



COURSE SYLLABUS

CJ 497.01W GANGS
SUMMER I 2020 6/1/2020 through 7/2/2020

Instructor: Elvira White-Lewis, JD/PhD, Associate Professor

Office Location: Ferguson Social Sciences #204 and #211

Office Hours: Virtually MTWR 1-2pm

Office Phone: 903-886-5326

University Email Address: elvira.white-lewis@tamuc.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: Email

Communication Response Time: Emails are answered within 24 hours M-F during business hours (9-5) Monday-Friday

Class Location: Online

Class time: Virtually

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings:

Required Reading:

Shelden, R.G., Tracy, S.K., and Brown (2013). *W.B. Youth Gangs in American Society*. 4th ed. Cengage Learning. ISBN-13:978-1-133-04956-2

Other materials as maybe assigned and located in D2L.

Course Description:

The course examines the most salient and contemporary issues in the study of gangs in American society that include the prevalence, structures, norms and behaviors exhibited by gang members. It explores why and how gangs form, conditions of gang membership and effects on members and society. Gang proliferation, race and gender issues, the relationship between gangs and violence and drugs are also examined. The design and effectiveness of prevention, intervention and suppression policies and programs developed in response to this phenomenon are assessed.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. To demonstrate an understanding of the current status, historical growth, and projected trends of gang memberships in the United States, locally and globally.
2. Describe the current research on gang formation and the implications for society and community, local and national. This will be achieved through a combination of written and discussion-based activities.
3. To demonstrate the academic skill of researching a topic reflective of gangs and crime scholarship through creating discussion board peer comments.
4. To identify and classify the types of gangs common in various geographic or societal communities and their effect on social, educational, and criminal justice systems, including social service and health providers, police, courts and schools.
5. To assess various approaches, programs, and policies for responding to gang formation and activities.
6. To synthesize relevant issues in gang formation and functioning and create recommendations for community response through creating substantive initial discussion board responses.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS**Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments**

This course will provide a variety of activities and assessments to assist you in achieving the outcomes/objectives for the course. Each week you will work toward achieving these outcomes through discussions and comments, a course project, and exams. Below is an explanation of each course requirement including due date, assignment instructions, and other requirements.

A core component of this course is critical thinking. Critical thinking requires students to think through situations, facts, and issues in an open-minded and objective way in an effort to analyze and evaluate information in an informed manner. Qualities of a critical thinker (and of arguments that embody critical thinking) include:

- Certainty is not always necessary for a critical thinker; possibility and probability should always be a consideration**—in other words, just because the book tells you it is true, does not mean that there may not be another solution or possibility to consider. The way that facts relate to one another—and not just fact alone—should be used to determine truth.
- Critical thinkers are not only independent thinkers; they are also fair-minded in that they are willing to consider all points of view, and they are careful to take every aspect of an argument into consideration**—your way of thinking may not necessarily be the only way or the right way of thinking. Consider other perspectives

- **Consider evidence (facts), source (from what source did your evidence come from), and motivations (what might be the underlying motivation behind these facts)**—in other words, gather information from credible sources and evaluate these sources/factual information in the context of what you have been asked to discuss/evaluate.

When posting discussions/comments, preparing the homework assignment, and taking exams, use the following to help you critically think through the question being asked. You will be graded (in part) on how well you perform these tasks.

- Determine the problem/issue you are trying to solve. Make sure you remain open-minded and objective and be aware of your own biases on the subject and put them aside
- Develop a hypothesis and/or possible solution to the problem/issue. Brainstorm other possible solutions. Think about the pros and cons of the problem/issue
- Gather information on the problem/issue that may support or contradict your position
- Analyze your facts. Do not assume anything. Evaluate the facts objectively
- Determine a reasonable conclusion based on all of the facts
- Make sure your facts (and the reporting of the facts) are accurate. You may assume a causal relationship but there might be other possible conclusions to be drawn based on other factors. Be sure to evaluate what those might be.

This course also requires that you utilize APA citation format for all discussions/ assignments/exams. See Course and University Policies/Procedures for more information on how to cite using APA.

Discussion Posts: (5 discussion posts @ 50 points each = 250 course points)

Student Learning Outcomes #1, # 2 #3, # 4, #5, #6: The student will obtain a basic understanding of important issues in Gangs. The student will learn to utilize critical thinking skills. The student will learn how to apply course concepts to ‘real life’ victimization/issues. The student will be an active and engaged participant in discussion forums by analyzing and evaluating information presented within the textbook, external readings/resources, student research, and class activities

The discussion forums are related to the chapter readings and other materials. Upon completion or near completion of the assigned readings and activities, you are expected to engage in an **ongoing** discussion/debate with your classmates. Your contributions to

the discussion forums will be graded for **quality, timeliness** of your contributions, and a **detailed analysis** linking together theory (readings) to application (activities/'real life' CJ/Gang issues).

