

Global Campus Bachelor's Degrees: Criminal Justice

OTWIN MARENIN: They look on TV or the movies. Criminal justice, the police, crime shows are the major entertainment segment that you find. This because it's interesting stuff. And some of it's gross, some of it's indelicate, some of it is heart-wrenching, some of it concerns justice and how to deal with people fairly. And all of these things come into play when you teach and research criminal justice.

The criminal justice degree is a social science degree, though a lot of students I think that major in criminal justice think they want to be cops or they want to work in some part of the criminal justice field. But if that's not what you want to do, or if you start doing it you find out it's not really what you thought it was, you have a very solid BA in social sciences.

It sounds like Washington State Online disconnects you from the student because you don't see them, but you talk to them more than you talk to students on campus. Generally they are older. They are more committed, I think. And they are more critical. If something doesn't work, they're much more likely to say, I don't understand this.

Well, I got my degree and '73, so I've been teaching 37 years. I started out as a political scientist and an Africanist. Then I got interested in the police when I was in Nigeria. And then when I came back I realized as a political scientist you cannot find anything written on the police, because it's not a political science topic, strangely enough. You have to be a sociologist or criminal justice or criminology.

So I decided to become a criminal justice person because I was interested in police. And now I'm coming full circle because now I'm back doing international policing, so I am back to my political science part and and international comparative part. But I do it within the criminal justice topic.

So most of my recent research is transnational policing and UN peacekeeping, police and UN peacekeeping operations. Keeps me on my toes.