

**POLITICAL SCIENCE INTERNSHIPS:  
STUDENT GUIDE AND RESOURCE MANUAL**

**COURSE PACKET FOR**

**POLS 5100**

**POLS 5101**

**POLS 5102**

**POLS 5110**

**POLS 5111**

**POLS 5112**

**POLS 5120**

**POLS 5121**

**POLS 5122**

**POLS 5130**

**POLS 5131**

**POLS 5132**

Department of Political Science  
The University of Georgia  
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## THE INTERNSHIP: AN INTRODUCTION

### The Internship's Role in the Political Science Program of Study

The internship semester is an important part of the undergraduate program in Political Science at the University of Georgia. The primary purpose of the internship is to provide students with an opportunity to integrate academic knowledge with experiences obtained in an operational setting. The internship experience also develops skills and knowledge needed to pursue a career in a political science field.

Ordinarily, the intern has a supervisor whose duties are cast in the mainstream activities of the organization and whose work represents what the intern might reasonably expect to encounter should he or she pursue a similar career. The supervisor may view the intern as an apprentice who is learning to perform the major tasks associated with the job at hand. In this way, the intern learns the organizational routine and benefits from the experience and expertise of the supervisor. The internship is also an academic learning experience with faculty assigned to supervise student interns' academic work, including an original research project and/or a series of analytical essays.

All internships undertaken for academic credit must be approved by both the host agency and the Department of Political Science. To be eligible for placement, a student must:

- (1) be in good academic standing (UGA GPA  $\geq$  2.0).
- (2) have completed any required pre-requisite course related to the internship sequence. See your advisor for details.

## COMPONENTS OF THE INTERNSHIP

Students register for one to three courses during the internship semester: POLS 5100, 5101 or 5102; POLS 5110, 5111, or 5112; POLS 5120, 5121, or 5122; or POLS 5130, 5131, or 5132. Each course is four semester credit hours.

In calculating final grades:

- 5100/5110/5120/5130 are based on the agency supervisor's evaluation of the student's work performance (Satisfactory/ Unsatisfactory basis)
- 5101/5111/5121/5131 are based on a single research paper/ project (A-F basis)
- 5102/5112/5122/5132 are based on evaluations of a series of analytical essays (A-F basis)

As with all major courses, one must receive a grade of C or above to satisfy the major requirements in political science. If a student receives a grade of C- or lower on any internship course, it will not count towards satisfying the major requirements. Students will not be cleared to register for these courses until their advisor has received a letter of confirmation from the agency where the student plans to intern, verifying the student's placement.

Frequently, confirmations are not received until late in the term preceding the internship semester. Students, therefore, should not be concerned if they are unable to pre-register on the usual schedule. Internship courses are available only with permission of the advisor, and no intern will be closed out of registration who is awaiting confirmation of internship.

As noted earlier, the internship is not simply a work experience. There are well-defined university requirements that constitute the basis for the academic credit you receive when you successfully complete your internship. The following sections detail the nature of, and expectations for, each internship component. As you read through these sections, it should be apparent that the internship can be a very time-consuming experience. Students work in agencies and also meet high academic standards for analytical essays and/or a research paper.

**THE ANALYTICAL ESSAYS (POL5 5102/5112/5122/5132)**  
(Four semester credit hours)

The grade for this course will be based on evaluations of 6 essays. The requirements for these essays are described below. Essays must be submitted at specified times during the term as indicated on the calendar of due dates for the internship semester. Faculty supervisors will determine whether essays are to be submitted electronically or in hard copy form. You should keep copies of your essays for your own records.

**General/Academic Essays (3 required)**

Each academic essay will provide a framework drawn from academic sources that is used to analyze your experience/observation. Essays are structured opportunities for you to analyze observations (direct or indirect) from your internship and, in doing so, examine ideas, issues, concepts and theories from previous course work or academic readings. The essays should include both analytical and descriptive contents, but the strongest essays will be those that provide more developed analyses. Each essay should include the following:

- Identification/discussion of a concept, theory, empirical finding, etc., drawn explicitly from course texts and/or outside academic reference(s).
- A description of the agency experience or observation that brought this topic to mind or how the internship context connects with the topic.
- An analysis of your observation(s)/experience.
- You must use at least one outside academic reference per essay and cite appropriately. A title for each essay, properly formatted in-text citations, and end of essay list of references/works cited page that follows APA/ASA/APSA format.

A student will submit the first essay per the instruction of the faculty supervisor, but typically no later than the end of the second week of the internship. Faculty supervisors will provide feedback on that essay so that students may better understand what is required of all essays. For all other essays, students will not revise them once submitted; they are expected, however, to write future essays that take into account the feedback from the faculty supervisor earlier in the term. One's final grade on the essays will take into consideration whether the student responded to feedback and, as a result, demonstrated improvement over the semester.

The acceptable length of essays will vary somewhat by topic and individual style of writing. More important is the quality of analysis and composition. An essay which includes sufficient analysis and evidence of critical thinking will require approximately 4-5 double-spaced pages.

Confidentiality is a paramount concern in many agencies, and its considerations may extend to the preparation of essays. If applicable, do not use names or other identifiers of defendants, victims, or authorities in your essays; instead, use pseudonyms of some sort.

On occasion, a supervisor may require agency review of essays before you submit them to your professor or may request that you give the agency a copy of the essays.

A topic does not have to emerge from a first-hand experience or observation; one can be generated by a conversation with agency staff about their experiences, current events, observations or thoughts on political issues or practices.

Tips:

- jot down an idea/observation when it occurs to you
- locate relevant texts, many of which are available in the library, to develop a list of potential topics prior to the start of the internship
- do not try to include too much in a single essay
- proofread your paper...your grade on this component will be higher if your papers are well-written
- include a works cited page (and cite your references in the body of your essay)

### **Specialized/Professional Essays (3 required)**

The requirements for this set of three essays are described below:

**1. Agency History/Background Essay:** in this essay, students will provide an overview of the agency for which they are interning: its organization, history, purpose, leaders and constituents. This essay should also provide information relevant to professional careers in that agency (positions, educational requirements, salary information, hiring outlook).

You may use any verifiable source to write this paper, including agency web sites, academic materials, and government documents. The purpose of this paper is to provide a strong foundation for understanding the agency where you are interning, including information on its workforce. This paper will allow you to conduct a more thorough informational interview (see below). This essay should be approximately 4-5 pages (double-spaced) in length.

**2. Informational Interview Essay:** in this essay, students will conduct an interview of a professional in your agency (agency supervisor or other). Your faculty adviser MUST pre-approve your choice of interviewee. This interview will help you gain an understanding of the agency and profession you may consider entering.

The interview must be conducted in person; email interviews are not acceptable. You may not interview friends and/or family members, even if they are employees in your agency. Any final report submitted without the professor's pre-approval of the interviewee/subject will result in a score of zero for the assignment. You may use a tape recorder during the interview if you wish, but make the person you are interviewing aware that you are using one BEFORE the interview starts and ask if he or she has any objections.

The interview questions below are suggested questions to consider. You should choose a certain number of questions and then ask them exactly as they are written. You may ask "probe" questions (e.g. "Can you tell me more about that?") in addition to the main questions provided. Record and type up interviewee responses to specific questions rather than providing a summary of his or her responses (include the actual interview questions followed by their responses). *All material submitted MUST be e-copy.* Additional questions of interest may be asked thereafter.

Your final write-up includes the questions and responses. You should also include a discussion section that focuses on highlights of the interview, including comments made by

the interviewee that you present in the context of what you learned about the agency in your earlier essay. Relating the interview material to your political science coursework and/or other academic sources in a substantial way will earn you a higher grade. Submitting the questions/responses and a minimal discussion of the key points will be sufficient for a satisfactory grade for the assignment, but it will not constitute "excellent" work.

These interviews have many positive aspects and provide excellent opportunities for the future. The experience will allow you to obtain information about a possible career and/or allow you to make a more informed career choice. The interview may provide you with a potential career-related contact. The assignment also provides insight into workplace dynamics, occupational issues, and job realities.

### Interview Questions

1. Name of the professional being interviewed
2. The interviewee's official job title and employment location
3. How long have you been a [job title]?
4. How did you get your job?
5. People enter particular careers for many different reasons. What were some of the reasons you entered this particular career?
6. Was this your first choice as a career? If not, what was?
7. What is a typical workday and typical week in this job?
8. How often do you work past 6:00p.m. and on weekends?
9. What are the most difficult problems/challenges/decisions you face in this job?
10. Of all the individuals you have met in this line of work, what personal attributes do you think are essential to success in your particular job?
11. What do you see as the greatest rewards of your job?
12. What do you like the least about your job?
13. Where do you see yourself in five years?
14. Do you foresee any major changes in this field within the next five years?

**3. Resume/Cover Letter Essay:** In this essay requirement, students will prepare a resume and cover letter in response to a hypothetical job posting (faculty supervisor will provide the postings, sample is below). When preparing the resume and letter, you should follow the guidelines and rubric found in the career center guide (link below, pp.22-23, 28-31, 32-34), the purpose of the assignment is to prepare the student to enter the job market in their chosen field.

<http://career.uga.edu/uploads/documents/UGACareerGuide.pdf>

*Sample job posting:*

<p><b>Title</b></p>	<p><b>Research Analyst II Fiscal Affairs Program National Conference of State Legislatures</b></p> <p><b>Compensation:</b> \$3,486 a month</p>
<p><b>General Description</b></p>	<p>NCSL's Fiscal Affairs Program is seeking a research analyst II to perform legislative research, analysis, writing and program planning. The position is an integral part of the State Fiscal Health Project, a project within the Fiscal Affairs Program at NCSL that covers a broad range of topics including, but not limited to, issues related to state economic development approaches, state budgeting practices and state tax changes. This individual will conduct research, organize meeting logistics, perform outreach to legislators and legislative staff, develop written analyses and respond to information requests from state legislators, legislative staff, the media and others on a variety of fiscal issues. This includes recruiting legislators to attend meetings, summarizing relevant legislation and working on a variety of research and writing projects as well as assisting other fiscal staff with major research projects.</p>
<p><b>Responsibilities and Duties</b></p>	<p><b>Research, Policy Analysis and Writing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collects monitors and analyzes data on legislative actions using a wide range of research skills.</li> <li>• Prepares prompt, concise and accurate written responses to legislative requests for information.</li> <li>• Under supervision plans programs and organizes background materials in closely related subject areas for research projects, meetings, conferences and technical assistance workshops.</li> <li>• Plans, researches and writes for newsletters, issue briefs, short research reports or articles.</li> <li>• Draft documents for the NCSL web site and edit and maintain existing web pages.</li> <li>• Assist in inputting data on legislative changes into online databases.</li> <li>• Performs other fiscal duties as assigned.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Minimum Qualifications</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bachelor's degree. Preference includes at least one year of general policy research, legislative or state government experience.</li> <li>• Skill and competence in a range of research skills and tasks including web-based research, original surveys, in-depth interviews and specialized library resources.</li> <li>• Skill and competence in working cooperatively and professionally with a variety of people, often under pressure.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attention to detail and the ability to problem solve and think critically is essential.</li> <li>• Is well-organized, efficient, flexible and a team player with a positive attitude.</li> <li>• Skill and competence in a variety of written and oral communications. Final candidates will be given a writing test during the interview process.</li> <li>• Must be able to multitask, work independently and with others, maintain confidentiality and work in a bipartisan manner.</li> </ul>
<b>Benefits</b>	<p>NCSL offers an outstanding, comprehensive program of benefits to employees and their family at low cost. NCSL covers 90 percent of the monthly premium for health insurance and employees pay 10 percent. Employee only Dental plans are covered 100 percent by NCSL or NCSL will provide a portion of the dependent premium. Other plans such as life insurance (2x annual salary), disability coverage and employee assistance programs are provided at no cost.</p> <p>Employees contribute 5 percent of salary toward the 401(a)-retirement plan and NCSL matches 10 percent of salary after six months with full vesting. In addition, NCSL offers a flexible work-life balance with 35-hour work weeks, three weeks' vacation with five years' experience and optional holidays. NCSL also provides discounted ancillary benefits employees can take advantage of such as in office dry cleaning pick up, pet insurance, 24-hour fitness memberships, bus / train passes, and more!</p>
<b>To Apply</b>	<p>Interested candidates should send a resume and cover letter highlighting skills and qualifications to: <a href="https://ncsl.applicantpro.com/jobs">https://ncsl.applicantpro.com/jobs</a> no later than <b>Friday, Feb. 16, 2018</b>.</p>

## Caution About Plagiarism

Plagiarism in your academic work will not be tolerated. The definition of plagiarism quoted below is taken from the University of Georgia publication *A Culture of Honesty*. All University of Georgia students should be familiar with the Honor Code and the provisions of *A Culture of Honesty*. Both are accessible on The University of Georgia website. Most instances of plagiarism can be easily avoided with appropriate citations and quotes. Additional useful guidance about how to avoid plagiarism may be found at:

The University of Georgia's Libraries web site, "LibGuides"

<http://guides.libs.uga.edu/content.php?pid=584608>

From *A Culture of Honesty*:

Plagiarism - Submission for academic advancement the words, ideas, opinions or theories of another that are not common knowledge, without appropriate attribution to that other person. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the following acts when performed without appropriate attribution:

1. Directly quoting all or part of another person's written or spoken words without quotation marks, as appropriate to the discipline;
2. Paraphrasing all or part of another person's written or spoken words without notes or documentation within the body of the work;
3. Presenting an idea, theory or formula originated by another person as the original work of the person submitting that work;
4. Repeating information, such as statistics or demographics, which is not common knowledge and which was originally compiled by another person;
5. Purchasing (or receiving in any other manner) a term paper or other assignment that is the work of another person and submitting that term paper or other assignment as the student's own.

## Sample General/Academic Essays

### Example 1:

#### Racial Discrimination in Death Penalty Cases

Racial discrimination in the criminal justice system has been a contentious topic that the United States has faced for years. In an effort to appease the relations between minority races and the criminal justice system, the right to “equal protection” was implemented into law through the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution (Cole, DeJong, & Smith, 2011). Despite this effort, several statistics and studies have repeatedly shown that African Americans and other minorities are exposed to the criminal justice system at a higher rate than that of whites (Cole et al., 2011). Cole et al. (2011, p.25) write in their book, “African American men are sent to jails and prisons at a rate 6 times greater than that of whites.” Furthermore, when referring to federal crimes, African American males were given sentences that on average were 20% longer than the sentences that white male offenders received (Cole et al., 2011). Much of the discussion among scholars has been about whether the difference between the treatments of groups can be attributed to disparity or discrimination (Boyd, 2013). Cole et al. (2011) provide three explanations of why there might be disparity between the groups. These explanations are as follows; people of color commit more crimes, the criminal justice system is racially biased, and America is a racially biased society (Cole et al., 2011). In concordance with this literature, 57% of inmates on death row are minorities (Boyd, 2013). Thus it is apparent that there is racial discrimination in the criminal justice system; more specifically, in death penalty cases.

In one of history’s most famous and comprehensive studies on this topic, Baldus, Pulaski, and Woodworth (1983) explore the idea of racial discrimination in death row cases in Georgia. This study named, “Comparative Review of Death Sentences: An Empirical Study of the Georgia Experience” (1983) has tested the effectiveness of the Georgia Supreme Court in comparative sentencing review. Baldus et al. (1983) stated the following: Comparative sentence review-what the United States Supreme Court has sometimes described as “proportionality review”-is a procedure by which a court determines whether a death sentence is consistent with the usual pattern of sentencing decisions in similar cases or is comparatively excessive (p.663).

