I. **Course Information**

**Instructor Information:**

Instructor: Joanna Kubik  
Email: jokubik@rutgers.edu  
Instructor’s Office: Smith Hall 111  
Office Hours: Tuesdays- 3pm

**Course Overview:**

This course explores juvenile street gangs, when they exist, when they are illusory, and public reactions to them. It also considers co-offending by juveniles who are not necessarily gang members. The course considers what gang membership means, and when gangs are cohesive or not. It examines variations among juvenile street gangs, and contrasts these with other groups of co-offenders that are sometimes called “gangs”.

**Prerequisite:** None

**B.S., Criminal Justice Program Learning Goals**

Upon completion of the B.S. in Criminal Justice at Rutgers University-Newark, students should be able to:

1) Describe the development and functions of major criminal justice institutions (e.g., police, courts, corrections, and juvenile justice), the activities of actors within these institutions, and how they relate to one another as well as the broader social, political, and economic world.

2) Describe the mechanisms, correlates, theoretical underpinnings, and situational contexts of crime,
criminal behavior and opportunity, and techniques for prevention and treatment.

3) Apply and analyze theories related to the policies and practices of the criminal justice system and its major institutions.

4) Demonstrate the ability to gather, explain, and apply empirical research in the field of criminal justice.

5) Obtain a comprehensive knowledge about the process of conducting criminal justice research, and develop the skills to conduct criminal justice research with appropriate methodologies.

**Course Learning Objectives:**

By the end of this course, students will be able to answer these questions:

1. How are gangs defined and why are these groups considered a major social problem?
2. What is the extent and nature of street gangs in the US and elsewhere?
3. What role does race, ethnicity and gender play in street gangs?
4. What is the nature of gang involvement in crime, drugs and violence?
5. How have programs and policies addressed the gang problem?

**Required Readings:**

1) Confronting Gangs by G. David Curry, Scott H. Decker, & David C. Pyrooz, Oxford University Press/ 2014

2) Articles posted on Blackboard (BB)

**Course Structure:**

The course will incorporate diverse learning activities including lectures, PowerPoint presentations, and group discussions.

Classroom learning is a group activity that depends upon everyone’s full participation in order to succeed. I expect students to: be prepared to begin class on time, silence or turn off and put away cell phones and other electronic devices, read and be prepared to discuss homework, submit assignments on time, and assist your classmates. You can expect that I will: be on time and prepared for every class, be available via email and appointments to answer questions, make every class engaging and valuable, and respect your contributions to class.
II. **Course Schedule**

**Part 1**
Sept 5: Introduction and Course Overview
Sept 7: Chapter 1: What is a gang?  
BB: Fleisher - Fremont Hustlers

Sept 12: Movie: Crips & Bloods: Made in America (Assignment distributed)
Sept 14: Gang demographics and risk factors

Sept 19: Chapter 2: Theories explaining gang membership * Reaction papers due*
Sept 21: Chapter 2: Theories explaining gang membership

Sept 26: Chapter 3: Gang Structure
Sept 28: BB: Papachristos - Gang World

Oct 3: Chapter 5: Gangs and Crime
Oct 5: Movie: Frontline Newark PD (Assignment distributed)

Oct 10: Chapter 4: Gang membership in the life course
Oct 12: BB: Taylor - The Boulevard Ain't Safe For Your Kids * Reaction papers due*

Oct 17: Exam Review
Oct 19: Exam #1

**Part 2**
Oct 24: BB: Carlie - Into the Abyss/The Structure of Gangs
Oct 26: Chapter 8: Gangs & Social Institutions

Oct 31: Chapter 9: Gangs and Juvenile Justice System
Nov 2: BB: Milton - Chapter 1 & Chapter 2

Nov 7: Chapter 7: Gangs Around the World
Nov 9: Movie: City of God, Guns, and Gangs (Assignment distributed)

Nov 14: Effectiveness of COPY Program for First Time Youth Offenders (no readings)
Nov 16: NO CLASS (ASC conference) * Reaction papers due*

Nov 21: Chapter 6: Girls, Women, & Gangs  
BB: Miller - Gender and Victimization Risk Among Young Women in Gangs
Nov 23: NO CLASS - Thanksgiving

Nov 30: BB: Tita and Papachristos - The Evolution of Gang Policy

Dec 5: Exam Review
Dec 7: Exam #2
III. Course Assessment and Grading
The following grading system will be used for this course:

- Exam #1 30%
- Exam #2 30%
- Short Reaction Papers (3) 30%
- Attendance/Class Participation 10%

EXAMS (60%):
There will be 2 examinations for this course. Exam #1 will cover material from Part 1 of this course. Exam #2 will cover material from Part 2 of this course. These exams will include material covered in the readings and in class lectures/discussions. You are responsible for the readings as well as information covered in class. The format of the exams will include multiple choice and short answer questions.

