

CJ 590: Media & Crime, Spring 2018

Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice
University of Alabama

1 INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Dr. Erin M. Kearns

Email: emkearns@ua.edu

Website: www.erinmkearns.com

Twitter: @KearnsErinM

Office: Farrah Hall 431

Office Hours: Wed. 3-5 pm,

or by appointment

Skype: KearnsEM

*emails must originate from your university email account with CJ 590 in the subject line

2 COURSE INFORMATION

Time: 5:30 pm - 8:05 pm Wednesday

Location: Lloyd Hall 318

3 COURSE DESCRIPTION

Crime is a popular—yet controversial—topic in the media. You can barely turn on a television without hearing about crime on the news or finding a crime procedural drama. What impact do media have on public perceptions of crime, criminality, police, courts, and corrections?

This course examines the social construction of crime, how perceptions of crime and justice are actively framed, and consequences of portrayals of justice in the media and their role in popular culture. We cover media framing of: crime and criminality, crime control, law enforcement, courts, and corrections. We debate the extent to which media causes crime, or controls it. Students will analyze and critique frames in newspaper stories and crime dramas, and discuss how media impact public perception of crime and crime control.

4 STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

- Understand the history of media's relationship with crime and criminal justice
- Identify the various ways that media depicts crime and crime control
- Evaluate the accuracy of media depictions of crime and crime control
- Apply research findings to understand media's impact on public perception of crime
- Analyze the ways in which media depict crime and criminal justice
- Synthesize the literature on media and crime to identify gaps in our knowledge

5 TEACHING METHOD

The course is structured to examine how crime and crime control are depicted in various types of media. We will draw from literature across disciplines including communications, criminology & criminal justice, political science, and psychology.

Research shows that students learn best when they actively participate in class. I believe that the role of a professor is to facilitate an active learning environment. As such, I will serve as the moderator and occasional discussion leader, but the bulk of the responsibility falls on the students. To be successful in the course, you are required to read all assignments, come to class prepared, and engage fully in discussions and other activities. I value your opinions about the course and will solicit feedback periodically.

6 COURSE EXPECTATIONS, REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

6.1 ASSESSMENT

Attendance and Participation (20%):

This class works best when students are present and engaged. This a seminar course where all students are expected to contribute meaningfully to discussion throughout each class. I expect that you will have read all assigned material thoroughly before class. You should come to class each week with: the readings, your notes, thoughtful questions, and critiques of the materials. To receive full points, you need to be present and be an active contributor to advancing the class dialogue.

Attendance

- You are permitted 1 absence for whatever reason without penalty.
- Missing class hinders learning - yours and your classmates':
 - Missing 2 classes → your overall grade will be no better than a B
 - Missing 3 classes → your overall grade will be no better than a C
 - Missing 4 classes → your overall grade will be an F
- Serious matters or extenuating circumstances beyond your control should be discussed privately with me at the earliest possible opportunity.

Participation Guidelines

- Evaluate the evidence based on the readings and other empirical works
- It is absolutely okay (even encouraged) to update your position with new information
- Contribute as much as you want, but do not interrupt when someone else is speaking
- Build on what others have said to advance the discussion
- Stay on topic so that comments don't ramble
- Provide warning if you want to discuss a new topic so we can wrap up the current topic
- Encourage each other! It is okay to share partially formed thoughts or questions
- Diversity of thought is a good thing - respect and build off of this

Student Discussion Leaders (10%):

Students will rotate as discussion leaders. The student(s) leading discussion will act as the moderator(s) that week. The student(s) will: introduce the material, discuss how it relates to what we have already read and discussed in previous weeks, analyze and evaluate the readings, and pose thoughtful discussion questions. Student discussion leader(s) will send me at least 8 discussion questions (not the ones from the book!) at least 48 hours in advance of class. All other students should bring at least one question each class. We may not get to all questions, but we should never run out of questions to discuss.