The authors of this study used a computerized data program that is more inclusive than the courts used (Baldus et al., 1983). In this study two measures of data sets were used (Baldus et al., 1983). The first is the

130 defendants that went to trial and were sentenced between January 1, 1970, and the time *Furman v. Georgia* was made law (Baldus et al., 1983). The second set of data used was post-Furman and included 594 defendants (Baldus et al., 1983). In total, after the sentencing trials 113 cases ended in the death penalty sentence (Baldus et al., 1983). In order to test for comparative excessiveness within these cases, seven different measures were used (Baldus et al., 1983). Due to the extensiveness and the amount of variables controlled for in this study, several findings and explanations were found.

The authors first and foremost state the fact that through their research it is evident that Georgia's post-Furman court system inflicts death sentences that they identified to be excessive (Baldus et al., 1983). A second important finding was that after the Georgia Supreme Court completed comparative reviews, not a single death penalty sentence had ever been relinquished on the grounds that the sentence was excessive (Baldus et al., 1983). A third and most important finding related to racial bias was that it is apparent there is bias in death penalty sentencing based on subjective factors (Baldus et al., 1983). These particular factors found in the study were the race of the victim and the characteristics of the place in which the defendant is prosecuted (Baldus et al., 1983). Therefore, this study demonstrated that it is not so much the race of the defendant, but typically the race of the victim that leads to racial bias in death penalty sentencing. Another study was conducted in more recent years that analyzed the difference in death penalty sentencing for African American defendants when the race of the victim was White compared to African American.

Much of today's research has been focused on the racial discrimination within capital sentencing cases. In a study named "Looking Deathworthy: Perceived Stereotypicality of Black Defendants Predicts Capital-Sentencing Outcomes" (2006), the authors venture into the idea that the more a defendant's appearance resembles the stereotypical Black person, the more likely they will be sentenced to death (Eberhardt, Davies, Purdie-Vaughns & Johnson). In this study, Eberhardt et al. (2006) used a two-phase method to test their hypothesis. In Phase 1 the research centered on cases in which there was a Black defendant and a White victim (Eberhardt et al., 2006). Phase II was directed at seeing the relationship between a Black defendant and Black victim in sentencing (Eberhardt et al., 2006). For both phases, data was used from a later study conducted by Baldus and his colleagues in 1998 (Eberhardt et al., 2006). These cases were taken from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania between 1979 and 1999 and had all advanced to the penalty phase (Eberhardt et al., 2006). Of the cases Eberhardt et al. (2006) used, 44 involved a Black defendant convicted of killing a White victim. In the second phase, 308 cases went to the penalty phase, however only 118 were used to avoid

the problem of oversampling (Eberhardt et al., 2006). In both phases Stanford students were asked to look at a black and white photo of the defendants face and rate the stereotypicality of each of the defendant's appearances (Eberhardt et al., 2006). There were no limits on what facial features they could observe to make this decision, and each photograph was shown on a screen for 4 seconds (Eberhardt et al., 2006). The scale ranged from 1 to 11, with 11 meaning the defendant looked extremely stereotypical of a Black man (Eberhardt et al., 2006). The results of this study are comparable to Baldus and his colleagues.

For Phase I, in which there was a White victim, Blacks were more likely to receive a death sentence if they appeared to look more Black compared to those that looked less Black according to stereotypes (Eberhardt et al., 2006). Further into this, 57.5% of the Black defendants that were deemed higher range in their appearance received the death penalty sentence compared to the defendants in the lower range where only 24.4% received this sentence (Eberhardt et al., 2006). In comparison, in Phase II Eberhardt et al. (2006) found that how stereotypical a defendant looked did not predict whether or not they would receive the death penalty when a Black victim was involved (Eberhardt et al., 2006). These conclusions are similar to those of Baldus et al. (1983) in that the criminal justice system is racially bias based on the color of the victims for capital punishment cases.

Although we only have a few cases at a time at XXX office, all except one of our clients are African American. Therefore, it is evident that we have a higher percentage of Black defendants facing the death penalty than White defendants. This potentially demonstrates racial bias due to the fact that these defendants are facing the death penalty as opposed to a normal sentence for murder. The minimum sentence for murder in Georgia is 30 years. Within these cases, some of the victims were White, some were Black, and two were Hispanic. Thus, there is an even mix on the race of the victims. While I was attending a meeting the other day about the progress on Client X's case, one of the members of the team made the statement, "A Black defendant is being charged with murdering an elderly White man, what could be worse?" In response to this another member made the statement, "Not only that, but he is being held and tried in a predominately White County." Therefore, due to previous cases in their line of work, many of the people I work with are already aware of the racial biases found within the criminal justice system. In addition to what has been said in meetings, the media has plastered newspapers with the fact that a Black man killed a White man. One paper even mentioned the word "Thug" when referring to our client. Our client has quickly come to the realization that race will play a paramount factor in his trial. As the meeting progressed it was noted that this will ultimately be one of the hardest cases

we will be handling right now solely due to the demographics of the defendant, the victim, and the county in which the murder occurred.

This conversation I had with the team members is relative to the literature and studies discussed on racial bias in capital punishment. Although all of these cases are currently in the pretrial stage for the guilt phase, there is a very high possibility that some of our clients may receive the death penalty. More particularly it is evident that our main concern is the cases in which there was a White victim who was murdered in a predominately White community. This is synonymous with the study Baldus et al. (1983) conducted. The authors of that study demonstrated that there are racial biases in the death penalty system in Georgia; however, the researched showed that defendants were more likely to get the death penalty depending on the race of the victim and the community in which the defendant is prosecuted (Baldus et al., 1983).

The newspaper headlines and comments on the Internet do not hold back on how the citizens of the community feel about a Black man murdering one of their own. These statements give our team a great sense of idea on the type of community we are dealing with in this case. Thus, this client of ours is already at a disadvantage before the trial has even begun. In addition to the study on Georgia, Eberhardt et al. (2006) portrayed that discrimination can be seen in other legal court systems as well. In this study, the results explained that looking like a stereotypical African American will have an effect on the type of sentence you received (Eberhardt et al., 2006). Although I cannot confidently say where exactly Client X would fall on the scale used in the study, I would at least place his appearance above the median line due to his dark skin tone. Consequently, as research shows, he could possibly receive the death penalty sentence because he looks like a typical African American male and he murdered a White man.

Although it is disheartening, I agree with the literature. Based on the demographics of the people involved in our cases, there seems to be some sort of racial bias in the criminal justice system. More specifically for death row cases, the attorneys in my office are most worried about the clients who are African American that are being charged with murder of a White victim.

Questions:

- In the “Looking Deathworthy” study, would the same results apply if they were to use Hispanic offenders and were to measure how stereotypical those offenders looked? Or are these results strictly applicable to African American defendants?
- Is there a way to prove causation in court that a death sentence was received for strictly discriminating reasons?

#### References

Baldus, D., Pulaski, C., & Woodworth, G. Comparative Review of Death Sentences: An Empirical Study of the Georgia Experience. *Journal of Law and Criminology*, 74(3). Retrieved from <http://eds.a.ebscohost.com.proxyremote.galib.uga.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=897cc0a9-6f84-43a8-95e6ff6084d35665%40sessionmgr4003&vid=3&hid=4208>

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Cole, G., DeJong, C., & Smith, C. (2011). *Criminal Justice in America (7e)*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

Eberhardt, J., Davies, P., Purdie-Vaughns, V., & Johnson, S. Looking Deathworthy: Perceived Stereotypicality of Black Defendants Predicts Capital-Sentencing Outcomes. *Psychological Science*, 17(5). Retrieved from <http://eds.a.ebscohost.com.proxyremote.galib.uga.edu/eds/detail/detail?vid=3&sid=82e0d779-8ba4-4a84-952162ba3d0d8b97%40sessionmgr4005&hid=4208&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWRzLWxpdmU%20d#db=edsjsr&AN=edsjsr.40064553>

#### **Example 2:**

##### An Overview of Sexually Exploited Children

It is estimated that in the next ten years, child sex trafficking will surpass drug and arms dealing, as one of the most profitable illegal markets in the world (Jordan et al., 2013). The reasoning behind this being that victims can be kept in substandard conditions, at little cost, and sold over and over again (Jordan et al., 2013). Unfortunately, the United States is one of the top destinations for trafficked person with estimates being between 15,000 and 50,000 victims per year (Jordan et al., 2013). Of those victims, 70% are female and 40%

are children (Jordan et al., 2013). This alarming number of children fall under a category known as sexually exploited children (SEC) and oftentimes come from the cities and towns that we live in.

The domestic minor sex population is usually made up of females between the ages of 12 and 14 and boys between the ages of 11 and 13. They are runaway or throwaway youth and generally come from multi-problem homes, familiar with abuse and neglect (Jordan et al., 2013). In order to obtain absolute obedience, victims are beaten, drugged, raped, denied food, and tortured (Jordan et al., 2013). Majority report being forced into prostitution and have little choice in what becomes of their bodies (Jordan et al., 2013). Overall, this particular segment of children comes from disadvantaged backgrounds and because of this are often vulnerable targets. After running away or being kicked out, most are approached within 48 hours to be recruited into prostitution (Jordan et al., 2013). Girls, being the primary target, are encouraged to sell their bodies because they have little else of value to trade and no way of supporting themselves (Siegel & Welsh, 2009). Once seized, victims are often taken to other states or countries, have their identification taken away, and are drugged. Many develop substance dependencies as a way to cope with their situation or they are forced into the habit to maintain compliance (Jordan et al., 2013).

All of these statistics are particularly disturbing when working with the kids that are labeled CSEC (commercially sexually exploited children) at the XXXX agency where I intern. We sat in on a sanction meeting where a boy, only thirteen, had to be brought in to talk about how he had been advertising himself on gay websites, trying to get money. Additionally, he was in trouble for leaving the house between the hours of midnight and five AM, without his mother having any idea where he would go. One night he brought home a pair of brand new Nike shoes and could give no explanation as to how he had acquired them at such odd hours. It was later discussed that he had probably gone to see a man to trade the shoes for sexual favors. This particular youth had also run away before and somehow managed to make his way to Albany State University with no money, no vehicle, and no contact. It was left up to assumption on how he did this and why he was found in a college dorm room.

The agency worries that if his behavior continues they will be unable to help him. He could easily be kidnapped and sold into prostitution if he continues on the path that he does. Additionally, this child had a very scrawny physique and looked sick. If he is not sick already, exposure to multiple partners, often without the use of a

condom, vastly increases the chances of disease transmission. If he were to be forced into prostitution, condom usage is usually an optional choice for buyers and has little to do with the choice of the victim.

The people who would be most like to recruit this boy are known as traffickers, or pimps. They can be a lot of different people, including gang members, smugglers, organized crime, or even friends and family (Jordan et al., 2013). They recruit from numerous locations, but particularly from shelters, foster care, and group homes where the victims are likely to be more vulnerable and needy (Jordan et al., 2013). Their aim is to develop a bond with these kids, comparative to Stockholm syndrome. It is known as a “trauma bond”. First the pimps shower the child with gifts, affection, and love in exchange for sex. Most children do not see the problem with the attention at this stage because they feel like it is genuine love. However, the second part of the bond involves instilling fear in the child - punishing them but also making them feel gratitude for being allowed to live. This grooming process often produces intense loyalty and serves as a disassociation process whereby the child is given a new name and persona. The goal is to ensure total dependence on the pimp – emotionally, physically, mentally, and financially (Jordan et al., 2013).

When discussing the buyers of trafficked children, it is often vaguely stated that “it can be anyone.” However, there are certain characteristics that most buyers do possess. They are usually white males from developed nations and have a preference for virgin children, partially because these children won’t be carrying disease, but also due to the allure of taking someone’s virginity (Jordan et al., 2013). Generally, buyers do not consider themselves pedophiles (Jordan et al., 2013). Furthermore, buyers can be broken down in to three categories: situational, preferential, and opportunistic buyers. Situational buyers are those who engage in the practice because the children are available and the practice is tolerated. Preferential buyers are usually the pedophiles and are seeking children specific to their preference. Opportunistic buyers, purchase sex indiscriminately and are either unable to differentiate between adults or minors, or who are willfully blind to age (Busick, 2014).

Organized crime groups play a large role in the circulation of trafficked youth. They will often target older children, usually twelve and up, who are easier to take care of. Other youths involved in the crime group will often help manipulate the newer ones by isolating them and giving them easy access to drugs. For female children that become pregnant, their babies are usually raised by the group and used as a tool for compliance when the mothers act out or try to run away (Jordan et al., 2013). Younger children, sometimes aged nine or

below, are purchased from their families or other trafficking rings and used in child pornography – a source of income for many of the crime rings (Jordan et al., 2013).

Due to the extensive trauma experienced while being trafficked, it is often impossible to fully rehabilitate youth who have suffered exploitation. On a daily basis, these victims suffer being raped, beaten, denied food and water, having their identities taken from them, drugged, and are subject to mental and physical imprisonment and torture (Banovic & Bjelajac, 2012). As a result of the long term exposure, they develop acute stress reactions, namely Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, depression, adjustment disorder, and dissociation and self-harm (Banovic & Bjelajac, 2012). Ultimately, they are in dire need of medical assistance for their mental health issues, resulting drugs addictions, and the rising spread of sexually transmitted diseases (Banovic & Bjelajac, 2012). Thankfully, the prosecution-oriented approach of dealing with these victims has been replaced with treatment oriented ones and facilities are adopting policies to deal with emotional healing and stabilization, overcoming trauma, social inclusion, and individualized care to help victim become part of the community again (Banovic & Bjelajac, 2012).

Even though help is available and becoming more attuned to the victim's needs every day, there still exists a problem in misidentifying victims and prevention of getting them the help they need. Many are incapable of disclosing the abuse they face. They are taught to fear the authorities and most feel shame, fear, and trauma when trying to recount their experience (Jordan et al., 2013). Definitions of trafficked youth seem to be blurry and vary across states. Additionally law enforcement is often inclined to regard their victims as juvenile delinquents or prostitutes, ignoring the need for assistance. Unfortunately, about 40% are regarded as offenders, instead of victims (Jordan et al., 2013). Another issue is the age of consent. Many are being charged with prostitution, when really anyone under 18 is incapable of giving consent, especially given the fact they are forced into relinquishing the rights of their own bodies.

Child trafficking is a growing epidemic that affects our country both at the borders, but also domestically. It is our children that get dragged into this unsavory and horrifying form of slavery too. The best method to combat this problem is vigilance and education on multiple levels. It is important to educate the public on the definition of a trafficked child. A minor having sex does not constitute prostitution and more importantly should not be labeled with the stigma of such. In addition, social services, law enforcement, foster care, and other frontline staff need to be better trained to recognize high-risk factors in youth that they come across and be able to

refer them to proper treatment facilities. Overall, the emphasis on this group of children needs to be protection, whether that be in court, in homes, or in mental health facilities. Punishment, on the other hand, needs to be directed to the appropriate sources of their pain – the buyers and the sellers.

Questions:

- Who make up sexually exploited children?
- Who are the sellers and the buyers of SECs?
- What impact does trafficking have on its victims?
- What help is available?

#### References

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Busick, R. N. (2014). Blurred Lines or Bright Line - Addressing the Demand for Sex Trafficking under California Law. *Pepperdine Law Review*, (2), 333.

Jordan, J., Patel, B., & Rapp, L. (2013). Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking: A Social Work Perspective on Misidentification, Victims, Buyers, Traffickers, Treatment, and Reform of Current Practice. *Journal Of Human Behavior In The Social Environment*, 23(3), 356-369.

