

# CCJS 331 SG91: CONTEMPORARY LEGAL POLICY AND ISSUES

Fall 2018

University of Maryland, College Park at the Universities at Shady Grove

Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice

Instructor: Alan C. Drew

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Class Meets: Wednesdays 12:30-3:00 pm BLD 3 Room 2226

Office Hours: Wednesday 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. or by appointment

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

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 the opioid epidemic and criminal and civil liability for the resulting harm cause by the drug, the right to protest, mass shootings and Second Amendment, police use of force; the internet, who owns it, who should regulate its use, censorship and web content, government and private regulation of is travelers; the right of privacy, its historical roots, whether it really exists in the 21st century, who has the right to be let alone, and what to expect next; gene technology, how it's legitimate uses, legal, ethical, and moral considerations surrounding gene technology, and the appropriate regulation of gene technology; and other topics selected for study. 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, discuss, and analyze 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, readings as assigned, your research, and academic journals. Students will ultimately become familiar with the intricacies of a myriad of moral, ethical, legal, and social dilemmas which have face currently and will face our society, our nation, and the world.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

There is no required text for this course. Course materials will be provided on ELMS, during lectures, through videos, newspapers, magazines, and from the internet. All students will be expected to have read the assigned materials before class. Again, this will be considered as part of your class participation.

Additional required readings will be made available to you via ELMS.

## COURSE WEBSITE

This class utilizes Canvas (ELMS) for distribution of important course information. To access Canvas, go to <http://elms.umd.edu> and log in with your Directory ID and password. If you have any problems accessing your account, contact the support desk at 301-405-1400. You must be registered for the class to access the course website. The syllabus, additional required readings, class announcements, and grades will be posted on Canvas. You are responsible for knowing the material posted on the website. Writing assignments will also be submitted via Canvas.

## COURSE GRADING

Participation: (15%) Participation refers to active engagement in class discussions.

Writing Assignments: 20% each for 3 written assignments. Students are required to submit the written assignments on time. A failure to turn papers in on time will result in grade reductions.

Final Exam: There will be no exams in this course. The fourth written assignment will be considered as a final for the course in lieu of a final exam and will be worth 25% of final grade.

Percentage points will be converted to a letter grade as listed below:

<b>A+</b>	97% or above	<b>C</b>	76% to 73%
<b>A</b>	96% to 93%	<b>C-</b>	72% to 70%
<b>A-</b>	92% to 90%	<b>D+</b>	69% to 67%
<b>B+</b>	89% to 87%	<b>D</b>	66% to 63%
<b>B</b>	86% to 83%	<b>D-</b>	62% to 60%
<b>B-</b>	82% to 80%	<b>F</b>	Less than 60%
<b>C+</b>	79% to 77%		

## **UNDERSTANDING ASSIGNED READINGS**

Many of the required readings for this course are empirical articles published in peer-reviewed academic journals. While I do not expect you to fully understand all of the advanced statistical methods described in these empirical articles, you should be able to answer the following questions and be prepared to discuss these elements of empirical articles in class:

1. a) The research question(s) – what question(s) is the author trying to answer?
2. b) Basic data/methods – where does the data come from and what sample is the author using?
3. c) Major findings – what are the important takeaways from the research?
4. d) How does this research contribute to our understanding of courts and sentencing?

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

You will be assigned several short written assignments/exercises throughout the semester that will be announced in class as well as on ELMS. These assignments will typically pertain to current events that are relevant to class discussions.

## **GRADE DISPUTES**

If you have questions or concerns about your grade(s) and believe I should review them, you must submit a written request over email that describes your concern in detail. This request must be submitted within one week after grades for the relevant assignment have been posted.

## **COURSE RELATED POLICIES**

The University of Maryland now maintains a webpage that provides students with information about students' rights and other course-related university policies. Please visit <http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html> to review these policies.

## **DISABILITY SUPPORT**

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. To receive documentation, please call DSS at 301-314-7682. This form should be presented to me by September 11, 2019. 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. DSS students who are requesting to take their exams at the DSS Center must submit a request with DSS online no later than one week prior to each exam. The student is expected to take the exam at the same time as the rest of the class.

## **RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES**

If you are unable to take an exam due to a religious observance, you will need to notify and discuss the absence with me by September 11, 2018. Failure to notify me of a religious observance in advance will result in a grade of zero for the missed exam/assignment.

## **ATHLETES**

Official athletic schedules must be submitted to me by September 11, 2018. Practices do not count as excused absences. In cases of an excused absence, students are expected to arrange a makeup exam/assignment with me in advance of the absence. Athletes who miss an exam or assignment due to a game or other commitment but never submitted an official schedule by September 11th and never notified me will receive a grade of zero for the missed exam/assignment.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Academic dishonesty of any form will absolutely not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty encompasses the traditional behavior such as cheating on exams and assignments, giving false statements, etc., but also includes activities such as possessing and/or reviewing previous semesters' exams. Additionally, students will be asked to write the University approved Honor Pledge on each exam. 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 on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit

<http://shc.umd.edu/SHC/StudentAcademicDishonesty.aspx> .

