**Course Objective**
This course is designed to provide an advanced overview of the criminal court system in the United States. The class will discuss the historical context of the American criminal court system, leading to the contemporary challenges and issues that are prevalent for system actors. Students will be able to identify the different phases of a criminal prosecution, as well as the relevant actors in a criminal court workgroup. Students will be able to identify where the court system works, where the court system fails, and what innovations in court processes are happening in contemporary criminal procedures. Students will be able to assess the intersections of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, and ethnicity on the way that the court system functions.

**Learning Outcomes**
(1) Discuss the historical context of the American criminal court system, leading to the contemporary challenges and issues that are prevalent for system actors;

(2) Identify the different phases of a criminal prosecution, as well as the relevant actors in a criminal court workgroup;

(3) Identify where the court system works, where the court system fails, and what innovations in court processes are happening in contemporary criminal procedures; and

(4) Assess the way in which race, gender, age, sexual orientation, and ethnicity intersect with the functions of the court system.

**Notice:** This course is, by its definition, a course about crime and the people who commit crime. By the nature of this course, we are discussing trauma and traumatic events. It is impossible for me to identify when any particular topic is going to bring up difficult feelings and emotions for any one person in the class. However, I do expect that many people in the class have experienced trauma caused by criminal victimization and I anticipate that some of the material may be difficult.

Always take care of yourself first. If you need to stop reading a book or an article, put it aside until you feel that you are better able to focus on it and talk to me about it. If you need to talk more at length, I am always available during office hours but University policy requires that I report certain information if certain crimes have happened on campus. There are confidential resources for you to access:

- UMD CARE Office
- UMD Counseling Center
- UMD Mental Health Service
If you feel like you are going to hurt yourself or someone else, or if you feel like you are having a mental health emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.

Required Texts

1. *Courts*
   Cassia Spohn
   ISBN: 9781544307947

2. *Just Mercy: Story of Justice and Redemption*
   Bryan Stevenson
   ISBN: 9780812984965

Additional materials for the course are uploaded into the ELMS course.

Course Requirements

Students in CCJS 345 will receive 4 grades in this course.
- 25% - Quiz grade
- 25% - Reflection Assignments
- 25% - Mid-Term Exam
- 25% - Final Exam

This is the formula that you need to use to calculate your grade. Do NOT use ELMS-CANVAS to calculate your grade. Plug your grades into the formula below.

Quizzes 100 points x 2.5 = 250 points

~10 points per quiz x ~10 quizzes = ~100 points

(To calculate your quiz grade, add all your quizzes together. Once you’ve added all your quizzes together, multiply that number by 2.5.)

There will be at least 10 quizzes throughout the semester. Each quiz is worth ~10 points. Each quiz will be taken on ELMS Canvas and will be announced on ELMS-Canvas. Students will have until 11:59 pm on the date that the quiz is due to complete the quiz. Quizzes are open note and open book and will be heavily based on the material in the books. It is highly recommended that you read all material and attend class to do well on the quizzes.

There are no excuses for missed quizzes. Students who miss a quiz can take the quiz for 50% credit for 48 hours after the quiz closes.

Your first quiz is a quiz that tests your knowledge on the contents the syllabus. This syllabus is a contract between each of you and me. Completing the 10 point quiz posted on ELMS certifies to me that you have read and understand the requirements of this course. Please do not take quiz until you are able to certify that this is true. You will be held to the requirements of this course.

Students are responsible for all material posted on ELMS – Canvas and all notices posted on Slack. Taking the quiz certifies that you have read the full syllabus and are certifying that you will be responsible for all material posted on ELMS – Canvas and on Slack.
The quiz is due to be completed on ELMS by Friday, January 29 at 11:59 pm. Students who miss a quiz can take the quiz for 50% credit for 48 hours after the quiz closes.

Reflection Assignments 300 points x 1 = 300 points

100 points per assignment x 3 assignments = 300 points

(To calculate your reflection assignment grade, add all your assignments together. Once you've added all your assignments together, multiply that number by 2.5.)