Siegel, L., & Welsh, B. (2009). *Juvenile delinquency: Theory, practice, and law* (10th ed., pp.157-159). Australia: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning

## THE RESEARCH PAPER (POLS 5101/5111/5121/5131) (Four semester credit hours)

### Description and Purpose

The internship research paper requires that you undertake an original research project and then submit a paper that reports and interprets your findings. This paper also includes information on your research design, with special attention to reviewing existing scholarship. Students identify a reasonably focused research question, secure an appropriate set of observations and measures related to that question, and analyze the data systematically to shed light on the hypothesis. Most interns address a topic directly related to the activities of their host agency and often acquire data for analysis from a source in the agency. Research topics are as varied as the types of agencies in which students intern, but there are common key requirements detailed more fully below. Given the complex and substantial requirements for a research project, interns must plan ahead and consult with both the faculty advisor and on-site agency supervisor.

### General Instructions

**Selecting a topic.** The first task in preparation of the research paper is selection of a general topic. Several factors will influence this selection, primarily the type of agency in which you are interning. As soon as you begin work in the agency, consult your agency supervisor and give some thought to the issues the agency addresses that relate to a potential research topic. You will want to discuss the research paper requirement with your agency supervisor early on in your internship, not only for ideas, but to see what types of data might be available through the agency. You should keep your agency supervisor apprised of your topic as it develops to ensure that it is acceptable to the agency and that you are authorized to use agency data sources.

Another source to assist you in topic selection is your faculty supervisor. You are required to submit a general research topic, described in a paragraph or two, early in the term with a detailed outline of the paper near the midterm. However, it is advisable that you do not wait until the deadlines; instead, you should begin a dialog with your faculty supervisor immediately. Your professor can provide valuable feedback and advice, saving you time and effort with false starts.

A final factor to consider in topic selection is your intellectual interests. Researching a question that captures your interest and imagination will result in a higher quality project and paper.

**Developing a plan for research.** Once your general topic has been approved, you should begin a review of the literature. The initial step is to develop a list of scholarly references to identify existing research. In reading through these works, you will see how your question fits in with what has already been done (i.e., whether you will be doing a replication or an extension of previous research). Existing scholarship also provides guidance on how to narrow down your question, determine what appropriate data are available to address the question, and how you will collect and analyze your data.

**Observation strategy: collecting data.** Under no circumstances should you begin data collection or analysis until your professor has approved a detailed outline of the project. If you need to begin those activities prior to midterm, when the outline is formally due, you

should get in touch with your faculty supervisor who may require you to submit the outline for review earlier in the term.

If your internship research will involve collection of data from human subjects (e.g., surveys, interviews), please advise your faculty supervisor early in the semester since this can be a time-consuming process. You must have the approval of the UGA Institutional Review Board before beginning data collection. If you attempt to conduct a survey or interview without prior approval from the IRB, you are at risk of receiving a failing grade for the paper.

Although most agencies will have observations/data available for a student-intern to use for this project, some agencies may not provide data sources. If you find that to be the case, you should contact your faculty supervisor early on so that s/he can assist you in identifying sources of data in the public domain.

- (a) **Data analysis and paper drafts.** Once you have received the necessary approvals noted above, you should proceed with data collection, analysis, and interpretation. You will have access to SPSS through VLAB during the internship. SPSS is available to interns via the UGA Virtual Lab at: <http://eits.uga.edu/support/vlab>. SPSS also hosts a web site where students can lease the software for six months: <https://www.onthehub.com/spss/>

Because a number of technical/formatting issues may present obstacles at this stage, you should give yourself sufficient time to analyze the data. The organization of the paper, clarity in writing style, grammar, spelling, and use of proper citation format will also affect your grade.

As with the analytical essays, your faculty supervisor will determine whether your assignments are to be submitted electronically and/or “hard copy.” There is no specific length requirement for the paper, though a typical length would be 20-25 pages, including appendices and citations.

**Citations.** When appropriate, you should cite references using a standard citation system uniformly throughout the body of the paper and in a reference list at the end of the paper. You may follow any standard citation system used in social science journals: American Sociological Association (ASA), American Psychological Association (APA), American Political Science Association (APSA), or any comparable citation style from the social sciences. Interns should review information on the UGA Libraries website regarding citation styles to ensure that the research paper meets the required standards. <http://www.libs.uga.edu/ref/citation.html>

## **Paper Format**

A suggested format and approximate page length of the research paper is outlined below. Please keep in mind that this is a general guideline; your faculty supervisor has the last word on paper format.

### **1. Statement of the Problem, Issue, or Research Question (1-2 pages)**

You should briefly state the issue, question, or problem to be addressed, along with its importance and relevance (i.e. why is this important today?). You should briefly note how

research may help to address the question/issue/problem, as well as orient the reader so they will know what it is you intend to do in the study.

## **2. Review of Prior Research (5-8 pages)**

A thorough search and review of relevant literature on your topic will build an important foundation for your research project. If there is a vast body of previous research, you will need to synthesize as much as possible and focus on points of major importance. Conversely, if there is little previous research on the topic, you will need to exercise some creative thought to place your specific topic within a broader framework. Your professor, along with reference librarians, are helpful resources for effectively using search engines to identify scholarly research related to your topic. It is best to focus on academic sources and avoid studies or websites that are not peer-reviewed. Textbooks are generally not considered the best references for a research paper, although they are often helpful in identifying other relevant scholarship. The bulk of your review should be articles in peer-reviewed research journals, research monographs, or scholarly book-length treatments on your topic. Students should integrate what they have found on previous scholarship and assess the implications of the reviewed studies on their own research question.

## **3. Research Methodology (3-7 pages)**

As the paper transitions from the literature review to a discussion of the research design, students are expected to draw on their research methods courses (if you did not take POLS 3700 or 4150, you should inform your faculty supervisor at the beginning of the term). Recognizing that there is a wide variety of socially scientific qualitative and quantitative approaches, the method employed will depend on your research question and the type of data available to you.

Some students will collect primary data through surveys (using self-administered questionnaires or interviews) or field observation; however, since these approaches require the extra step of Institutional Review Board approval, many students prefer to utilize some type of data available to them either in the form of agency records or other archival data. Students may perform explanatory research, test hypotheses or employ quasi-experimental designs, while others will evaluate the effectiveness of a program or policy.

Determining what method or design is appropriate to the research question and data available is something you should consult with your professor about during the topic selection and research outline stages. Again, do this well before carrying out any data collection or analysis.

The following list summarizes essential elements which should be considered and included in the methodology section of the paper as appropriate:

- (b) Concepts, hypotheses, and expectations. All research projects will require that the student identify key theoretical constructs/concepts and outline their expectations with respect to the research question or problem. In some instances, students will be engaged in a project where they will clearly state causal hypotheses to be tested.
- (c) Operationalization. For each concept, the student should provide an operational definition that conveys an empirical manifestation of the key concepts.
- (d) Measurement. For each variable, the paper should provide specifics on how the values are to be measured. Consider issues of validity and reliability in your

measurements. If you are doing a replication or adopting existing measurements, cite the appropriate literature.

- (e) Observation strategy. What will be the source for your data? How will you access these data? Examples of archival data include hardcopy or computer files available at internship agencies. Examples of secondary data include the UCR and NCVS. Secondary data are typically available for download as excel or SPSS datasets through ICPSR or other web sites maintained by governmental agencies. Please consult your faculty supervisor for additional guidance.
- (f) Data collection procedure. Describe the method you used to gather your data. If you do a survey, include a copy of the questionnaire in an appendix and discuss any pertinent issues of measurement not already mentioned. If you did field observation, were you a participant/observer? How did you record the data? If you collected data from agency records or archives, include a codebook that lays out your variables and how they were measured. For any collection procedure, describe the conditions under which you collected the data and any shortcomings in the data collection procedures. If you analyzed secondary data, describe the same regarding how the original data were collected.
- (g) Processing and analysis of data. What data analysis techniques did you use? When deciding on a plan for data analysis, keep in mind that the strongest research projects will be those that maximize their ability to account empirically for the phenomena of interest. Using statistical tools and software (such as SPSS) is therefore an important step in your research.

#### **4. Presentation of Findings (3-5 pages)**

In this section you will present your data analysis and discuss your findings. Your methods of data analysis will shape the write up of your results, including any statistical tests. Were your expectations supported? Have you discovered anything significant that was not anticipated by the design of the study? In the next section, you will discuss findings in a broader context, including why your results did/did not support what others have found.

#### **5. Conclusions (2-3 pages)**

In this conclusion, discuss what contribution this study has made to our understanding of the issue or problem of concern. Were your expectations supported? Did your study corroborate other findings? What types of generalizations can you draw about the problem based on your research? What are the limitations of your study? What should scholars investigate on this topic in the future?

#### **Plan ahead**

The academic component of your internship is substantial. You will have to spend a considerable amount of time after the regular working day and/or on weekends to successfully complete the essays and research paper. However, you should not feel overwhelmed by the challenge of forcefully dealing with each and every point on the suggested paper format. The paper is intended to be a major learning experience, equivalent to a senior thesis. Do not hesitate to ask for assistance and to start on your academic requirements early.

Remember to have your research methods textbooks and notes handy to consult when designing your research project and analyzing and interpreting your data. Should you have failed to keep the text, numerous social science research methods texts are available in the

library. It would be best to consult your professor for a recommendation if needed, but a few are listed below, along with a general student writer's manual which you might find helpful:

Babbie, Earl. *The Practice of Social Research*, Belmont CA: Wadsworth/Centage

Frankfort-Nachmias, Chava and David Nachmias. *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, New York: Worth Publishers

Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, Joseph Bizup, and William T. Fitzgerald. *The Craft of Research*. Chicago. University of Chicago Press.

Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M., Henry E. Brady, and David Collier, Eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<https://politicalscienceguide.com/research/methods-and-analysis/analyzing-quantitative-data/statistics/>

On the following pages, you will find examples of internship papers that were judged to be among the best. Since these papers may have followed a different rubric, you should follow guidelines in the manual and directives from your faculty supervisor concerning paper preparation. In addition to reviewing these papers, you should be aware that the presence of a flaw in an example paper does not excuse you to make the same mistake in yours. In reformatting these scans from pdfs to word, some errors are inevitable.

Example 1:

Public Perceptions of the Criminal Justice System

By UGA  
Intern

University of Georgia

## Introduction

Public perceptions regarding the criminal justice system have influenced subsequent policy decisions. For example, at the end of the 20th century, the shift toward harsh criminal punishments and mass incarceration in the United States was largely supported by a public reflection of these retributive preferences (Green 2015). To gain a better understanding about the role of public opinion, researchers have examined the underlying structure of punitive attitudes and have identified a variety of factors that are associated with support for harsh crime policies. These include variables such as race/ethnicity, gender, fear of crime, political conservatism, attributions about the causes of crime, religion, and racial prejudice (Davila, Hartley, Buckler, and Wilson, 2011). Although extensive research has determined that certain demographic characteristics, psychological determinants, and background factors influence attitudes toward the criminal justice system, an insignificant amount of research has attempted to link how experiences connect to public attitudes regarding the functionality, role, and purpose of the correctional system.

A majority of the public will never personally experience the world of imprisonment, as most are law-abiding citizens who will never step foot in a jail or prison, and are thus limited in scope and knowledge of the details of the justice system. Many people only know about the realities of prison based on portrayals in the media or other external sources of knowledge, however, they may have a more accurate understanding about prison if they have personal understanding about how the system operates. Would society benefit from having a more comprehensive understanding of how the correctional system functions? How would attitudes about the criminal justice system be shaped if members of the public were given the opportunity to participate in a carceral experience? Broadcasted "Scared Straight" programs have attempted

to articulate the actuality of incarceration for juvenile offenders, but members of the public generally do not experience these realities. In the following section, a review of existing literature is presented, which articulates perceptions of the criminal justice system and the theoretical basis upon which these opinions are formed.

#### Confidence and Punitive Attitudes toward the Criminal Justice System

If the public is unaware of the effectiveness of certain policies, how can they be certain that the system is legitimately reducing crime? Dandurand (2014) notes that a successful system must contain "strategic, integrated, and sustainable mechanisms that enhance the entire criminal justice process." If the public is uneducated and uninformed about the realities of the criminal justice system, they will likely rely on other forms of authority to shape their attitudes; such as emotions, personal biases, potential media exposure, as well as personal or vicarious experiences to form their opinions (Dandurand 2014). These forms of reliance, however, are not the only factors which impact public opinion about the criminal justice system.

Previous research about the sources of punitive attitudes and public opinion about criminal justice policies have largely focused on the cognitive and demographic factors associated with the desire to punish criminals harshly (Johnson 2009). The topic of crime often elicits a strong emotional response that arguably influence punishment preferences, so the role of feelings and emotions should be taken in to consideration. Johnson (2009) examined the role that emotions play in support for harsh criminal justice policies by asking the question: to what extent is anger about crime associated with punitiveness? Using survey data from the 2001 Race, Crime and Public Opinion Study (RCPOS), Johnson examined the relationship between anger about crime and punitiveness among white and black respondents (2009). Using Random Digit Dialing (RDD) to develop a representative sample of all US households, the survey data was collected by

administering an internet survey questionnaire to this representative sample (Johnson 2009). After two waves of data collection, the researchers found 1,508 respondents which included 783 whites and 725 blacks (Johnson 2009). The dependent variable of punitiveness was based on responses to four survey items measuring support for three strikes law, stricter parole, trying juveniles in adult courts, and harsher penalties for violent offenders. The four coded items created a punitive index that ranged from 4 to 14, and higher scores indicated greater punitiveness. Using a multivariate analysis, the interaction between anger and race of respondent was tested, and this interaction was insignificant, indicating that anger has a similar effect on whites' and blacks' punitiveness (Johnson 2009). After controlling the sample for variables such as perceived racial bias, racial prejudice, attributions about the causes of crime, and political ideology, the results showed that anger about crime is a significant predictor of support for punitive policies, regardless of race (Johnson 2009). Although a respondent's race did not influence punitive attitudes, whether or not a respondent was angry about crime reflected the level of support.

While Johnson's (2009) study focused on the role of emotions and punitive attitudes, few research studies have focused on actual contact with the criminal justice system and its influence on sentencing attitudes. Davila, Hartley, Buckler, and Wilson (2010) examined the impact of prior **personal** or vicarious experience with the criminal justice system on sentencing attitudes. This study utilized secondary data analysis obtained from the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, which consisted of 1,502 respondents (804 females and 698 males) (Davila et al. 2010). The dependent variable of sentencing attitude was developed from a survey question that asked respondents the following: "Thinking about the amount of prison time and other punishments now given to people convicted of crimes; in general, do you think sentences are too

harsh, too lenient, or about right?" (Davila et al. 2010). The independent variables included factors such as gender, race/ethnicity, political affiliation, income, highest level of completed education, religiosity, and finally prior contact with the criminal justice system (either personal or vicarious) (Davila et al. 2010). Using logistic regression analysis utilizing the impact of factors of interest on sentencing attitudes, results indicated that individuals who had been charged with a crime (personal experience), or who had an immediate relative or close friend who had been charged (vicarious experience), were more likely to perceive the criminal justice system as too harsh, regardless of race or ethnicity (Davila et al. 2010). Their primary hypothesis was confirmed: individuals with prior personal or vicarious experience with the criminal justice system are significantly more likely to perceive punishments as too harsh compared to those who lack this experience. These findings corresponded with those of Johnson (2009), who found that individuals with prior criminal justice experience held less punitive attitudes.

#### Influence of Media on Punitive Attitudes

Sentencing attitudes and public knowledge of the criminal justice system are also derived from exposure to the media. Dowler (2003) examined the influence of media consumption on fear of crime, punitive attitudes, and perceived police effectiveness. The sample is derived from the 1995 National Opinion Survey on Crime and Justice (NOSCJ), which is a random telephone survey of adults (n= 1005) who reside in the continental United States. The survey is cross-sectional, and samples are stratified to all U.S. counties in proportion to each county's share of the telephone households in the target area. Using random digit dialing (CATI), the survey achieved a 62% response rate. An Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression indicated that respondents who are regular viewers of crime drama are more likely to fear crime, however, although statistically significant, this relationship is weak (Dowler 2003). Furthermore, the

results indicate that gender, education, income, age, perceived neighborhood problems and police effectiveness are statistically related to fear of crime. In addition, fear of crime, income, marital status, race, and education are statistically related to punitive attitudes (Dowler, 2003). The limitations in this study were that crime shows vary in scope of topic and level of realistic portrayal, so the authors say it would be prudent to know which specific shows the respondents were viewing (Dowler 2003).

