



# Courts & Sentencing

**CCJS 345**

**Fall 2019**

## Learning Outcomes

This course examines one aspect of the criminal justice system: the courts. Within that broad topic, we will discuss pretrial processes, prosecutorial decision-making, theories of punishment, risk assessment, and sentencing. We will also examine innovations in courts and sentencing and the role evidence-based policy has in the court system. The overarching goal for this course is to examine our current court and sentencing structure and discuss future developments within this aspect of the criminal justice system.

After successfully completing this course you will be able to:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of various aspects of the American court and sentencing structure.
- Define the courtroom workgroup and the influence they have on sentencing schemes.
- Describe the historical context and theoretical underpinnings of the American court and sentencing system.

## Required Resources

Course website: [elms.umd.edu](https://elms.umd.edu)

1. Hemmens, Craig, Brody, David C., & Spohn, Cassia. 2020. *Criminal Courts: A Contemporary Perspective*. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Sage. Thousand Oaks, CA. ISBN-13: 9781544338941

It is highly encouraged that you use the student resources provided by this textbook: <https://edge.sagepub.com/hemmens4e/student-resources-0>

2. Bogira, Steve. 2005. *Courtroom 302*. Vintage Books. New York, NY. ISBN-13: 9780679752066
3. Other assigned content is embedded within content pages on ELMS.

**Dr. Katie Zafft**

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**Class Meets**

Online

**Office Hours**

By Appointment

**Prerequisites**

CCJS 100

**Course Communication**

Pertinent course information will be announced using the Announcement feature on ELMS. Students should contact me using the messaging feature on ELMS rather than emailing directly. This ensures student privacy when discussing grades, absences, or accommodations. **I do not reply to emails sent from non-university email accounts.**

## Campus Policies

It is our shared responsibility to know and abide by the University of Maryland's policies that relate to all courses, which include topics like:

- Academic integrity
- Student and instructor conduct
- Accessibility and accommodations
- Attendance and excused absences
- Grades and appeals
- Copyright and intellectual property

Please visit [www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html](http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html) for the Office of Undergraduate Studies' full list of campus-wide policies and follow up with me if you have questions.

## Activities, Learning Assessments, & Expectations for Students

**The course schedule details the readings, podcasts, or videos that are to be completed each week during this course.** It is imperative that you stick to this schedule as much as possible so you do not fall behind. Doing this work on time will help to create more robust discussions in this class. Set aside ample time each week to do the following:

- Check class announcements
- Complete the required readings, podcasts, and/or videos.
- Participate in the active discussion thread by submitting a new comment and replying to classmates.

**Online Discussions.** These discussions help students synthesize the readings and keep on track with the schedule. Students are expected to check into the online classroom at least twice a week and write/respond to discussion threads. Specific instructions will be given for each discussion thread as to the required content of student contributions. In general, students are expected to write thoughtful commentary on the topic and engage with other students in the course by replying to the comments of others. It is imperative that students make a habit of checking the discussion threads multiple times per week in order to receive the potential for full participation credit. Discussion threads are due twice per week on Wednesdays and Saturdays unless otherwise noted. Students are expected to make one original discussion post and at least one discussion comment. Late discussion submissions will not be graded.

**Interview Assignment.** Students must interview someone who works within the criminal court system who makes decisions that impact criminal case processing and write a paper about the content of the interview. Students must provide contact information from the person they interview (in person or by phone) so that the date and time of the interview can be verified by the professor. Late paper submissions will not be graded.

**Exams.** There will be three multiple choice exams in this course. You will be given 75 minutes to complete the exam. The exams will be available at midnight the day of the exam and are due by 11:59pm that day. Once you begin the exam you have 75 minutes to complete it. You may use whatever notes you feel are necessary to complete the exam. Collaboration in completing exams is strictly prohibited. The final exam is non-cumulative. Late exam submissions will not be graded.