Students are required to complete three reflection assignments during the course of the semester. Each reflection assignment is worth a total of 100 points. Each reflection assignment will be completed on ELMS by typing the text directly into the Assignment tool. Assignments that are not submitted in this manner will receive a 0 on the assignment.

Each module during the course will have at least one reflection assignment. A reflection assignment is a response to a prompt from the Professor. Sometimes the prompt will be a media clip. Sometimes the prompt will be an article from the news, or a required article from your book. I may use Panopto to create a recording outlining the prompt and the question. Regardless of the method by which the assignment is delivered, all materials for the reflection assignment will be located in the module of the course to which the material pertains. Students are asked to write a 2-3 page essay on their reflection of the prompt by typing their response directly into the Assignment tool on ELMS – Canvas. Students may not upload a .doc or .pdf into the tool so that it circumvents the Turnitin tool.

Reflections must demonstrate that the student has read the article, is using classroom material, and has considered the prompt in light of the classroom material. What do you, as the student, believe about the prompt given your understanding of the material and your life experiences? While this is your reflection of the prompt, the prompt must be based on facts. It is not your opinion, necessarily, but your reasoned reflection and conclusion based on the facts and material that we learned in class.

Grading Rubric for Reflection Assignments:

Reflection Assignments will be graded according to the following rubric:
- 20% (20 pts) - Answer demonstrates an understanding of the material
- 20% (20 pts) - Answer is based on facts, research, and class material
- 15% (15 pts) - Answer demonstrates adequate development of each point used in the answer
- 15% (15 pts) - Answer demonstrates responsivity to the question(s)
- 15% (15 pts) - Answer demonstrates advanced writing skills: grammar, spelling, and organization
- 15% (15 pts) - Assignment is appropriately cited

One assignment must be completed before the Mid-Term Exam and one assignment need to be completed after the Mid-Term Exam. The third Reflection Assignment can be completed at any time that the student wants to complete the assignment.

Assignments for any one module are due before the start of the next module, as written on the Course Schedule. Students who miss a deadline for a Reflection Assignment may complete the assignment for 50% credit up to 24 hours after the Reflection Assignment is due.

Mid-Term Exam 100 points x 2.5 = 250 points
(To calculate your mid-term exam grade, multiple the score you earned on the mid-term by 2. Once you have that number, multiply that number by 2.5.)

The Mid-Term Exam is scheduled for the week of March 13, 2022. The Mid-Term Exam due no later than **Friday, March 17 at 11:59 pm**. **No exams may be rescheduled for any reason unless there is a University-approved absence as described below. Students who fail to take the exam by the time that the exam closes will receive a 0 on the exam.**

*If you have an excused absence:* I will excuse absences for medical necessity, family emergencies, religious observances, interviews with proper documentation, university-sanctioned events, or court appearances. All excused absences must have a note from the appropriate authority, e.g. doctor, court, university official, interviewer. If your absence is excused, you will have the opportunity to make-up the exam **within one week of the absence. There will be no exams made up by the student after one week.** It is **solely the student's responsibility to learn whether an exam was given on the day the student was absent and to arrange with professor to complete the exam.**

**Final Exam**  
100 points x 2.5 = 250 points

Every student is required to take the final exam. The final exam will be scheduled at the time proscribed by the University. I do not allow any final exam to be rescheduled except for medical necessity (documentation is required), religious observances, university-sanctioned events, or court appearance. **No exams may be rescheduled for any reason unless there is a reason described above. Students who fail to take the exam by the time that the exam closes will receive a 0 on the exam.**

**Total points**  
1000 points

**Extra Credit**  
Points to be added to the END of your point total, as calculated above

At times during the course of the semester, extra credit opportunities may be offered to students. These will depend on events that are occurring on or near campus. Students are able to earn up to fifty (50) points in extra credit during the course of the semester. Extra credit can be ad hoc events, as offered during the semester, or reflection papers, as described below.

**Total points**  
1000 points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>935-974</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>895-934</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>865-894</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>825-864</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>795-824</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<tr>
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<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>625-664</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>595-624</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>below 595</td>
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**University Policies**
[http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html](http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html)

**Expectations of this class will reflect some of the expectations of the criminal justice system.**

**Fairness.** Fairness dictates that we all have the same rules. Every student in this class will be held to the same standards.