Additionally, Pickett, Mancini, Mears, and Gertz (2015) found that reliance on mass media is associated with lower levels of knowledge about criminal punishment, and this effect is particularly strong for female respondents. The authors tested three hypotheses about the relationships between prior criminal justice experience, reliance on the mass media for information about crime and justice, and knowledge about criminal punishment (Pickett et al. 2015). The data came from a random telephone survey of 1,308 adult residents in Florida and the response rate was 48.6%. Researchers found that media reliance reduces the accuracy of knowledge about criminal punishment, while prior criminal justice experience either as an offender or employee increases knowledge about criminal punishment (Pickett et al. 2015). Furthermore, the relationship between media reliance and knowledge about criminal punishment does not appear to be conditional on audience characteristics, except in the case of gender. For female respondents, there is a negative effect of media reliance on knowledge about criminal punishment. Relative to men, women may have higher exposure to news and crime-related media because they spend more time watching television and there may be differences in the consumed types of media. The survey only analyzed residents from a single state so generalizability is limited, yet the researchers noted that almost every state has undertaken similar "get tough" measures (Pickett et al. 2015).

Pickett et al. (2015) provides insight about the public reliance on media to explain public misunderstanding of criminal justice policies in a general way. Welsh, Fleming, and Dowler (2011), on the other hand identified pervasive themes inherent in the portrayals of crime and justice using specific movies. Because films are a cultural medium that reflect dominant attitudes of society and shape out perceptions and ideas, the researchers examined the connection drawn between the narratives of justice that emerge in some films and the manners in which crime and criminality are constructed (Welsh et al. 2011). To determine the themes and messages, the researchers asked four questions about the construction of crime and criminality, the construction of victimization, the responses to crime or models of justice, and how the presentations of crime and victimization are linked to models of justice and responses to crime (Welsh et al. (2011). The researchers examined these questions using an ethnographic content analysis (ECA) of 30 North American motion picture films. Inclusion in the sample was guided by two criteria: the film had to include a prominent depiction of criminal victimization as part of the major plot narrative, and the film had to include a prominent portrayal of an official or non-official response to the criminal victimization within the major plot narrative (Welsh et al. 2011). Analyses of narrative patterns that emerged from observations throughout the film sample identified three broad thematic categories: (1) crime as an invading social evil; (2) social inequality and the limitations of retribution; and (3) crime as a social problem. Across several films, punishment and retribution were constructed as limited responses to crime, while other films emphasized restorative principles such as confrontation and healing. Their review suggested that there is a dynamic interplay between the constructions of crime and the narratives of justice found in film.

The role of media in public perceptions and understandings of crime and justice issues cannot be underestimated. Far from an objective lens of events, the media are platforms wherein

our social reality is not only reflected but to some extent negotiated and developed. Therefore, it is important to examine media contributions to our societal knowledge base on crime, particularly portrayals of societal responses to crime and their effectiveness. These cultural constructions carry the potential to create misinformation about the nature and causes of criminality while reinforcing dominant ideologies about justice and punishment.

#### Effects of Prison Tours on Punitive Attitudes

Many criminal justice departments offer students the opportunity of touring a prison or jail as a means of providing the students with an experience of the system that otherwise cannot be fully transmitted in a traditional academic setting. For Helfgott (2003), the use of prison tours is a useful way of stimulating critical thinking and active learning, a way for university-level students to gain first-hand access to the spatial dynamics of a prison, a way to debunk certain mythologies and stereotypes about imprisonment, and way to experience what prison is like from the perspectives of staff and incarcerated individuals. After students participated in a prison tour they were asked to write a two-page reflection paper. From the sample of 200 papers collected over a ten-year period, 30 reflective papers were randomly chosen (Helfgott 2003). Helfgott (2003) found that, after participating in a prison tour, undergraduate criminal justice students' reflective papers identified four key themes: they saw offenders as human beings, what they observed contradicted negative myths and media stereotypes, they integrated classroom knowledge with the experiential learning of seeing and talking to inmates, and they had personal ambivalence about offenders and criminal justice policy and practice. The prison tours impacted students' criminal justice attitudes, values, and beliefs (Helfgott 2003).

Although carceral tours can be a useful tool for teaching students about the realities of prisons, Piche and Walby (2010) found that such tours are often highly scripted and regulated in

ways that obscure many aspects of incarceration-including the experiences of prisoners. From the beginning to the end of the tour, certain protocols and specific restrictions are in place to ensure that operational and order maintenance goals of the institution are not disturbed, which suggests that tours are viewed as a risk to public order (Piche and Walby 2010). The authors completed an analysis of CSC penitentiary tour materials obtained using Access to Information requests and concluded that carceral tours are regulated and scripted in such a way that they do not have value as a research or a pedagogical tool. Originally, the researchers planned to participate in tours of Canadian federal penitentiaries to examine the extent that staff-led tours deviated from the previously unpublished regulations and scripts they had obtained, but an ethical dilemma prevented them from doing so: the authors decided that what they could learn from a carceral tour would be limited and would not justify such an intrusion of prisoners' lives (Piche and Walby 2010). Because the authors did not actually experience a carceral tour  firsthand, I find it problematic to conclude, based on their analysis, that prison tours are not valuable tools for teaching students about life in prison.

For students in online criminal justice programs, a carceral tour is not practical, so Miner-Romanoff (2014) instead wanted to know: "Will exposure to juvenile prisoners' actual accounts impact students' attitudes, understanding, and perceptions of the juvenile justice system and provide pedagogical benefits?" (Miner-Romanoff 2014). The 43 students in an online juvenile delinquency course viewed a video of nine incarcerated juvenile offenders who recounted their experiences of institutionalization, sentences, challenges, programming, and fears upon release. Student responses to seven quantitative questions and one qualitative question revealed that the video greatly impacted their attitudes, understanding, and perceptions of the juvenile justice system. The students responded that the video helped them understand juvenile incarceration and

added to their support of treatment and rehabilitative programs: 62.8% of the students responded that the video increased their support for incarceration alternatives and 72.1% reported the video increased their support for mental health treatment and education. The qualitative responses confirmed these results (Miner-Romanoff2014). Miner-Romanoff (2014) further suggests that this strategy can be used to help criminal justice educators enhance student learning so that students experience a major aspect of the juvenile justice system. The students, however, did not gain the advantage of actually experiencing the institutional environment and did not physically see the incarcerated adolescents, so onsite experiences could have impacted students more strongly than the virtual r. This study, however, has several limitations: (1) it was implemented at a single university with varying class ranks of undergraduates who may have had previous criminal justice courses, which could have affected their opinion; and (2) the use of a 3// point Likert-type scale for responses rather than a scale with additional choices would have K \_.- allowed for more nuances and possible greater accuracy of responses (Miner-Romanoff2014). Nevertheless, the study results indicate the importance and impact of experiential learning in online criminal justice education (Miner-Romanoff 2014).

Recently, tours have been used as a deterrence mechanism to 'scare straight' so-called at-risk youth by giving juveniles the opportunity to experientially learn about the realities of incarceration on a very intrusive and personal level (Petrosino, Turpin-Petrosino, Finckenaer 2000). Using preliminary results from a systematic review of nine randomized experiments of the Scared Straight program, the researchers show that a popular and well-meaning program can actually have harmful effects (Petrosino et al. 2000). Seven of these nine studies reported group failure rates: these the program increases the percentage of the treatment group committing new offenses anywhere from 1% to 30% (Petrosino et al. 2000). The researchers suggest juveniles

may find prison as an attractive carceral setting that offers a sense of community (Petrosino et al. 2000). Program supporters, on the other hand, argue the programs have a positive impact for the prisoners: they have the opportunity to speak to juveniles in an attempt to keep them out of jail by reflecting on their mistakes (Petrosino et al. 2000). Despite the popularity of Scared Straight, however, there is little evidence to suggest that it is a deterrent to juvenile delinquency and that these programs actually lead to more crime by program participants. The paradox of these program evaluations is that these programs continue regardless of their empirical evidence of ineffectiveness in order to align with the "get tough" political climate that still exists today.

#### Presentation of Current Study

Correctional philosophy fluctuates back and forth between punishment and treatment of the offender, and this is often fed by public opinion. Given their stable, social psychological underpinnings, punitive attitudes are often difficult to change, as they are often linked to emotions and feelings (Johnson 2009). Prior research has examined the relationship between sentencing attitudes and other variables such as demographic characteristics, personal and vicarious experiences, and media exposure (Johnson 2009; Davila et al. 2011; Dowler 2003; Pickett et al. 2015; Welsh et al. 2011). For criminal justice students, physical interactions with a carceral setting influenced their attitudes on imprisonment (Helfgott 2003; Miner-Romanoff 2014). A limited amount of research, however, has attempted to understand if public interaction with a carceral setting can alter punitive preferences and opinions of the criminal justice system.

The current study seeks to determine how public attitudes are formed regarding the operational goals of the criminal justice system. Specifically, does vicarious or personal contact with the criminal justice system shape public perceptions about how the system should function? A formal presentation of the current hypotheses is as follows:

H<sub>0</sub>: Persons who have had a vicarious experience with the criminal justice system have the same mean level of retribution and level of rehabilitation than those without a vicarious experience; that is, the two means are equal and there is no experience-perception relationship.

H<sub>1</sub>: Persons who have had a vicarious experience with the criminal justice system will have a lower level of retribution and a higher level of rehabilitation than those without a vicarious experience; that is, the two means are different and there is an experience-perception relationship.

H<sub>0</sub>: Persons who have had a personal ex  
have the same m

perience with the criminal justice system mean level of retribution and level of rehabilitation as those without a vicarious experience; that is, the two means are equal and there is no experience-perception relationship.

H<sub>2</sub>: Persons who have had a personal experience with the criminal justice system have a lower level of retribution and a higher level of rehabilitation than those without a vicarious experience; that is, the two means are different and there is an experience-perception relationship.

The theoretical base from which these hypotheses draw from is social learning theory, a core criminological paradigm developed by Albert Bandura. This framework articulates that learning occurs through vicarious observation and imitation, and learning is a cognitive process which can influence behavior and development (Grusec 1992). Behavior can be learned not only through communication within close personal groups, but also through identification with more distant associations such as the media (Glaser 1956). If an individual learns about the criminal

justice system, this person has a more precise understanding of this world. This subsequent knowledge then shapes individual opinions and outlook about the nature of the criminal justice system.

### Methods

In partnership with the XXXXX concert series event, where members of the community could learn about issues facing incarcerated individuals, learn more about what the formerly incarcerated can achieve, as well as listen to jazz music. The survey was administered at two of these events—one in March and the other in April. Because of the low attendance at the XXX, participants for this sample were selected through convenience sampling. Respondents were both recruited from the XXX event and from those passing by and touring the XXXX

The survey was administered to 66 individuals, but many of the surveys had missing information, so 51 surveys were entirely completed. Of the 61 respondents who specified their gender, 40% was male (n=24) and 60% was female (n=37). The average age of the respondents was 43-years-old, with the youngest being 17-years-old and the oldest being 79-years old. Of the 60 respondents who specified their racial/ethnic identity, 17% of the respondents identified as being either of Hispanic, Latino, or other Spanish origin (n=10), 58% of respondents identified as White (n=35), 5% of respondents identified as American Indian/Indigenous (n=3), 7% responded as being Black or African American (n=4), and 13% of respondents identified as "other," which includes Asian/Pacific Islander, Multiracial, or another race (n=8). Six individuals did not specify their racial identity.

Having a vicarious experience with the criminal justice system (IV t) was measured by the following question: "Do you have a personal friend or family member who has been incarcerated or has worked for the criminal justice system?" (No=0, Yes=1). Having a personal experience with the criminal justice system (IV2) was answered using the following question: "Have you ever visited a *carceral setting*? Examples may include visiting someone you know in jail or prison, personally serving a sentence in jail or prison, or going on a prison tour, such as Alcatraz in San Francisco," (No=0, Yes=1). These questions were different from Davila et al. (2010), who also measured the influence that personal and vicarious experiences had in determining sentencing attitudes. Whereas Davila et al. (2010) defined a personal experience as individuals who had been charged with a crime, this study's definition of a personal experience was broader. It was defined as having visited a carceral setting. This included visiting a relative in prison or jail or even touring a prison.

Statements about the criminal justice system were given and respondents were asked how strongly they agreed with the statements about how the system should operate. DV<sub>1</sub> (level of retribution) was measured according to the following statement: "The criminal justice system should be tougher on criminals." DV<sub>2</sub> (level of rehabilitation) was measured using the statement: "Prisons and jails should include more rehabilitative programs for incarcerated individuals." A Likert scale was used in order to measure the intensity of their opinion for both variables (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree).

The study was originally designed with using political affiliation as the control variable, as research has shown that one's political ideology can be a predictor of whether or not the criminal justice system should be more retributive or more rehabilitative (Carroll et al. 1987). Generally, individuals who hold more liberal beliefs tend to favor a criminal justice system that

is more rehabilitative, while those who are more conservative believe that the criminal justice system should be tougher on crime. However, there was not enough diversity of the sample to make such a determination, as about 88% of the sample identified as being "Mostly Liberal," while just 12% identified as being "Mostly Conservative." Because of this discrepancy, the study controls for gender, as 40% identified as male and 60% identified as female.

A descriptive statistics and frequencies test showed the demographic makeup of respondents as well as the response averages of specific survey questions. IV<sub>1</sub> and IV<sub>2</sub> were both nominal, with an answer choice of no (=0) or yes (=1), while DV<sub>1</sub> and DV<sub>2</sub> were measured using a Likert Scale. For these reasons, I ran an Independent Samples T-test in order to determine the outcome of both hypotheses by measuring the strength of opinion of the participant .

### Results

There were nine total variables measured on the survey questionnaire (see Appendix A). The statistical description of completed surveys is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
What is your age?	63	17.00	79.00	42.6825	18.6079
What is your gender?	61	00		.623	.48867
What is your race/ethnicity?	60	1.00	5.00	3.2667	.95432
What is your religious preference?	58	1.00	3.00	2.3276	.84579
What is your political affiliation?	58	.00	1.00	.1207	.32861
Do you know someone who has been incarcerated?	66	.00	1.00	.6061	.49237
Have you ever ben to a carceral setting1	66	.00	1.00	.6061	.49237
__ CJ system should be more retributive.	65	1.00	5.00	2.1846	1.05907
__ CJ system should be more rehabilitative.	66	1.00	5.00	4.7121	.69648
__ Valid N (listwise)	51				

The mean score for those respondents who did have a family member or personal friend who has been incarcerated was .6061. The mean score for whether someone has been to a carceral setting was also .6061, which means that there was an equal number of respondents who had both a vicarious connection and a personal experience with the criminal justice system. 40% of the respondents did not have either a vicarious or a personal connection to the correctional system. DV1 (level of retribution) had a mean value of 2.1846. This indicates that respondents were, on average, slightly disagreed that the criminal justice system should be tougher on criminals. DVz (level of rehabilitation) had a mean value of 4.7121. This indicates that respondents were, on average, in strong agreement that more rehabilitative programs should exist for criminals. Because DVz had a higher mean score than DV1, it suggests that respondents prefer a criminal justice system that is more rehabilitative rather than retributive, however, further analysis is needed to determine if this relationship is statistically significant and whether the null hypotheses can be rejected.