**There will be NO make-up exams without documented, verifiable excuses of emergencies or extreme circumstances. These excuses are at the discretion of the instructor. Please notify the instructor prior to the exam to explain your absence. If a make-up exam is issued, it must be completed within one week of the scheduled exam date.

SHORT REACTION PAPERS (30%):
Short reaction papers will be assigned three times throughout the semester. The format of the reaction papers will be 4 short essay questions about the documentary that will be viewed in class. The short answer essay questions will be assigned during the movie and will be due the first class after the movie viewing (see course schedule).

ATTENDANCE and PARTICIPATION (10%):
The frequency and quality of your participation in class discussions will be noted, as will your constructive critical feedback and support offered to other classmates throughout the semester.

The following grading scale will be used for this course:

- A  90–100%
- B+  85-89%
- B   80-84%
- C+  75-79%
- C   70-74%
- D   60-69%
- F   <60%

**Late or Missing Assignment Policy:** Attendance is very important and will count toward your final grade. You will be more successful if you attend. If an emergency arises and you must miss class, it is your responsibility to notify the instructor about the reason for your absence as early as possible. If you miss class, you are still responsible for anything assigned for the next class or
classes, including obtaining any handouts given in the class you missed. It is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to catch up.

**Examinations:** Examinations are to be taken during their scheduled times. Students who fail to take examinations on the prescribed dates WILL NOT be permitted to take the examinations unless extenuating circumstances exist. Proper documentation for the circumstance MUST be provided before the student is able to take a make-up examination.

**IMPORTANT:** Every grade will be posted on Blackboard. Any issues regarding an assigned grade must be brought to the attention of Dr. Ostermann before the date of the final examination. Do not wait until the last minute! You will know exactly what your final term grade should be before it is assigned because you will know the grades of every assignment/examination/etc. This syllabus also states the value of each assignment towards your final term grade. Absolutely NO CONSIDERATION FOR GRADE CHANGES will be made on or after the date of the final examination. Grades are assigned objectively. You will get the grade that you earn.

**IV. Course Policies**

**Classroom Rules**
All members of this class are required to conduct themselves in an appropriate and professional manner. Laptops are permitted only if disengaged from the internet and other electronic devices should be stored away unless you specifically seek the instructor’s permission. In this class, we may have discussions that challenge our taken for granted assumptions about crime and justice. Students should be prepared to engage honestly and openly about this material and perhaps even examine their own beliefs about the issues. While I am hopeful that the course materials will spark interesting discussion, personal insults or other types of demeaning, disrespectful, or threatening comments toward other class members about their experiences, backgrounds, or statements will NOT be tolerated.

**Academic Integrity**
As a member of the Rutgers University community you are not to engage in any academic dishonesty. You are responsible for adhering to basic academic standards of honesty and integrity as outlined in the Rutgers University Policy on Academic Integrity for Undergraduate and Graduate Students [http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity](http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity)

Your academic work should be the result of your own individual effort, you should not allow other students to use your work, and you are required to recognize and reference any material that is not your own. Violations of the university’s policy will result in appropriate action.
**Academic Resources**

**Students with Disabilities**
Rutgers University is committed to providing equal educational opportunity for persons with disabilities in accordance with the Nondiscrimination Policy of the University and in compliance with § 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. For additional information please visit the website [https://ods.rutgers.edu/](https://ods.rutgers.edu/) or contact the representative for the Newark Campus.

Allen Sheffield  
Director of ADA Services and Academic Support  
Robeson Campus Center, Suite 352  
350 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard  
Newark, NJ 07102  
Phone: 973.353.5300  
Fax: 973.353.5666  
E-mail: kate.torres@rutgers.edu  
Website: [https://ods.rutgers.edu/](https://ods.rutgers.edu/)

**Psychological and Counseling Services**
If you experience psychological or other difficulties as a result of this course, or because of other issues that may interfere with your performance in the course, please contact the university’s psychological and counseling service center ([http://www.counseling.newark.rutgers.edu](http://www.counseling.newark.rutgers.edu); 973-353-5805), which is located in Blumenthal Hall, room 101. The center offers a variety of free, confidential services to part-time and full-time students who are enrolled at Rutgers.

If you are interested in finding out more about  
• Accelerated Master's Program (B.S. /M.A.)  
• Criminal Justice National Honor Society (Alpha Phi Sigma)  
Please refer to the School of Criminal Justice website [http://rscj.newark.rutgers.edu/](http://rscj.newark.rutgers.edu/)

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