



# How to Improve Your Teaching Evaluations by Using the Socratic Method and Essay Exams

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# Classes Taught, Undergraduate & Graduate

- Introduction to Criminal Justice
  - Policing a Democracy
  - Criminal Law & Procedure
  - Criminal Justice Policy, Professionalism and Ethics
  - Psychology and the Law
  - Graduate Seminar
  - The Law in Black & White
- Evidence Law
  - Mock Trial
  - Univ 101
  - Race, Ethnicity and Crime
  - Death-penalty Seminar
  - Legal Trends & Issues

# KNOW YOUR EVALUATION QUESTIONS!

1. The professor is willing to answer questions and assist students upon request
2. The professor uses examples and practical applications in class
3. The professor encourages students to analyze, interpret and apply concepts
4. \*The professor provides feedback on exams and assignments
5. The course requirements including grading were explained at the beginning of the semester
6. The professor was effective teaching this course

**Encourages students to analyze (Question #3)**

Semester and Course	Jirard Average	University Average
Fall 2012 Crim. Law 01	5.9	5.3
Fall 2012 Crim. Law 02	5.9	5.3
Fall 2012 Evidence Law	5.9	5.3
Fall 2012 Legal Trends	5.7	5.3
Spring 2012 Mock Trial	5.9	5.3
Spring 2012 Capstone Ethics	5.7	5.4
Spring 2011 Crim. Law 01	5.9	5.4
Spring 2011 Crim. Law 02	6.0	5.4
Spring 2011 Mock Trial	5.9	5.4
Spring 2011 Capstone Ethics	5.8	5.4
Fall 2010 Crim. Law 01	6.0	5.3
Fall 2010 Crim. Law 02	5.9	5.3
Fall 2010 Public Percept.	5.9	5.3
Spring 2010 Crim. Law 02	6.0	5.4
Spring 2010 Mock Trial	5.8	5.4
Fall 2009 Mock Trial	5.8	5.0
Fall 2009 Evidence	5.8	5.3
Spring 2009 Univ. did not publish		
Fall 2008 Crim. Law 01	6.0	5.2

Stephanic Jirard should offer a course to ALL other professors in which she instructs them how to teach.

By far I've learned more with Jirard than in any other class.

Please describe the most positive aspects of this course.

I really do like how the class is. It is challenging but forces you to learn the material and interact with it, not just recite the facts then forget it like other classes.

Please describe the most positive aspects of the course.

It was very upbeat. It made you remember every you learned by making everyone involved in lecture.

Other comments:

Awesome teacher. I've learned more from Dr. Jirard than any of my other teachers combined.

**Other comments:**

This was the best course in the entire program. Professor Jirard kept me interested in the material. She challenged us to think. It was much better than memorizing information & regurgitating it for an exam. I will remember more from this class than any of the others.

**Please describe the most positive aspects of this course.**

The most positive aspect of this course by far was Pro. Jirard. Without her this class would not be as interesting. I would never have learned as much as I did. I learn more in 7 of Jirard's classes than I do in 5 of my other classes. By far she is the best teacher here at SHIP without a reasonable doubt.

**Other comments:**

This class honestly scared me at first and was intimidating, but I feel I learned so much in one semester and it was a great experience. Awesome Professor!

# General Tips for Classroom Management

- Start every class with a student talking in front of the class, e.g., news of the day, answer to previous or current class discussion question
- If you use PowerPoints, upload slides to campus management system (Canvas, D2L) BEFORE class for student download
- Your class roster is your best friend. Important to **call on EVERY student, EVERY class**: Prevents certain students from dominating class time, which destroys morale.

# The Basics of the Socratic Method

- Should require students to bring class reading/books to class, ask students to read selected passages
- Ask specific questions about the material, not personal opinion

# The Basics of the Socratic Method

- If students have not done the reading, move from specific questions to general questions about class concepts
- If a student still fails to answer, ask why they're studying their major, or hopes for their career