Tables 2 and 3 show the frequency distributions of the independent variables of interest (vicarious and personal experiences).

Table 2. Frequency Distribution-Vicarious Experience

<b>Do you have a <u>family member</u> or personal friend who has been incarcerated?</b>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	.00 No	26	39.4	39.4	39.4
	1.00 Yes	40	60.6	60.6	100.0
	Total	66	100.0	100.0	

Table 3. Frequency Distribution-Personal Experience

<b>Have you ever been to a carceral setting?</b>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	.00 No	26	39.4	39.4	39.4
	1.00 Yes	40	60.6	60.6	100.0
	Total	66	100.0	100.0	

Tables 4 and 5 show the frequency distribution of DV<sub>1</sub> (level of retribution) and DV<sub>2</sub> (level of rehabilitation).

Table 4. Frequency Distribution-DV<sub>1</sub>

<b>The criminal justice system should be tougher on criminals.</b>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00 Strongly Disagree	21	31.8	32.3	32.3
	2.00 Disagree	19	28.8	29.2	61.5
	3.00 Neutral	19	28.8	29.2	90.8
	4.00 Agree	4	6.1	6.2	96.9
	5.00 Strongly Agree	2	3.0	3.1	100.0
	Total	65	98.5	100.0	
	Missing System!!		1.5		
Total		66	100.0		

Table 5. Frequency Distribution-DV<sub>2</sub>

<b>The criminal justice system should be more rehabilitative.</b>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00 Strongly Disagree	1	1.5	1.5	1.5
	2.00 Disagree	0	0	0	1.5
	3.00 Neutral	3	4.5	4.5	6.1
	4.00 Agree	9	13.6	13.6	19.7
	5.00 Strongly Agree	53	80.3	80.3	100.0
	Total	309	100.0	100.0	

Only 9% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the criminal justice system should be tougher on criminals, 29% of respondents answered neutrally on the question, and about 60%

of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that the correctional system should be harsher. Meanwhile, only 1% of respondents disagreed that the criminal justice system should offer more rehabilitation programs, 3% of respondents answered neutrally on the question, and over 93% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the correctional system should be more rehabilitative.

H1 was measured using an independent samples t-test, as shown in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Means Comparison Test-Vicarious Experience

	Do you have a family member or friend who has been incarcerated?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.
CJ system should be tougher on criminals	No	26	2.1923	1.09615	.962
	Yes	39	2.1795	1.0481	
CJ system should offer more rehabilitation	No	26	4.6154	.69725	.367
	Yes	40	4.7750	.69752	

Table 6 shows the means comparison between those who do not have a vicarious experience with the criminal justice system and those who have such a connection. When asked if they believed the criminal justice system should be harsher on criminals, those who did not have a family or friend in the correctional system (n=26) had a mean score of 2.1923. In comparison, when asked the same question, those who did have a vicarious experience (n=39) had a mean score of 2.1795. There is no statistically significant difference in level of retribution between those who have a vicarious connection and those who do not have a connection (t = .047, p = .962) those without a vicarious connection to the correctional system (n=26), when asked if they believed the criminal justice system should be more rehabilitative, they had a mean score of 4.6154. In comparison, those who did have a vicarious experience (n=40), when asked the same question, had a mean score of 4.775 (t = -.909, p = .367). For level of rehabilitation, while it would appear that those with a vicarious experience have a higher mean score than those

without a vicarious experience, this relationship is not statistically significant. Because of this lack of statistical significance, I am unable to reject the null: having a vicarious experience with the criminal justice system does not cause an individual to have a more rehabilitative opinion than those without a vicarious experience.

H2 was also measured using an independent samples t-test, as shown in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Means Comparison Test-Personal Experience

	Have you ever been to carceral setting?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.
CJ system should be tougher on criminals	No	26	2.1538	.96715	.85
	Yes	39	2.2051	1.12810	
CJ system should be more rehabilitative	No	26	4.8077	.56704	.37
	Yes	40	4.65	.76962	

Table 7 shows the means comparison between those who do not have a vicarious experience with the criminal justice system and those who have such a connection. When asked if they believed the criminal justice system should be harsher on criminals, those who did not have a personal connection to the correctional system (n=26) had a mean score of 2.1538. In comparison, when asked the same question, those who did have a personal experience (n=39) had a mean score of 2.205. There is no statistically significant difference in level of retribution between those who have a personal connection and those who do not have a connection ( $t = -.190$ ,  $p = .85$ ). Those without a personal connection to the correctional system (n=26), when asked if they believed the criminal justice system should be more rehabilitative, they had a mean score of 4.8077. In comparison, those who did have a personal connection (n=40), when asked the same question, had a mean score of 4.65 ( $t = .897$ ,  $p = .37$ ). For level of rehabilitation, there is no statistically significant difference in level of rehabilitation between those without a personal connection and those with a personal connection. Therefore, I am unable to accept H2: having a

personal connection to the criminal justice system does not cause an individual to have a more rehabilitative opinion than those without a personal connection.

To see if an individual's gender influenced the results, a means comparison was completed for vicarious experiences, as shown in Table 8 below

Table 8. Means Comparison Test-Gender and Vicarious Experience

How would you describe your political views?		Do you have a family member or friend who has been incarcerated?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.
Male	CJ system should be tougher on criminals	No	9	4.1189	1.0541	.515
		Yes	15	4.667	1.14642	
CJ system should be more rehabilitative		No	9	4.44	.88192	.600
Female		Yes	15	4.667	1.0465	
	CJ system should be tougher on criminals	No	14	4.7143	1.1507	.555
		Yes	22	4.136	1.0372	
	CJ system should be more rehabilitative	No	14	4.7143	.61125	.328
	Yes	22	4.8696	.34435		

When asked if they believed the criminal justice system should be more rehabilitative, men without a vicarious connection to the correctional system (n=9) had a mean score of 4.44. In comparison, when asked the same question, men who did have an incarcerated family member or friend (n=15) had a mean score of 4.667. There appears to be a negative association of level of rehabilitation between those men who have a vicarious connection and those who do not have a connection ( $t = -.532, p = .60$ ). But because this relationship is not statistically significant, being a male does not influence whether a respondent believes that the system should be more rehabilitative and I am unable to accept H1 for males. When asked if they believed the criminal justice system should be more rehabilitative, women without a vicarious connection to the correctional system (n=14) had a mean score of 4.7143. In comparison, when asked the same

question, women who did have an incarcerated family member or friend (n=22) had a mean score of 4.8696. This relationship is not statistically significant ( $t = -.992, p = .328$ ). Therefore, I am unable to accept H, which specifies that females who have had a vicarious experience with the criminal justice system will have a higher level of rehabilitation than those without a vicarious experience.

As shown below, Table 9 controls for gender and personal experiences.

Table 9. Means Comparison Test-Gender and Personal Experience

How would you describe your political views?		Have you ever been to a carceral setting?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.
Male	CJ system should be tougher on criminals	No	8	2.25	1.0351	.611
		Yes	16	2.00	1.1547	
	CJ system should be more rehabilitative	No	8	4.625	.74402	.886
		Yes	16	4.563	1.0935	
Female	CJ system should be tougher on criminals	No	17	2.177	.95101	.813
		Yes	19	2.263	1.19453	
	CJ system should be more rehabilitative	No	17	4.882	.48507	.392
		Yes	20	4.15	.44426	

When asked if they believed the criminal justice system should be more rehabilitative, men without a personal connection to the correctional system (n=8) had a mean score of 4.625. In comparison, when asked the same question, men who did have an incarcerated family member or friend (n=16) had a mean score of 4.563. There is no statistical significance of level of rehabilitation between those men who have a personal connection and those who do not have a connection ( $t = .145, p = .886$ ). Therefore, I am unable to reject the null hypothesis. When asked if they believed the criminal justice system should be more rehabilitative, women without a vicarious connection to the correctional system (n=17) had a mean score of 4.882. In comparison, when asked the same question, women who did have an incarcerated family

member or friend (n=20) had a mean score of 4.75. It does not appear that there is a statistically significant relationship between gender and level of rehabilitation ( $t = .866$ ,  $p = .392$ ). For both genders, I am unable to accept H2 which specifies that those who have had a personal experience with the criminal justice system will have a higher level of rehabilitation than those without a personal experience.

### Discussion

An individual's opinion about the criminal justice system can be explained by a number of internal and external factors. Researchers have studied whether certain demographic characteristics (age, race, gender, religion, political ideology, etc.) are correlated with an individual's level of punitiveness. Media portrayal of crime, which may or may not be a true reflection about how the criminal justice system operates, can also influence public perception. This is problematic because public opinion may be misguided or biased. Those who have had actual contact with the criminal justice system therefore, may have a more accurate perception and understanding of the criminal justice system than those with limited interaction. There has been a limited amount of research exploring these factors of personal and vicarious experiences and perceptions of the criminal justice system. This study adds to the conversation by expanding what is meant by an individual having a "personal experience" with the criminal justice system by including visits to a carceral setting.

This study sought to determine if having a vicarious or personal experience with the criminal justice system can influence one's opinion about the functions and operational goals of the system. I hypothesized that if a respondent had a prior experience with the system, then they were more likely to have the opinion that the criminal justice system should be more rehabilitative rather than more retributive. H1 predicted that if a respondent had a vicarious

experience, then they would have a higher level of rehabilitation than those without a vicarious experience, but statistical analysis showed that this was not statistically significant. H2 predicted that if a respondent had a personal experience, then they would have a higher level of rehabilitation than those without a personal experience, but statistical analysis showed that this was not statistically significant. Due to insignificant findings, I am unable to reject the null hypotheses and accept H1 or H2 that there is an association between having a vicarious or a personal experience and whether someone views the criminal justice system as needing to be more rehabilitative rather than punitive in practice.

This study was further controlled for gender to determine if this variable influenced the outcome of level of rehabilitation, as females tend to value rehabilitation in the criminal justice system more than males (Carroll et al. 1987). For both men and women, there was no statistically significant relationship between gender and level of retribution and rehabilitation, even if the individual had a vicarious or personal experience. Gender does not appear to matter as much when determining a respondent's level of rehabilitation. So, when taking gender into account, I am unable to reject the null hypothesis that having either a vicarious or personal experience can affect a respondent's level of retribution or level of rehabilitation.

Both the measure of retribution and rehabilitation were worded in a broad and general manner for the purposes of simplicity, but future studies may want to consider specific correctional practices and programs, as these individuals may prefer some over others. A respondent may support the more retributive practice of determined sentences for convicted murderers but would not support the death penalty for serial killers. A respondent may agree with certain rehabilitative programs such as substance-abuse programs in prison but would not want to live on the same street as a halfway house. Further, due to the limitations of the course,

the survey was only able to ask questions which could be answered quantitatively. Allowing respondents to write additional comments about their answers could provide more insight for the results, but using a Likert scale to measure their opinion reflected how strongly participants felt about the focused objective of the criminal justice system.

Additional attention should be drawn to the participation of study, as many of the participants were those who were willing to step inside of a jail cell or who expressed enthusiasm for taking three minutes of their day to complete a survey. These respondents may already have inclinations for a justice system that stresses rehabilitation. Further, the effects of the size of the jail may have influenced opinion. Do to these limitations in populations, further researchers may want to consider exploring this topic qualitatively using small focus groups and lengthier, more in-depth statistical data. Additionally, asking more diverse samples may provide researchers with additional insight and more comprehensive statistical analysis. For example, having a wider range of respondents on the political spectrum may determine if one's political affiliation can influence opinions about the functionality and goals of the correctional system.

Further studies should examine what specific types of programs or policies that individuals may or may not support. For example, in terms of more rehabilitative policies, would a respondent support a criminal justice system that offered more education and job-training programs? Future researchers may also want to consider having respondents listen to first-hand accounts of incarcerated individuals and then gauging opinion. Respondents may have a more comprehensive understanding of what incarceration actually entails if they are exposed to these experiences. Finally, given that members of the public may hold inaccurate perceptions about the criminal justice system, policy makers should consider strategies to counter public misunderstanding so that individuals can be more informed. This may include informing

decision makers about the effectiveness of certain policies and what data and research has shown in regards to these initiatives.

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Appendix A

Please complete the following demographic information:

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Gender Identity \_\_\_\_\_ Race/Ethnicity \_\_\_\_\_ Religious Preference \_\_\_\_\_

Political Affiliation (circle one): Mostly Liberal Mostly Conservative

We have a few personal questions we respectfully ask:

1. Do you have a relative or a personal friend who is or has been incarcerated?

Circle one: NO YES **If** yes, can you explain? (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Have you ever visited a carceral setting such as a prison or a jail? Examples may include being incarcerated or touring Alcatraz.

Circle one: NO YES **If** yes, can you explain? (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Please rate on how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements:

3. "The criminal justice system should be *tougher* on convicted offenders."

**Example 2:****The Prevalence of Mental Disorders in Juvenile Gang Members  
and Other Associated Factors**

*“What a lot of people don’t realize about gangs, in my opinion, is that a gang is not there to attack you. Eighty percent of the people in a gang are there to stop anyone from attacking them. You join a gang for protection, not to go out and hit someone.” – Michael Cane*

**Introduction**

According to the National Youth Gang Survey, an estimated 30,000 gangs and 850,000 gang members are active in the United States (National Gang Center). This represents a 15% increase from 2006 and highlights the rampant rate at which gang membership is increasing and the number and types of gangs are growing and diversifying. Of those, roughly 80% are located in large cities and suburban counties, suggesting that gangs and all that they represent, thrive in urban conditions (National Gang Center).

Due to the proliferation of gang problems around the country, especially over the past two decades, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) has attempted to develop a comprehensive and coordinated response to help tackle the expansive issues. They offer support for research, evaluation, training, technical analysis, and demonstration programs that help combat youth gang involvement. Additionally, they have extended their reach into developing, funding, and evaluating anti-gang programs. These programs are aimed at all aspects of gang dissemination including prevention, intervention, enforcement, and reentry strategies for those leaving the gang life (Comprehensive Anti-Gang Initiative).

One of their most important contributions was the launch of the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention. At the direction of President Obama, this forum began a national conversation between federal and local agencies on how to deal with youth and gang violence, helping to elevate the common issues to national significance (Comprehensive Anti-Gang Initiative). The forum convenes with a variety of agencies including the Departments of Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, drug control agencies, faith and community based groups, family representatives, philanthropies, law enforcement, and education representatives (Comprehensive Anti-Gang Initiative). The goal of such a vast meeting of the minds is to establish and discuss all factors and concerns that contribute to gang involvement; the hope is that through multidisciplinary partnerships, balanced approaches and effective strategies will result (Comprehensive Anti-Gang Initiative).

The Department of XXXX also does its part to help contribute to the growing body of information about youth in gangs. When a XXXX is assigned a new case they must upload most of the youth's information into a Juvenile Tracking System called JTS. Part of inputting the youth's information includes uploading any gang involvement, what gang they are associated with, how long they have been associated with that gang, any gang related charges, as well as photos and descriptions of any gang related tattoos. This information helps track gang members and helps justice workers understand particularities associated with different types of gangs. The information can be accessed by technical analysts to help determine trends and associations about the gangs and the youth who join them.

The study I conducted attempts to add to this growing body of research and knowledge by establishing a relationship between the presence and prevalence of mental disorders within the

juvenile population and gang membership. Recent literature points to a growing body of factors that influence youth to join gangs, however, there is minimal conclusive research showing that presence of a mental disorder, particularly multiple diagnoses, contribute to gang involvement.

The DSM-V classifies a mental disorder as "a syndrome characterized by clinically significant disturbance in an individual's cognition, emotion regulation, or behavior that reflects a dysfunction in the psychological, biological, or developmental processes underlying mental functioning. Mental disorders are usually associated with significant distress in social, occupational, or other important activities" (American Psychological Association, 2013). Particularly, this definition attributes a dysregulation of the individual's psyche to their inability to thrive optimally in society. Therefore, it should translate that this disadvantage, like many of the others shown to increase a youth's propensity towards gang involvement, would also push a youth towards a lifestyle more conducive to their untreated mental status.