Weekly Reaction Papers (30% total; 10 memos @ 3% each):

A short reaction paper is due by the start of class - there are 10 papers due, you choose which 10 weeks.

I have provided optional prompts for each week's reaction paper. Your job is to make an argument based on the readings and support your cast. Your paper should: relate directly to the material assigned for that week, identify strengths and weaknesses of the material, provide a commentary and critique (not a summary) of the readings, identify remaining questions, and be supported by references to the readings.

Reaction papers should be 2 to 3 pages in length, double-spaced, and in 12 pt Times New Roman with 1 inch margins (these are strict guidelines). Papers should be uploaded in Word to the appropriate link in the Assignments section of Blackboard. The grading rubrics are on Blackboard.

Journal Article Review (10%):

Students will select an empirical journal article related to media and crime that features a scientific test of the theory. Students may not chose an article being discussed in class. Article reviews are intended to be brief (maximum of four pages) but thoughtful evaluations of the research in question. The review should discuss: the research question and formal hypotheses; the methods and data; the findings and conclusions; the implications; and lingering questions or critiques.

Final Research Proposal (30%):

Students will each select a topic of interest to write a research proposal. The goal of this assignment is to: a) thoroughly review and synthesize the literature and identify gaps in current knowledge on the topic, and b) create a research proposal for a project that would address this gap in the research.

Your research proposal must be related to media and crime. The final research proposal should be between 12 and 20 double-spaced pages, excluding references. Papers must include:

- A clear statement of the gap in the literature to be explored
- A review and synthesis of the literature to situate your research question in this discussion
- Clearly specified, theoretically derived hypotheses
- A detailed description of the proposed methodology and analytical plan
- The expected contribution(s) of your project to scholarship and policy

Critical paper benchmarks & associated due dates:

- Topic, Title, and Summary - **due 1/31**
 - A brief overview of the topic, the gap in the literature, and an idea of how to address it
- Outline and References - **due 2/28**
 - A written introduction, an outline of the major section of the literature review and methodological approach, a list of at least 20 relevant academic sources
- Final Research Proposal - **due 4/30 @ 3:30 pm**

You must complete the Academic Integrity Quiz due 1/17. Failure to do so will result in ZEROs on all written assignment until this is completed.

NOTE FOR ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: You must use the APA style for your references. A guide on how to use this format can be found at: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01>.

6.2 GRADING

A = 100 - 90	B = 89 - 80	C = 79 - 70	D = 69 - 60	F = 59 or below
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If you have questions or concerns about a grade(s) and believe I should review them, you should submit a written request over email to me describing your concern in detail. You must take 24 hours to reflect on the grade before contacting me, but you must submit the request within one week of the date that grades for that assignment are disseminated. The exception is an addition error, which should be pointed out immediately.

Unless otherwise stated in class, there are no extra credit assignments for this class. Assignments will be graded on accuracy, depth of expression, grammar, neatness, punctuation, quality, spelling, and thoroughness. Rubrics are available on BlackBoard for all graded assignments. Please note that Blackboard shows unweighted grades.

As per the Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA), grades will not be posted, given out over the phone or email, or released to anyone other than the student.

7 COMMUNICATION

EMAIL

I will send emails on a regular basis to remind students about upcoming events, due dates, important news, et cetera. These messages will come to your official university email. Students are responsible for the contents of these messages. I will respond to email within 24 hours during the week and within 48 hours on the weekend unless otherwise specified in advance.

8 COURSE POLICIES

STUDENT COPYRIGHT

For the benefit of future students, work in this course may be used for educational critique, demonstration, samples, presentations, and verification. Outside of these uses, work shall not be sold, copied, broadcast, or distributed for profit without student consent. Items submitted for this course also may be submitted to TurnItIn.com for analysis.

