



# Using Police Dramas to Teach Ethics in Criminal Justice


## A Case Study in Engagement and Innovation



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Impact Through Quality Connections  
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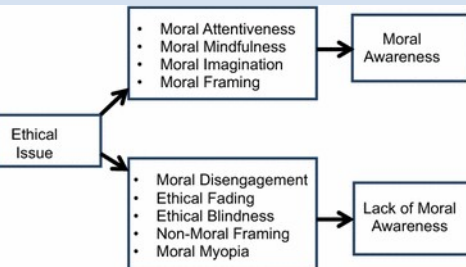
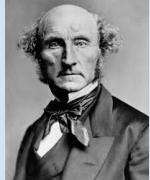
## INTRODUCTION

- DEMONSTRATE HOW POLICE MOVIES AND TV DRAMAS CAN BE USED TO TEACH ETHICS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE.
- SHOW HOW MEDIA CAN BRIDGE THEORY AND PRACTICE WHILE ENHANCING ENGAGEMENT AND REFLECTION.
- PRESENT ACTIVITIES AND ASSESSMENTS ALIGNED WITH QUALITY MATTERS (QM) STANDARDS.



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# READING ABOUT ETHICS IS FUN RIGHT?

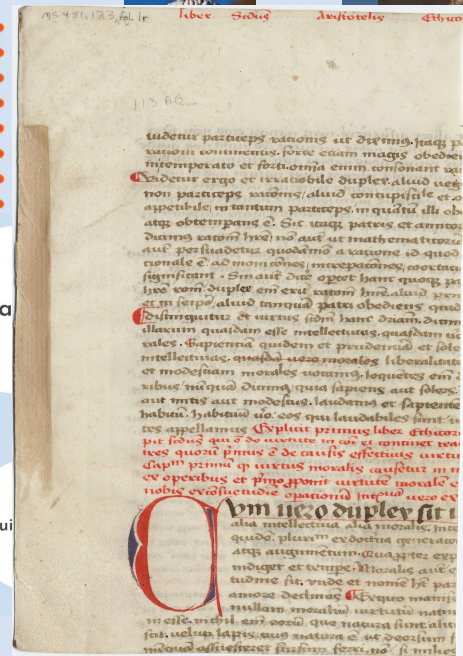


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## RESULT;



Extremely motivated students, lots of question and great conversation...



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# ETHICS IN CJ

- WHAT IS CRIMINAL JUSTICE ?
- DO WE NEED ETHICS ?
- IS IT IMPORTANT?



Revised 1/2025



## CRJU 257: Ethics in Criminal Justice

**SPRING  
2025**

Click to go to the Canvas page:



Dates: 01/13/2025 - 05/14/2025

Delivery Method: Hybrid

Thursdays 11:00 - 12:15

Location: Building 1 #302

**Instructor:** Seref G. Onder, Ph.D.  
**Office:** TLC (in the Library)  
**E-mail:** [sonder@bhc.edu](mailto:sonder@bhc.edu)  
**Phone:** (309) 796-5281 (Office)  
**Office:** 10:10-11:00 Thursdays in person  
 or appointments upon request  
**Hours:** Online meeting is optional.

[Course Info](#)
[Course Evaluation](#)
[Schedule](#)
[Requirements and Expectations](#)
[General College Information](#)

**OUR MISSION is to inspire students, develop talent and strengthen communities.**

### Course Description:

This course will examine the ethical responsibilities of police officers and other criminal justice professionals and the moral and ethical dilemmas faced by them.

**Credit Hours:** 3 credit hours **Prerequisites:** CRJU 109 and COMM 100 or by permission of the instructor

### Course Objectives:

**Expected learning objectives:** Upon completion of the course, the students shall be able to:

- Identify and define the terms morals, ethics, duties, and values
- Describe what behaviors might fall under moral/ethical dilemmas
- Explain the differences between ethical issues and ethical dilemmas
- Articulate what steps organizational leaders should take to encourage ethical decision making on the part of their employees
- Identify the difference between the formal ethics of criminal justice and the values of the criminal justice practitioners' subculture
- Articulate what effect police discretion has on the corruption of the Noble Cause

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## SOLUTION;

### Being creative



- Simplification and illustration
- Stories, examples etc



### Using multiple channels

- Audio
- Video
- Images



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## USE MEDIA IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE EDUCATION

**HOW POLICE MOVIES AND CRIME DRAMAS CAN ENHANCE INSTRUCTIONAL QUALITY, STUDENT ENGAGEMENT, AND LEARNING OUTCOMES IN CJ ETHICS?**

- **CONNECTS ETHICAL THEORY TO REAL-WORLD DILEMMAS.**
- **ENCOURAGES CRITICAL THINKING AND CLASSROOM DISCUSSION.**
- **SUPPORTS EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND STUDENT MOTIVATION.**
- **MAKES ABSTRACT MORAL REASONING TANGIBLE AND RELATABLE.**

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## THE CASE STUDY: ETHICS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE COURSE

**Undergraduate course on Ethics in Criminal Justice.**

- **Objective**

**Analyze ethical dilemmas and apply moral reasoning to professional decisions.**

- **Approach:**

**Integrate selected films and TV episodes as ethical case studies.**



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## SAMPLE MEDIA USED

Students engage with clips or episodes from:

- 12 Angry Men
- Dirty Harry
- 3rd Watch – 'Sully and Ty'
- The Closer – 'Ruby'
- Serpico



These videos are used as ethical case studies where students identify dilemmas, analyze decisions, and connect scenarios with ethical theories.

