

Law and Society

| Fall 2024 | Department of Sociology and Criminology and Law |
| University of Florida | Classes 10741 and 26329 |

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course introduces students to the scholarly study of law from a multidisciplinary, liberal arts perspective. We will examine legal ideas, legal institutions, and the legal process with emphasis on the study of criminal behavior and the American criminal justice process. Note: This is not a course in the content of the law. Instead, it is a course designed to help you critically evaluate the interaction between the law and the society in which it operates.



Professor: Dr. Lora Levett (she/hers)
Email: llevett@ufl.edu, 352-392-7181 (although email is much faster)
(put CJL3038 in the subject line)
Office hours: Thursdays 10:30am – 12:30pm, and by appointment
Turlington 3336 and on zoom
<https://ufl.zoom.us/my/loralevett>

Teaching Assistants:

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READINGS and MATERIALS:

We will be reading required peer- reviewed articles, chapters, law review articles, and news articles that are available publicly or through our library. These are assigned for each module and available as PDFs through our canvas website. We will also read Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption by Bryan Stevenson. Copies are available through the UF Bookstore or anywhere you buy books. We will also listen to podcasts and watch videos that are publicly available.

1. Define, compare, and contrast different definitions of and approaches to understanding law.

2. Identify and analyze functions and dysfunctions of law.

3. Apply concepts in law and society to real-world events to demonstrate understanding of law in everyday life.

7. Explain concepts in law and society to laypeople to demonstrate understanding and ability to engage in science communication.

6. Debate how different values systems contribute to the creation and practice of law. Explain how various ways of knowing contribute to those choices.

5. Describe the evolution and development of law, legal institutions, process, and roles in the legal system. Analyze these concepts using law and society approaches.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

4. Compare and contrast various theoretical perspectives in law and society as they relate to legal ideas, institutions, processes, and practices.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS



EXAMS

Three non-cumulative, closed note/book exams will be administered via Honorlock exam proctoring. The Exams consist of 40 multiple choice questions worth 2 points each. The exams will cover all topics discussed up to the date of the exam including assigned readings, lectures, and discussions. The final exam is non-cumulative; it is a third exam. Note that even though the assigned readings may not be covered in lecture, you are responsible for knowing the material. To help, you have a study guide for each reading.



CLASS DISCUSSIONS

Discussion is pivotal to engaging in critical thinking about the ideas in this course. Therefore, we will engage in discussions throughout the class. Generally, to earn full points, you must make a thoughtful contribution to the class discussion, post your contributions on time, and follow all the instructions for posting. Each discussion is worth a total of 10 points. There are 14 discussions throughout the semester. Your lowest discussion score will be dropped. Thus, there are 130 total possible points.



APPLICATION ASSIGNMENTS

Many of the concepts, theoretical perspectives, and issues we discuss in class can aid in your analysis and understanding of real-world events or law in everyday life. For this assignment, throughout the semester you will be responsible for turning in 3 analysis of current events, relating the events to some class material that we have discussed this semester. The rubric for doing your analysis is available in the Canvas site. Each of these assignments is worth 15 points toward your final grade for a total of 45 points toward your final grade.



JUST MERCY PAPER ASSIGNMENT

You are responsible for writing a response paper after reading the book Just Mercy. Details about the response paper (including the grading rubric) are available in the Canvas site. Your paper is worth 50 points toward your final grade.

Each of the course requirements is designed to assess whether you have met one or more of your course objectives. The course objectives are matched with the course requirements for you below.

COURSE REQUIREMENT	COURSE OBJECTIVE(S)
EXAMS	1, 2, 4, 5, 6
CLASS DISCUSSIONS	1, 3, 4, 5, 6
APPLICATION ASSIGNMENTS	2, 3, 6, 7
JUST MERCY PAPER	2, 3, 6, 7

Final grades will be determined according to the point structure below and are based on your work on a combination of exams and assignments. GPA assignments are also noted. For more information about UF grades and grading policies, see the [UF Undergraduate Catalog Grades and Grading Policies \(linked here\)](#).

COMPONENT OF YOUR GRADE		POINTS AVAILABLE	POINTS EARNED
EXAMS	Exam 1	80	
	Exam 2	80	
	Exam 3	80	
Discussions	14 Discussions worth 10 points each (lowest discussion score dropped)	130	
Application Assignments	3 Assignments worth 15 points each	45	
Just Mercy Paper		50	
TOTAL POINTS		465	

GRADING

POINTS EARNED	GRADE	CORRESPONDING GRADE POINTS
432-465	A	4.00
418-431	A-	3.67
404-417	B+	3.33
385-403	B	3.00
372-384	B-	2.67
358-371	C+	2.33
339-357	C	2.00
325-338	C-	1.67
311-324	D+	1.33
292-310	D	1.00
279-291	D-	0.67
278 and below	E	0.00

On failing grades:
 You must earn at least a 'C' for the course to count for the criminology. If you are assigned an 'E' for the course, I must report whether you never attending the course, whether you stopped attending the course and did not complete it, or whether you attended the entire course and earned an E. Therefore, if you believe you are going to fail, complete the entire course anyway because this may have implications for financial aid. However, I hope you will come talk with me and we can work together to address the issues before it gets to that point!