THE MISCELLANEOUS CALAMITY CLAUSE

As you may know, each class is required to meet for a specified number of hours in a semester. When class is cancelled due to ice/hurricane/plague/zombies, these hours need to be made up. Instead making up hours at the end of the semester when you are very busy, we will simply hold class online for any week in which class is cancelled. If this happens, we will move class online. Since we would not know of a cancellation in advance, the timeframe will shift slightly. Discussion leaders and I will post questions on Blackboard and you will have until the next class to respond to 5 of them. Additionally, I am occasionally required to be out of town for professional conferences. I will give you as much advanced notice as possible and we will simply move the class online for that week.

MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENTS & NOTES

If you are absent, you will need to get the notes from a classmate, so find a reliable source now.

All assignments are due by the beginning of class on the date indicated and will receive a 0 if not provided at that time. I WILL NOT accept late papers or papers submitted in hard copy or email. Papers MUST be submitted to Blackboard. No excuses will be accepted.

In an extraordinary circumstance, I accept late work. To qualify for this exception, you must notify me by email, provide documentation, and receive my permission in advance of the deadline. You will receive a 0 for unexcused late work. Examples of extraordinary circumstances include, but are not limited to: medical problems that require bed care or surgery (including yourself and immediate family members), subpoena for court or jury duty, or in-service training. Oversleeping and other personal events do not qualify. I reserve the right to exercise discretion in this matter so that individual predicaments may be considered.

CLASSROOM COURTESY

Classroom courtesy is essential for learning. All students have the right to learn without unneeded distractions such as: cell phones, talking out of turn, reading, falling asleep, entering and leaving the classroom, etc. If you need cell phone for emergency purposes, it must remain on vibrate. Cell phone use is prohibited. Laptops and tablets may only be used if you have a documented learning need. It is your responsibility to arrive on time and stay for the entire class period. If you need to leave early, tell me beforehand. Repeated disruptions will lead to a reduction in your final grade.

Most importantly, as the topics addressed in this class can lead to strong feelings and heated discussion, please remember that class discussion must be respectful and scholarly at all times.

Scholarly Comments:

- are respectful of diverse opinions and open to follow up questions and/or disagreement
- are related to class and/or the course material
- are focused on advancing the discussion about issues related to the course and/or course material rather than personal beliefs
- are delivered in normal tones and a non-aggressive manner

Unacceptable Comments:

- are personal in nature (includes attacks on a persons appearance, demeanor, or beliefs)
- include interrupting the professor or other students
- often use the discussion to argue for political positions and/or beliefs. If political discussions arise in the context of the research discussed, they must be discussed in a scholarly way
- include using raised tones, yelling, arguing, or being threatening in any manner
- include ignoring the professor's authority to maintain the integrity of the classroom

SEVERE WEATHER GUIDELINES

Please see the latest Severe Weather Guidelines in the Online Catalog.

POLICY ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the official Code of Academic Conduct provided in the Online Catalog.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

UA's primary communication tool for sending out information is through its web site at www.ua.edu. In the event of an emergency, students should consult this site for further directions. Additional course information will be posted using Blackboard Learn.

DISABILITY STATEMENT

Contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) as detailed in the Online Catalog.

PREGNANT STUDENT ACCOMODATIONS

Title IX protects against discrimination related to pregnancy or parental status. If you are pregnant and will need accommodations for this class, please review the Universitys FAQs on the UAct website.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

Under the Guidelines for Religious Holiday Observances, students should notify the instructor in writing or via email during the first two weeks of the semester of their intention to be absent from class for religious observance. The instructor will work to provide reasonable opportunity to complete academic responsibilities as long as that does not interfere with the academic integrity of the course. See full guidelines at Religious Holiday Observances Guidelines.

UACT: ETHICAL COMMUNITY STATEMENT

The UAct website provides an overview of The University's expectations regarding respect and civility.

