

## Syllabus

**Course Overview:** The US justice system is uniquely fragmented: federal, state, county, and city agencies all control a piece of the system. The day-to-day operation of the justice system, the data it produces, and efforts to reform the system all reflect this fragmentation with different agencies performing distinct functions in the detection of crime, apprehension of suspects, the prosecution and defense of the accused, and the adjudication, incarceration, and post-release supervision of offenders. In a very real sense, the US does not have a single justice system; instead, it has many different justice systems.

Despite this extreme fragmentation, the different systems often function in a manner that is strikingly similar across jurisdictions. Disproportionate involvement of minorities in the justice system and official responses to the killing of unarmed civilians by law enforcement officers are just two examples of these similarities.

This course will examine the operation of the US justice system with a focus on the organizational structure of the system and the data that the system produces. Students will explore contemporary issues in criminal justice while learning the basics of quantitative data analysis. Lectures and readings will introduce students to the core components of the justice system. Labs will require students to assess, transform and analyze data on contemporary issues in criminal justice.

## January 17 – Small Data with Large Consequences

- Lecture
  - Housekeeping
  - Overview of the course:
    - Introductions
    - Analytic perspective
    - What the course is not
    - Public data sets
- In-Class – Survey on familiarity with course topics

➤ **Reading due on January 24: be prepared to discuss in class**

Read ALL of:

- [The Color of Justice: Racial and Ethnic Disparities in State Prisons](#)
- [Criminal Justice Reform in California Rolls On](#)
- [California Embraces Criminal Justice Reform](#)

Read “Recommendations Summary” (pages 10-21) of:

- [California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice](#)

## January 24 – Current Topics on the Justice System

- In-Class Discussion of Reading
- Lecture – Overview of the justice system

- **Lab 1: be prepared to discuss in class on January 31, written response due on February 7**
  - LAB - Data Exploration of in-custody deaths in Texas using Google Sheets
- **Reading due on January 31: be prepared to discuss in class**
- [FBI Director: "We really have no idea ..."](#)
- [7,000 Deaths in Custody](#)

## January 31 – Public Data Sets & Justice System Data

- In-Class Discussion of Reading and Lab 1
- Lecture – Matrices, Data Structure & Types of Data

- **Written response to Lab 1 Due**
- **Reading due on February 7: be prepared to discuss in class**
  - [Congress is Finally Going to Make Local Law Enforcement Report How Many People They Kill](#)
  - [States Hid Cop Killings from Feds](#)
  - [Arrest Related Death Program: Data Quality Profile](#)

## February 7 – Drilling Down, Slicing, Dicing & Metadata

- In-Class Discussion of Reading
- Lecture – More on Data Structure and Types of Data

- **Lab 2: be prepared to discuss in class on February 14, written response due on February 21**
  - Merging TX and CA data sets
  - or
  - Offender Based Transaction System (OBTS) Drill-Down
- **Reading due on February 14 – TBD**

## February 14 – Visual Presentation of Data

- In-Class Discussion of Lab 2
- Lecture - Using Graphs for Analysis and Presentation

- **Reading due on February 21**
  - [Criminal Justice Realignment in CA](#)
  - [Looking Past the Hype: 10 Questions ...](#) (Download the entire paper from the SSRN website)
  - [How Has Proposition 47 Affected California's Jail Population?](#)
- **Also due on February 21: Written response to Lab 2**

## February 21 – Criminal Justice Reform in California

- Short Quiz on Lectures and Readings through February 7
- Lecture – Criminal Justice Reform in California

- **Reading due on February 28 – TBD**
- **Also due on February 28 – Selection of topic and dataset for final project – one-page abstract**

## February 28 – Data Abstraction

- In-Class Discussion of Reading
- Lecture – Turning Qualitative Data into Quantitative Data

- **Lab 3: be prepared to discuss in class on March 14, written response due on March 21**
  - Coding in-custody & arrest-related deaths
- **Readings due on March 7**
  - [Finally Good News on the School to Prison Pipeline](#)
  - [Juvenile Justice Solutions ...](#)
  - [20 Years of Flawed Criminal Justice Policy](#)

## March 7 – Contemporary Issues 1 – Juvenile Justice

- Guest Lecture – David Muhammad, National Center on Crime and Delinquency

- **Reading due on March 14: be prepared to discuss in class**

Read ALL of:

- [In Wisconsin, a Backlash ...](#)
- [State of Wisconsin v Eric L. Loomis](#)
- ["Should Prison Sentences Be Based On Crimes That Haven't Been Committed Yet?"](#)
- [Risk Needs Assessment 101](#)

## March 14 – Contemporary Issues 2 – Bail Reform and Pre-Trial Detention

- Short Quiz on Lectures and Readings through March 7
- In-Class Discussion of reading & Lab 3

➤ **Reading due on March 21: TBC**

➤ **Also due on March 21: Written response to Lab 3**

## March 21 – Contemporary Issues 2 – TBD – (continued)

- In-Class Discussion of Reading
- Lecture – TBD

➤ **Reading due following Spring Break, on April 4: be prepared to discuss in class**

Read pp. 1-16 of:

[The Civil Rights Division's Pattern and Practice Police Reform Work](#)

Read ALL of:

- [Oakland Police Misconduct Cases Raise Questions ...](#)  
Read Summary (pp. 1-8) and skim the rest of:
- [Civil Rights Investigations of Local Police ...](#)

**March 28 – Spring Break, No Class**

**April 4 – Contemporary Issues 3 – Federal Oversight of Law Enforcement**

- In-Class Discussion of Reading
- Lecture – The Federal Role in the Criminal Justice System

- **Reading due on April 11: be prepared to discuss in class**
- [OPD and Court-Ordered Reform](#)
  - [Police Reform & Accountability Accomplishments](#)  
Read pp. 17-40 of:
  - [The Civil Rights Division's Pattern and Practice Police Reform Work](#)

**April 11 – Contemporary Issues 3 – Federal Oversight of Law Enforcement – (continued)**

- Guest Lecture – Kelli Evans, Senior Director Administration of Justice, California State Bar

**April 18 –**

- Short Quiz on Lectures and Readings through April 11

**April 25 – TBD**

**May 2 – TBD – Last Day of Class**

## Crime & Punishment: taking the measure of the US justice system

### Legal Studies 88 – Spring 2017

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#### Grading

Students will be graded based on the following:

- 10% – Attendance
- 10% – Class Participation
- 60% – 3 Labs and 3 Review quizzes – 10% each
- 20% – A final project requiring the analysis of a selected dataset, some basic transformation of the data, and a *descriptive* presentation of the findings.

The final project will have at least two milestones, including the development of an evaluation focus, a discussion of the data limitations, and a plan for the final presentation of the data (written or in-class).