

**Cedar Crest College**  
**Corrections: Crisis in America**

Course: CRJ 306

Credits: 3

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Course Description

The American corrections system is in crisis facing an unprecedented incarceration rate and high numbers of repeat offenders. This course, taught by a prison warden, is designed to examine the effectiveness of the often conflicting four justifications for punishment: retribution; deterrence; rehabilitation; and social protection. Progressive approaches to incarceration will be explored as well as current trends in alternatives to incarceration. The inmate subculture will be examined together with a critical look at the overcrowding epidemic facing today's prison administrators.

Course Objectives

Through this course, the intent is to assist the student to develop and use critical thinking skills to:

1. Distinguish between the historical rationales for punishment, which include; revenge; retribution; rehabilitation; deterrence; and incapacitation.
2. Develop the ability to critically analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the rationales for punishment.
3. Gain an understanding of the importance of the role inmate management plays in controlling inmate behavior.
4. Develop an understanding of the role architectural design plays in the management of inmate populations.

## Course Outcomes

Students will distinguish and define each of the rationales for punishment, which include; revenge; retribution; rehabilitation; deterrence; and incapacitation.

Assessment: Students will participate in classroom discussion; read selected articles from scholarly journals and other relevant publications; and will excel in a written essay outlining the strengths and weaknesses of each rationale.

Students will be able to identify the relationship between architectural design and the ability to manage an inmate population.

Assessment: Students will complete a housing plan exercise upon the conclusion of the inmate behavior management training curriculum. The exercise will challenge the students to make knowledgeable decisions with respects to inmates are manages most efficiently in which housing units; which inmates are most efficiently overcrowded; and at what cost should inmates be comingles given emergency housing conditions.

Students will be able to discuss and critically analyze the common myths associated with the effect incarceration has on crime.

Assessment: Students will read and critically review selected readings; and participate in classroom discussion based on selected readings; tour Northampton County Prison; and excel in a written examination.

## Required Texts and Readings

***Please note that all of the material needed for this course can be found on line and none of it needs to be purchased by the student. All of the material will be placed on the ecompanion website for ease of use. Details will be provided on the first day of class.***

Pew Center on the States. (2009, March). *One in 31: The long reach of American corrections*. Washington, DC: The Pew Charitable Trusts.

Austin, J., Clear, T., Duster, T., Greenberg, D.F., Irwin, J., McCoy, C., et al. (2007). *Unlocking America: Why and how to reduce America's prison population*. Washington, DC: The JFA Institute.

Krisberg, B. (2008). *Getting the genie back in the bottle: California's prison gulag*. Washington, DC: National Council on Crime and Delinquency.

Collins, W.C. (2007). *Jails and the Constitution: An overview*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections.

Martin, M., & Rosazza, T. (2004). *Resource guide for jail administrators*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections.

### Student Assignments

This course is designed to be reading intensive. The selected readings will be assigned in the order in which the concept is covered. The articles are an important facet to evaluating and understanding the key correctional concepts that are faced by industry professional today. All articles must be read prior to class discussion.

Each student is expected to do high quality work in completing the following assignments:

1. To regularly attend all class periods and read all assigned readings.
2. Each student will be required to submit a written examination covering the material covered in the first weekend of class. There is no required length to the assignment; however, students should be aware that the assignment needs to be completed thoroughly, offering complete coverage of the topic.
3. Students will be required to submit a written assignment covering the tour of the Northampton County Prison.
4. Each student will complete a housing plan exercise designed to cause the student to critically examine the effect inmate housing decisions has on inmate behavior management. The student will be given a jail design and must house inmates based of the characteristics of the sample population, explaining why inmates where selected for given

housing styles; why certain inmates were chosen to come together; and what options are available given emergency situations.

### Classroom Protocol

Appropriate classroom behavior is implicit in the Cedar Crest College Honor Code. Such behavior is defined and guided by complete protection for the rights of all students and faculty to a courteous, respectful classroom environment. That environment is free from distractions such as late arrivals, early departures, inappropriate conversations and any other behavior that might disrupt instruction and/or compromise students' access to their Cedar Crest College education.

Furthermore:

Students are expected to have prompt and regular classroom attendance in accordance with the policy stated on the syllabus.

Faculty are expected to make clear on the first day of class reasons for specific classroom decorum and repercussions for non-compliance. Faculty should be aware of setting boundaries and procedures for exceptions to expectations stated in the syllabus.

Sleeping, or the appearance of sleeping is strictly prohibited. Any student who is observed sleeping will receive a zero for the class participation portion of the course. Repeated events will result in any student failing the course. Any student who is observed sleeping during a guest lecture will fail the course without question.

Students need to understand that open discussion is encouraged and expected in order to foster an advanced learning environment. However, all students should use caution when sharing personal information. There is a point to which personal experiences are detrimental to the learning environment.

Written assignments are due on the date discussed in class. The syllabus is intended to serve as an outline recognizing that the speed of student learning cannot be predicted in advance. All assignment dates will be clearly discussed in class. Any assignment handed in late will be assessed a 10 point reduction in the grade for each day that it is late. A zero will be received once the assignment is five days late. An assignment is considered late if it is not handed in by the time the class period expires on the

announced date of the assignment. With respect to the final assignment, it will be considered late if it is not submitted by midnight on the last day of class. All late assignments must be sent to me via email and will not be accepted in any other format. Additionally, late assignments will be graded without comment.

### Honor Philosophy

The Cedar Crest College Honor Philosophy is based upon the principle that, as a self-governing body, students have the ability to create an atmosphere of trust and support. Within this environment, individuals are empowered to make their own decisions, develop personal regard for the system under which they live, and achieve a sense of integrity and judgment that will guide them through life.

### Grading

Class Participation	10 %
Written Essay	20 %
Written Examination	30 %
Housing Plan Exercise	<u>40 %</u>
	100 %

### Attendance Policy

Students may be absent without penalty to their grade on two occasions. Any student absent on 3 or 4 occasions will have their attendance grade reduced by 25 %; any student absent on 5 or 6 more occasions will receive a zero for class participation; and any student absent on 7 or more occasions will not pass the course. All absences must be discussed with the instructor in advance, with the exception of medical emergencies.

Those students who choose to sleep through lectures will receive a zero for class participation without exception.

## Course Outline

### Weekend #1

#### Course Outline

#### Corrections Overview

What is corrections

Objective of corrections

The growth of American corrections

How to reduce the reliance on incarceration

Rationales for Punishment

### Reading Assignment

Pew Center on the States. (2009, March). *One in 31: The long reach of American corrections*. Washington, DC: The Pew Charitable Trusts.

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Krisberg, B. (2008). *Getting the genie back in the bottle: California's prison gulag*. Washington, DC: National Council on Crime and Delinquency.

### Weekend #2

#### Jails and the Constitution

Managing inmate behavior

### Reading Assignment

Martin, M., & Rosazza, T. (2004). *Resource guide for jail administrators*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Corrections.