Note: I do not round up or add points at the end of the semester, so please do not ask. However, you will be given a 5-point extra credit opportunity this semester. I encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity! It is provided so that if your grade is considered 'borderline' or within a few points of the next highest grade, you will have the opportunity to boost your grade. It is offered fairly to everyone, unlike arbitrarily asking the professor to award extra points on an individual basis at the end of the semester.

COURSE POLICIES



Makeup Policies

I understand that someone's life sometimes interferes with one's ability to complete class requirements. If you have a legitimate reason for missing a class assignment, you will be allowed to make up what you missed if you contact me immediately before or after the missing assignment. Legitimate reasons include Title IX related absences, serious accidents or emergencies affecting you, your roommates, or family, official university activities/requirements (e.g., school related trips, professional conferences, athletic competitions, music performances), military obligations, severe weather conditions that prevent class participation, legal obligations. Religious holidays are excused but must be discussed in advance.

Student Computing Requirements

The University of Florida expects students taking online courses to acquire computer hardware and software appropriate to the degree program. Coursework will require ongoing use of a computer and a broadband connection to the internet. You will need a computer with a camera, microphone, and speakers. UF does not recommend students rely on tablet devices, mobile phones, or Chromebook devices as their primary computer.

In this course, we will use Mediasite for lectures, Honorlock for exams (see above), and Microsoft Word for assignments (available through UF).

Honorlock Exam Proctoring

Exams will be proctored by Honorlock. Honorlock is an online proctoring service that allows you to take your exam from the comfort of your home. You DO NOT need to create an account, download software, or schedule an appointment in advance. All that is needed is a computer, a working webcam, and a stable internet connection.

To get started, you will need Google Chrome and to download the Honorlock Chrome Extension. You can download the extension at www.honorlock.com/extension/install. When you are ready to test, log into Canvas, go to your course, and click on your exam. Clicking 'launch proctoring' will begin the authentication process, where you will take a picture of yourself and show your ID. Honorlock will be recording your exam session by webcam as well as recording your screen. Honorlock support is available for you during your exam. If you encounter any issues, you may contact them by live chat, phone (844-243-2500) and/or email (support@honorlock.com). If you encounter issues within Canvas, you may contact the UF Help Desk at helpdesk@ufl.edu or 352-392-4357. If you experience technical problems, you'll need to email Dr. Levett with your ticket number from those services. Last, please click here for a page from UF to prepare for an Honorlock Exam.

COURSE POLICIES, CONTINUED

Virtual Classroom Behavior

Students are expected to behave appropriately and professionally in the online environment. This class is meant to be an enriching, enjoyable experience for all of you. Disrupting the class or behaving inappropriately in our online environment results in depriving your fellow classmates and yourself of this experience. The instructor is the final arbiter of what behavior is appropriate and inappropriate. The instructor may remove your posts if they are deemed unacceptable.

Netiquette Guide for Online Courses

These guidelines are adapted from the UF Center for Teaching Excellence and are available in full here.

When communicating, you should always treat your instructor and fellow students with respect. Remember all college level communication should have correct spelling and grammar. Don't use all caps BECAUSE THAT LOOKS LIKE YELLING. On discussion boards, ensure you are respectful of others' opinions, even when they are different from your own. You can disagree (in fact, disagreeing and having a constructive conversation is essential to critical thinking!). However, you should do that in a respectful, non-personal way.

Communication

I am here to help, and there are several ways in which you can communicate with me:

Discussion Board: You can post content or class related questions to the discussion board in our Canvas course shell. Be sure to look at previous posts to see if your question has been answered, and I will check this board regularly and weigh in. However, often your classmates may be your best resource. Think of this discussion board as a place to ask things that you would ask in class.

Email: The fastest way to reach me is through email – please include CJL3038 in the subject line. If you do not hear back from me within 48 hours, please pop it to the top of my inbox by forwarding it. I get a TON of email, and I don't want to lose yours in the shuffle. Email is for private questions or something you would not generally ask during class.

Office Hours: Please pop by and say hi during office hours! I am happy to meet with you about the material, answer questions about the major, and chat about careers – really talk about whatever you'd like to cover academically. To get the most out of office hours, come with an agenda of things you would like to cover. If the times do not work, email for an appointment!

