Prof. Frazier  
A General Survey of Policy Analysis Issues in Criminal Justice


Samuel Walker, Sense and Nonsense about Crime and Drugs (7th


**Criminological Theory I**
March 16  
Prof. Kazemian

Introduction: pp. 1-20
Chapter 4: Social Disorganization Theory, pp. 82-106
Chapter 5: Anomie and Strain Theory, pp. 107-136
Chapter 6: Social Learning Theories, pp. 137-166
Chapter 7: Control Theories, pp. 167-197

**Policing I**
March 23  
Prof. Shane

Course materials can be obtained from www.jonmshane.com. On gaining access to this website, students should select “Police and Community” from the links. When prompted, they should enter (in lower-case letters):
1. User name: police
2. Password: community

Internet Explorer web browser works best. Students may also be able to gain access to course documents using Mozilla Firefox, Safari, Google Chrome, or other web browsers. Whenever prompted for the user name and password on subsequent occasions, students should enter these again.

All the readings are listed under the heading “Course Documents.” Students are directed to:

Introduction to the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing
The Evolution of American Policing
Opportunity Makes the Thief: Practical Theory for Crime Prevention
Designing Out Gang Homicides and Street Assaults
Reducing Drug Dealing in Private Apartment Complexes in Newark, New Jersey
**Criminological Theory II**
March 30  Rational Choice and Routine Activities Theories of Criminal Behavior
Prof. Garot

Part X: Introduction
Stafford and Warr
Cornish and Clarke
Part XI: Introduction
Cohen and Felson
Clarke

**Corrections II**
April 6  Prisoner Re-Entry
Prof. Mellow

Prof. Mellow has assigned articles that can be accessed at the following websites:

https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=explorer&chrome=true&srcid=0BzCVXZTpfG
B-gNmNkYThc5N2MtNmU5MC00YmI1LTw4YTktTYTwYmU1MmIxOTg&hl=en&authkey=CLuApNEE
Kurlychek, Brame and Bushway (2006) Scarlet Letters and Recidivism
https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=explorer&chrome=true&srcid=0BzCVXZTpfG
B-gOTI2ZWRIOTAtAiNGFhMi00ZGZkLWFjOTwEtN0UTgznNmY0YWE3&hl=en&authkey=CPVeqPwP
Pager (2003) The Mark of a Criminal Record
https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=explorer&chrome=true&srcid=0BzCVXZTpfG
B-gYzBiZmlOTl1ZDc1MC00MmY2LTw1MDM1OTgwMjMjMjc2Mjkz&hl=en&authkey=CISHneAI
https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=explorer&chrome=true&srcid=0BzCVXZTpfG
GB-gNTlmZTkWjktMzFiOS00YTVjLWdIzWmMtYzY3ZGJwZGJiNDk4&hl=en&authkey=CJPLy_EE
Burnett and Maruna (2004) So Prison Works, Does It?
https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=explorer&chrome=true&srcid=0BzCVXZTpfG
B-gZTziYjM2ZmQtMDRiMC00MDljLWFizTAtYjc3MmQ3ODkyOTg3&hl=en&authkey=CJL-3doB
**Policing II**  
April 13  
Prof. Moskos  

Prof. Moskos has assigned six readings. They can be found at [http://petermoskos.com/files/compreview.html](http://petermoskos.com/files/compreview.html)

**Research Methods I**  
April 27  
Prof. Karmen  

**Research Methods II**  
May 4  
Prof. Spunt  

**Research Methods III**  
May 11  
Prof. Gideon
# Appendix B

## Grading Rubric for Comprehensive Review Answers

A framework to guide graders in evaluating answers to comprehensive review questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject-Matter (50%)</th>
<th>Exceeds Expectations (9-10 pts)</th>
<th>Meets Expectations (7-8 pts)</th>
<th>Approaches Expectations (6 pts)</th>
<th>Does not Meet Expectations (5 pts or less)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrated mastery of relevant concepts</td>
<td>Thorough review of concepts</td>
<td>Incomplete survey concepts</td>
<td>Incomplete and inaccurate survey of concepts</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction and Thesis Statement (10%)</th>
<th>Insightful, brief analysis of core issues</th>
<th>Clear analysis of core issues</th>
<th>Disorganized introduction</th>
<th>No introductory paragraph</th>
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</thead>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Structure (20%)</th>
<th>Coherent organization, helpful topic sentences for each paragraph</th>
<th>Generally clear organization, often helpful topic sentences</th>
<th>Unclear organization, less than informative topic sentences</th>
<th>No discernible organization, no topic sentences for paragraphs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanics (20%)</th>
<th>Excellent sentence structure, grammar, and punctuation</th>
<th>Occasional lapses in sentence structure, grammar, and punctuation</th>
<th>Consistent problems with sentence structure, grammar, and punctuation</th>
<th>Significant problems in these areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>