

**DePaul University  
School For New Learning**

**Course Syllabus**

**HC 138 The Juvenile Court System: Is There a Future for Our Children?**

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**Competencies Offered: H1D, H2X, H4, L7**

The mission of the juvenile court is simple and straightforward. As one Illinois advocate wrote “The fundamental ideas of the juvenile court is so simple it seems anyone ought to understand it - - It is the acknowledgment by the state of its relationship as the parent to every child within its borders.” However, too often this mission seems to become lost.

In 1999 we celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the juvenile court system. This affords us an opportunity to examine the strengths and weaknesses of this special court and study how race and politics shape the workings of the court system. The court’s legal decisions about children’s lives are extremely important because of their profound life-long consequences for individual children and because of the impact these decisions have on society in general. This course will study the juvenile court system from its inception in 1899. We will see how crime has changed, not so much in numbers, but in the degree of violence due to guns, drugs and gangs. We will also look at the difference between the adult court and the juvenile court and why sometimes the adult court is “kinder” to juveniles. The method we will employ to achieve our goal will be through small learning teams. Each student will be assigned to a learning team by the second week of class. The team will usually consist of 4-5 students. Together we will explore the material presented in class.

**Competencies :**

**H-1-D** Can explain a system of law that governs society.

Learners will be able to:

1. Identify a system of law that governs society.
2. Understands the interrelationships among the laws of that system.
3. Interprets the presuppositions or applications of the laws of that system.

You will demonstrate this competency through your class participation and your work within the learning team. You will also demonstrate this competency by writing a 5 page paper (double spaced with 12 font) OR by giving a 15 minute presentation, explaining how the laws of the juvenile court system are enforced

and why you believe those laws are or are not reflective of the original designers of the juvenile court. . In this paper or presentation you will: 1). Select and explain the history of one area discussed in Gitten's book (i.e. the care of delinquent, disabled or dependent children); 2) Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the approaches used in that care; 3) Reflect on how the system could be improved. **This paper will count for 1/3 of your grade.**

**H-2-X:** Can explain how the juvenile court system differs from the adult court

Learners will have:

1. Identified the characteristics of the juvenile court system.
2. Identified the characteristics of the adult court.
3. Demonstrated a knowledge of how these two courts differ in their approach to offenders.

You will demonstrate this competency through your class participation and your work within the group. You will further demonstrate this competency by writing a 5 page paper (double spaced with 12 font OR a 15 minute presentation, explaining the characteristics of each court and the differences between the adult court and juvenile court system. You will choose one outside reading and the Gitten's book for your study. In this paper or presentation you will: 1) give an overview of the adult court, 2) give an overview of the juvenile court system, and 3) explain in detail the differences between the two. **This paper will count for 1/3 of your grade.**

**H-4:** Can analyze power relations among racial, cultural, or economic groups in the United States.

Learners will be able to:

1. Describe the unequal power relations among racial, social, cultural, or economic groups in the U. S.
2. Explain the historical, sociological, or economic dynamics under which these groups came to be in conflict.

You will demonstrate this competency through your class participation and your work within your group. You will further demonstrate this competency by writing a 5 page paper ( double spaced with 12 font) OR a 15 minute presentation, explaining the unequal power base in the juvenile court system in regards to race, social status, cultural background, or economic place in society. You will also be expected to explain how these groups came to be in conflict, especially from an historical perspective. You will use the Gitten's book and one resource from the reading list given in class. In the paper you will: 1) select and discuss the history of one area of the juvenile court ( i.e. care of delinquent, disabled or dependent children); 2) describe how, over the years, the juvenile court system has become so biased against the poor and especially minorities, and 3) how the misuse of power has affected the lives of the juveniles it was supposed to help **This paper will count for 1/3 of your grade.**

**L7** – Can learn collaboratively and examine the skills, knowledge and values that contribute to such learning.

Learners will be able to:

Articulate the skills needed for collaborative learning.

1. Assess their own ability to contribute to the collaborative learning process.
2. Understand the strategies necessary to group dynamics.
3. You will achieve this competency through participation in assigned learning teams and by studying the skills necessary to group decision making. You will learn through your experience in the learning team, as well as, through the materials presented in class. You will demonstrate this competency through your active participation in your assigned learning team and by giving a team presentation on 1) an assessment of your team's efforts in working collaboratively, 2) a description of the collaborative learning skills employed by your team i.e. communication skills, group dynamics, etc. 3) a discussion of how you plan to use these skills in the workplace 4) an explanation of how the experience of collaborative learning was different for you than learning on your own. **This presentation will count for 1/3 of your grade.**

#### **Learning Experience:**

Strategies used in class:

1. Brief lectures.
2. Assigned readings.
3. Small and large group discussions.
4. Learning teams. Each team is expected to work collaboratively.
5. Group presentations.
6. Use of Blackboard

#### **Required Readings:**

1. Gittens, Joan *Poor Relations, The Children of the State of Illinois, 1818 - 1990*, Chicago, IL. University of Illinois Press, 1994.
2. Class handouts on pertinent material in the field.
3. At least one book from the reading list.

Note: the course Blackboard website is available via login at DePaul's Online Learning (OLL) site, <http://oil.depaul.edu>

Writing resources are available from DePaul's Writing Center's on-site and online services. For information call 312-262-6726, email [wcenter@depaul.edu](mailto:wcenter@depaul.edu).

#### **Class attendance:**

Given the style of learning (teams) used in this class and the fact that much of the work is done online, missing class not only hurts your learning, but also hurts the learning of the other members of your team. It also is detrimental to the learning of the class as a whole. If you must miss class, it is YOUR responsibility

for communicating with both the professor and someone from your learning team. This communication is to take place BEFORE and AFTER class. Failure to do this could affect your grade.

**Incomplete Grade Requirements are:**

1. It must be requested, in writing, at least two weeks prior to the last class.
2. Learner must have good attendance.
3. Learner must have completed  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the assignments.
4. Learner must sign a contract with the instructor. This contract will specify how the assignments are to be completed and when the assignments will be due.

**Note incompletes are given at the discretion of the instructor.**

**Summary papers:**

Each learner will complete **3 summary papers, 5 pages in length.** The first one is due **week 3** on dependent children. The second is due **week 5** on the delinquent juvenile and the third is due **week 8** on disabled children.

**Each learner will be graded as follows:**

- 1) 1/3 of the grade will be from your contribution to and cooperation with the learning team.
- 2) 1/3 of the grade will be from the 3 summary papers.
- 3)
  - a) 1/3 of the grade for H-1-D will come from the final paper or presentation detailing the history of the juvenile court system in regards to the specific area chosen by the learner.
  - b) 1/3 of the grade for H-2-X will come from the final paper or presentation explaining the differences between the adult court and the juvenile justice system..
  - c) 1/3 of the grade for H-4 will come from the final paper or presentation demonstrating how race and economics deeply effect how the juvenile justice system functions.
  - d) 1/3 of the grade for L7 will come from the final presentation demonstrating the skills needed for collaborative learning.

**ALL PAPERS MUST BE TURNED IN BY THE LAST CLASS**

**Grading**

In assigning grades, I follow the University's guidelines: A stands for high degree of excellence, and in this course should represent a high standard both for written work and classroom participation; B represents a superior standard of performance, both in written work and classroom participation. Grades lower than a C are not acceptable as evidence for demonstrating competence in SNL. Finally, I stand by the University's published policies regarding plagiarism (found in the University bulletins and the student handbook) and other forms of cheating. Students are expected to be familiar with these policies.

**Criteria for assessment:**

At the end of the quarter you will be able to:

1. Demonstrate competence.
2. Verify accuracy of statements regarding course material and your own outside reading.
3. Analyze the rationale behind your choices.
4. Work collaboratively with others.
5. Presentation of one aspect of the juvenile court system.

Learners will also be evaluated on completeness, clarity, attendance and contribution to team members. The assessments and the feedback you receive will embody the qualities of clarity, integrity, flexibility and empathy.

**Criteria used for:**

1. The readings - Did you complete the assignments on time? Did the discussions and team work indicate an understanding of the reading material? Did your summary papers indicate a clear understanding of the readings?
2. The summary papers - How well did you relate the readings, lectures, and activities in your summary papers? If you disagreed with any of the material: i.e. the readings, lectures, discussions etc., did you include a clear rationale for your position? Were your papers clear and complete?
3. Learning team - Did you consistently contribute to the learning team? How well did you support the other members of the team? Were you consistently active in the team discussions and presentations?
4. Final paper or presentation - How well did your written work or presentation show that you understand the issues of the juvenile court system in regards to your particular competency? Were you able to fully integrate the reading material into the paper or presentation? How clearly, completely and concisely were you able to express your ideas in the paper or presentation.

**Topics and Time Framework:**

Week 1 (January 5)

Introduction, syllabus, interview, review of material for class, group assignments. Online.

**Assignments for next week,**

Read *Poor Relations* (hereafter referred to as PR) Pg 1-35. Bring 3 questions to class from reading assignment.

Week 2 (January 12)

Study and practice of skills, roles and tasks needed for collaborative learning. A look at the homework questions? Do they raise other questions? On ground.

### **Assignment for week 3.**

Read RR pages 35-87 Discussion on blackboard regarding readings. Teams work online answering questions posted on blackboard. Find and discuss at least three articles on dependent children. **1st summary paper due on dependent children.**

Week 3 (January 19)

Online discussion of the roles, tasks and skills needed for collaborative learning. Each group will assume a role for this week. The roles should change every week, giving each learner a chance to experience each role. Work on blackboard with predetermined questions and any others that arise. Summary of dependent children. Online

### **Assignment for week 4**

Read PR pages 89- 125. Find and bring to class at least 3 articles on delinquent children. Each learner should have chosen at least one resource from the list handed out in class. Begin reading of resource.

Week 4 (January 26)

Discussion of PR pages 89-125. Sharing of articles on delinquent children. Discussions on resource material. Check on collaborative learning skills. On ground.

### **Assignment for week 5.**

Read PR pages 125-158. Continue outside reading. **2<sup>nd</sup> summary paper due on delinquent children.** Discuss topic for presentation on week 9.

Week 5 (February 2)

Discussion on blackboard regarding reading material, both assigned and resource. Team discussion of presentation for week 9. Online.

### **Assignment for week 6**

Typed outline on what your final paper or project will be. This paper must be specific and contain all ingredients of paper or presentation. Bring ideas to class for presentation on week 9

## Class 6 (February 9)

Learners will meet with their perspective team members to finish planning of presentation for week.9. In addition professor will meet with each learner individually to discuss the learner's progress in the class. This will be a self evaluation as well as the professor's. You will also be expected to present the professor with a typed draft of what you plan to do for your final On ground.

### **Assignment for week 7**

Read PR pgs 159-185. Continue outside reading. Contact fellow team members regarding presentation on week 9.

## Week 7 (February 16)

Learners will work online with questions presented by professor. Then, a discussion will take place between teams. Online

### **Assignment for week 8**

Read PR pgs 186-239. Each learner should have completed his/her outside reading at this time. **Last summary paper due on disabled children.**

## Week 8 (February 23)

Discussion of changes in the system. This discussion will included both PR and your outside resource. Online

### **Assignment for week 9**

Team presentation.

## Week 9 (March 2)

Review of case studies. Small group work. A look at Restorative Justice Philosophy On ground

**Assignment for week 10.** Final papers and presentations due.

## Week 10 (March 9)

Final presentations, summary and critique Face to Face.

## Week 11(March 16)

Any revisions that are needed. Late assignments. Online.

