

### Course Information

*Course Number/Section: CRIM 3326*

*Course Title: Victimless crime*

*Term: Fall 2023*

*Days & Times: Friday: 1pm-3:45pm*

### Professor Contact Information

*Professor Bruce Jacobs*

*Teaching Assistant:*

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*Office Location: GR 2.114*

*Office Hours: By appointment*

*Other Information*

Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions:

N/A

### Course Description

Victimless crimes, sometimes known as public order crimes, include a variety of behaviors that generally are illegal (or sanctioned negatively in some way) but which typically are perceived by those engaging in them to be legitimate, justified, and acceptable. Many such offenses are illegal/sanctioned only because the government says so, especially public order violations where there is no identifiable victim. The objective of this course is to develop a thorough understanding of the complexities and controversies that swirl around these offenses.

A number of questions will be posed and explored to this end. Is there a moral basis for defining behaviors that people freely participate in, and which seemingly bring no harm to others, as criminal? Should the government be allowed to tell people what they can and cannot do? Is it acceptable to curtail individual liberties for the greater social good? If so, on what basis and under what circumstances? What does the notion of harm really mean? Key definitions and constructs of public order/victimless crime will be examined. Specific offenses--drug use/distribution, prostitution, and gambling--will be explored in particular, but there will be wide coverage of other offenses through student presentations (described below). The social control of these behaviors, and of public order crimes in general, will be a recurrent theme throughout the course.

## Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

Objective 1: Explain the form and content of victimless crime in America.

Objective 2: Assess the reasons for engaging in victimless crimes of various types.

Objective 3: Evaluate the effectiveness of policies designed to inhibit participation in victimless crime.

## Required Textbooks and Materials

Criminal Justice and Moral Issues (R. Meier and G. Geis; select chapters)

Addiction by design (Schull; select chapters only)

Callgirl (Angell)

Articles distributed via email:

VICES ARE NOT CRIMES: A VINDICATION OF MORAL LIBERTY; By Lysander Spooner (1875); Libertarianism as the Philosophy of Moral Freedom; Paul Kurtz; select other articles as emailed to students by Professor

Suggested Course Materials: None other than the required readings

## Assignments & Academic Calendar

*Topics, Reading Assignments, Due Dates, Exam Dates*

Topics and readings will be determined at least one lecture day prior to assignment. The pace of the course will vary and our readings schedule will be flexible to account for that variation. The first exam will be about the 8<sup>th</sup> week of the class. The second exam will be the last day of class. There is no overall final exam for the course.

## Grading Policy

### Requirements

Two **in-class** exams on the material covered during the course will be given. Each will be worth 40% of your grade. The first exam will take place around the 8<sup>th</sup> week of class. The second exam will take place on the last day of class. The second exam will not be cumulative. Each exam will be multiple choice.

Both tests will be administered via eLearning but **will be taken in class. Taking the test in a venue other than our classroom (for example, remotely) is not permitted.** Both tests will consist of around 80 multiple choice questions (this number is an estimate), which will be randomized. Each question will appear individually, and if need be, you will be allowed to go back and review past questions that have been answered. Both exams will be 60-90 minutes long unless a letter has been received from the Office

of Student AccessAbility, indicating otherwise. You will only have one opportunity to complete. Once the exam is opened, the exam clock will begin, automatically closing after the allotted time.

Weekly discussion boards will be created to encourage optional discussion among students. Please be respectful when responding to other students. Everyone may not have the same perspective; however, you can still learn from each other.

Two additional folders have been created in eLearning—one for optional readings and one for optional videos. These may contain content that is mentioned in lecture but has not been assigned.

Oral presentations also will be part of the course requirements. Presentations will be presented by groups of two. Students will split the preparation and presentation work 50/50. Your teaching assistant will help organize students into groups and develop the presentation schedule. Presentations will be done via pre-recorded video and emailed to your teaching assistant no later than the Thursday night before the Friday they are given. Stay apprised of all class announcements.

Presentations will do the following:

1. Pick an offense that we did not cover in class that would be considered a public order or victimless crime. The offense chosen is at the student's discretion, subject only to the instructor's approval.
2. Describe the offense you're presenting. How is it done, by whom, where (if relevant), and for what reason?
3. Who is being victimized?
4. How did it come to be illegal?
5. Should it be illegal? Why or why not?

