

Fall 2003

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE 103
COURTS AND SOCIETY

Instructor: Mona Lynch
office / phone: MH 513 / 924-2958
e-mail: mlynch@email.sjsu.edu
Class meetings: T-Th. 10:30-11:45 AM--Room TBA
Office hours: T 12:30-3:00 PM; Th. 12:30-2:30 PM

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will systematically cover the basic components of the US courts, with an emphasis on how criminal cases proceed through the court system. We will begin with an overview of the US court history, structure, and function, and an introduction to basic procedural and substantive criminal law. We will move on to a discussion of some of the contemporary court processes and practices, including charging and arraignment, plea bargaining, the trial process, sentencing, and post-sentence processes. In this section we will begin with the role of judges, juries, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and corollary legal actors in the adjudication process. The other major component of the course will entail the examination of series of special issues and problems related to contemporary criminal courts, including 3 strikes cases, federal drug cases, capital cases, influences of race, class, and gender on court outcomes, sex offender laws, and political influences on courts and their participants. Throughout the course, we will examine the gap between the ideals of the court system and the realities of its operations.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

In addition to participating in the class discussions and activities on Tuesdays and Thursdays, you are required to:

- 1) Complete the required readings prior to the class for which they are assigned.
- 2) Complete a minimum of 4 hours of independent court observation.
- 3) Plan 1 set of discussion section topic questions and lead one discussion section related to your readings and/or court observations & turn in brief summary.
- 4) Turn in a typed 3-5 page paper that will involve critically analyzing the gap between the ideals of justice and the realities of contemporary courts as illustrated by your observations.
- 5) Take 1 in-class quiz.
- 6) Take 2 in-class exams (a mid-term and a final) that will cover the readings and lecture materials.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Neubauer, David (2001). *America's Courts and the Criminal Justice System*
Wadsworth Publishing. Available at Spartan and Roberts bookstores.

Lynch AJ 103 Reader (2003). Available at Maple Press, 431 E. San Carlos (next to
Subway, just past 10th Street).

GRADING, MISSED EXAM & LATE ASSIGNMENTS POLICY

Only legitimately excused missed exams, tests, and assignments may be made up. My policy for what constitutes legitimate excuses will be outlined during our first class meeting. Only under extreme and unavoidable emergency circumstances will you be able to make up an exam for a legitimate excuse if you have not given notice of your absence before the actual scheduled exam period. You may only make up 1 scheduled exam/quiz during the semester, so if you are not in attendance for more than 1, you will receive zero points for any additional missed exams or tests. The missed quizzes and midterms will be taken on the final day of class: Tuesday, December 9. The make-up exams will be in a different format than the original exams. The missed final period will be arranged only if absolutely necessary, and may also be in a different format than the original final.

The court paper deadline is a firm deadline. Each **day** (including weekends) that your paper is late will result in a 5 point deduction from your grade for that assignment. Again, only legitimate excuses as outlined in the first class meeting will be accepted to avoid the late penalty. Computer / printer breakdowns are generally NOT legitimate excuses. Your final grade for the course will be based upon your performances on the in-class exams, the assignments, and the final project, as follows:

Quiz:	100 points maximum
Midterm:	300 points maximum
Final:	300 points maximum
Discussion section:	100 points maximum
Court paper:	200 points maximum
Total possible:	1000 points

A range =	900 points or above
B range =	800-899 points
C range =	700-799 points
D range =	600-699 points
F =	599 points or below

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF TOPICS / ASSIGNMENTS / DUE DATES:

WEEK 1 (August 26-28) Overview of course and brief history of courts.

Read: Textbook, chapter 2.

WEEK 2 (September 2-4): State and federal courts.

Read: Textbook, chapters 3 & 4; chapter 18 recommended

WEEK 3 (September 9-11): Introduction to legal actors; Prosecutors.

Read: Textbook, chapters 5 & 6.

WEEK 4 (September 16-18): Prosecutors, cont.; Defense attorneys.

Read: Reader, chapter 1; Textbook, chapter 7.

WEEK 5 (September 23-25): Judges; Defendants, victims, and witnesses. Case study: Shifting power in the criminal courts.

Read: Textbook Chapters 8 & 9.

IN-CLASS QUIZ ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25.

WEEK 6 (September 30-October 2): Arrest, arraignment, and bail.

Read: Textbook, chapter 10 & 11; Reader, chapter 2.

WEEK 7 (October 7-9): Evidence in the courts. Case study: snitches in federal drug cases.

Read: Textbook, chapter 12; reader chapter 3..

WEEK 8 (October 14-16): Finish snitches case study/exam review.

MIDTERM EXAM ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16

WEEK 9 (October 21-23): Plea bargaining.

Read: Textbook, chapter 13; Reader, chapter 4.

WEEK 10 (October 28-30): Criminal trials and the role of the jury.

Read: Textbook, chapter 14.

WEEK 11 (November 4-6): Sentencing. Case study: 3 strikes laws.

Read: Textbook, chapters 15 & 16.

WEEK 12 (November 11-13): The appellate process.

Read: Textbook, chapter 17.

WEEK 13 (November 18-20): Case study: Capital cases.

Read: Reader, chapter 5.

WEEK 14 (November 25): Case studies: Juvenile Courts; Sex offenders in the courts.

Read: Textbook, chapter 19; Reader, chapter 6.

PAPERS DUE IN CLASS ON TUESDAY NOVEMBER 25.

NO CLASS THURSDAY--THANKSGIVING.

WEEK 15 (December 2-4): Case study: Racialized justice, politics, and the courts.

Read: Reader, chapter 7.

WEEK 16: Make-up day/final review

Tuesday, December 9: Make-up exams/quizzes.

Final exam during scheduled period: Thursday, December 11, 10:45 AM-12:00 noon.

NOTE LATER STARTING TIME!