

A Comprehensive Study of the Criminal Justice System

Introduction to Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement, and the Courts is the ideal text for students interested in learning the complexities of the criminal justice system. With nearly 100 years of combined experience in teaching and working in the field, the authors of this comprehensive program empower students to think critically about the U.S. criminal justice system.

There are new topics to reflect current criminal justice issues, allowing students to benefit from the most up-to-date information and become more engaged in the classroom. Students will also benefit from updated statistics, references, and notes.

Key Features

Designed with the content and support features to assist both new and seasoned teachers to bring Criminal Justice to life in the classroom:

- *Myth vs. Fact* inserts debunk common misconceptions about the system and alert students to the need to question what they see in the media
- *Thinking Critically* sections challenge students to think about and apply chapter concepts
- *Careers in Criminal Justice* mini biographies highlight some of the most exciting career options
- Chapter-opening *Crime Stories* vignettes motivate students to delve into the chapter

Criminal Justice: The Nonsystem

As noted earlier, the many police, court, and corrections agencies of the federal, state, and local governments, taken together, are commonly referred to as the criminal justice system. However, the depiction of criminal justice—or, more specifically, of the interrelationships and inner workings of its various components—as a “system” may be inappropriate and misleading for at least two reasons.

First, there is no single “criminal justice system” in the United States. Rather, as noted earlier, there is a loose confederation of many independent criminal justice agencies at all levels of government. This loose confederation is spread throughout the country with different, sometimes overlapping, jurisdictions. Although there are some similarities among many of those agencies, there are also significant differences. The only requirement they all share, a requirement that is the basis for their similarities, is that they follow procedures permitted by the U.S. Constitution.

Second, if a **system** is thought of as a smoothly operating set of arrangements and institutions directed toward the achievement of common goals, one is hard-pressed to call the operation of criminal justice in the United States a system. Instead, because there is considerable conflict and confusion among different agencies of criminal justice, a more accurate representation may be that of a criminal justice “nonsystem.”

myth

The agencies that administer criminal justice in the United States form a unified system: the criminal justice system.

fact

There is no single “criminal justice system” in the United States. Instead, there is a loose confederation of many independent criminal justice agencies at all levels of government. Moreover, instead of operating together as a system, agencies of criminal justice in the United States interact but generally operate independently of one another, each agency often causing problems for the others.

FYI Criminal Justice System Needs Improvement

A 2018 national survey found that 76% of registered voters believe the U.S. criminal justice system needs significant improvements, while only 21% believe “it’s working pretty well as it is.” Sixty-eight percent of Republicans, 78% of Independents, 80% of Democrats, and 80% of women believe the system needs significant improvements.

Source: Robert Blizard, “National Poll Results: Public Opinion Strategies, January 25, 2018, accessed June 3, 2019, <https://www.politico.com/f?i=0h000009612ccc-d42c-e963-e9ff82bc0001>

THINKING CRITICALLY

1. What do you think are some of the positive aspects of having a criminal justice nonsystem?
2. What do you think are some of the disadvantages of having a criminal justice nonsystem?

Introduction to Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement, and the Courts

Mobile | Digital | Print

Chapter 1	Crime and Justice in the United States
Chapter 2	Crime and Its Consequences
Chapter 3	Explaining Crime
Chapter 4	The Rule of Law
Chapter 5	History and Structure of American Law Enforcement
Chapter 6	Policing: Roles, Styles, and Functions
Chapter 7	Policing America: Issues and Ethics
Chapter 8	The Administration of Justice
Chapter 9	Sentencing, Appeals, and the Death Penalty
Chapter 10	Institutional Corrections
Chapter 11	Prison Life, Inmate Rights, Release, Reentry, and Recidivism
Chapter 12	Community Corrections
Chapter 13	Juvenile Justice
Chapter 14	The Future of Criminal Justice in the United States

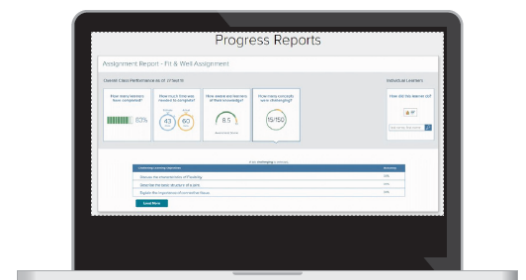
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