COURSE POLICIES, CONTINUED

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <http://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Additional Course Fees

Class number 26329 has no additional course fee. Class number 10741 has an additional course fee of \$27.99.

Academic Misconduct

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. [See the UF Conduct Code website for more information.](#) If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. [See the “Get Started with the DRC” webpage on the Disability Resource Center.](#) It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester.

Civility and Values

As members of this class and university, we are members of a larger learning community where excellence is achieved through civility. Our actions affect everyone in our community. Everyone is to be treated with respect, regardless of political affiliation, gender, age, race, religion, sexual orientation, culture, or other identity.

In-Class Recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A ‘class lecture’ is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To ‘publish’ means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

RESOURCES

Campus Resources

Part of learning about topics in law and society involves examining sensitive topics, such as racial disparities, gender discrimination, and victimization. This may be emotionally difficult at times, and I encourage you to seek out campus resources for support. UF provides several different types of resources:

Counseling and Wellness Center:

<https://counseling.ufl.edu> 352-392-1575

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit

<https://shcc.ufl.edu>

UF Police Department Office of Victim Services:

<http://www.police.ufl.edu/victim-services>, or call 352-392-111 (or 911 for emergencies)

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; [Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website.](#)

Dean of Students Office – Emergency Response team:

<https://dso.ufl.edu/resources/uf-emergency-response/>

U Matter, We Care can also help students, staff, or faculty in distress. You can reach them via email at umatter@ufl.edu or phone 352-392-1575. If you find yourself concerned about a fellow student, you can notify U Matter, We Care, and they will reach out to the student. We are a community who looks out for one another, so don't hesitate to reach out if you're worried.

GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, [visit the GatorWell website](#) or call 352-2734450.

Academic Resources

Academic resources may be helpful in navigating issues you may encounter in this class or during your time at UF. I cannot tell you how many students I have referred to the Teaching Center for Study Skills help or the Writing Studio for assistance in writing. Student have always really benefitted from the services. AND, they are already included in your student fees! I encourage you to take advantage of these resources.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601, <http://www.career.ufl.edu/>. Career assistance and counseling services.

Library Support: [Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.](#) Call 866-281-6309 or email ask@ufl.libanswers.com for more information.

Teaching Center: 1317 Turlington Hall, 352-392-2010, or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. <https://academicresources.clas.ufl.edu/> General study skills and tutoring.

Writing Studio: <http://www.writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio> Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. Daytime (9:30am-3:30pm): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138 | Evening (5:00pm-7:00pm): 1545 W University Avenue (Library West, Rm. 339). Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

Academic Complaints: Office of the Ombuds; [Visit the Complaint Portal webpage for more information.](#)

Enrollment Management Complaints (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions): [View the Student Complaint Procedure webpage for more information.](#)

RESOURCES

Technical Help

For technical issues with the course, contact the UF Help Desk at helpdesk@ufl.edu or 352-392-4357. Honorlock support is also available to you during your exam, support@honorlock.com or 844-243-2500. If you encounter technical issues, please contact the help desk or honorlock first, and then contact me, including your help desk ticket number.

Succeeding in an Online Class

I'm excited to be working with you this semester! Here are some tips to help you succeed in the online format:

Know what is expected of you in class. Make sure you read the syllabus thoroughly and stay on top of to-do lists each week.

Communicate with me! I am happy to answer questions and am available just as much as if we were in a classroom. Make sure to take advantage of office hours or to email for an appointment if you'd like to chat – I am here to help.

Schedule 'class times' for yourself. Remember, 12-15 credits is a full time load. This means that for every hour you're spending 'in class' you should be spending 2-3 hours outside of the class studying each week. Translated for online classes, that means you should allocate around 9-12 hours per week for a 3 credit class. Remember, you earn 0 points for work turned in late!

Actively watch lectures – you're not watching TV! Take notes as if you were sitting in a live class. Post questions about the material on the discussion board – the online class offers a lot of opportunities to interact about the material, and I hope you'll take advantage of those.

If you run into trouble or need help in the course, do not wait to ask for it! I am here to help. The help desk is also incredibly helpful with technical issues, so don't forget to take advantage of those resources as well. Take pictures or screenshots and document what's happening.

Back up your work – since we're primarily working in a virtual environment, it becomes even more important to keep backups.

Be attentive in your work. Each assignment is carefully laid out for you. Make sure to answer every part of the question.

Enjoy the journey and the opportunity to expand your knowledge. I learn new things each semester, and I look forward to this journey with you.