Discussion posts will be posted within the first day class. The content of these posts may be found in D2L (See below under Technology Requirements for more on accessing/turning in assignments using D2L). Posts are due by **11:00PM CST** on the following dates/days. Note initial response due on first date and peer comments on 2nd date.

Introductory discussion Due June 3, 2020

Discussion/ Comment Post #1 **due June 4/ June 6**

Discussion/Comment Post #2 **due June 11/ June 13**

Discussion/Comment Post #3 **due June 18 /June 20**

Discussion/Comment Post #4 **due June 25 /June 27**

Discussion/Comment Post #5 **due June 30/ July 1 * Note: earlier days**

You are required to answer the discussion questions using your textbook/additional materials (if applicable/required) as your primary source(s). Additional source materials are always welcome and should be cited accordingly and are sometimes required in order for you to complete the assignment. Please read the assignment directions carefully.

Your main posts/initial response to the question should be **A MINIMUM** of 250 words in length. Please keep in mind that **ALL** posts must be substantive and meaningful. Proper grammar and word usage are required. I will take this opportunity to remind you that your discussion posts are formal assignments and will therefore be graded as such. Proofread and spell check prior to submission.

Comment Posts: (10 posts @ 10 points each = 100 course points)

Student Learning Outcomes #1, #3 and # 4: The student will learn to utilize critical thinking skills. The student will be an active and engaged participant in discussion forums by analyzing and evaluating information presented within the textbook, external readings/resources, student research, and class activities.

Comment posts are responses you make to the 5 discussion posts that you and your classmates have posted during the course. **You are to post two (2)** substantive peer comments for each discussion question **and not all** on the same day. Comment posts should be a **MINIMUM** of 100 words in length.

Comment posts should be meaningful. Merely agreeing or disagreeing with a classmate will not be looked upon favorably and will result in a loss of points. A meaningful post is one that moves the discussion forward in some substantive way through providing one's perspective, additional information through research, or reframing the discussion in some new way. You are expected to engage in an **ongoing** discussion/debate with your classmates. Your comments will be graded for **quality, timeliness** of your contributions, and **relevance**. **NO LATE COMMENTS ARE ACCEPTED. Specifically, for each discussion board, you are expected to be visible a minimum of two days. All discussion and comments on one day will result in the downgrading of points.**

Please note that comments will be tallied by me and entered into the gradebook on an ongoing basis. This will allow students to 'follow' their comments grade in real time.

Assessment Method: Discussion assignments will be graded using the Discussion Post/Comments Grading Rubric provided in Appendix A of the syllabus.

There will be **1** exam in this course. Exam will be 1 hour in length and will be accessible for a 24-hour period beginning at 6:00 AM until 6 AM CST the next day. Students will be notified of the precise format of the test prior to exam day. **YOU WILL ONLY BE ALLOWED TO ACCESS THE EXAM ONCE.** See under Course and University Policies/Procedures for more information regarding taking tests on eCollege.

Final Exam covering Chapters 1-10 of the text and any other assigned materials will be **taken on Wednesday July 1- July 2, 2020**

Assessment Method: Multiple choice, True/False and/or short answer questions.

EXTRA CREDIT: Do not ask, there will not be any. Two types of students usually want to do extra credit work: those who would like to make an even "higher" A; and those who are failing the course. In either case, extra credit makes no sense. Put in the time, energy, and effort on the "regular" work and you will not need any "extra" credit.

(See syllabus tool for content suggestions)

GRADING

Assignments for this course will be scored using a points system. Below is an explanation of how each assignment type will be scored.

Assignment Type	# of Assignments	Point Value	Total Points
Discussion	5	50	250
Comments	10	10	100
Final Exam	1	100	100

		TOTAL	450
--	--	--------------	------------

Grades earned on each assignment will be added together and will be divided by the total number of points possible in the course. Below is the overall point scale for the course.

Total points possible for the semester = **450**.

450-405 = A
404-360 = B
359-315 = C
314- 270 = D
269 and below = F

You will find your course grades in the gradebook located in D2L. This gradebook will keep a 'real-time' accounting of the points you earn on assignments for this class. In this way, you may track your progress in this course throughout the course of the semester.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Browser support

D2L is committed to performing key application testing when new browser versions are released. New and updated functionality is also tested against the latest version of supported browsers. However, due to the frequency of some browser releases, D2L cannot guarantee that each browser version will perform as expected. If you encounter any issues with any of the browser versions listed in the tables below, contact D2L Support, who will determine the best course of action for resolution. Reported issues are prioritized by supported browsers and then maintenance browsers.