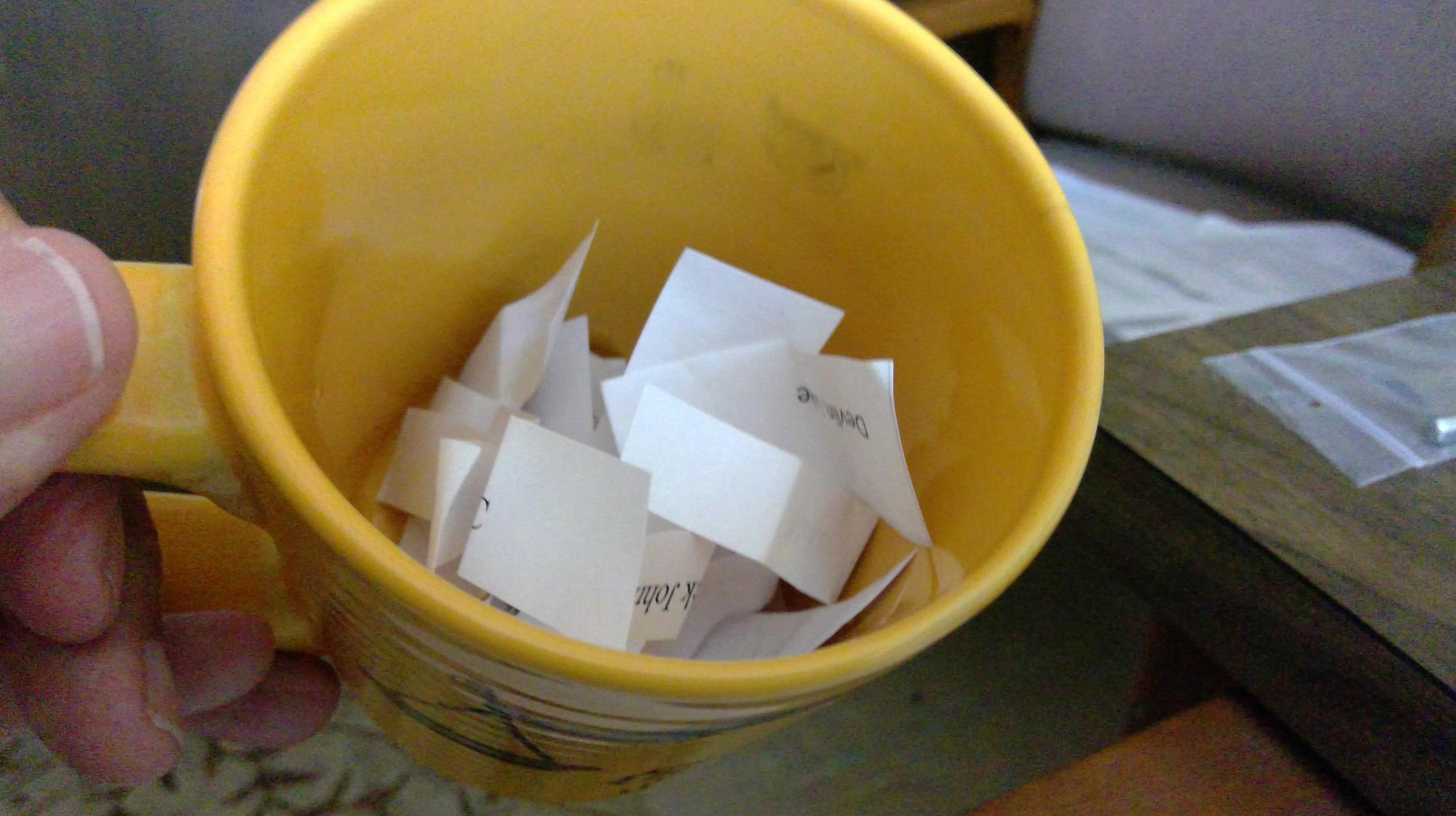
Example of series of questions asking 1 student who refuses to answer:

Q. Name one of Robert Peel's Principles of Policing? (specific)

Q. What is the role of police in society? (less specific)

Q. Give me an example that you have heard of police in the news?

Q. Why did you decide to study criminal justice?



# Essay Exams

- Ditch the multiple choice exams – students do not like them and think they're unfair because many answers have to be tricky!
- We're all busy, but the frontloading of the work makes the excellent teaching evaluations worth it
- Reduce grading time by creating a rubric first, one that other graders can use
- Take general principles from class and choose news stories (current or not) for the students to analyze and apply the principles
- You can have fun writing creative hypotheticals

## Grading Rubric CRJ 100 Quiz 1

### **Essay 1**

#### **10 points**

One viewpoint:

Locke: Consensus model (social contract), everyone united to achieve justice

Marx: The have and the have not's

Foucault: Punishment is external torture of the body

Beccaria: Social contract, free will, deterrence, prevention better than punishment

Bentham: Panopticon (utilitarianism, hedonistic calculus)

#### **10 points**

Proposed Criminal Law

#### **5 Points**

Public Resistance (prostitution is a "victimless" crime; can't regulate sex/morality)

## **Essay 2**

### **15 points**

Faulty CRJ Frame - crimes are committed because criminals feel they can get away with it

(alt. frame "Hooker" comes from blocked opportunities)

### **10 points**

One Defense:

Self defense

Necessity

Duress

BWS

Insanity

**Connected concepts:** female incarceration rates, female victim rates (Violence Against Women Act), street crimes versus property crimes, crime control/due process/rehabilitation/restorative justice/nonintervention; homework answers

## **PROFESSOR FEEDBACK ON EXAM PERFORMANCE**

In late November 2004, Shippensburg, local police responded to a domestic violence call. When police arrived at the apartment on King Street, it was apparent that the husband Fred and his wife Sally had been drinking alcohol and fighting. They both had red welts on their faces. Although state law mandated that if there existed evidence that the woman had been physically assaulted the male on the scene was to be arrested, the officers couldn't tell who started the fight, and merely separated the couple. Officer Jones told Fred to "go walk it off and come back in an hour."

Even though it was near freezing, Fred took off from the apartment without a jacket. The police watched Fred stumble away. Fred walked about one mile before he fell down an embankment in the dark and died from exposure. Officer Jones is being prosecuted for criminal homicide. In his defense, he stated that he is not the cause of Fred's death and that he had no duty to Fred once Fred left the apartment. Who is correct, the prosecution or Fred? Discuss both arguments in your answer.

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1) Issue: Who is correct, the prosecution, or Fred?

Rule: causation

1. factual = but for?

2. proximate = foreseeable

3. intervening cause = breaks the causal chain

duty

duty by law; it is the officer's job to follow the law and to protect others

Application: But for Fred dying of exposure, is Officer Jones responsible? No, therefore Officer Jones is the factual cause. Is it foreseeable that Fred could have died from being alone drunk, and without a jacket in near freezing weather? Yes, because Officer Jones watched Fred stumble away, it was noted that it was near freezing, and also state law

Feel Free to Contact Me for Help and Ideas

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THANK YOU