

CJ 497, Special Topics: Guns and Violence in American Society

Syllabus, Fall 2012

Section 01W - Web-Based Course via Blackboard

W. T. Jordan, Instructor

Office: University Center 414-C	Virtual Office Hours: we will primarily communicate electronically. I encourage you to use <u>email</u> , the <u>telephone</u> , or the <u>chat room</u> to communicate with me about any issue or question about the class or other issues for which you would normally come to my office. I also welcome your visits, so drop by or call for an appointment. Don't be shy! Blackboard has chat rooms open to all class members that are available for simultaneous discussion. I will log in to the Office Hours chat room for our class periodically -- and I will try to vary the times that I am there. Additionally, I can contact you via telephone to discuss other issues if you desire -- just leave a voice mail or email with a day, preferred time, and phone number. On-campus office hours: Tuesday/Thursdays 10:45-11:45. Tuesday 1:45-5:45. Drop-ins are welcome at other times (appointments are better). DL Students: Virtual office hours via Blackboard Chat at varying times, usually including on-campus office hours. Go to Chat and click on Office Hours.
Phone: 903-223-3168	
E-mail: tom.jordan@tamut.edu (I answer email 2-3 times each week on a triage basis -- i.e. emergencies first.)	
Fax: 903-223-3107	
URL: http://www.tamut.edu/academics/tjordan/	

[LINKS:](#) [GRADES](#) [Weekly Schedule](#) [ASSIGNMENTS](#)

Course Description:

This course is designed to explore the philosophical, social, political, and empirical discourse on the relationship between guns, violence, and the American people. Specifically, we will deal with philosophical, constitutional, and policy questions related to the claims and counterclaims made about guns in public, legal, and academic discourse. It is appropriate for anyone interested in criminal justice, history, legal studies, political science, and current events. This is not a lecture and exam course. This is a seminar using a collection of literature that responds to the fundamental issues in the debate over the place of guns in American society. Students are expected to complete the readings for each module, then participate in an open discussion of the ideas presented. Additional learning activities are included.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Students will explain the distinction between collectivist and individualist interpretations of the 2nd Amendment with attendant policy ramifications
- Students will discuss the history and most relevant case law on gun possession and use from the federal level
- Students will be able describe the hypothesized effects of guns in the U.S. in terms of murder, suicide, accidental death, crime prevention, recreation, etc., drawing on relevant statistics where available.
- Students will be able to describe the major policy initiatives of the past 50 years aimed at limiting or expanding gun related rights.

Course Materials:

<p>Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McClurg, Kopel, and Denning (Eds.), 2002, <i>Gun Control and Gun Rights</i>. • Books, articles, and internet sites as needed by individual students or as assigned in class. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer and internet access. MS-Word, email software, internet browser, that are compatible with Blackboard.
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Grading Policy:

Letter Grades are based on written assignments and participation. You must participate substantially and collegially in the course.

<p>Planned Activities: (see Assignments page for specific requirements)</p>
<p>-- Participation (3 grades --> 1 grade for each 5 weeks)</p>
<p>-- Internet Assignment/Web Work (2 grades)</p>
<p>-- Essays (2 grades)</p>

--Extra Credit (Optional) Book Review (1 grade)

<i>Subject to change with notice</i>

Final course grades will be determined based on the student's contributions and demonstrated knowledge through the planned activities. You will receive three participation grades throughout the semester. You will be assigned to two specific topics for which you will be responsible to find, summarize, and post additional information (Webwork). You will also be assigned to two different additional topics for which you will write essays. All assignments are graded on a scale of 0 to 4. Essentially, 0 is F, 1 is D ... 4 is an A. At the end of the term, the mean of the 7 scores will indicate the student's semester score and letter grade. [Click Example Grading to see an example.](#)

Grading Scale:

D: 0.5...<1.5

C: 1.5...<2.5

B: 2.5...<3.5

A: 3.5 and above

- ① Every out-of-class assignment includes the requirement to make and keep a copy of your written work in case the original is lost or misplaced.
- ① Students are encouraged to make an appointment to review and discuss graded material and their progress in the course.
- ① No Grade of "incomplete" will be given except in the most unusual circumstances that reasonably preclude completion of the course (e.g. you are in a coma) -- poor grades is not an acceptable reason.
- ① If the final exam is missed due to legitimate absence, a grade of "Incomplete" will be given until the makeup is taken (typically the following semester).
- ① Makeup exams may be a different format and different questions from the regular exams.
- ① No additional extra credit assignments will be given; please do not ask.
- ① Notice must be given, and arrangements made prior to an excused absence or late assignment.
- ① You are strongly encouraged to complete your written assignments early when possible to avoid missed deadlines due to technology or other circumstances.
- ① **Late work will be reduced in grade by 10% every day that it is late**, beginning immediately after the deadline. Late work at the end of the semester may result in a zero or an "X" (incomplete grade).
- ① Note that you are responsible to be in class every day that the class meets. Exam and activity dates are tentative and may be moved. If you are absent, you are responsible to get from other students the notes, syllabus changes, assignments, instructions, or other announcements that are given in class. Absence can negatively affect your grade.

Academic Dishonesty: Please review the Student Code of Conduct and the statement on Academic Dishonesty in the Catalog, then read the explanation of plagiarism supplied by TurnItIn at http://www.turnitin.com/research_site/e_home.html. ~~Any act of academic dishonesty~~

~~or plagiarism will normally result in a zero for failure to complete the assignment and may result in an "F" in the course and referral to the university judicial system.~~ At this level of scholarship, students should understand the severity of cheating, plagiarism, and misrepresentation of another's work. The instructor encourages questions regarding citations, references, cheating, improper behavior, and academic ethics. You should review this page within the first two weeks of class. When in doubt, **ASK** the instructor!

