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Class time: M&W 1200-1315; Office hours: M&W 100-1200 or by appointment
Spring 2005

JS 103
COURTS AND SOCIETY

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will provide a survey of how courts in the United States function, with an emphasis on criminal courts. We will review the history of our court system as well as Constitutional guidelines for their functioning, basic procedural law from arrest, arraignment, grand jury indictment, trial, sentencings and appeal. All levels of courts will be examined from municipal to the United States Supreme Court. Some attention will be Given to courts of Juvenile, Military, domestic and International jurisdiction. Alternative courts such as Drug, Domestic Violence and Family Court will be included and the subject of student observations. The roles of the major participants; defense and prosecuting attorneys, probation officers and judges will be critically examined. Controversial topics such as plea bargaining, mandatory sentences and capital punishment will inform our conclusions regarding the Justice System. We will also make use of the interactive sentencing exercises on the CD that accompanies the text.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are encouraged to come to class having done the readings for that week, and prepared to discuss issues raised by the instructor. There will be two midterms and a final exam. All exams will be a combination of multiple choice, fill-in and essay. All exams must be taken to pass the class. In addition, students will be required to do a court observation for which there will be a handout. Finally, each student is required to research the criminal justice system of another country and make a presentation to the class—either on their own or in a group using power point or overhead slides. This assignment has been very successful in the past, so students are encouraged to sign up for the country of their choice as soon as possible. A handout will also be provided. Sample presentations are available for guidance. Two thirds of all assignments must be completed if the student desires an incomplete in the course.

REQUIRED TEXT

David Neubauer, American Courts and the Criminal Justice System (8th edition).
Wadsworth Publishing, 2005.

Raymond Kellser, Study Guide for American Courts and the Criminal Justice System;

Wadsworth Publishing, 2005.

EVALUATION

Midterm #1	25%
Midterm #2	25%
Class	
Presentation	15%
Court	
Observation	5%
Class Participation	5%
Final exam	25%

The grades will be determined by a class generated curve. Missed exams may only be taken on the final day of class with proper documentation of illness or other emergency. Only one exam may be missed! Class presentations must also be presented on the day signed up for—oversleeping, forgetting your disk etc. do not constitute acceptable excuses. Students should always be aware of their class standing. Please be aware that I consider professional ethics very important, as such, recycled presentations, and cheating on exams will receive an automatic 'F'. It is the sole discretion of the instructor whether the student will also receive a failing grade in the class and be referred for University disciplinary action.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Please be prepared and punctual. Turn off your cell phones; excessive talking during lectures is disturbing to other students and the instructor. I encourage thoughtful discussion and response to lectures—those who participate regularly may have their final grade enhanced by ½ grade point—B to B+ etc. Do not ask the instructor for her lecture notes, it is your responsibility to attend class or find a note sharing buddy.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1	Introduction and class procedures Cp. 1 Courts, Crime and Controversy Visit a few of the courthouse websites on pg.5 Visit the Bureau of Justice Statistics Website On page 19
WEEK 2	Law and Crime Cp. 2 Civil vs Criminal jurisdiction Visit the Constitutional Law Center on pg. 47; download a Copy of the Bill of Rights

Assignment of presentation topics & dates

Famous Trial #1

- WEEK 3 State and Federal Courts
Cp. 3-4
Visit the USSC website on page 76
Famous Trial #2
Set up court observations
- WEEK 4 Dynamics of Courthouse Justice
Cp. 5 Assembly line justice
Public Defender Video
Cp. 6 Prosecutors, discovery rules, ethics
Famous Trial #3
Midterm Review
- WEEK 5 **Midterm #1 MARCH 7**
Cp. 7 Defense Attorneys
Scottsboro Trial Film
- WEEK 6 Judges; state & federal
Key cases pg. 185
Famous Trials #4-5
Student presentations begin
- WEEK 7 Defendants & Victims in Court
Cp.9
Student presentations continue
Access the NVC website on pg. 212
Famous Trial #6
- WEEK 8 Arrest to Arraignment
Cp 10
Cases on pg. 230-1
Student presentations continue
- WEEK 9 **SPRING BREAK!**
MARCH 28-APRIL 1
- WEEK 10 **Midterm #2 APRIL 11**
CP.11 Bail; jail statistics, preventive detention
Famous Trial #7
- WEEK 11 Discovery/ Suppression motions
Cp. 12
Interrogation cases pg. 267

WEEK 12 Plea bargaining
Cp. 13
Controversies, overreaching, ethics, insanity defense
Frontline Video (time permitting)

WEEK 13 Trials and Juries
Cp. 14
Review cases on pg. 309
Famous Trial #8
COURT OBSERVATIONS DUE APRIL 25!

WEEK 14 Sentencing options, trends, reforms
Cp 15
Theores of punishment

WEEK 15 Sentencing continued
12 Angry Men film
Film Assignment distributed
Review for Final
Make-up missed midterms

Last day of Instruction May 17

FINAL EXAM MONDAY MAY 23 0945-1200