## Course-Specific Policies

**Turnitin Integration.** For this course, your paper will be collected via Turnitin on our course ELMS page. I have chosen to use this tool because it can help you improve your scholarly writing and helps me verify the integrity of

student work. For information about Turnitin, how it works, and the feedback reports you may have access to, visit [https://umd.service-now.com/itsc?id=kb\\_article&sys\\_id=c0116d8f0f7ef2007f232ca8b1050e63](https://umd.service-now.com/itsc?id=kb_article&sys_id=c0116d8f0f7ef2007f232ca8b1050e63)

**Excused Absences.** Excused absences are those that are detailed in the University's course related policies linked on the first page of this syllabus. Students are required to notify me prior to missing an assignment or exam unless the circumstances of the absence prevent you from doing so. Missed assignments or exams must be completed within one week of the absence unless otherwise arranged.

- If you miss an exam due to an excused absence, you will need to arrange a time to take the exam within one week of your return to classes. Excuse notes will be verified prior to grading the exam.
- Since the interview assignment is something you have worked on over the course of many weeks, late submissions by excusal are only considered if your absence prevents you from finishing up a minimal amount of editing the day it is due or prevents you from accessing a computer to submit the paper on time.
- Pre-planned excused absences must be communicated to me in advance of your absence and all work must be completed prior to your absence or on a mutually agreed-upon schedule.
- **Late submissions of assignments or exams due to technical issues with your internet connectivity, computer software, or computer hardware are not covered under the excusal policy.** If there is an ELMS outage that interferes with our course I will adjust accordingly.

## Get Some Help!

You are expected to take personal responsibility for your own learning. This includes acknowledging when your performance does not match your goals and doing something about it. Everyone can benefit from some expert guidance on time management, note taking, and exam preparation, so I encourage you to consider visiting <http://ter.ps/learn> and schedule an appointment with an academic coach. Sharpen your communication skills (and improve your grade) by visiting <http://ter.ps/writing> and schedule an appointment with the campus Writing Center. Finally, if you just need someone to talk to, visit <http://www.counseling.umd.edu>.

Everything is free because you have already paid for it, and **everyone needs help**... all you have to do is ask for it.

## Names/Pronouns and Self Identifications

The University of Maryland recognizes the importance of a diverse student body, and we are committed to fostering equitable classroom environments. I invite you, if you wish, to tell us how you want to be referred to both in terms of your name and your pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.). The pronouns someone indicates are not necessarily indicative of their gender identity. Visit [trans.umd.edu](https://trans.umd.edu) to learn more.

Additionally, how you identify in terms of your gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, and dis/ability, among all aspects of your identity, is your choice whether to disclose (e.g., should it come up in classroom conversation about our experiences and perspectives) and should be self-identified, not presumed or imposed. I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly, and I ask you to do the same for all of your fellow Terps.

## Grades

Grades are not given, they are earned. Your grade is determined by your performance on the learning assessments in the course and is assigned individually (not curved). If earning a particular grade is important to you, please speak with me at the beginning of the term so that I can offer some helpful suggestions for achieving your goal.

All assessment scores will be posted on the course ELMS page. If you would like to review any of your grades (including the exams), or have questions about how something was scored, please send me a message to schedule a time for us to talk.

Late work will not be accepted for course credit so please plan to have it submitted well before the scheduled deadline. I am happy to discuss any of your grades with you, and if I have made a mistake I will immediately correct it. **Any formal grade disputes must be submitted in writing and within one week of receiving the grade.**

Learning Assessments	#	Points Each	Category Weight
Course Orientation	2	10	2%
Discussions: Original submissions and replies		5	20%
Interview Assignment	1	100	18%
Exams (exams are equally weighted)	3	100	60%

Final letter grades are assigned based on the percentage of total assessment points earned. To be fair to everyone I establish clear standards and apply them consistently. Grades are rounded up to the next percentage point at the .45% threshold. Please understand that being close to a cutoff is not the same this as making the cut (89.44 ≠ 90.00). It would be unethical to make exceptions for some and not others. Grades will not be curved or negotiated at the end of the course.