Supported browsers are the latest or most recent browser versions that are tested against new versions of D2L products. Customers can report problems and receive support for issues. For an optimal experience, D2L recommends using supported browsers with D2L products.

Maintenance browsers are older browser versions that are not tested extensively against new versions of D2L products. Customers can still report problems and receive support for critical issues; however, D2L does not guarantee all issues will be addressed. A maintenance browser becomes officially unsupported after one year.

Note the following:

- Ensure that your browser has JavaScript and Cookies enabled.
- For desktop systems, you must have Adobe Flash Player 10.1 or greater.
- The Brightspace Support features are now optimized for production environments when using the Google Chrome browser, Apple Safari browser, Microsoft Edge browser, Microsoft Internet Explorer browser, and Mozilla Firefox browsers. [Desktop Support](#)

Browser	Supported Browser Version(s)	Maintenance Browser Version(s)
Microsoft® Edge	Latest	N/A
Microsoft® Internet Explorer®	N/A	11
Mozilla® Firefox®	Latest, ESR	N/A
Google® Chrome™	Latest	N/A
Apple® Safari®	Latest	N/A

Tablet and Mobile Support

Device	Operating System	Browser	Supported Browser Version(s)
Android™	Android 4.4+	Chrome	Latest

Apple	iOS®	Safari, Chrome	The current major version of iOS (the latest minor or point release of that major version) and the previous major version of iOS (the latest minor or point release of that major version). For example, as of June 7, 2017, D2L supports iOS 10.3.2 and iOS 9.3.5, but not iOS 10.2.1, 9.0.2, or any other version. Chrome: Latest version for the iOS browser.
Windows	Windows 10	Edge, Chrome, Firefox	Latest of all browsers, and Firefox ESR.

- You will need regular access to a computer with a broadband Internet connection. The minimum computer requirements are:
 - 512 MB of RAM, 1 GB or more preferred
 - Broadband connection required courses are heavily video intensive
 - Video display capable of high-color 16-bit display 1024 x 768 or higher resolution
- You must have a:
 - Sound card, which is usually integrated into your desktop or laptop computer
 - Speakers or headphones.
 - *For courses utilizing video-conferencing tools and/or an online proctoring solution, a webcam and microphone are required.
- Both versions of Java (32 bit and 64 bit) must be installed and up to date on your machine.
At a minimum Java 7, update 51, is required to support the learning management system. The most current version of Java can be downloaded at: [JAVA web site](http://www.java.com/en/download/manual.jsp)
<http://www.java.com/en/download/manual.jsp>
- Current anti-virus software must be installed and kept up to date.

Running the browser check will ensure your internet browser is supported.

Pop-ups are allowed.

JavaScript is enabled.

Cookies are enabled.

- You will need some additional free software (plug-ins) for enhanced web browsing. Ensure that you download the free versions of the following software:
 - [Adobe Reader](https://get.adobe.com/reader/)
<https://get.adobe.com/reader/>
 - [Adobe Flash Player](https://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/) (version 17 or later)
<https://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/>
 - [Adobe Shockwave Player](https://get.adobe.com/shockwave/)
<https://get.adobe.com/shockwave/>
 - [Apple Quick Time](http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/)
<http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/>
- At a minimum, you must have Microsoft Office 2013, 2010, 2007 or Open Office. Microsoft Office is the standard office productivity software utilized by faculty, students, and staff. Microsoft Word is the standard word processing software, Microsoft Excel is the standard spreadsheet software, and Microsoft PowerPoint is the standard presentation software. Copying and pasting, along with attaching/uploading documents for assignment submission, will also be required. If you do not have Microsoft Office, you can check with the bookstore to see if they have any student copies.

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Brightspace Support

Need Help?

Student

Support

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778 or click on the **Live Chat** or click on the words “click here” to submit an issue via email.



System Maintenance

Please note that on the 4th Sunday of each month there will be System Maintenance which means the system will not be available 12 pm-6 am CST.

This course is taught as a face-to-face class **and** enhanced online. Students need access to a computer (there are computer labs all over campus) in order to check e-mails and to check grades and take examinations on D2L and to participate in discussions for the online part of this class.

- Students need to have ready access to a broadband connection to the internet such as Cable, DSL, or the TAMU-C campus network. (Dial-up, satellite, or other non-broadband internet connections will not function sufficiently with eCollege.)
- A computer with a 2.0Ghz or better processor and 1 GB of RAM. MAC computers with similar configurations will also work.
- Windows XP, Vista, or 7 operating system. MAC with the OS 9 or X operating system.
- Microsoft Office or similar package with a word processor, Power Point type presentation application, and a spreadsheet application. (OpenOffice is a free, open source application that is very similar to the Microsoft Office applications and is available for download at www.openoffice.org).