Make sure you provide a summary of your presentation, with sources cited, to members of the class via PowerPoint. Also make sure that you use visual aids in your presentation (typically pictures, powerpoint slides, video clips, or graphs on overhead transparencies or perhaps video clips, if you so choose). The presentation will be the major part of your participation grade for the class. Participation is worth 20% of your final grade. Presentations should be about 12 minutes in length.

For graduate students, oral presentations will serve as the basis for a comprehensive research paper that they will turn in at the end of the semester. This paper will draw from at least 15 academic sources (books, articles, etc. not used in the course) and be 15 pages in length (double-spaced, one-inch margins all around). This paper should be of publishable quality and will be worth 1/3 of the graduate student's final grade. Undergraduates will not be required to turn in a research paper, but their oral presentations will require a nontrivial amount of research and preparation and will be evaluated on their merit.

This is an advanced undergraduate course and as such, it is intended to be discussion-intensive where at all possible. Each week, students will be expected to be

active participants. Be prepared to identify points of significance in the readings and to discuss them.

List of possible presentation topics

dog fighting  
ticket scalping  
public urination  
skateboarding on private property of a business  
baby selling  
burning and swapping music/movies/video games off the internet  
human smuggling  
breast-feeding in jurisdictions where banned  
assisted suicide  
hate speech  
speeding  
using a fake ID  
saying unacceptable things in public  
failure to wear motorcycle helmet (in states that require them)  
organ selling  
talking on cellphone in restaurant where banned  
flashing at mardi gras celebration  
use of cell phone cameras in prohibited areas  
owning an exotic pet  
excessive vehicle noise (from stereos or modified exhaust systems)  
use of steroids or other performance enhancing drugs  
street racing  
school prayer  
bestiality  
abuse of a corpse  
having consensual sexual relations with a minor  
using diet pills with banned substance ephedra  
smoking in public building where banned  
deciding not to get vaccinated during a pandemic  
use of cell phone cameras in prohibited areas  
medical experiments involving animals  
voyeurism  
texting while driving

Course Policies

*Make-up exams: None*

*Extra Credit: None*

*Late Work: None*

*Special Assignments: None*

*Class Attendance: Attendance is expected.*

*Classroom Citizenship: Per University Policy*

#### Field Trip Policies / Off-Campus Instruction and Course Activities

None

#### Student Conduct & Discipline

The University of Texas System and The University of Texas at Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student and each student organization to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the UTD publication, *A to Z Guide*, which is provided to all registered students each academic year.

The University of Texas at Dallas administers student discipline within the procedures of recognized and established due process. Procedures are defined and described in the *Rules and Regulations, Board of Regents, The University of Texas System, Part 1, Chapter VI, Section 3*, and in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*. Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SU 1.602, 972/883-6391).

A student at the university neither loses the rights nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. He or she is expected to obey federal, state, and local laws as well as the Regents' Rules, university regulations, and administrative rules. Students are subject to discipline for violating the standards of conduct whether such conduct takes place on or off campus, or whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.

#### Academic Integrity

The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work.

Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, statements, acts or omissions related to applications for enrollment or the award of a degree, and/or the submission as one's own work or material that is not one's own. As a general rule, scholastic dishonesty involves one of the following acts: cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or falsifying

academic records. Students suspected of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Plagiarism, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism (see general catalog for details). This course will use the resources of turnitin.com, which searches the web for possible plagiarism and is over 90% effective.

#### Email Use

The University of Texas at Dallas recognizes the value and efficiency of communication between faculty/staff and students through electronic mail. At the same time, email raises some issues concerning security and the identity of each individual in an email exchange. The university encourages all official student email correspondence be sent only to a student's U.T. Dallas email address and that faculty and staff consider email from students official only if it originates from a UTD student account. This allows the university to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of all individual corresponding and the security of the transmitted information. UTD furnishes each student with a free email account that is to be used in all communication with university personnel. The Department of Information Resources at U.T. Dallas provides a method for students to have their U.T. Dallas mail forwarded to other accounts.

