The goal of this course is to introduce students to a range of current criminal, civil, and constitutional issues. We will evaluate the legal, social, cultural, ethical and political implications of these controversial concerns. We will cover topics ranging from police use of excessive force 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 except with the permission by the professor. 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 substitute instructor may 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 substitute instructor is not present, students should wait at least 15 minutes. After that time has passed without the Professor or a substitute instructor 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 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
If a student has missed a single lecture, Campus Senate police 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.

**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 2015 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 which 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](http://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.studenthonorcouncil.umd.edu/code.html](http://www.studenthonorcouncil.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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue Paper 1</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue Paper 2</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take Home Final</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**

Class: 1: Introduction and Overview of the Course and General Discussion of Law and Its Legal Processes

Classes: 2-4  A discussion of what constitutes excessive force as defined by the Supreme Court in the Tennessee v. Garner and Graham v. Connor cases. The discussion will focus on the Michael Brown case in Missouri and the Freddie Gray case in Maryland. Copies of the above Supreme Court cases will be provided to you electronically.

Classes 5-7: The Right of Individual Privacy Versus the Right of the Government to Search and Seize Information from Individuals, their cell phones and computers, and third party providers who possess such data. The discussion will focus on the Fourth Amendment and material considering such issues.

Week 8: Midterm

Classes: 9-10

The discussion will focus on Same Sex Marriage as considered by the Supreme Court, the Constitution, and other legal and philosophical perspectives associated with Same Sex Marriage.
Classes: 11-12 The discussion will focus upon the individual right to parent versus the Government’s right to be involved in parenting decisions, such as the free range case in Montgomery County and other similar cases.

Class:12 Take Home Final Due: TBA