9 REQUIRED MATERIALS

REQUIRED BOOKS

- Surette, R. (2011). *Media, Crime, and Criminal Justice: Images, Realities, and Policy*. Cengage Learning. ISBN-13: 978-1285459059.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Mandatory readings will be posted to Blackboard. To do well, you should read everything before class and come prepared to discuss the materials. Due to the topical nature of the course material, additional reading will come from newspapers, magazines, et cetera. You are expected to read a newspaper daily. You can choose any papers you would like, but I would recommend both ones with good national coverage, such as the New York Times www.nytimes.com, and local papers. If you are particularly interested in this topic and would like to do further reading on it, feel free to ask me for suggestions.

10 TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

This syllabus is a guide for the course. It is subject to change with advanced notice. Changes may come in class or may come via e-mail. You are responsible for all such communications.

MEDIA, CRIME & CRIMINALITY

Class 1 (Wednesday 1/10): Social Constructionism: Crime, Politics & Media

★ Surette, Chapters 1 & 2

- Dowler, K., Fleming, T., & Muzzatti, S. L. (2006). Constructing crime: Media, crime, and popular culture. *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 48(6), 837-850.
- Steffens, L. (1928). "How I Made a Crime Wave." *The Bookman*, 416-419.
- Surette, R., & Otto, C. (2001). "The Media's Role in the Definition of Crime." In Eds. Henry & Lanier, *What Is Crime?: Controversies over the Nature of Crime and What to Do about It*, pp. 139-154.

Optional RP1 Prompt: What is the largest factor that impacts social construction of crime?

Class 2 (Wednesday 1/17): Crime Reporting: Victims & Perpetrators

★ Surette, Chapter 3

- Cavender, G., Bond-Maupin, L., & Jurik, N. C. (1999). The construction of gender in reality crime TV. *Gender & Society, 13*(5), 643-663.
- Fishman, M. (1978). Crime waves as ideology. *Social Problems, 25*(5), 531-543.
- Gruenewald, J., Pizarro, J., & Chermak, S. M. (2009). Race, gender, and the newsworthiness of homicide incidents. *Journal of Criminal Justice, 37*(3), 262-272.

Optional RP2 Prompt: How do victim and/or perpetrator identity impact crime reporting?

Class 3 (Wednesday 1/24): Criminogenic Media

★ Surette, Chapter 4

- Erickson, R. V. (1991). Mass media, crime, law, and justice: An institutional approach. *The British Journal of Criminology, 31*(3), 219-249.
- Reiner, R. (2002). "Media made criminality: The representation of crime in the mass media." In: Reiner, Robert and Maguire, Mike and Morgan, Rod, (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, pp. 302-340.

Optional RP3 Prompt: On balance, do media cause or constrain crime?

Class 4 (Wednesday 1/31): News Media & Crime

- Gilliam Jr, F. D., Iyengar, S., Simon, A., & Wright, O. (1996). Crime in black and white: The violent, scary world of local news. *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics, 1*(3), 6-23.
- Kearns, E.M., Betus, A.E. & Lemieux, A.F. (2017). Why Do Some Terrorist Attacks Receive More Media Attention Than Others? *under review for publication*.
- Lankford, A., & Madfis, E. (2017). Don't Name Them, Don't Show Them, But Report Everything Else: A Pragmatic Proposal for Denying Mass Killers the Attention They Seek and Detering Future Offenders. *American Behavioral Scientist*.
- Sheley, J. F., & Ashkins, C. D. (1981). Crime, crime news, and crime views. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 45*(4), 492-506.
- Sorenson, S. B., Manz, J. G., & Berk, R. A. (1998). News media coverage and the epidemiology of homicide. *American Journal of Public Health, 88*(10), 1510-1514.

- **TOPIC, TITLE & SUMMARY DUE**

Optional RP4 Prompt: In what way is crime reporting most divergent from crime reality?

