

Issues in Criminal Justice: Gangs

Professor: **Dr. Robert J. Durán**

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Class Hours: MWF 10:30 – 11:20

Class Room: Breland Hall Room 172

Office: Breland Hall Room 141 Office Hours: MWF: 9:30 – 10:20; TTR: 9:30 – 10:00

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M: 5:10 - 5:45; TR: 2:45 – 5:00

Course overview

There are very few topics that can generate both tremendous public appeal and opposition. Politicians, agents of the criminal justice system, and the general public have a lot to say on the topic of gangs. Very little of this knowledge is based on systematic research, and thus the policies chosen have led to perpetuation of gangs. The primary purpose of this class will be to take you inside the “social world” of gangs. This inside view will be accompanied by a thorough overview of gang research. When I came to Las Cruces in 2006, I realized there was no data available regarding gangs along the New Mexico/Texas border region. It is my goal to utilize the resources within this class to create a preliminary data source on this topic.

WebCT will contain all course information, lectures, discussions, and communication tools. <http://salsa.nmsu.edu/> You can also access this link on your my.nmsu.edu

Required Readings:

Fremon, Celeste. 2004. *G-Dog and the Homeboys: Father Greg Boyle and the Gangs of East Los Angeles*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico.

Klien, Malcolm. 2004. *Gang Cop: The Words and Ways of Officer Paco Domingo*. Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira.

Rodríguez, Joseph. *East Side Stories: Gang Life in East LA*. New York: Powerhouse.

Ruiz, Mona and Geoff, Boucher. 2005. *Two Badges: The Lives of Mona Ruiz*. Houston, TX: Arte Publico.

Valentine, Bill. 2000. *Gangs and Their Tattoos: Identifying Gangbangers on the Street and in Prison*. Boulder, CO: Paladin Press.

Course Requirements

Attendance: Regular attendance is important for your success in college. Occasionally things happen and an emergency absence is necessary. I will allow three unexcused absences. After three absences I will begin deducting 20 points for each additional absence.

Readings: To ensure that you have the background information necessary for class discussions, you will need to read all assigned reading by class time on the day it is assigned.

Class participation: I strongly emphasize the knowledge building that occurs in the classroom. This is our arena to speak how we feel and engage with people who have different opinions. I want to hear from every student in the class about what they think and why. I prefer verbal participation, but written input through email and WebCT is also encouraged. I want our class to be a comfortable atmosphere to share our personal knowledge. I expect everyone to come to class attentive, alive, and prepared. Check your spelling prior to participating on WebCT or email.

Negative Participation: There is no reason for rude or disrespectful comments. I will not tolerate sexist, racist, or demeaning language in class or on WebCT. If you feel like a nap, want to play on your cell phone, hold side conversations, or engage in some other activity that wastes our time don't bother coming to class! I document negative participation into your overall grade. Disruptive behavior that conflicts with the course will result in a warning to change the behavior. If this behavior cannot be corrected by the third warning you will be administratively dropped from the course.

Gang Presentation: I would like everyone in the class to have an opportunity to make a 15 minute presentation on a gang, gang event, regional differences, or ethnic/racial gangs. I will pass around a sign up sheet. You will be graded on the quality of your presentation. I'd recommend incorporating music, video, or PowerPoint, but it is not required. Video clips cannot make up more than 5 minutes of your presentation. Several cable TV channels such as the History Channel, National Geographic, and BET have been showcasing gangs. You can also acquire regular news reports by joining Google news alerts for the topic of gang. You Tube also has a lot of gang clips.

Book Review: Each of the five books assigned for this class will require a book review. The spring schedule provided outlines when these book reviews are due. I am also posting on WebCT a link on helpful tips on how to write these books reviews.

The NM/TX Border Gang Update: One of my goals of this course is to create a gang bulletin regarding various groups along the border region. My interests are in what gangs exist, origination, functions, conflicts, and impact upon the community. I expect this to be a department specific bulletin that can be used to inform various public agencies, media, and community groups regarding gangs within this region of the country. Each person in the class will choose a particular topic. We can talk with public officials or community members. We can take pictures of graffiti or relevant gang material. I'd like to create a database on this topic which can launch future research projects and community outreach. You will be graded on your contribution to this project.

Take Home Test: There will be three take home tests throughout the semester. You will be given directions and asked to pick several questions to answer. These will be returned typed, 12 point font, and with one-inch margins. I will expect you to utilize information

gathered from your readings, lecture, and discussion. Cite your sources. The due date will be listed on the assignment. You will be given five days to complete the assignment.

Late policy for writing assignments: Work turned in late is an inconvenience to me, as it requires me to adjust my grading schedule. I will deduct 2% for each day late.

Cheating on a test, or plagiarism on an assignment or paper is **UNACCEPTABLE** and will result in a zero grade for that assignment. Please consult the student handbook: http://www.nmsu.edu/~vpss/SCOC/student_hand_book.html

Moreover, even with citation, failure to put quotation marks around direct quotations also constitutes plagiarism, because it implies that the writing is your own. Material should either be paraphrased or clearly designated as quotation. Note that replacing words with synonyms, changing verb tense or other minor alterations do not qualify as paraphrasing.

