COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of this course is to introduce students to a range of current criminal and constitutional issues. We will evaluate the legal, social, cultural, ethical and political implications of these controversial concerns. We will cover topics ranging from terrorism to the right to marry. Selected readings will frame the legal problems on center stage, allowing us to dissect the multiple layers of each issue. In order to fully explore these topics, we will consider all sides and various arguments in favor of and in opposition of the selected questions. We will mostly debate these issues by analyzing legal opinions, commentaries and academic journals. Students will ultimately become familiar with the intricacies of a myriad of legal and social dilemmas.

CLASS FORMAT

All students are expected to be prepared every class session as students will be called upon randomly to outline the cases in the text. The class will be guided by the instructors, but student participation is a key element of the class.

REQUIRED BOOKS


STATEMENT ON CLASSROOM CLIMATE

The success of this class is dependent not only on my abilities and talents as an instructor to communicate information and ideas, but also on our ability as a class to work together to create an environment conducive to active learning. As a department and university, we expect the faculty and students to be prepared for class and to be actively engaged in the classroom activities. Unfortunately, disruptive behaviors in the classroom cheat other students of opportunities to learn. The University of Maryland’s Code of Academic Integrity defines classroom disruption as “behavior a reasonable person would view as substantially or repeatedly interfering with the conduct of a class.” Examples include coming late to class, repeatedly leaving and entering the classroom without authorization, excessive talking, persisting in speaking without being recognized, allowing cell phones to ring, talking on a cell phone, reading text messages, sending text messages, or using a cell phone or any other electronic device for any purpose. None of this behavior will be tolerated.

Students are expected to treat each other with respect. Disruptive behavior of any kind will not be tolerated. Students who are unable to show civility with one another, the teaching assistants or with me will be subject to being referred to the Office of Student Conduct or to Campus Police. You are expected to adhere to the Code of Student Conduct.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

In this class, students will not be allowed to use their personal computers to take class notes. Students will also be prohibited from using their mp3 players, cell phones, tablets or any other type of technology during class. If these devices are seen and/or used during class, the student(s) will be asked to leave the class immediately. If these devices are seen and/or used during an exam, the exam will be collected from the student and the student will no longer be allowed to continue taking the exam. The exam score will be noted as 0.

CLASS CANCELLATIONS

In the course outline you will find dates where classes have been identified as cancelled. If for any reason a class needs to be cancelled at the last minute, a Teaching Assistant will be present in the classroom to notify the class of the cancellation and/or notice will be posted through the class email list. If for any reason the Professor or a Teaching Assistant is not present, students should wait at least 15 minutes. After that time has passed without the Professor or a Teaching Assistant showing up to the class, students may leave without suffering any consequences.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Official closures and delays are announced on the campus website at http://www.umd.edu and snow phone line (301-405-SNOW) as well as local radio and TV stations. If the University closes for inclement weather, then any reading assignments, written assignments or exams that were assigned for that day will be due the next class period that the University is open. If the University is opening late then the instructor will notify the class via the coursemail and on ELMS whether the instructor will either have class or cancel class.
ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES

Regular and consistent attendance in this class is expected from registered students. University policy excuses the absences of students for illness, religious observances, participation in University activities at the request of University authorities, and compelling circumstances beyond the student’s control. Students must submit the request in writing and supply appropriate documentation.

Campus Senate policy requires students who are absent for a Major Student Grading event, due to illness/injury, to furnish documentary support to the instructor. I require students to contact me by email or by phone prior to class time in which you indicate that you have an illness or an injury. You must provide written documentation of the illness from the Health Center or an outside health care provider verifying the dates of treatment and the time period during which the student was unable to meet academic responsibilities. This documentation must be provided immediately upon your return to class. You will not be allowed to turn in missed assignments or make up quizzes, tests or papers if you have not provided this documentation. Documentation not presented to me in a timely manner will not be accepted. In addition, if it is found that you have falsified the documentation provided, I will refer you to the University’s Student Conduct Office.