Classroom Courtesy: Cell phone and beepers: Students are required to turn off cell phones or beepers while in the classroom. If an emergency situation exists (or on-call law enforcement officers) which requires you to be contacted immediately, you are expected to discuss the situation with the professor prior to the beginning of class presentation. Students are expected to refrain from talking to each other while formal instruction is being presented. This applies to the professor's and student's presentations (Amended from the College of Health and Behavioral Science statement on classroom courtesy).

University Policies

Disability Accommodations: Students with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations through the A&M-Texarkana Disability Services Office by calling 903-223-3062.

Academic Integrity: Academic honesty is expected of students enrolled in this course. Cheating on examinations, unauthorized collaboration, falsification of research data, plagiarism, and undocumented use of materials from any source constitute academic dishonesty and may be grounds for a grade of 'F' in the course and/or disciplinary actions. For additional information, see the university catalog.

A&M-Texarkana Email Address: Upon application to Texas A&M University-Texarkana an individual will be assigned an A&M-Texarkana email account. This email account will be used to deliver official university correspondence. Each individual is responsible for information sent and received via the university email account and is expected to check the official A&M-Texarkana email account on a frequent and consistent basis. Faculty and students are required to utilize the university email account when communicating about coursework.

University Drop Policy: To drop this course after the census date (see [semester calendar](#)), a student must complete the Drop/Withdrawal Request Form, located on the University website <http://tamut.edu/Registrar/droppingwithdrawing-from-classes.html>) or obtained in the Registrar's Office. The student must submit the signed and completed form to the instructor of each course indicated on the form to be dropped for his/her signature. The signature is not an "approval" to drop, but rather confirmation that the student has discussed the drop/withdrawal with the faculty member. The form must be submitted to the Registrar's office for processing in person, email Registrar@tamut.edu, mail (7101 University Ave., Texarkana, TX 75503) or fax (903-223-3140). Drop/withdraw forms missing any of the required information will not be accepted by the Registrar's Office for processing. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the form is completed properly before submission. If a student stops participating in class (attending and submitting assignments) but does not complete and submit the drop/withdrawal form, a final grade based on work completed as outlined in the syllabus will be assigned.

Student Technical Assistance:

- Solutions to common problems and FAQ’s for your web-enhanced and online courses are found at this link: <http://www.tamut.edu/webcourses/index.php?pageid=37>

If you cannot find your resolution there, you can send in a support request detailing your specific problem here: <http://www.tamut.edu/webcourses/gethelp2.php> Blackboard Helpdesk contacts: Office hours are: Monday - Friday, 8:00a to 5:00p Julia Allen (main contact) 903-223-3154 julia.allen@tamut.edu Frank Miller (alternate) 903-223-3156 frank.miller@tamut.edu Nikki Thomson (alternate) 903-223-3083 nikki.thomson@tamut.edu

Course Schedule

DATE/SESSION (Date in () is the day the week begins.)	TOPIC/AGENDA Topic designated by letter in (parentheses).	READING/OTHER
Week 1 (8/27)	Introduction to course and explore WebCt	Complete the Week 1 check-in procedures in the weekly schedule. Let me know if you need help. Read next week's material prior to the beginning of the week.
Module 1: Philosophical Issues		
Week 2 (9/3)	(A) Armed Citizens: Right, Requirement, or Neither	MKD pp. 113-136
Week 3 (9/10)	(B) Militia Issues	MKD pp. 137-154
Module 2: Constitutional Issues		
Week 4 (9/17)	(C) The 2nd Amendment	MKD pp. 155-188 Topic A Reaction Essay Due 9/23
Week 5 (9/24)	(D) Commentary	MKD pp. 189-211 Topic B Reaction Essay Due 9/30
Week 6 (10/1)	(E) Current Constitutional Perspective	<i>District of Columbia v. Heller</i> <i>McDonald v. Chicago</i> Topic C Reaction Essay Due 10/07

Module 3: Guns and Violence		
Week 7 (10/8)	(F) Murder and Suicide	MKD pp. 60-90 Topic D Reaction Essay Due 10/14
Week 8 (10/15)	(G) Accidents and Other "Costs"	MKD pp. 91-112 Topic E Reaction Essay Due 10/21
Module 4: Reducing Victimization Through Gun Possession		
Week 9 (10/22)	(H) Personal Self-Defense	MKD pp. 1-32 Topic F Reaction Essay Due 10/28
Week 10 (10/29)	(I) Deterrence & Recreation	MKD pp. 33-52 & 53-59 Topic G Reaction Essay Due 11/4
Module 5: Civil Suits		
Week 11 (11/5)	(J) Product Liability	MKD pp. 288-319 Topic H Reaction Essay Due 11/11
Week 12 (11/12)	(K) Negligent Marketing and Government Plaintiffs	MKD pp. 320-355 Topic I Reaction Essay Due 11/18
Module 6: Variation by Group Characteristics		
Week 13 (11/19)	(L) Guns, Violence and Race,	MKD pp. 234-257 Topic J Reaction Essay Due 11/25
Week 14 (11/26)	(M) Guns as Culture	MKD pp. 258-287 Topic K Reaction Essay Due 12/2
Module 7: Guns and Politics		
Week 15 (12/3)	Saturday Night Specials to Assault Weapons: Winning the hearts, minds, and wallets in American Politics	Topic L Reaction Essay Due 12/9

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Revised,