#### Withdrawal from Class

The administration of this institution has set deadlines for withdrawal of any college-level courses. These dates and times are published in that semester's course catalog.

Administration procedures must be followed. It is the student's responsibility to handle withdrawal requirements from any class. In other words, I cannot drop or withdraw any student. You must do the proper paperwork to ensure that you will not receive a final grade of "F" in a course if you choose not to attend the class once you are enrolled.

#### Student Grievance Procedures

Procedures for student grievances are found in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities, of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*.

In attempting to resolve any student grievance regarding grades, evaluations, or other fulfillments of academic responsibility, it is the obligation of the student first to make a serious effort to resolve the matter with the instructor, supervisor, administrator, or committee with whom the grievance originates (hereafter called "the respondent"). Individual faculty members retain primary responsibility for assigning grades and evaluations. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the grievance must be submitted in writing to the respondent with a copy of the respondent's School Dean. If the matter is not resolved by the written response provided by the respondent, the student may submit a written appeal to the School Dean. If the grievance is not resolved by the School Dean's decision, the student may make a written appeal to the Dean of Graduate or Undergraduate Education, and the dean will appoint and convene an Academic Appeals Panel. The decision of the Academic Appeals Panel is final. The results of the academic appeals process will be distributed to all involved parties.

Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations.

#### Incomplete Grade Policy

As per university policy, incomplete grades will be granted only for work unavoidably missed at the semester's end and only if 70% of the course work has been completed. An incomplete grade must be resolved within eight (8) weeks from the first day of the subsequent long semester. If the required work to complete the course and to remove the incomplete grade is not submitted by the specified deadline, the incomplete grade is changed automatically to a grade of F.

#### Disability Services

The goal of Disability Services is to provide students with disabilities educational opportunities equal to those of their non-disabled peers. Disability Services is located in room 1.610 in the Student Union. Office hours are Monday and Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Tuesday and Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The contact information for the Office of Disability Services is:

The University of Texas at Dallas, SU 22  
PO Box 830688  
Richardson, Texas 75083-0688  
(972) 883-2098 (voice or TTY)

Essentially, the law requires that colleges and universities make those reasonable adjustments necessary to eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability. For example, it may be necessary to remove classroom prohibitions against tape recorders or animals (in the case of dog guides) for students who are blind. Occasionally an assignment requirement may be substituted (for example, a research paper versus an oral presentation for a student who is hearing impaired). Classes enrolled students with mobility impairments may have to be rescheduled in accessible facilities. The college or university may need to provide special services such as registration, note-taking, or mobility assistance.

It is the student's responsibility to notify his or her professors of the need for such an accommodation. Disability Services provides students with letters to present to faculty members to verify that the student has a disability and needs accommodations. Individuals requiring special accommodation should contact the professor after class or during office hours.

#### Religious Holy Days

The University of Texas at Dallas will excuse a student from class or other required activities for the travel to and observance of a religious holy day for a religion whose

places of worship are exempt from property tax under Section 11.20, Tax Code, Texas Code Annotated.

The student is encouraged to notify the instructor or activity sponsor as soon as possible regarding the absence, preferably in advance of the assignment. The student, so excused, will be allowed to take the exam or complete the assignment within a reasonable time after the absence: a period equal to the length of the absence, up to a maximum of one week. A student who notifies the instructor and completes any missed exam or assignment may not be penalized for the absence. A student who fails to complete the exam or assignment within the prescribed period may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment.

If a student or an instructor disagrees about the nature of the absence [i.e., for the purpose of observing a religious holy day] or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor may request a ruling from the chief executive officer of the institution, or his or her designee. The chief executive officer or designee must take into account the legislative intent of TEC 51.911(b), and the student and instructor will abide by the decision of the chief executive officer or designee.

Off-Campus Instruction and Course Activities

Off-campus, out-of-state, and foreign instruction and activities are subject to state law and University policies and procedures regarding travel and risk-related activities.

Information regarding these rules and regulations may be found at the website address given below. Additional information is available from the office of the school dean.

([http://www.utdallas.edu/Business\\_Affairs/Travel\\_Risk\\_Activities.htm](http://www.utdallas.edu/Business_Affairs/Travel_Risk_Activities.htm))

*These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor*