

Tutoring Guide for Papers in Introduction to Criminal Justice

The Assignment in General

Students in Introduction to Criminal Justice are required to write monographs. A typical monograph analyzes a contemporary issue in one of three areas of criminal justice: corrections (e.g., private prisons or faith-based correctional programs), the court system (e.g., the use of public defenders or the use of shock incarceration), or law enforcement (e.g., the current state of enforcement regarding identity theft or corporate crime). The paper should analyze the issue as is, not theorize about causation or offer recommendations for change (such writing will be required later in capstone courses). Style required is APA.

The Paper's Structure and Development

A typical monograph in this class follows this basic format:

- Definition of the Issue & Identification of Paper's Main Points (Introduction & Thesis)
- Discussion of Strengths of Present Condition
- Discussion of Weaknesses of Present Condition
- Discussion of Opportunities for Growth in the System
- Discussion of Threats to Present System
- Conclusion

The Paper's Research Base

Papers should both examine and interpret research from a variety of credible sources that address criminal justice issues. Examples of such sources are books, monographs, journal articles (many of which can be accessed via library databases), government documents, court cases, laws and statutes (and their histories), and statistical reports.

Elements of Other Monographs for Upper Level Courses

- Thesis: Author's hypothesis which paper seeks to prove; may be several sentences
- Argument: Must be logical and well supported to demonstrate hypothesis is correct
- Method: Use of representative, credible sources; organization of study (chronologically or thematically?); theory and models; and analysis.
- Historiography: Inclusion of previous studies in the field and attention paid to the school of thought from which the author writes.