



August 13, 2018

Dear ,

Congratulations on your first semester and welcome to the John Jay College community! As part of the LLS 100 First Year Seminar class “The Latina/o Struggle for Inclusion and Social Justice” we will work together to understand how the social and economic reality of the Latino community affects access to education, health and entrance to the criminal justice system.

Identity is a big part of your college experience. We will explore how different parts of our identities affect our surroundings and the opportunities we are offered. This exploration will be essential when examining and discussing the role that gender, race, ethnicity, immigration status and other identities have in access to social justice in the latinx community. Every member of this course has a history and life experiences that makes each of us unique. I look forward to listening to all of your diverse experiences and opinions.

For most of you this is your first experience with a college course and I am certain that if we work together we can enrich your personal, academic and professional development. Be ready to work on developing essential skills for your academic success through fun and engaging projects, oral presentations, digital stories and more. As part of the course, you will also have the opportunity to explore what the Latinx community has to offer throughout the city, the nation and the world. Upon the completion of this course you will have a better understanding of the ins and outs of college and the resources John Jay College and CUNY have to offer.

I will send you a link to our course website in a few brief weeks and before the course begins so that you can become familiar with it and begin your readings. I look forward to meeting you in late August but, in the meantime, if you have any questions please feel free to contact me at gramirezvargas@jjay.cuny.edu.

Sincerely,

Prof. Gabriela Ramírez Vargas

Your Team Success Members:

Peer Success Coach: Daphne Escudero, daphne.escudero@jjay.cuny.edu

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August 8, 2018

Dear ,

Congratulations on starting your career at John Jay College of Criminal Justice! I'd like to introduce myself as your professor for HIS 100 First Year Seminar class, The War on Drugs & Urban Narratives. In the course, we will be exploring the changing social, legal, and economic settings of the so-called War on Drugs in urban America. Because I want you to start thinking of yourself as a potential criminal justice professional, the course will look closely at the shifting relationship between drug markets and law enforcement. I'm particularly excited to be teaching this course because it provides an opportunity for students to do real research into the history of crime and policing in cities—my specialty. The class culminates in the production of an animated video excerpt of your own creation depicting policing in America. In short, by the end of the semester you will have not only learned a lot about crime but will also have created what I think will be a rather cool video you can share with future employers, friends, and family.

But we cannot learn about crime by spending all of our time in the classroom! So, the course features a number of optional field trips. I'll be leading a kayaking trip down Manhattan's west side waterfront while talking about crime and corruption on New York's docks in the 1940s and 1950s (no kayaking experience required). I'll also address the birth of modern organized crime while guiding an optional walking tour through Gotham's Little Italy and Chinatown neighborhoods.

The first semester of college can be not only an exciting time but also challenging one, so we will spend some time exploring the various college resources available to help you be the best student you can be. Challenging students and seeing them succeed are my greatest pleasures, so I encourage you to e-mail (gumbach@jjay.cuny.edu) with any questions or concerns you might have before the start of the semester. As Clint Eastwood says in the 1971 film Dirty Harry, "Go ahead, make my day" by shooting me a question!

Greg ("Fritz") Umbach

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