**Professionalism.** Treat this class and engage with me as if you are going to a job or an internship in the criminal justice system. Please refer to me as Professor or Dr. Fisher.
Prepare to learn, grow, and be uncomfortable. This class will challenge traditional notions of age, sex, gender, ethnicity, modesty, social norms, and relationships. Be open to questioning what you know (or think you know) about the world. Learning to think in new ways can sometimes be uncomfortable – an expectation of this class is that you embrace the discomfort.

Use humor and compassion. The topics that we will be discussing in this class can be difficult. As with many professionals in the criminal justice system, I use humor to deflect from trauma, sadness, and tension. I encourage you to do the same – with compassion.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging. This course is designed to explicitly address the issue of identity and how different identities interact with the criminal justice system. We will discuss internal and external biases, hate speech and behavior, and bias-motivated incidents. It is the philosophy of the University of Maryland, the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, and me that all students at the University feel that their identity as a person is included in our conversation and that they feel a sense of belonging in this classroom. Disrespectful comments and conversation will not be tolerated. Expressing viewpoints as fact that are cultivated from disreputable news sources will not be tolerated. Students who wish to participate in class may do so only if they are willing to engage in a respectful and open discussion of ideas that are based on facts, evidence, and science.

- We will acknowledge that we all hold implicit biases that are shaped by our families, cultures, and communities.
- We will acknowledge that our implicit biases have an impact on how we interact with people and how we will do our jobs as criminal justice professionals.
- We will acknowledge that racism, ethno-centrism, xenophobia, homophobia, transphobia, and sexism exist in our culture and influence the ways in which the criminal justice system is structured and operates.
- We will acknowledge that the biases and structural “isms” of our society impact our classmates and colleagues in a very real way on a daily basis.
- We will try, during this class, to identify when these “isms” influence our opinions and critically analyze our thoughts and behaviors.
- We will speak and act with respect, kindness, openness, and compassion at all times during this semester.

Failure to acknowledge these expectations and parameters will result in a reduction of your Engagement grade and may result in a referral to the Office of Student Conduct.

Office Hours
Sometimes the material is understood better by talking it through. Because this is an asynchronous class, I may not have the instant feedback that I would get in an in-person classroom as to whether a student understands the material or is confused. Students who wish to discuss the material can attend my office hours to ask questions and talk through the material. Coming to my office hours are first-come, first-served. I will speak to each student individually and privately as they enter my physical office in College Park, my physical office in Shady Grove, or my Zoom meeting room.

Monday: 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm via Zoom or in-person at the Shady Grove campus
Tuesday and Thursday: 11:00 am – 12:00 pm via Zoom or in-person at the College Park campus

Students with Disabilities
I will make every effort to accommodate students who are registered with the ADS and who provide me with a University of Maryland ADS Accommodation form. I am not able to accommodate students who are not registered with ADS or who do not provide me with documentation that has not been reviewed by ADS.

Disability accommodations are the student’s responsibility. If the student has a disability or an accommodation that the student wants me to acknowledge, the student is required to have at least one 1:1 meeting with me in which the student discusses the accommodation and makes a plan for the accommodation. I cannot accommodate an issue that I don’t know exists or that is unclear. If a student has a request for an accommodation that requires an extension of deadlines, students are required to notify me of the request for an extension at least 48 hours in advance of the deadline.

Lecture Material
The lecture 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 insure 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).

Academic Integrity
Academic dishonesty, or the use of unauthorized and uncited sources to generate your work in this course, is strictly prohibited. The assignments in this course are intended to develop your critical thinking skills. If you are copying or paraphrasing someone else’s work, you are not utilizing your critical thinking skills to reach a reasoned decision on your own.