Class 5 (Wednesday 2/7): Entertainment: Crime in Television & Movies

- Watch an episode of any TV show related to crime or crime control - seriously, watch TV!
- Watch this clip on media & research on crime.
- Brown, D., Lauricella, S., Douai, A., & Zaidi, A. (2012). Consuming television crime drama: A uses and gratifications approach. *American Communication Journal, 14*(1), 47-61.
- Eschholz, S., Blackwell, B. S., Gertz, M., & Chiricos, T. (2002). Race and attitudes toward the police: Assessing the effects of watching "reality" police programs. *Journal of Criminal Justice, 30*(4), 327-341.
- Raney, A. A., & Bryant, J. (2002). Moral judgment and crime drama: An integrated theory of enjoyment. *Journal of Communication, 52*(2), 402-415.
- Yar, M. (2010). "Screening crime: Cultural criminology goes to the movies." In K.J. Hayward & M. Presdee (eds), *Framing crime: Cultural criminology and the image*, pp. 68-82.

- **JOURNAL ARTICLE REVIEW DUE**

Optional RP5 Prompt: On balance, do entertainment media get crime right or wrong?

MEDIA AND CRIME CONTROL**Class 6 (Wednesday 2/14): Media & Crime Fighters**

★ Surette, Chapter 5

- Dowler, K. (2003). Media consumption and public attitudes toward crime and justice: The relationship between fear of crime, punitive attitudes, and perceived police effectiveness. *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture*, 10(2), 109-126.
- Manning, P. K. (2001). Theorizing policing: The drama and myth of crime control in the NYPD. *Theoretical Criminology*, 5(3), 315-344.

Optional RP6 Prompt: On balance, do media provide crime fighters in a positive or negative light?

Class 7 (Wednesday 2/21): Media & the Courts

★ Surette, Chapter 6

- Daftary-Kapur, T., Penrod, S. D., O'connor, M., & Wallace, B. (2014). Examining pretrial publicity in a shadow jury paradigm: Issues of slant, quantity, persistence and generalizability. *Law and Human Behavior*, 38(5), 462-477.
- Mason, C. (2011). Jay-Z's 99 Problems, Verse 2: A Close Reading with Fourth Amendment Guidance for Cops and Perps. *St. Louis University Law Journal*, 56, 567-586.
- Rafter, N. (2001). American criminal trial films: An overview of their development, 1930-2000. *Journal of Law and Society*, 28(1), 9-24.

Optional RP7 Prompt: What is media's biggest impact on the courts and the court system?

Class 8 (Wednesday 2/28): Media & Corrections

★ Surette, Chapter 7

- O'Sullivan, S. (2001). Representations of prison in nineties Hollywood cinema: from Con Air to The Shawshank Redemption. *The Howard Journal of Crime and Justice*, 40(4), 317-334.
- Sarat, A., Chan, M., Cole, M., Lang, M., Schcolnik, N., Sidhu, J., & Siegel, N. (2014). Scenes of Execution: Spectatorship, Political Responsibility, and State Killing in American Film. *Law & Social Inquiry*, 39(3), 690-719.

● OUTLINE & REFERENCES DUE

Optional RP8 Prompt: On balance, do media sanitize or humanize corrections?

Class 9 (Wednesday 3/7): Crime Control

★ Surette, Chapter 8

- Kort-Butler, L. A., & Hartshorn, K. J. S. (2011). Watching the detectives: Crime programming, fear of crime, and attitudes about the criminal justice system. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 52(1), 36-55.
- Nielsen, L. B., Patel, N. A., & Rosner, J. (2017). Ahead of the Lawmen: Law and Morality in Disney Animated Films 1960-1998. *Law, Culture and the Humanities*, 13(1), 104-122.

Optional RP9 Prompt: On balance, do media promote realistic narratives on crime control or promote a false narrative?

NO CLASS (Wednesday 3/14): Spring Break**Class 10 (Wednesday 3/21): Crime Solving, Television & Technology**

- Watch *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver*.
- Geragos, M. J. (2006). The thirteenth juror: media coverage of supersized trials. *Loyola Law Review*, 39, 167.