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## LEARNING OBJECTIVES (QM STANDARDS )

Students will be able to:

1. Identify ethical dilemmas in criminal justice contexts.
2. Apply ethical theories – deontological, teleological, and virtue ethics.
3. Take an ethical position and defend it with critical reasoning.
4. Reflect on how media portrayals shape perceptions of justice and morality.



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## EXAMPLE ACTIVITY: 'ETHICS ON SCREEN'

### Assignment Description:

Students watch Dirty Harry and write reflections connecting scenarios to ethical theories.

### Reflection Prompts:

- What is the ethical dilemma presented?
- Which ethical framework best applies?
- What would be the most ethical action, and why?
- Defend your position using theory and reasoning.

**Assessment:** Graded reflection post with rubric aligned with QM Standards.

Followed by class discussion/online discussion after submission



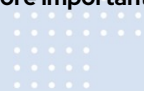
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## EXAMPLE ACTIVITIES

- 12 Angry Men (Deontology / Duty in judicial fairness and process)
- Dirty Harry (Teleology / Utilitarianism vs. Due Process)
- Serpico (Deontology / Duty to uphold the law vs. org. corruption)

### Film Application: Serpico & 12 Angry Men

- Activity: Analyze Frank Serpico's dilemma. Is his choice to report corruption a deontological duty that must be fulfilled, even if the teleological outcome (consequence) is harm to his career or personal safety?
- Activity: In 12 Angry Men, analyze Juror 8's commitment to the duty of "reasonable doubt." Is the process (the duty) more important than the quick, desired outcome (conviction)?



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## ALIGNMENT WITH QM STANDARDS (SELECTED)

Aspect	Media-Driven Learning Benefit	QM Standard Supported
<b>Contextualization</b>	Provides complex, realistic ethical dilemmas that texts often lack, making theory immediately practical.	QM 4.1 (Relevance to Objectives)
<b>Engagement</b>	Increases student interest and critical thinking skills by analyzing narrative and character motivation.	QM 4.6 (Opportunities for Interaction)
<b>Assessment</b>	Allows for the design of authentic, high-order thinking assessments (application, analysis, evaluation).	QM 5.1 (Measuring Objectives) & QM 5.4 (Varied Assessments)

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## ALIGNMENT WITH QM STANDARDS (MORE)

QM Standard	Requirement	Alignment with Media Approach
QM 4.1	Materials contribute to the achievement of stated L.O.s.	Films provide <b>realistic case studies</b> directly applicable to required ethical analyses (e.g., identifying utilitarian choices).
QM 4.2	Relationship/sequence of materials are clear.	Films serve as the <b>application/analysis stage</b> following the theoretical lecture. Sequence: <b>Theory</b> → <b>Film Case</b> → <b>Student Debate/Analysis</b> .
QM 4.6	Opportunities to interact with content are provided.	Film analysis requires <b>active engagement</b> (moral reasoning, justification, debate) rather than passive reading.
QM 5.1	Assessments measure the stated L.O.s.	<b>L.O. 2:</b> Apply Utilitarianism. <b>Assessment:</b> Write a short brief justifying Callahan's actions using only Teleological ethics.
QM 5.3	Specific and descriptive criteria are provided for evaluation.	<b>Rubric Requirement:</b> Criteria must focus on the correct application of the ethical framework (e.g., Did the student correctly define and apply the <b>duty</b> in their Serpico analysis? Was the calculation of consequences sound?).
QM 5.4	Assessments are sequenced, varied, and relevant.	<b>Varied Assignments:</b> Use the films for <b>discussions</b> (low-stakes application), <b>quizzes</b> (identification of ethical dilemma), and <b>analytical essays</b> (high-stakes justification).

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## STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND OUTCOMES

- Students reported greater interest and engagement.
- Improved ability to analyze ethical challenges.
- Encouraged deeper ethical reasoning and professional reflection.

### Student Comment Example:

'Watching Serpico and discussing integrity made me rethink what it means to be a good officer.'



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## CONCLUSION

- ✓ Media can transform ethical theory into real-world context.
- ✓ Align film-based activities with learning objectives and QM design.
- ✓ Encourage reflection and ethical decision-making.
- ✓ Foster active learning through discussion and engagement.



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# THANK YOU

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