

Criminal Justice 201: Lecture 1, Intro

[Melanie-Angela Neuilly]: Hello my name is Melanie-Angela Neuilly and I'm an assistant professor in the department of criminal justice and criminology here at Washington State University. This is what I will tell you if you were my classroom students. Of course, some of you may already know me so it might sound a little redundant but oh well. The first thing that I will tell you is that I'm French. I'm not Louisiana French or French Canadian. I'm actually French from France-the country of stinky cheese and high fashion. You may ask why does it matter. Well it matters because that's where my interests lies-international and comparative criminal justice and criminology. And it matters to me because I'm a French living in America. I think that it's important in an ever-shrinking world we're very aware of cultural differences and national differences and that we don't just stay focused on one country. And so that's why I share with you that I come from France. Additionally, my really weird last name makes more sense now. Doesn't it? The second thing I will tell you is that I study dead people. And I like to mention that very early on with any conversation with students because it really sets the atmosphere. Yeah, that's the French professor and she studies dead people. But it's true. I do like spending time with dead people, more particularly I actually like spending time with medical examiners and coroners. I study medical examiners and coroners in France and in the United States, and I look at the differences between the practices in France and in the United States. You may know coroners work from watching primetime television, and you may think that it's so straightforward and 100% sure what the medical examiners and coroners do. But in reality, the decision to classify a death as a homicide, for example, is an extremely complicated one and many factors come into play in making that decision. And so that's what I study-that complication right there. Finally, I would tell you that I'm very passionate about studying and understanding crime, and that I'm very enthusiastic about passing that knowledge onto you. But I would also tell you that learning is not a passive endeavor, and I would encourage you to be active learners throughout this class. The important thing here is not so much to study to the test, but to understand the big picture. With all that said, I hope you have a wonderful semester, and I look forward to hearing individually from you and reading everything that you have to say throughout the class space. And I wish you all the best in this class.