By establishing this connection, it is hopeful that more directed efforts can be designed to help youth who suffer from mental disorders and, essentially, keep them from becoming trapped in the web of the gang life. Identification and treatment of particular disorders seen prominently in the sample are discussed with the added recommendation of intensive psychological and psychiatric intervention for those under the Juvenile Justice System's radar who display symptomatic personality characteristics. If these youth can be targeted and helped early on, it is hopeful that they will avoid gang affiliation because they are better able to assimilate into society.

It is important to note that mental disorders do not exist in a vacuum bubble. They are present amidst a multitude of other factors that can contribute to gang involvement. It is therefore necessary and relevant to also discuss prevention and aid strategies that are effective at keeping

youth out of gangs or helping them leave. The aim of this study is only to identify and elaborate on one of these factors. However, through acknowledgement and coordination of all bodies of knowledge and strategy, the justice system will have the most effective approach to dealing with why youth are in gangs and the best ways to help get them out.

## **The Literature**

### *Mental Health*

The National Alliance on Mental Health estimates that 70% of youth in the in the juvenile justice system have at least one mental health condition. Of those, 20% have a severe mental illness. Furthermore, almost one half of youth have received no services for their mental health concerns in the previous year. This paints a grim picture of a sickly juvenile population which is not receiving the help that it needs. Unfortunately, due to stigma, discrimination, and neglect many never seek the help they need or let others see that they are suffering (WHO).

As mental health relates to juveniles in the justice system, gang members present as one of the more at-risk sections of the population. A study conducted by Coid et al. highlighted a complex relationship between mental health problems, substance abuse, violence, and gang membership (2013). They found that street gangs were concentrated in urban areas characterized by “socioeconomic deprivation, high crime rates, and multiple social problems” (Coid et al., 2013). Through these factors they determined that inordinately high levels of psychiatric morbidity existed in these areas and among these people. Particularly, mental illness was more prevalent among violent men and gang members (Coid et al., 2013). Violence itself was seen as a mechanism of enhancing self-esteem, used to reduce the damaging effects that resulted from growing up in the

poor areas aforementioned. By participating in violence, the subjects were seen to be mitigating the effects of the negative environment, childhood maltreatment, and educational failure. Violence itself was associated with increased levels of antisocial personality disorder, or Conduct Disorder in those under the age of 15 (Coid et al., 2013).

Over half the gang members in this study also presented with drug and alcohol dependence (Coid et al., 2013). Alcohol itself has been well documented as normal aspect of gang life. It is a risk factor for violence, as well as a numbing agent for the difficulties of day-to-day life. Drug dependence, particularly marijuana usage, is also seen as a normal aspect of gang life. As a depressant, it reduces arousal and stimulation, allowing for easier coping. Additionally, drugs serve as a huge part of gang profits. Most gangs actively participate in the underground drug economy, using members in all aspects of the transactions (Coid et al., 2013).

Lastly, this study found that gang membership was associated with high prevalences of anxiety disorder, psychosis, and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (Coid et al, 2013). Members expressed more positive attitudes towards violence, had more experiences of violence, and had more fear of violent victimization than any other category of person in their sample. Unfortunately, PTSD is the most frequent psychiatric outcome of exposure to violence and those in gangs experience more of it, at a younger age, than almost anyone else (Coid et al. 2013). Psychotic illness and PTSD are furthermore associated with higher levels of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral disturbance, usually resulting in more violence (Coid et al., 2013). This vicious cycle seems to be spurred by violence just as much as it continues to be perpetuated by it.

Coid et al. suggest that risk of relapse and failed intervention are heightened among those who return to gang life (2013). Because of this it is imperative that efforts be concentrated on

helping members permanently leave their gangs. Health care professionals play an important role in intervention and can help members deal with their fear of victimization as well as disassociation from gang activities. Additionally, they are the best resource for helping those suffering from mental illnesses that were exploited and escalated by their gang involvement.

The World Health organization reports that “some mental disorders can be prevented; most mental behaviors and disorders can be successfully treated; and that much of this prevention, cure, and treatment is affordable (2004)”. In an effort to end the cycle of neglect, they urge governments to do away large mental institutions in favor of smaller, community based health care. Additionally, mental health care should be integrated into primary and general health care systems. If these recommendations are implemented, it is possible that the stigma of rehabilitation can be eased and gang prevention can be more effective.

### *Gangs*

All 50 United States, including the District of Columbia, report having gang problems. In the past ten years, reports revolving around gang violence and other criminal behavior has increased by 15% (Howell, 2010). This makes understanding gang membership an irrefutably relevant and important subject. According to a survey conducted by the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, about 8% of youth report belonging to a gang at some point between the ages of 12 and 17. In high-risk areas, like larger cities, gang membership is even more represented, charting as high as 32% of youth (Howell, 2010).

Demographic characteristics of these youth vary by geographic location. However, in 2012 the National Gang Center reported that 46% of all gang members are Hispanic/Latino, 35% are

African American/black, 11% are Caucasian/white, and 7% are of other races. In relation to gender, majority of gang members are male. This trend has not fluctuated much over the years, with female representation usually accounting for less than 10%. In regard to age, about 34% of gang members are between the ages of 15 and 17. Those between the ages of 18 to 24 account for 36% and those below the age of 15 make up 16% (National Youth Gang Survey).

In deciphering a youth's decision to join a gang factors fall into one of two categories: attractions and risk factors. Attraction usually extends from having a friend in a gang and wanting to join as well, the opportunity to have money, to earn respect, for fun, and also for protection (Howell, 2010). Family can also play an influential role in a youth wanting to join a gang, Siblings, parents, or even cousins who are already a part of the gang can be extremely persuasive in getting a youth to be a part of "the family". This is especially true for Mexican American youth, whose culture emphasizes family cohesion above most other things (Howell, 2010). Additionally, cultural, language, and economic barriers can make gang life very appealing. For some it may be the only place where they do not feel marginalized. Lastly, pop culture tends to sensationalize gang lifestyle (Howell, 2010). Being a part of a gang becomes desirable when they are portrayed as all-powerful, well respected, and wealthy. Most youth today are aware of gang's language, style, and culture, and actively seek to embellish it and take it on as their own.

An overwhelming amount of risk factors also exist for youth which make them susceptible to joining a gang. Individual risk factors include: antisocial behavior, alcohol and drug use, victimization, and negative life events. Mental health problems, such as conduct disorder, externalizing behaviors, hyperactivity, and depression can also lead youth towards gangs. Those in juvenile correction facilities often admit to histories of sexual and physical abuse, psychiatric

disturbances, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, substance abuse, and cognitive deficits, all of which played their part in causing the youths to join gangs (Howell, 2010).

Weaknesses in the family structure, poverty, and financial stress can also make a juvenile at risk. Add in a community with greater levels of criminal activity, widespread availability of firearms and drugs, and minimal levels of neighborhood attachment, juveniles will feel that they have nowhere else to turn. Most importantly though is a youth's association with other delinquent peers. Aggressive and antisocial youth who begin to affiliate with each other in adolescence tend to feed off one another (Howell, 2010). As they experience rejection by their normally adjusted peers, they become pushed towards gang lifestyle because it is the only thing that accepts them for they are.

It is important to note that attraction and risk factors do not always mean that a youth will absolutely join a gang. Instead, youth who experience multiple factors throughout their adolescence, across multiple domains, are more likely than others to be drawn to what a gang has to offer them. They are the result of an accumulation of varied risk factors. Gang members themselves have more risk factors than other serious and violent offenders. In essence, joining a gang is a way of escalating delinquent behavior to a new level. Unfortunately, experiencing one risk factor usually spills over into experiencing another. For example, if a child has naturally aggressive tendencies, they are likely to experience discord with their family, associate with other peers who are aggressive and delinquent, etc.

Being a part of a gang as a youth has also shown to have a significant impact on adult functioning. Research seems to show a cascading effect in which gang membership propels youth down a path resulting in negative consequences in their later adult lives (Gilman et al., 2014). They

have a higher propensity for illegal behaviors, risk taking behaviors, and poorer overall health (Gilman et al., 2014). This effectively puts them on a high stress life course that most are unable to deviate from for the rest of their lives. Additionally, they have lower educational and occupational attainment, resulting from their lack of involvement in educational institutions as juveniles (Gilman et al., 2014). Because gang involvement tends to be a largely adolescent phenomenon, when juveniles age out, they are left with few connections or skills to help them in the adult world. Many have trouble leading productive lives and staying out of jail. It is not uncommon to fall into drug and alcohol dependency to help cope with problems and stressors (Gilman et al., 2014).

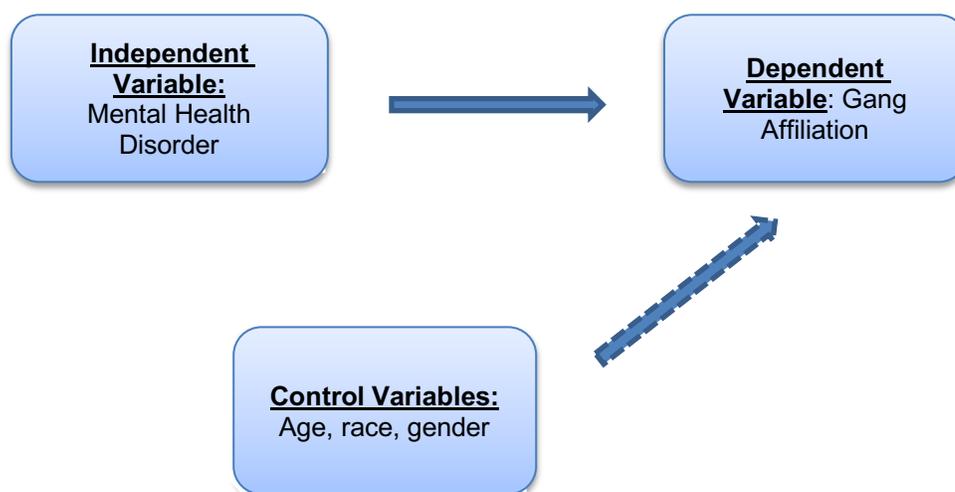
So far, treatment and rehabilitation of gang members has not received the attention that it needs. Most tend to be locked away for the crimes they commit, with increased sentences because of their affiliation (Davis & Flannery, 2001). They are often admitted with histories of physical and sexual abuse and a myriad of other problems that are not properly addressed while institutionalized (Davis & Flannery, 2001). Most are considered security risks and are treated as criminals rather than as youth who are in need of help (Davis & Flannery, 2001). The OJJDP recommends that helping this ever growing problem starts with intervention. If focus begins on the child when they first present signs of being at-risk then there is a higher likelihood that prevention of joining a gang can be accomplished (2010). However, without efforts from the community, and especially the parents, it is going to be impossible to stop youth from succumbing to the gang life.

### **Methodology**

Research indicates that there are a multitude of reasons why youth join gangs. It may be a way for them to get away from an abusive home life, provide them an outlet to make money, or even as a way to feel powerful (Bartollas & Schmalleger, 2011). A commonality between all of

these factors is that the gang life provides the disadvantaged youth with an outlet to deal with their frustrations. An additional, somewhat, understudied factor, is the pathological need of a child who cannot be adequately sustained or accepted in mainstream society. It follows that a disrupted internal state of being would also propel a youth towards anything that would make them feel normal again. This study aims to show that the presence of a mental disorder, or as in many cases, multiple linked mental health disorders are related to youth gang affiliation. In support of this primary hypothesis, my secondary goal is to show that this relationship persists, positively and significantly, after controlling for age, race, and gender.

As it relates to my hypothesis, the independent variable is the presence of one or more mental disorders in a youth. These range from Conduct Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder, Cannabis Abuse Disorder, Adjustment Disorder, Bi-Polar Disorder, Depressive Disorder, Antisocial Personality Disorder, Disruptive Behavior Disorder, Codeine Abuse Disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Alcohol Abuse, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and Dysthymic Disorder. The gang affiliation of the youth is the dependent variable and is defined by being a part of a gang or closely associated with other youth who are gang members. Please refer to figure 1 for an illustration of the connection between these variables.



**Fig 1. Proposed Relationship Model**

For the purpose of this study, the data set had to be narrowed down by several parameters in order to find information that would be relevant. It was suggested to me to use case files of youth who had been placed in a Youth Detention Center because more information was collected about them during intake and they were often administered more psychological examinations. This would provide more in depth information about the youth's background, their mental history, their past gang affiliations, and other demographic information that was not always collected for regularly probated youth. To make a more manageable population size to study, the data set was limited to only active cases of youth who had been institutionalized between January 1, 2013 and June 1, 2015 and managed by the Region XX Offices. This effectively left a population set generalizable to present day conditions in the areas of XXXXX.

This particular data set consisted of 186 youth. Of those, only 94 were selected for analysis. Those eliminated either did not have enough information listed in the Juvenile Tracking System to draw conclusive answers or access to their case files required additional clearance. The remaining cases were then coded as '1' for having a gang affiliation or '0' for having no gang affiliation; and '1' for having a mental disorder or '0' for having no mental disorder. Please refer to figure 2 for a more concise overview of how each variable was coded.

**Independent Variable: Mental Health Disorder**

- **Mental Health Disorder Diagnosis – 1**
- **No Mental Health Disorder Diagnosis – 0**

**Dependent Variable: Gang Affiliation**

- **Gang Affiliation – 1**
- **No Gang Affiliation – 0**

**Control Variable: Race**

- **API – Asian Pacific Islander**
- **B – Black**
- **H – Hispanic**
- **O – Other**
- **W – White**

**Control Variable: Gender**

- **Male – 1**
- **Female – 0**

**Fig 2. Data Coding Guide**

If the youth were coded as '1' for having either a gang affiliation or a mental health disorder, the name of the gang, the duration of their time spent in the gang, and the type of mental disorder they had been diagnosed with was logged. The gang information was obtained directly from what was listed in JTS. The mental health diagnoses were obtained by reading through each youth's psychological/psychiatric report. If the youth did not have a psychological examination conducted it was assumed that they suffered from no mental illness. Youth who are institutionalized are generally required to have a psychological, if symptoms present, before they are ever placed. Additional variable information collected included the age, race, and gender of the youth. Age ranges logged were from 13 years old to 20 years old. The race of the youth was categorized using the system in JTS which distinguishes youth by White, Black, Hispanic, Asian Pacific Islander, or other. These were abbreviated as W, B, H, API, and O, respectively. Gender was coded as '1' for male youth and '0' for female youth. Please refer to figure 2 for an overview of how the last two control variables were coded in excel.

The data was then taken from Excel and run in SPSS to obtain crosstabulations between gang affiliation and mental disorder. The chi-square statistic was also calculated to determine significance. Bar graphs of this information were created using excel to visually show what mental disorders were most prevalent in gang affiliated youth and non-affiliated youth. Percentages of mental disorders in gang affiliated youth were also created in a pie graph to show what mental disorders were most present in gang affiliated youth to help determine how they might be affected by gang life. Crosstabulations were also created in SPSS for gang affiliation and mental health

disorder, while controlling for age, race, and gender. Chi-square statistics were also calculated for all multivariate crosstabulations to show significance. Visual representations of the control variables were created in excel to better highlight certain trends and explain connections.

