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## **Veterans in the Criminal Justice System**

### **Syllabus - Spring 2017**

#### **Required Reading:**

- Winners and Losers: Battles, Retreats, Gains, Losses and Ruins from the Vietnam War, Gloria Emerson, WW. Norton and CO. (Reissue Edition, 2014)
- Lethal Warriors: When the New Band of Brothers Came Home, David Philipps, Palgrave/Macmillan)
- What Have We Done: The Moral Injury of Our Longest Wars, David Wood, Little Brown and CO. There will be several articles posted on Moodle throughout this course. Following the posting of these articles, they will become required reading.

**THE COURSE:** The subject matter of this course – veterans entangled in the criminal justice system – has been, for the most part, absent in the academic arena. In fact, the subject matter of this course has only rarely been openly addressed by the criminal justice system. To place this topic in perspective, relative to criminal justice, in July 2007, your instructor conducted a study of the Marion County Jail. Veterans comprised just over 5% of the jail population of the Marion County Jail (Approximately 1,000 veterans booked into the Marion County jail per year). In December 2011, this instructor conducted another study of the Marion County Jail, and veterans accounted for 10% of the jail population (Over 2,000 veterans booked into that facility per year). That reflects a 100% increase in 3 ½ years. In 2007, this instructor conducted a homeless study in Marion and Polk counties. Of the 360-homeless people interviewed, over 30% were veterans, and about 30% of those veterans were products of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. Among the Iraq and Afghanistan veterans in that study, 6 were females. The females were married and most had children. They were homeless because they could not adjust to the transformation of

soldier/Marine to mother and spouse. The number of veterans, and in some cases active duty personnel, becoming entangled in the criminal justice system has increased significantly over the past few years. However, most criminal justice agencies do not keep track of the number of veterans processed through the system. Many veterans are apprehensive, in part because of shame as well as concern about losing benefits, about revealing their veteran status when arrested or detained. Altercations in the public arena between law enforcement and veterans – particularly combat veterans – are increasing. Most law enforcement agencies fail to even provide training to officers in respect to veteran confrontation. I have been told by many law enforcement administrators that they do not want any training provided. Most defense attorneys, prosecutors, and judges are not veterans, and therefore struggle with their own capacity to understand the social realities of veterans in the community and in the criminal justice system. Although Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is a topic reserved for the discipline of psychology, it is imperative that students have some understanding of that mental issue relative to many veterans. Due to its relevance to this topic, war-related PTSD will be addressed in this class as a source of information – not as a guide to diagnosing PTSD. To adequately address the topic of veterans entangled in the criminal justice system it is imperative to understand “what” a veteran is – particularly if that veteran has been exposed to combat. Therefore, much of your required reading is focused on that aspect of the subject. Another area of concentration will be the processes associated with transforming the “civilian” into the military, continued development of those processes during the period the individual is serving in the military, and the transition experienced by veterans back into the civilian culture. These topics are sociologically related to the term: The Military Total Institution. The Military Total Institution is the formal structure and maintenance of military culture. Drawing from the assumption that people are products of their social environments, the

military culture significantly influences the reintegration process for veterans. Those veterans who have trouble reintegrating back into the civilian culture are more likely to become entangled in the criminal justice system – not because they are more inclined to engage in criminal behavior but because they “don’t fit.” Because this is a criminal justice course focusing on veterans, it is imperative that students are presented with recent research data pertaining to veterans who have and have not been processed through the criminal justice system. One purpose of using this approach – veterans not in the criminal justice system versus veterans entangled in the criminal justice system – is to compare characteristics, experiences, types of behavior, etc. and conduct analysis and develop possible preventive measures and alternative approaches for the criminal justice system when addressing veteran issues. The research data provided for students in this class are derived from a recent study conducted by the instructor that focused on Iraq and Afghanistan veterans located in 16 U.S. states from 2008-2010. These data, in part, are included in peer-reviewed publications, appellate processes, professional legal training for attorneys and in court testimony in criminal cases involving Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. Additionally, data collected from veteran criminal defendants will also be included throughout this course. Topics related to Moral Injury and Traumatic Brain Injury will also be covered in this course. There will be many films presented throughout this course. These films are not for entertainment purposes. Instead, they will be presented for educational purposes and will often be the focal point for class discussions afterwards. The content of these films, along with your assigned readings, will be expected to be included in your required paper. Periodically, there may be guest speakers brought into the classroom. Following the presentation by any guest speakers, students will be REQUIRED to ask questions and participate in discussions. Ultimately, this course will be a collaboration of history, philosophy, psychology, anthropology, sociology, political science, and criminal justice,

with the primary purpose to make students culturally competent in the topic of veterans entangled in criminal justice. Periodically, there will be articles, PowerPoints, etc. posted on Moodle. These postings will assist student in their preparation for completing the course paper.

### **Core Course Objectives**

Course Goal	Program Goal	ULO
Students will be able to identify and discuss problems associated with veteran re-acculturation.	Apply basic theories and practices in real world context	
Students will be able to critique the handling of veterans in the criminal justice system	Analyze and articulate the multitude of issues, theories, policies, practices, and current challenges related to the administration of justice in a free society	
Students will be able to identify cultural distinctions that contribute to veterans becoming entangled in the criminal justice system.		Diversity (Intercultural Knowledge)

#### **STUDENT EVALUATION:**

1. Classroom discussions/participation (100 Points)<sup>1</sup>
2. Veteran Re-Acculturation Paper (100 Points – DUE by JUNE 9, 2017, 2012)<sup>2</sup>

ALL students will be expected to participate in classroom discussions and other activities. This includes questions, answers/responses. All students must be prepared to participate in open discussions. Students are expected to appreciate and respect the right of all students to express opinions. Dialogues and arguments must be civil, constructive, and based on information validated through social science research. Attendance will be taken at the end of each class period – each class period is valued at 10 points. 2 Each student is required to write a Veteran Re-Acculturation Paper. This paper must highlight the overall content of the course. This paper must also include preventive options that would reduce the likelihood of veterans becoming entangled in criminal

justice and a plan that would improve the criminal justice system's handling of veterans. The plan must be based on class material and discussions. Students may use other research that can support his or her plan. The paper must include a definition of "veteran," the unusual nature and experiences of many veterans, and an explanation of why or why not veterans should be considered different at various stages of the criminal justice system process. Make certain that you cite the assigned reading material germane to this course, and feel free to use other social science references. YOUR PLAN MUST BE SUBMITTED BY JUNE 9, 2017. IT MUST BE IN WORD FORMAT AND SENT AS A SINGLE ATTACHMENT TO PROFESSOR. YOUR RE-ACCULTURATION MUST BE BETWEEN 8-10 PAGES (DOUBLE-SPECED). 4 Below are lists of reading assignments. Apr 3 – Apr 17: Winners and Losers: Battles, Retreats, Gains, Losses and Ruins from the Vietnam War Apr 18- May 15: Lethal Warriors May 16 – Jun 5: What Have We Done: The Moral Injury of Our Longest Wars



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