Feel free to call Jerry Nevarez, Director of Institutional Equity, at 505-646-3635 with any questions you may have about NMSU's Non-Discrimination Policy and complaints of discrimination, including sexual harassment.

Feel free to call Michael Armendariz, Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities, at 505-546-6840 with any questions you may have on student issues related to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. All medical information will be treated confidentially.

As the professor, I reserve the right to change any part of the class. Please keep all returned exams (and other returned work) in the event that you have a grade dispute at the end of the semester.

Official communication to you will often come through your NMSU e-mail box or WebCT. Please access it regularly, or forward it to your current use address, as your success in college may ride on your ability to respond quickly.

Grading

Attendance	100 points
Presentation	100 points
Participation	175 points
Take Home (3)	75 points each for a total of 225 points
Gang Update	200 points
Book Review	40 points each for a total of 200 points

Extra Credit

There are several movies that have made a major impact on the discussion of gangs and the promotion of the gang lifestyle. Please complete a Critical Evaluation Form for each movie you watch. These forms are available on WebCT. You are eligible for up to 5 point extra credit for each movie you watch and the proper completion of the Critical Evaluation Form. You can watch up to 10 movies for extra credit.

SPRING SCHEDULE

Reading

In-Class

Week 1

January 16
January 18 Rodríguez 1-33

Class Introductions--Syllabus
NM/TX Border Region Gangs

Week 2

January 21—MLK Holiday—No Class—
January 23 Rodríguez 34-61
January 25 Rodríguez 62-97

Defining Gangs

Week 3

January 28 Rodríguez 98-135
January 30 Rodríguez 136-163
February 1 Rodríguez 164-191

History of Gangs 1776-1930

Week 4

February 4 Fremon vii-32 (Rodríguez Book Review) History of Gangs 1940-1970
February 6 Fremon 33-55
February 8 Fremon 56-79

Video: Bastards of the Party

Week 5

February 11 Fremon 80-105
February 13 Fremon 106-131
February 15 Fremon 132-182

Contemporary Gangs 1980s

Video: Bastards of the Party

Week 6

February 18 Fremon 183-212
February 20 Fremon 213-240
February 22 Fremon 241-299

Contemporary Gangs 1990s

Week 7

February 25 Ruiz 5-37 (Fremon Book Review)
February 27 Ruiz 39-55
February 29 Ruiz 57-83

Female Gang Members

Video

TAKE HOME

Week 8

March 3 Ruiz 85-104
March 5 Ruiz 105-132

Gang Culture

March 7 Ruiz 133-160

Week 9

March 10 Ruiz 161-201 Drugs
March 12 Ruiz 203-229
March 14 Ruiz 231-288

Week 10 Klein ix-28

March 17 Klein ix-28 (Ruiz Book Review) Violence
March 19 Klein 29-24
March 21 Klein 35-40

Week 11

Spring Break

Week 12

March 31 Klein 41-72 Gang Units
April 2 Klein 73-80
April 4 Klein 81-99

Week 13

April 7 Klein 100-111 Federal Gang Control
April 9 Klein 112-141
April 11 Klein 142-155

TAKE HOME

Week 14

April 14 Klein 156-173 Gang Programs
April 16 Klein 174-198
April 18 Valentine vii-51

Week 15

April 21 Valentine 53-71 (Klein Book Review) Prison Gangs
April 23 Valentine 73-88
April 25 Valentine 19-122

Week 16

April 28 Valentine 123-161 Prison Gangs
April 30

May 2 (Valentine Book Review)

TAKE HOME

Recommended Movies

White Gangs, Organized Crime, Specialized Gangs, Hate Groups

American History X (1998)	Bronx Tale (1993)
Casino (1995)	Gangs of New York (2002)
Godfather (1972); Godfather Part II (1974); Godfather Part III (1990)	Goodwill Hunting (1997)
Goodfellas (1990)	Outsiders (1983)
Heat (1995)	
SLC Punk (1998)	

Black Gangs and High Crime Neighborhoods

Boyz n the Hood (1991)	Menace II Society (1993)
Redemption: The Stanley Tookie Williams Story (2004)	South Central (1992)

Mexican American Gangs and Prison

American Me (1992)	Bound by Honor (1993)
Mi vida loca (My crazy life) (1993)	

Police and Gangs

Colors (1988)	In Too Deep (1999)
New Jack City (1991)	Training Day (2001)

Drugs and Gangs

American Gangster (2007)	Blow (2001)
Carlito's Way (1993)	Empire (2002)
Scarface (1983)	

School and Gangs

One Eight Seven (1997)	
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Other Country Gangs

Hooligans (2005)	City of God (2002)
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Old School Gang Movies

Boulevard Nights (1979)	The Warriors (1979)
Zoot Suit (1981)	

There are also a whole lot of low budget films and people may like them but the production of the film, actors, and so on are not as great.