If a student has missed a single lecture, Campus Senate policy allows that I accept as an excused absence a self-signed note from the student. The note must also contain an acknowledgement by the student that the information is true and correct and that providing false information is prohibited under Code of Student Conduct. The student is also obligated to make a reasonable attempt to inform the instructor of his/her illness in advance. A self-signed note will not apply to missing a major Scheduled Grading Event.

ATHLETES

Any student participating in a school sponsored athletic program must provide a copy of their athletic calendar outlining dates when they will miss classes to the instructor by September 18, 2015.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

While the University does excuse absences for religious observances, it is the student’s responsibility to inform the instructor of any intended absences for religious observances in advance and prior notification is especially important in connection with final examinations, since failure to reschedule a final examination before the conclusion of the final examination period may result in loss of credits during the semester. Therefore, by September 11, 2015, students must provide me in writing a request for a make-up exam if I have indicated a date on this syllabus that you are unable to make due to a specific religious observance on a specific date. Please refer to the Online Undergraduate Catalog Policy on Religious Observance. Please remember that accommodations are NOT made for travel to and from the religious observance.
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

I will make every effort to accommodate students who are registered with the Disability Support Services (DSS) Office and who provide me with a University of Maryland DSS Accommodation form, which has been updated for the Fall 2014 semester. This form must be presented to me no later than September 18, 2015. I am not able to accommodate students who are not registered with DSS or who do not provide me with documentation that has been reviewed by DSS after September 18, 2015.

ELMS

The University of Maryland now uses Canvas via Enterprise Learning Management Systems, (ELMS). The ELMS website is www.elms.umd.edu. We will use ELMS in this course for posting grades, class announcements and class notes. After assignments are due and exams are given, grades will be posted on ELMS in a reasonable period of time. The instructor will also post class notes on ELMS for students to review. It should be noted that while notes will be posted, these notes are only a sketch of what will be discussed in class and are not to be considered a replacement for attending class and taking notes for oneself.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation and plagiarism. For more information of the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit http://www.studenthonor council.umd.edu/code.html

The following statement must be signed and/or written on every exam and assignment: “I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination (or assignment).”
COPYRIGHT

Legally, course materials such as written or recorded lectures and Power Point presentations are copyright protected and the ability to copy and distribute course materials unless it is for personal use and with instructor’s permission is illegal.

The lectures I deliver in this class and the course materials I create and distribute are protected by federal copyright law as my original works. My lectures are recorded or delivered from written lectures in order to ensure copyright protection. You are permitted to take notes of my lectures and to use course materials for your use in this course. You may not record, reproduce, or distribute my lectures/notes for any commercial purpose without my written consent. Persons who sell or distribute copies or modified copies of my course materials, possess commercial copies of my notes (i.e. Terpnotes), or assist another person or entity in selling or distributing those materials may be considered in violation of the University Code of Student Conduct, Part 9(k).

ONLINE COURSE EVALUATIONS

Your feedback about this course is very important to me and therefore we do several forms of evaluations throughout this semester. One important campus-wide evaluation is the online evaluation at the end of the semester. Students can go directly to the website (www.courseevalum.umd.edu) to complete their evaluations.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Reading Assignments: Each student is responsible for reading assignments as outlined below and being fully prepared to participate in classroom discussions. While much of our reading derives from our text, other readings will be posted on BlackBoard.
2. Participation: Class attendance and participation are expected. Students must be prepared to participate in both formal and informal debates. Reflection papers, assigned and completed in-class, will contribute to a student’s participation grade.
3. Exams: Two exams will be given based on material from the text, supplemental readings, lectures and in-class discussion. NO MAKE-UP EXAMS will be given unless a legitimate and documented excuse plus notification to me prior to the exam are given, and the exam must be made up within one week of the missed examination.
4. Issue Papers: Each student will write two short papers (no more than four pages in length). These papers will be presented in class, in order to facilitate discussion. They will be due at the beginning of the class session in which the material is being covered. Late papers will not be accepted.
GRADING

Participation = 10%
Midterm = 30%
Issue Paper 1 = 15%
Issue Paper 2 = 15%
Take Home Final = 30%

97-100 = A+; 93-96 = A; 90-92 = A-
87-89 = B+; 83-86 = B; 80-82 = B-
77-79 = C+; 73-76 = C; 70-72 = C-
67-69 = D+; 63-66 = D; 60-62 = D-
Less than 60 = F
This syllabus is subject to change by the instructor’s discretion. All changes will be announced at the beginning of class. Please read the assigned chapter(s) by the date noted.