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Interaction with Instructor Statement:

The most effective way to communicate with the professor will be to come to class during the class format and online during the online part of the class. The professor will be in her office during posted office hours and by appointment during the face to face period of this class. The best way to make an appointment is to communicate directly with the professor prior to or after class. Appointments can also be made via e-mail.

The professor will periodically communicate with the entire class or selected individual students by using the student's MyLeo e-mail address. Students should check their MyLeo account regularly for e-mails from the university and/or the professor.

If you encounter **any technological difficulties with D2L** or with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778 or click on the **Live Chat** or click on the words "click here" to submit an issue via email.



COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURE/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures:

Assigned readings should be completed BEFORE coming to class.

UNIVERSITY SPECIFIC PROCEDURES

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: [Netiquette](#)

<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

TAMUC Attendance*

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/_undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/_graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf

ADA Statement

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

/

Nondiscrimination Notice

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC)

46.035 and A&M- Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

POLICIES ON ENROLLMENT, "X's", AND WITHDRAWAL: All policies regarding last day for enrollment, withdrawal from class, and the use of "X" will be rigidly adhered to in this course. Students should check the student handbook, current semester schedule, and the appropriate bulletin boards, which indicate the specific deadlines for withdrawing from courses without penalty. Seeing that all university procedures are followed is the students' responsibility.

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*). This includes, but is not limited to, providing an environment where all students feel comfortable to express their viewpoints freely and not being disrespectful to other students or the professor. For more on web-specific conduct, see: <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>.

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Every effort will be made to adhere to the course schedule as noted below. However, circumstances may require changes to the schedule. In that case, changes will be announced via University Email and in Announcements. The professor reserves the right to change the schedule if necessary and depending on the progress of the class. I highly recommend that you follow the schedule outlined below **VERY CAREFULLY** so that you are sure to complete readings as assigned and submit your assignments on time.

Please note that all homework assignments/discussions/comments/exams are due by **11:00PM CST** in D2L on the day they are due as outlined in the syllabus.

Please note that your book for this class is a combination textbook and reader. What that means is that each chapter in the book begins with information as you might find in a textbook, followed by readings (some original to the book, others adapted from other sources). Your assignments for this course require that you read the textbook information. In some cases, additional materials are available for download in D2L.

Week 1

June 1	<p>Class begins-- Read the syllabus carefully</p> <p>Read: Introduction AND chapter 1: What is a Gang and how many are there? AND chapter 2: What do gangs and gang members look like?</p> <p>Post a Week #1 Discussion where you introduce yourself and accept the conditions of the syllabus/agree to the Rules of Netiquette/answer the discussion question (this does NOT count as part of your discussion/comment grade) Due by June 3, 2020</p> <p>The link to the Rules of Netiquette may be found under Course and University Procedures/Policies under Student Conduct</p>
	<p>Complete first discussion by Thursday and comments by Saturday both at 11:00PM CST on alternate days</p>

Week 2

June 7	<p>Read the following chapters for this week</p> <p>Chapter 3: The Gang Subculture <i>and</i></p> <p>Chapter 4: Criminal Activities of Gangs</p> <p>Complete discussion and comments by both at 11:00PM CST on alternate days and before the deadlines.</p>
---------------	--

Week 3

June 14	Read chapter 5: Girls and Gangs AND Chapter 6: Adult Gangs
	Complete discussion and comments by both at 11:00PM CST on alternate days and before the deadlines.

Week 4

June 21	Read: Chapter 7: Why are there gangs? AND
	Chapter 8: Gangs in context: Inequality in American Society
	Complete discussion and comments by both at 11:00PM CST on alternate days and before the deadlines.

Week 5

June 28	Read Chapter 9: Legal responses to the gang problem AND Chapter 10: Community and National Intervention Strategies AND Chapter 11: Conclusions Complete discussion and comments by both at 11:00PM CST on alternate days and before the deadlines. Note: This is a short week!!
July 1-2	Final Exam covering Chapters 1-10

Note: While I intend to follow this syllabus, instructor reserves the right to amend and will provide advance notice in writing to students if such a change becomes necessary for the successful completion of this course.

Appendix A

Discussion Assignment/Comments Grading Rubric

Discussion Post (50 points)

Assignment instructions: Student follows the assignment directions /10

Analysis: Student evaluates the issue/situation sufficiently to demonstrate an understanding of the material /10

Critical thinking: Student employs critical thinking skills /15

APA format: Student provides citations in proper APA citation format /10

Grammar/Word usage: student uses proper grammar and word usage /5

Comments Posts: submitted two substantive posts /20

Comments on Post:

Comments Grade