## **Discussion**

### *Hypothesis One*

To test my first hypothesis, I used a crosstabulation analysis and a chi-square test to view the relationship between presence of a mental health disorder (IV) and gang affiliation (DV). Please see table 2. What this illustrates is that a majority of youth who had a mental disorder were also in a gang (76%). Though this is a large portion – over three-fourths, for those with a mental disorder – looking at those with no mental health disorders, the majority are also a part of a gang (62.5%). This shows that most of the population sampled came from gang affiliated backgrounds to begin with. Looking at table 3, we can see that the significance level, or p-value, was 0.157. For a relationship to be considered statistically significant, it needs to be between 0.05 and 0.1. Unfortunately, without any controlling variable, this relationship is not statistically significant.

Reasoning behind this may come from the fact that there is already a majority of gang affiliated youth in the sample. Due to the origins of this data set and considering that these youth are institutionalized, there are a myriad of other variables that may be causing the mental health issues that these youth experience. One consideration might be that many of these youth are not screened for mental illness until they have to be institutionalized. This means that they have had no prior counseling or medical support to deal with their issues.

**Gang (1) No Gang (0) \* Mental Disorder (1) or not (0) Crosstabulation**

Count

		Mental Disorder (1) or not (0)		Total
		0	1	
Gang (1) No Gang (0)	0	18 (37.5%)	11 (24%)	29 (31%)
	1	30 (62.5%)	35 (76%)	65 (69%)
Total		48 (100%)	46 (100%)	94 (100%)

**Table 2. Percentages of mental disorders within gang affiliated and non-affiliated youth**

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.625	.067		9.377	.000
Mental Issues (1) No Mental Issue 0)	.136	.095	.147	1.426	.157

a. Dependent Variable: Gang (1) No Gang (0)

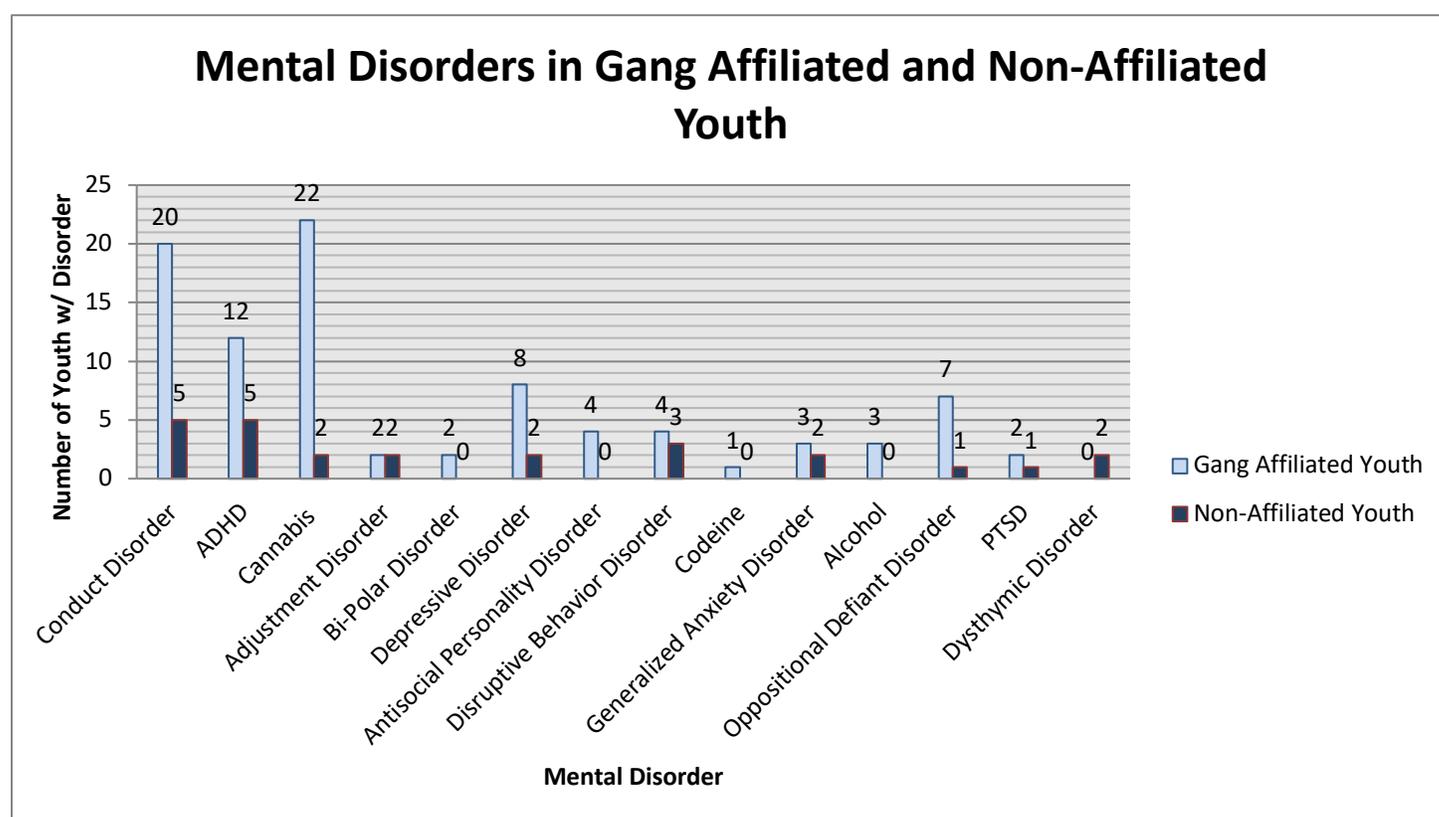
**Table 3. Significance of relationship between gang affiliation (DV) and presence of mental health disorders (IV)**

*Mental Disorders*

Although the crosstabulation analysis did not produce any conclusive relationship between the variables, other notable trends did emerge. Looking at figure 3, we can see that in non-gang affiliated youth the array of disorders that presented in these youth are relatively evenly spread and

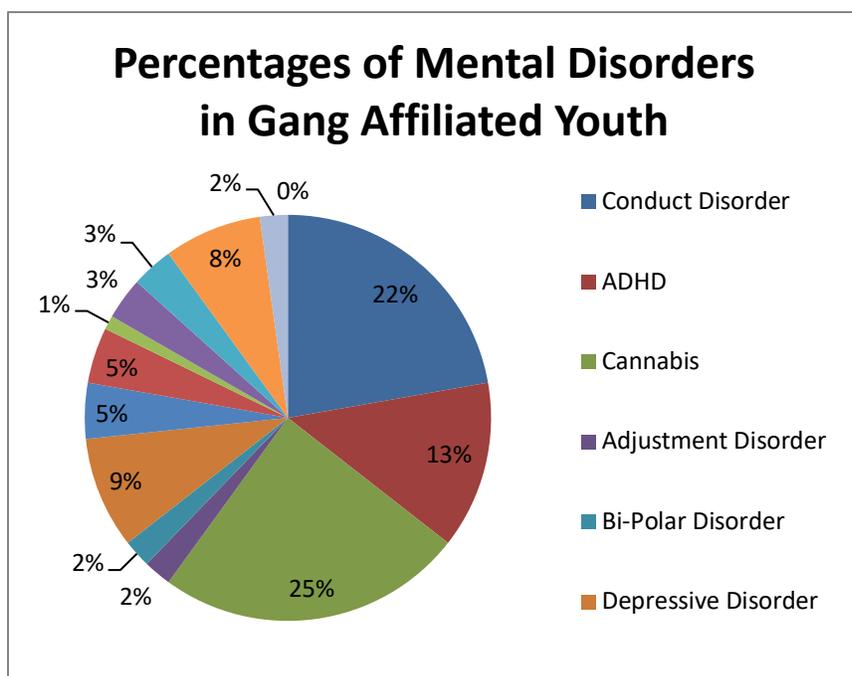
not too high. However, looking at those who were gang-affiliated, there is a monumental increase in those presenting with Conduct Disorder and Cannabis Abuse. This highlights that in this particular sample, gang-affiliated youth were showing more knowledge and commitment to doing wrong as well as substance abuse.

**Figure 3. Bar graph of mental disorders in gang affiliated and non-affiliated youth**



This is consistent with literature which emphasizes juvenile gang members as more aggressive and delinquent when compared to other youth (Coid et al., 2013). Part of the reason why Conduct Disorder is so overrepresented in this sample may be due to gang lifestyle which promotes and escalates the negative traits of the disorder; extending even to the reasons why they were institutionalized. Substance abuse may be a symptom of coping with these youth's environment. Many of the counties where these youth came from are poor and underprivileged. Figure 4 visually

depicts just how large the proportions of Conduct Disorder and Cannabis Abuse are, representing 22% and 25%, respectively, of diagnosed gang affiliated youth. Compared to the other diagnoses in the sample, these two disorders represent almost half of the diagnoses.



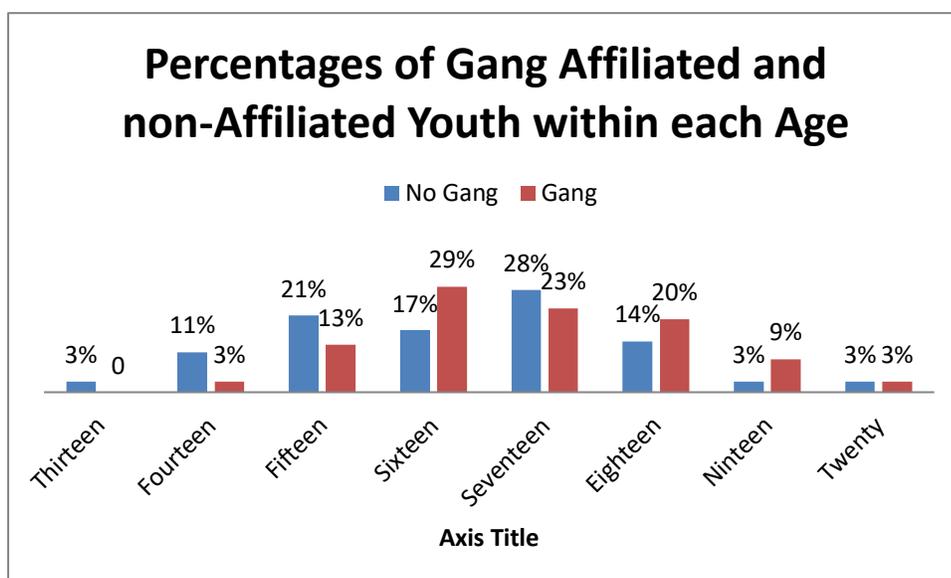
**Figure 4. Pie graph of mental disorders in gang affiliated youth.**

### *Age*

Some other relations derived from this data set which are consistent with literature explanations are the control variables relation to gang affiliation. For example, looking at figure 5, we can see that the majority of the youth who were gang affiliated were between the ages of 16 and 18. Totaled together, this makes up 72% of the sample of gang affiliated youth. This makes sense considering that the average age which youth become involved with gangs and also when they commit the most delinquent acts also fall within this same age bracket. Ages of non-gang affiliated youth are more spread out, showing their charges or problems may have been related to other

factors, since they did not have that gang influence. However, the most youth were found within the age bracket of 15 to 18, totaling 80% of the non-gang affiliated youth in the sample. This demonstrates the same principle: that most youthful crime occurs within this range.

For non-affiliated youth, the age range may dip down to a lower age group to include sex offenders. These particular youth are often sentenced with harsher punishments, like institutionalization, regardless of their age, because the courts find their crimes to be more deviant and with a higher likelihood of recidivism. When looking through these youth's legal sections, a sexual offense was the most common reason for incarceration that I came across.



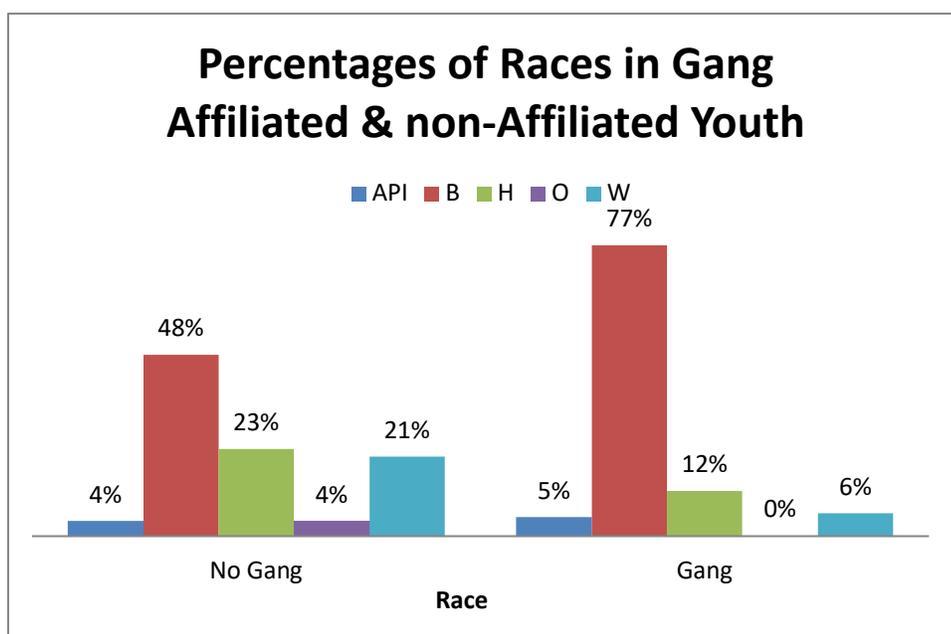
**Figure 5. Bar graph of ages of gang affiliated and non-affiliated youth**

### *Race*

Within the category of race, an overwhelming majority of youth in the sample were Black. Looking at figure 6, we can see that the 48% majority is twice the size compared to any other race in the non-gang affiliated sample of the population. Closer following races are Hispanic youth,

making up 23%, and White youth, comprising 21%. This is representative of most institutional facilities, adult and juvenile, with most inmates being Black, followed by Hispanics. White and Asian inmates tend to represent far less of that population (Bartollas & Schmalleger, 2011).

In the gang affiliated section of the sample population, the black composition makes up an enormous percentage of the group, charting 77%. This is interesting considering that gangs encompass a wide variety of races. It may be due to the population sample's origins that we are seeing this trend. Because so many black youth are locked up, it may be an outside variable that is causing the amount of black youth to be over represented. It is poignant to note, however, that comparing black gang affiliated youth to black non-gang affiliated youth, there is a 29% difference between the groups. This indicates that a significant amount of black youth, from this sample, were more involved with gangs than not.

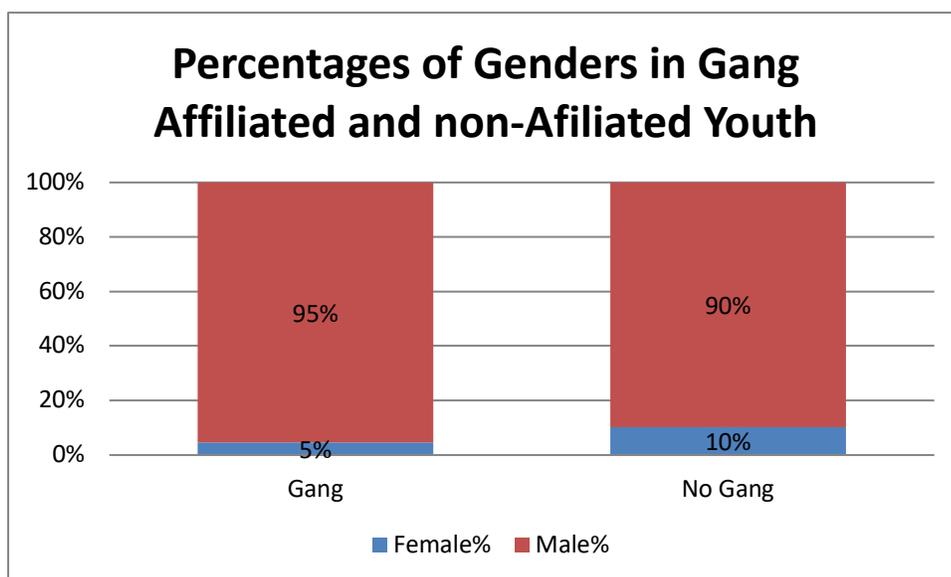


**Figure 6. Bar graph percentages of races in gang affiliated an non-affiliated youth**

## *Gender*

The majority of youth in this sample are male. This holds true regardless of whether or not the youth are gang affiliated or not. Literature suggests that most youth drawn to gangs are male and most gangs are predominantly comprised of males, as well (Howell, 2010)). Looking at the 95% composition of males affiliated with gangs in this sample (please refer to figure 7), we can see that this is consistent. However, this is only 5% higher than the control population of non-affiliated male youth. This shows evidence of a system which tends to institutionalize males more so than females. There are so relatively few females in this particular sample population that it is almost impossible to generate any conclusion about female gang affiliated youth.