Final Grade Cutoffs				
+ 97%	+ 87%	+ 77%	+ 67%	
A 93%	B 83%	C 73%	D 63%	F <60%
- 90%	- 80%	- 70%	- 60%	

## Copyright

The material I deliver in this class and the course materials I create are original works and protected by federal copyright law. 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).

## Course Schedule

This is a general schedule I have put together with most things due on **Wednesdays and Saturdays**. The flexibility of an online course allows you to complete things earlier in the week if that works better for your schedule.

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	ASSIGNMENTS
1	8/28	Introductions	Syllabus
	8/31	Law and the Judicial Function	Hemmens Ch. 1
	Read Bogira, Prologue by the end of Week 1		
2	9/4	Theories of Punishment	Module Week 2
	9/7	History of Sentencing	Module Week 2
	Read Bogira, Ch. 1-2 by the end of Week 2		
3	9/11	Court Organization and Structure	Hemmens Ch. 4
	9/14	The Supreme Court	Module Week 3
	Read Bogira, Ch. 3-4 by the end of Week 3		
4	9/18	Sentencing	Hemmens Ch. 12
	9/21	Federal and State Sentencing Reform	Module Week 4
	Read Bogira, Ch. 5-6 by the end of Week 4		
5	9/25	<b>Exam #1</b>	<b>Due by 11:59pm</b>
	9/28	Prosecutors	Hemmens Ch. 5
6	10/2	Plea Bargaining and Discretion	Module Week 6
	10/5	Prosecutors and Incarceration	Module Week 6
	Read Bogira, Ch. 7-8 by the end of Week 6		
7	10/9	Defense Attorneys	Hemmens Ch. 6
	10/12	Representing Guilt and Innocence	Module Week 7
	Read Bogira, Ch. 9-10 by the end of Week 7		
8	10/16	Judges	Hemmens Ch. 7
	10/19	Selecting Judges	Module Week 8
	Read Bogira, Ch. 11-12 by the end of Week 8		
9	10/23	The Jury	Hemmens Ch. 9
	10/26	Jury Nullification	Module Week 9
	Read Bogira, Ch. 13-14 by the end of Week 9		

10	<b>10/30</b>	<b>Exam #2</b>	<b>Due by 11:59pm</b>
	<b>11/2</b>	Pretrial Procedures	Hemmens Ch. 10
	Read Bogira, Ch. 15-16 by the end of Week 10		
11	<b>11/6</b>	Bail	Module Week 11
	<b>11/9</b>	The Criminal Trial	Hemmens Ch. 11
	Read Bogira, Ch. 17-18 by the end of Week 11		
12	<b>11/13</b>	Intermediate Sanctions	Module Week 12
	<b>11/16</b>	Specialized Courts	Hemmens Ch. 14
	Read Bogira, Ch. 19 by the end of Week 12		
13	<b>11/20</b>	Risk Assessment in Sentencing	Module Week 13
	<b>11/23</b>	Collateral Consequences	Module Week 13
	Read Bogira, Epilogue by the end of Week 13		
14	<b>11/27</b>	Thanksgiving Recess	
	<b>11/30</b>	Thanksgiving Recess	
15	<b>12/4</b>	Sentencing Disparities	Module Week 15
	<b>12/7</b>	<b>Interview Assignment Due</b>	<b>Due by 11:59pm</b>
16	<b>12/11</b>	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>	Due by 11:59pm

**Note:** This is a tentative schedule, and subject to change as necessary – monitor the course ELMS page for current deadlines. In the unlikely event of a prolonged university closing, or an extended absence from the university, adjustments to the course schedule, deadlines, and assignments will be made based on the duration of the closing and the specific dates missed.