[For more tips from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences for online learning, click here.](#)



COURSE SCHEDULE

The material for each week will be released at the beginning of the course. Pay attention to the ‘to do’ list as the materials may change based on where we are in the course, current events, new scholarship, etc. With each topic, you’ll have readings to complete, lectures to watch, and assignments to complete. The syllabus and schedule are provided for your information and may change as deemed necessary. You are responsible for learning the material contained in the syllabus and on our Canvas site as well as any modification that are made during class. All changes to the syllabus will be announced and emailed to you. When you have questions, please contact me. A proposed semester schedule appears below, and any changes will be updated on Canvas and announced in class.

Unit	Week	Date	Topics	Reading(s)	ASSESSMENT	DUE DATE
1	1	Aug 22-24	Topic 1: Introduction to Course	Calavita, 2016	Syllabus quiz Discussion 1	Aug 30 Aug 30
1	2	Aug 26-30	Topic 2: What is Law?	Tommasoli, 2012	Discussion 2 Discussion 3	Aug 30
1	3	Sept 3-6	Topic 3: Before the Law	Bracket, 1995 Kafka, 1998 (1925) Poiltzer, 1962 (Kafka, 2 readings)	Discussion 4	Sept 6
1	4	Sept 9-13	Topic 4: Critical Thinking and the Law	Ellerton, 2017	Discussion 5 Discussion 6	Sept 13 Sept 13
1	5	Sept 16-20	Topic 5: The Evolution of Law	Llewellyn & Hoebel, 1941	Discussion 7	Sept 20
1	5	Sept 20	--	--	Application Assignment 1	Sept 20
1	6	Sept 23-27	EXAM ONE	EXAM ONE	EXAM ONE	Sept 23-27

COURSE SCHEDULE CONTINUED

Unit	Week	Date	Topics	Reading(s)	ASSESSMENT	DUE DATE
2	7	Sept 30 – Oct 4	Topic 6: Tough Choices in Law and Society: Crime Control v. Due Process	Kaylor, 2014	Discussion 8	Oct 4
2	8	Oct 7-11	Topic 7: Resolving Conflict in an Adversarial System	Curtis, 1951 Frank, 1950 Mills, 1971	Discussion 9	Oct 11
2	8	Oct 11	--	--	Application Assignment 2	Oct 11
2	9	Oct 14-17	Topic 8: Tough Choices in Law and Society: Discretion and Equality	Klein, 2016	Discussion 10	Oct 17
2	10	Oct 21-25	Topic 9: Legal Players and Discretion	Sommers & Morotta, 2014		
2	10	Oct 25	--	--	Application Assignment 3	Oct 25
2	11	Oct 28- Nov 1	EXAM TWO	EXAM TWO	EXAM TWO	Oct 28 – Nov 1

COURSE SCHEDULE CONTINUED

Unit	Week	Date	Topics	Reading(s)	ASSESSMENT	DUE DATE
3	12	Nov 4 - 8	Topic 10: More Legal Players and Discretion	Maier, 2002 Barry, 2002 deToqueville, 1831	Discussion 11	Nov 8
3	13	Nov 12-15	Topic 11: Theoretical Perspectives in Law and Society	Lenin, 1919 Thornton & Wife v. The Suffolk Manufacturing Company, 1852 Ballinger, 1992	Discussion 12	Nov 15
3	13	Nov 15	--	--	JUST MERCY PAPER DUE	Nov 15
3	14	Nov 18-22	Topic 12: More Theoretical Perspectives in Law and Society	EEOC v. Sears, Roebuck, & Co. Harris v. Forklift Systems, Inc.	Discussion 13	Nov 22
3	15	Nov 25-29	Fall break	--	--	--
	16	Dec 2-4	Topic 13: Science-Based Policy Solutions	Summers, 1999	Discussion 14	Dec 9
3	17	Dec 9-13	EXAM THREE	EXAM THREE	EXAM THREE	Dec 9-13

A MESSAGE FOR STUDENTS



Finally, I have a message for you all, taken from the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1997):

“To Students:

You forfeit your chance for life at its fullest when you withhold your best effort in learning. When you give only the minimum in learning, you receive only the minimum in return. Even with your parents’ best example and your teachers’ best efforts, in the end it is your work that determines how much and how well you learn. When you work to your full capacity, you can hope to attain the knowledge and skills that will enable you to create your future and control your destiny. If you do not, you will have your future thrust upon you by others. Take hold your life, apply your gifts and talents, and work with dedication and self-discipline. Have high expectations for yourself, and convert every challenge into an opportunity.”

It is my hope that you will take this course and your years in college as a unique, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to expand your mind, enjoy yourself and your capacity to learn, and absorb as much knowledge as you can. Remember, you may never be here again. Get ready for a GREAT semester, and as always, **press on!**

-Dr. L