All assignments in **BOLD** are Major Scheduled Grading Events.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

Week 1  
Introduction and Overview of the Course

8/31-9/4  
Importance of the Bill of the Rights

Chapter 1: The Politics and Policy Dichotomy

*Issue 2.1 Are Violent Video Games Protected by the First Amendment?*

*Issue 2.4 Does the Sharing of Music Files Through the Internet Violate Copyright Laws?*

*Issue 3.2 Do Religious Groups Have a Right to Use Public School Facilities After Hours?*

Week 2  
Chapter 2: Crime Control Versus Due Process

9/7-9/11  
*Issue 3.4 Is Dog Sniffing for Drugs Outside a Home a Search Prohibited Under the Fourth Amendment?*

*Issue 3.3 Is a Strip Search of Middle School Students That Is Aimed At Finding Drugs Prohibited Under the Fourth Amendment?*
Week 3  Chapter 3: The Search for a Guiding Philosophy of Policing

9/14-9/18  Issue 4.3 Does the 4th Amendment Permit Police to Collect DNA from People Arrested, but Not Convicted on Felony Charges?

9/16  No Class (Jury Duty!!!)

Week 4  Chapter 4: Police and the Use of Force

9/21-9/25  In-class Movie: Fruitvale Station

Week 5  Chapter 5: Gun Control

9/28-10/2  Issue 4.1 Is There a Constitutional Right to Possess a Firearm for Private Use?

Week 6  Chapter 6: Sentencing

10/5-10/9  Issue 2.5 Is the 8th Amendment Violated If Prisoners Are Deprived of Basic Sustenance, Including Adequate Medical Care?

Week 7  Chapter 7: Race, Ethnicity and Justice

10/12-10/16  Issue 4.2 Are Blanket Prohibitions on Cross Burnings Unconstitutional?

Issue 4.5 Do Race-Conscious Programs in Admissions Policies Violate The 14th Amendment’s Equal Protection Under the Law?

Week 8  Chapter 8: Gender and Justice

10/19-10/23  Issue 2.2 Is It Constitutional to Ban Late-Term Abortions Without Providing for an Exception to Protect the Health of the Mother?
Week 9  Chapter 9: Wrongful Convictions
10/26-10/30

10/30  Midterm

Week 10  Chapter 10: What Are the Alternatives?

Week 11  Chapter 11: Putting the Brakes on Correctional Populations
11/9-11/13

Week 12  Chapter 12: The Death Penalty
11/16-11/20

Week 13  Chapter 13: Juvenile Crime and Violence
11/23-11/27  

\textit{Issue 3.5 Does the Cruel and Unusual Punishment Clause in 8^{th} Amendment Bar Imposition of the Death Penalty on Juveniles?}

11/25  No Class

11/26-11/28  Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 14  Chapter 13: Juvenile Crime and Violence
11/30-12/4  Chapter 14: Living in a Post-9/11 World

\textit{Issue 3.3 Is a Strip Search of Middle School Students That is Aimed at Finding Drugs Prohibited Under the Fourth Amendment?}
Issue 1.1 Should U.S. Citizens Who Are Declared to Be “Enemy Combatants” Be Able to Contest Their Detention before a Judge?

Issue 1.2 Does the President Possess Constitutional Authority to Order Wiretaps on U.S. Citizens?

Week 15  Chapter 14: Living in a Post 9/11-World
12/7-12/11  Chapter 15: Making Sense of Criminal Justice

Issue 4.4 Is the Federal Defense of Marriage Act That Defines Marriage As Between One Man and One Woman Unconstitutional?

Issue 4.7 Is it Unconstitutional for States to Imprison Undocumented Immigrants?