## **CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS**

I expect that all students will come to each class prepared to discuss the assigned material. In order to have a productive discussion, assigned readings must be complete PRIOR to the class period and you should come prepared to ask any questions and to provide your opinion on the material. Class discussions are essential to understanding the course material, so please come prepared to participate in group discussions, debates, class games, and group activities. I also expect that students pay attention and take notes during lectures. My lectures and slides WILL NOT be available online. If you miss class you must get notes from a classmate. If you would like me to review those notes for completeness, please stop by my office hours or make an appointment to discuss what you missed. In order for this class to be a success, we must maintain a respectful environment that is conducive to learning. Disruptive behavior or disrespect toward me or other students will not be tolerated. Students who are unable to show civility with each other or with me will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct or to Campus Police. You are expected to follow the Code of Student Conduct. The University of Maryland's Code of Academic Integrity defines classroom a reasonable person would view as substantially or repeatedly interfering with the conduct of a class." This includes such things as leaving the classroom repeatedly, making loud and distracting noises, and conversing with other students during the course lecture. This also includes reading outside material, sleeping, text messaging, and using prohibited technological devices. Repeated classroom disruptions will result in being asked to leave the class and may ultimately affect the grade you receive.

## **USE OF TECHNOLOGY**

Technology used for any purpose other than note-taking during class is prohibited. I will allow you to use a laptop to take notes during class if you like, but cell phones, mp3 players, etc. must be turned off during class and put away at all times. If devices are seen or used during class for any purpose other than note-taking, you will be asked to leave class. If any technological devices are seen and/or used during an exam, the exam will be collected from you and you will no longer be allowed to continue taking the exam. The exam score will be noted as zero and you will be referred to the Student Honor Council. The only exception to the use of technology policy is required accommodations through DSS.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY**

If the University is closed due to inclement weather on a day that a graded assignment is due, the graded assignment will be due for the next class meeting in which the University is open. This does not apply to the writing assignment- which is to be uploaded to ELMS at the scheduled time since you need not be present to upload. If the final exam is cancelled, I will follow the University rules for rescheduling.

## **EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES**

Students may visit a criminal court hearing and write a 4-5 page reflection on their experience as it relates to topics discussed in class. Reflections can be submitted at any point in the semester and can earn you up to 30 points out of 300 points on the final exam. Reflections must accompany proof of physically being at the court (we will discuss this more in class).

## **COURSE EVALUATIONS**

Your feedback about this course is very important to me. An online evaluation will be conducted at the end of the semester. You can go directly to the website ([www.courseevalum.umd.edu](http://www.courseevalum.umd.edu)) to complete your evaluation.

## **COPYRIGHT**

The lectures that I deliver in this class and the course materials I create and distribute are protected federal copyright law. You are permitted to take notes of 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).

## **Tentative Class Schedule and Reading Assignments**

**Week 1: 8/28** I will not hold class, since I will be out of the country. I want you to read and write a one-page paper for each of three articles concerning the opioid crisis in the United States. I will post links for you on ELMS. The assignments will be collected in class on September 11 and submitted on ELMS as well.

**Week 2: 9/4** I hope to have a substitute to stand in for me. They will show a video on the “Aggressive Advertising of Purdue Pharma in the Opioid Epidemic”. After the video, there will be a class discussion of the video.

Discussion of Aggressive Advertising of Purdue Pharma in the Opioid Epidemic

**Week 3: 9/11** I will be in class and we will continue the discussion of the opioid epidemic which will include a discussion of doctor’s liability for over prescribing opiates.

**Week 4: 9/18** Lecture on the various civil lawsuits and criminal cases against pharmaceutical companies and their executives.

**Week 5: 9/25** First written assignment concerning the opioid epidemic.

Lecture on the Second Amendment and cases discussing the meaning and application of the Second Amendment. Discussion of cases interpreting the Second Amendment.

**Week 6: 10/2** Continuation of discussion of the Second Amendment. The Politics of Gun Control. Discussion of where the presidential candidates stand on guns?

**Week 7: 10/9** Balancing the rights of gunowners with the right of individuals to be free from harm from gun owners. The role of government in regulating guns.

**Oct 9: Written Assignment Due**

**Week 8: 10/16** Video of Debates on Gun Control

**Week 9: 10/23** Second Written Assignment on Guns Explained

Introductory Discussion of Hate Crimes

**Week 10: 10/30** Video Debate on Hate Crimes, the Causes, and solutions

**Nov 6: Written Assignment Two Due**

**Week 11: 11/6** Technology and Privacy Introductory Discussion

**Week 12: 11/13** Discussion of the Fourth Amendment in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

**Week 13: 11/20** Discussion of the Fourth Amendment in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

**Thanksgiving Break 11/27--/12/1**

**Week 14: 12/4** Medical Technology, the Government, and the Constitution

**Written Assignment 3 on Medical Technology, the Government, and the Constitution**

**Dec 9: Last Day of Classes**

**Written Assignment 3 Due December 16, 2019 8:00 a.m -10 a.m.**