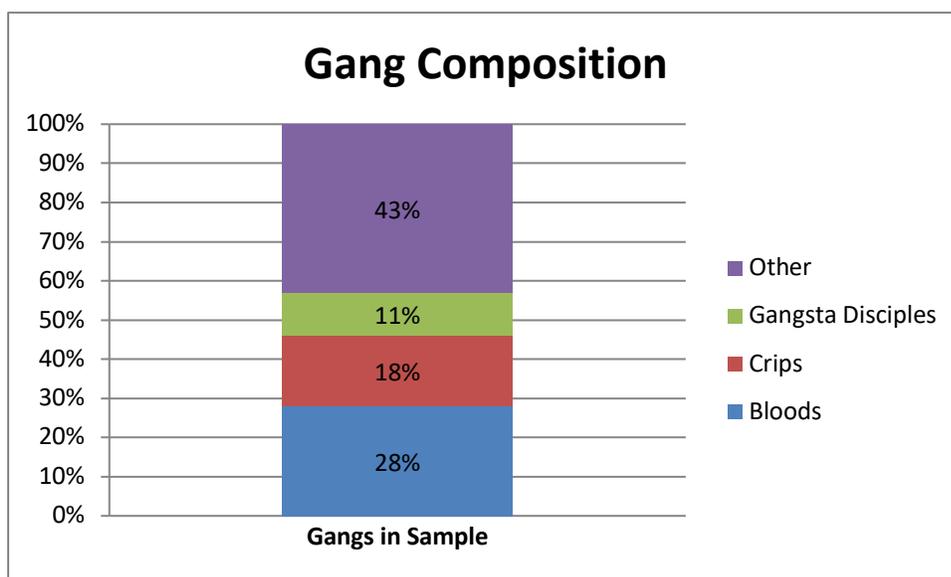
Research does suggest that females are attracted to gang life. However, they are less likely to join and become members of equal status as compared to their male counterparts (Bartollas & Schmallegger, 2011). This study attempted to control for this differentiation by including youth who were also closely associated with gangs, but were not necessarily a part of them. Unfortunately, the low number of females institutionalized prevented any true readings of this segment of the population. Because of this, further findings will be generalizable only to male youth.



**Figure 7. Stacked bar graph of gender percentages in gang affiliated and non-affiliated youth**

### *The Gangs*

Referring to figure 8 we can see that three gangs made up the majority (57%) of the sample. They were the Bloods, the Crips, and the Gangsta Disciples. The other 43% of the sample was comprised of a multitude of other lesser known gangs that did not account for many youth. For this reason I chose to combine them into a lump percentage and focus on the most represented gangs of the sample. The Bloods and the Crips are two of the most prevalent gangs in the country. That is no exception here in Georgia and in this sample, with the Crips accounting for 18% of gang affiliates and the Bloods claiming a vast 28%.



**Figure 8. Stacked bar graph of percentages of gangs in sample population**

### *Hypothesis Two*

Hypothesis two asserted that a positive correlation between gang affiliation and mental health status would persist after controlling for age, race, and gender. This was tested using a linear regression model. Table 4 indicates that at a p-value of 0.019, my model was statistically significant and adequately predicting my dependent variable, with other variables controlled.

For a more precise analysis we can look at table 3 and see the variables that were most significant in predicting gang affiliation in this population. Presence of a mental health disorder yielded a significance value of 0.042, meaning that hypothesis two was correct and statistically significant. Race, gender, and age controlled, allowed for mental health to be a predictor of gang affiliation. Without them, the true effects could not be accurately measured.

Looking the variable of race, in table 3, we can see that it too was statistically significant at 0.046. It is important to note that the higher represented races, like the Black and Hispanic group,

are more likely to be in a gang, than the lesser represented races such as White, Other, and Asian Pacific Islander. Because the sample does not feature many of the White, Other, and Asian Pacific Islander races, it is difficult to accurately generalize the same findings to them, despite the significance values.

Age was the most statistically significant variable, resulting in a p-value of 0.038. This means that the age of the youth is very helpful in predicting gang affiliation. This is consistent with research, which points to youth aged 14-18 as being to most likely to join a gang (Bartollas & Schmalleger, 2011). In our sample population this was also demonstrated.

		Coefficients <sup>a</sup>				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-.546	.596		-.915	.363
	Mental Issues (1) No Mental Issue 0)	.200	.097	.217	2.068	.042
	Gender Male (1) or Female (0)	.132	.175	.075	.754	.453
	Race (B(1), H(2), W(3), API (4), O (5)	-.095	.047	-.202	-2.021	.046
	Age	.070	.033	.222	2.105	.038

a. Dependent Variable: Gang (1) No Gang (0)

**Table 3. Significance levels as they relate to individual independent variables**

ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2.465	4	.616	3.118	.019 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	17.589	89	.198		
	Total	20.053	93			

a. Dependent Variable: Gang (1) No Gang (0)

b. Predictors: (Constant), Age, Gender Male (1) or Female (0), Race (B(1), H(2), W(3), API (4), O (5), Mental Issues (1) No Mental Issue 0)

**Table 4. Significance level of model**

### Limitations

Several limitations have been mentioned throughout this study already. However, one of the most important influencing characteristics is where this data came from. Because all of these youth are institutionalized, it means that they are some of the most delinquent juveniles in our society. It also means that they may not be representative of the greater population as a whole. Additionally, this may have influenced the diversity of this population, changing race, gender, age, mental health, and gang prevalence from what would normally be seen.

Secondly, my original sampling included almost 200 youth. Due to the lack of information on many of these youth though, it had to be cut down by almost half. Only youth who had had completed psychological examinations could be considered for mental health problems. However, those who did not have psychological examinations completed on them could still have mental health disorders that were not identified. Unfortunately, mental health is usually only addressed if severe enough symptoms present in the child.

Lastly, relative to the male sample, females represented a very small portion of the studied sample. Because of this, it is difficult to generalize results or make conclusions about females and

their relationship to mental health disorders and gang affiliations. Therefore, males are the only population studied in this sample, despite the presence of some female participants.

### **Conclusion**

Mental health issues are one of the most pressing topics in the criminal justice system. They can reflect a person's environment, their upbringing, and their exposure to pain. As social servants it is of the utmost importance that we pay attention to and understand why mental disorders present themselves. In doing so, we are better able to treat and rehabilitate those who are suffering, in trouble, and lost.

In relation to this study, a particular segment of society worth taking note of is gangs. Our government recognizes these institutions as some of the fastest growing venues of youthful delinquency. If we are to curb this trend, we first must understand why youth are drawn to such a lifestyle. Research emphasizes neglect, strain, and stress as being strong causative factors.

My research suggests that race, gender, and age controlled, having a mental disorder points to a stronger likelihood that a youth will join a gang. If more attention can be paid to the training of juvenile probation officers, teachers, family and child service workers and other professions which deal with youth, so that they might be better equipped to identify mental health problems, perhaps less youth will be pushed towards the comforts of gangs. Additionally, the more understanding of mental health disorders a person has, allows for rehabilitation and for effective gang removal. If we can take away the problems that are keeping them attached to such a lifestyle, they are more likely to not return to it.

It is easy to look down upon gangs and their members; to be scared or disgruntled.

However, there are reasons that youth join gangs. They do not come to them naturally. Many are pushed in that direction because society has not provided them with anything better. Instead of treating them as delinquents, it is time to treat them as the children that they are and as individuals who are need of help and services.

### Appendix 1:

Crosstabulation data used to create bar graphs related to age, race, and gender

**Gang (1) No Gang (0) \* Age Crosstabulation**

Count

		Age								Total
		13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
Gang (1)	0 (% within age)	1 (100%)	3 (60%)	6 (43%)	5 (21%)	8 (35%)	4(24%)	1(14%)	1(33%)	29 (31%)
No Gang (0)	1 (% within age)	0 (0%)	2 (40%)	8 (57 %)	19(79%)	15 (63%)	13(76%)	6(86%)	2(67%)	65 (69%)
Total		1 (100%)	5 (100%)	14(100%)	24 (100%)	23 (100%)	17 (100%)	7(100%)	3 (100%)	94 (100%)

**Gang (1) No Gang (0) \* Race Crosstabulation**

Count

		Race					Total
		API	B	H	O	W	
Gang (1)	0 (% within race)	1 (25%)	14 (22%)	7 (47%)	1 (100%)	6 (60%)	29 (31%)
No Gang (0)	1 (% within race)	3 (75%)	50 (78%)	8 (53%)	0 (0)%	4 (40%)	65 (69%)
Total		4 (100%)	64 (100%)	15 (100%)	1 (100%)	10 (100%)	94 (100%)

**Gang (1) No Gang (0) \* Gender Male (1) or Female (0) Crosstabulation**

Count

	Gender Male (1) or Female (0)			Total
		0	1	
Gang (1) No Gang (0) 0 (% within gender)		3 (50%)	26 (30%)	29 (31%)
	1 (% within gender)	3 (50%)	62 (70%)	65 (69%)
Total		6 (100%)	88 (100%)	94 (100%)

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## **THE AGENCY EXPERIENCE (POLS 5100/5110/5120/5130)**

(Four semester credit hours)

### **Description and Purpose**

The primary component of the internship is the agency experience itself. This experiential learning component should offer an opportunity for you to observe the agency's organization from an insider's perspective, to interact with agency personnel and clients, and to participate in some of the work of the agency. All of these things may assist you in assessing your career options, while allowing you to compare and contrast academic knowledge about the field of politics with its application in the real world.

In addition, students benefit from their introduction into a network of professionals and practitioners. Therefore, you will want to make every effort to leave a positive impression on your supervisors and others with whom you interact in the agency setting. This impression is important not only to your image, but also to the Department of Political Science itself. The program has developed an excellent reputation over 30+ years, thanks in large part to the quality representation provided by student interns. Our faculty continue to hold very high expectations and aspirations for students and anticipate that each intern will conduct him/herself in a professional manner.

To facilitate meeting these expectations, the following pages include tips and advice about appropriate and inappropriate behaviors. It is important that dress, language, and demeanor be professional and appropriate to the agency setting at all times. If you are ever uncertain or confused about what is appropriate or expected, seek clarification from your agency supervisor and/or your faculty supervisor. Remember, your faculty supervisor will assign the satisfactory or unsatisfactory (S/U) grade on your agency performance based primarily on evaluations that will be submitted by your agency supervisor during the internship.

Our program has enjoyed substantial success with the internship program over the years. This has been due to tremendous agency cooperation, diligent faculty supervision, and enthusiastic student response. If you have any questions prior to the beginning of or during the semester, phone or e-mail your faculty supervisor. We are looking forward to working with you and hope you have an exciting internship experience!

## TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL AGENCY EXPERIENCE

Although in most cases you will not be paid for your internship duties, the internship should still be approached as if you are in a paid position in your field. You are there primarily in the role of learner, but part of your function is also to be of assistance to the agency wherever possible. The tips listed below should help you maximize your internship experience.

1. Call the agency the week prior to starting your internship to confirm start date and time, dress code, parking arrangements, etc. If at any time your agency supervisor changes, or you are reassigned to a different person, make sure you notify the internship coordinator.
2. Be on time every day and report to the person or unit to whom you were directed to report. If that individual is not present or available, make your presence known to someone else in the office. Do not plan to leave the office early unless someone in authority has given you permission to do so. Learn and follow all agency policies and procedures.
3. Do not abuse your position in the agency by requesting unnecessary days off, time off to run personal errands, etc. If you are sick or must be late to work, be sure to call and notify the appropriate person in the agency in a timely manner.
4. Do not use the office phones, computers, or other office supplies or facilities for personal (including academic) purposes, unless you have been granted permission to do so. Keep any necessary personal calls you do make infrequent, short, and to the point so as not to hamper the work of the agency.
5. Remember, as part of your work you **may or may not** have access to information that is confidential. Be sure you consult with your agency supervisor to determine what types of information you have legitimate access to, what information is off-limits to you, and procedures for protecting confidentiality.
6. A certain amount of clerical work (typing, filing, answering phones, making copies), comes with any position. It is appropriate for you to occasionally carry out such tasks. It is only when you are asked to do these things far more than others in the agency, to the point that you are not being exposed to the full range of functions of the agency, that you should be concerned and let the internship coordinator know.
7. Try to approach your internship experience **proactively**. Some agencies utilize several interns each semester and it's possible to be overlooked regarding work assignments. Ask questions of agency personnel; ask what you can do to be useful if you have time on your hands. Also, request certain experiences if you think they are within your capabilities and would enhance your learning experience.
8. Remember that you are not a regular employee. Some tasks and activities, particularly those that are dangerous or require considerable expertise, will be beyond the scope of an intern's capabilities. Generally, agency personnel are aware of this and will inform you accordingly. However, if you feel that you are being asked to do something you believe is beyond your capabilities, or is putting you at inappropriate risk, please let your faculty supervisor or the intern coordinator know as soon as possible.

## APPENDIX A

### RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FACULTY SUPERVISOR

The faculty supervisor assumes general responsibility for the supervision of students during their internship. Her or his responsibilities begin after the student has secured an internship placement. The duties of the faculty supervisor include:

#### **1. Assisting students in preparing for the internship.**

Once an internship acceptance has been secured, the student is assigned to a faculty supervisor. Students are encouraged to arrange an informal meeting with the faculty supervisor to discuss mutual expectations of the internship, particularly if the student has not previously enrolled in a class with that faculty member. The faculty supervisor is prepared to provide guidance to the student regarding significant facets of the internship. These include the use of agency personnel as a resource during the internship, strategies for integrating individual interests with those of the agency, and suggestions for materials the student may wish to read prior to actually beginning the internship.

#### **2. Outlining evaluative criteria for internship essays and the research paper.**

The faculty supervisor is responsible for evaluating and grading all academic work completed during the internship. While there are minimum standards expected for all essays and research papers, the faculty supervisor should also explain any additional relevant criteria as well as the process to be used for providing evaluative feedback on academic work.

#### **3. Monitoring student activities during the internship.**

Through written and verbal communications with both the student and the agency supervisor, the faculty supervisor plays an important role in helping the student make the most of his/her internship experience as well as in assisting the agency in the goal of providing the student with a meaningful internship. It is the responsibility of the faculty supervisor, therefore, to be available to both the student and agency representatives in addressing problems related to student conduct and performance during the internship.

#### **4. Submitting final grades for the internship.**

The faculty supervisor will submit grades (A-F) for the analytical essays and the research paper. The faculty supervisor will submit a grade (S/U) for the agency performance course based on the agency supervisor's evaluation of the student's performance of duties within the agency.

In sum, the faculty supervisor is the representative of the Department of Political Science to the student and to the sponsoring agency during the course of the internship. All questions related to expectations regarding student performance should be directed to the faculty supervisor first, and subsequently to your academic advisor if necessary. Students are expected to stay in regular communication with the faculty supervisor over the course of their internship semester.