The prohibition on academic dishonesty extends to the use of any and all tools that use artificial intelligence to generate material. It also extends to using another’s work without proper citation or “collaborating” on assignments that aren’t intended for collaboration. We will use the Turnitin score on your written assignments, as well as other methods of detecting whether your material has been significantly “borrowed” from another source. Students who are found to be in violation of this classroom policy OR any other UMD campus policy regarding academic integrity will:

- Receive a 0 for the assignment; and
- Be referred to the Student Honor Council and the Office of Judicial Programs
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments and Readings Due</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 25, 2022</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
<td><strong>READ</strong>: Syllabus and Course Schedule; <strong>LISTEN</strong>: Course Introduction; <strong>TAKE</strong>: Quiz 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 30, 2022</td>
<td>Introduction to Courts and Case Processing</td>
<td><strong>READ</strong>: Section I, <em>Just Mercy</em>, Intro - CH. 1; <strong>LISTEN</strong>: Lecture: Section I; <strong>TAKE</strong>: Quiz 2; <strong>WRITE</strong>: Reflection Assignment #1</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 6, 2022</td>
<td>Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Law and the Courts</td>
<td><strong>READ</strong>: Section II, <em>Just Mercy</em>, CH. 2 - CH. 3; <strong>LISTEN</strong>: Lecture: Section 2; <strong>TAKE</strong>: Quiz 3; <strong>WRITE</strong>: Reflection Assignment #2</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 13, 2022</td>
<td>Prosecutors and Defense Attorneys</td>
<td><strong>READ</strong>: Section III, <em>Just Mercy</em>, CH. 4 - CH. 5; <strong>LISTEN</strong>: Lecture: Section 3; <strong>TAKE</strong>: Quiz 4; <strong>WRITE</strong>: Reflection Assignment #3</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 20, 2022</td>
<td>Judges and Jurors</td>
<td><strong>READ</strong>: Section IV, <em>Just Mercy</em>, CH. 6 - CH. 7; <strong>LISTEN</strong>: Lecture: Section 4; <strong>TAKE</strong>: Quiz 5; <strong>WRITE</strong>: Reflection Assignment #4</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 27, 2022</td>
<td>Pre-Trial and Trial Processes</td>
<td><strong>READ</strong>: Section V, <em>Just Mercy</em>, CH. 8 - CH. 9; <strong>LISTEN</strong>: Lecture: Section 5; <strong>TAKE</strong>: Quiz 6; <strong>WRITE</strong>: Reflection Assignment #5</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 6, 2022</td>
<td>Plea Bargaining and Trial Dynamics</td>
<td><strong>READ</strong>: Section VI, <em>Just Mercy</em>, CH. 12 - CH. 13; <strong>LISTEN</strong>: Lecture: Section 6; <strong>TAKE</strong>: Quiz 7; <strong>WRITE</strong>: Reflection Assignment #6</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 13, 2022</td>
<td><strong>MID-TERM EXAM DUE BY 11:59 PM on March 17, 2023</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>March 20, 2022</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 27, 20022</td>
<td>Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Law and the Courts</td>
<td><strong>READ</strong>: Section II, <em>Just Mercy</em>, CH. 2 - CH. 3; <strong>LISTEN</strong>: Lecture: Section 2; <strong>TAKE</strong>: Quiz 3; <strong>WRITE</strong>: Reflection Assignment #2</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 3, 2022</td>
<td>Plea Bargaining and Trial Dynamics</td>
<td><strong>READ</strong>: Section VI, <em>Just Mercy</em>, CH. 12 - CH. 13; <strong>LISTEN</strong>: Lecture: Section 6; <strong>TAKE</strong>: Quiz 7; <strong>WRITE</strong>: Reflection Assignment #6</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 10, 2022</td>
<td>Sentencing</td>
<td><strong>READ</strong>: Section VII, <em>Just Mercy</em>, CH. 14 - CH. 15; <strong>LISTEN</strong>: Lecture: Section 7; <strong>TAKE</strong>: Quiz 8; <strong>WRITE</strong>: Reflection Assignment #7</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 17, 2022</td>
<td>The Appellate Process</td>
<td><strong>READ</strong>: Section VIII, <em>Just Mercy</em>, Postscript; <strong>LISTEN</strong>: Lecture: Section 8; <strong>TAKE</strong>: Quiz 9; <strong>WRITE</strong>: Reflection Assignment #8</td>
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<td>May 8, 2022</td>
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