- Kim, Y. S., Barak, G., & Shelton, D. E. (2009). Examining the CSI-effect in the cases of circumstantial evidence and eyewitness testimony: Multivariate and path analyses. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 37(5), 452-460.
 - Podlas, K. (2006). The CSI effect and other forensic fictions. *Loyola of Los Angeles Entertainment Law Review*, 27, 87.
 - Schweitzer, N. J., & Saks, M. J. (2007). The CSI effect: popular fiction about forensic science affects the public's expectations about real forensic science. *Jurimetrics*, 357-364.
 - Willing, R. (2004). CSI effect has juries wanting more evidence. *USA Today*, 5.
- Optional RP10 Prompt: How do the 'CSI effect' and/or pretrial publicity impact the legal system most?

MEDIA, PUBLIC OPINION & PUBLIC POLICY

Class 11 (Wednesday 3/28): News Media & Public Opinion

- Callanan, V. J., & Rosenberger, J. S. (2011). Media and public perceptions of the police: examining the impact of race and personal experience. *Policing & Society*, 21(2), 167-189.
- Chiricos, T., Eschholz, S., & Gertz, M. (1997). Crime, news and fear of crime: Toward an identification of audience effects. *Social problems*, 44(3), 342-357.
- Gadarian, S. K. (2014). Scary pictures: How terrorism imagery affects voter evaluations. *Political Communication*, 31(2), 282-302.
- Gilliam Jr, F. D., & Iyengar, S. (2000). Prime suspects: The influence of local television news on the viewing public. *American Journal of Political Science*, 560-573.
- Graziano, L., Schuck, A., & Martin, C. (2010). Police misconduct, media coverage, and public perceptions of racial profiling: An experiment. *Justice Quarterly*, 27(1), 52-76.

Optional RP11 Prompt: What is news media's largest impact on public opinion about crime?

Class 12 (Wednesday 4/4): TBD

- Materials for this week TBD
- Optional RP12 Prompt: TBD

Class 13 (Wednesday 4/11): Entertainment Media & Public Opinion

- Donovan, K. M., & Klahm IV, C. F. (2015). The Role of Entertainment Media in Perceptions of Police Use of Force. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 42(12), 1261-1281. *Social problems*, 50(3), 395-415.
- Kearns, E.M. & Young, J.K. (2017). "If Torture is Wrong, What About 24?": Torture and the Hollywood Effect." Forthcoming, *Crime & Delinquency*.
- McNeely, C. L. (1995). Perceptions of the criminal justice system: Television Imagery and Public Knowledge in the United States. *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture*, 3(1), 1-20.
- Mutz, D. C., & Nir, L. (2010). Not necessarily the news: Does fictional television influence real-world policy preferences?. *Mass Communication and Society*, 13(2), 196-217.

Optional RP13 Prompt: What is entertainment media's largest impact on public opinion about crime?

Class 14 (Wednesday 4/18): Media & Criminal Justice Policy

- ★ Surette, Chapter 9
- Beckett, K. (1994). Setting the public agenda: "Street crime" and drug use in American politics. *Social Problems*, 41(3), 425-447.
- Burns, R., & Crawford, C. (1999). School shootings, the media, and public fear: Ingredients

for a moral panic. *Crime, Law and Social Change*, 32(2), 147-168.

- Scheingold, S. A. (1995). Politics, public policy, and street crime. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 539(1), 155-168.

Optional RP14 Prompt: On balance, do media have a larger impact on crime policy or does crime policy have a larger impact on media?

Class 15 (Wednesday 4/25): Media, Crime & Policy: Now and in the Future

★ Surette, Chapters 10 & 11

Optional RP15 Prompt: If you were to leap to 2028, what do you think would be the key issues and themes that we would be discussing in a class on media and crime? What would be the same and what would change?

FINAL PAPER DUE TO BLACKBOARD ON MONDAY, APRIL 30 @ 3:30 PM