

## **Term Information**

Effective Term Autumn 2026

## **General Information**

Course Bulletin Listing/Subject Area Sociology  
Fiscal Unit/Academic Org Sociology - D0777  
College/Academic Group Arts and Sciences  
Level/Career Undergraduate  
Course Number/Catalog 3555  
Course Title Exploring the U.S. Legal System  
Transcript Abbreviation Exploring US Legal  
Course Description This course involves in-person, off-campus observations of many different aspects of the US legal system. By observing the US Legal System in action, including but not limited to civil cases, evictions, environmental court, and family court, student's personal theoretical knowledge can be tested against real-world examples that are further explored in class sessions and materials.  
Semester Credit Hours/Units Fixed: 3

## **Offering Information**

Length Of Course 14 Week  
Flexibly Scheduled Course Never  
Does any section of this course have a distance education component? Yes  
Is any section of the course offered Less than 50% at a distance  
Grading Basis Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory  
Repeatable No  
Course Components Lecture  
Grade Roster Component Lecture  
Credit Available by Exam No  
Admission Condition Course No  
Off Campus Never  
Campus of Offering Columbus, Lima, Mansfield, Marion, Newark, Wooster

## **Prerequisites and Exclusions**

Prerequisites/Corequisites Sociology 3410 or Sociology 3488  
Exclusions  
Electronically Enforced Yes

## **Cross-Listings**

Cross-Listings

## **Subject/CIP Code**

Subject/CIP Code 45.1101  
Subsidy Level Baccalaureate Course  
Intended Rank Sophomore, Junior, Senior

## **Requirement/Elective Designation**

The course is an elective (for this or other units) or is a service course for other units

## **Course Details**

### **Course goals or learning objectives/outcomes**

- 1) Engage in pre-exposure analysis and self-reflection to identify thoughts, expectations, and potential stereotypes and biases about the US Legal System
- 2) Develop a familiarity with the major features of the US legal system;
- 3) Identify areas of the US legal system that function as theoretically expected and consider who (what groups) this benefits/harms
- 4) Analyze the conditions under which the US legal system does not meet its stated goals; and
- 5) Engage in ongoing post-exposure analysis and self-reflection regarding thoughts, expectations, stereotypes and biases about the US Legal System.

### **Content Topic List**

- Civil law
- Criminal substantive law
- Criminal procedural law
- Juvenile law
- Family law
- Eviction and Environmental law
- Legislative process
- Legal jobs

### **Sought Concurrence**

Yes

## Attachments

- Sociology 4555.docx  
(Syllabus. Owner: Downey,Douglas B)
- cover letter Sociology 4555.pdf  
(Cover Letter. Owner: Downey,Douglas B)
- 2024 Sociology and Criminology curriculum maps 4.7.25.xlsx: curriculum map  
(Other Supporting Documentation. Owner: Downey,Douglas B)
- 4555 concurrence from law school.pdf: law school concurrence  
(Other Supporting Documentation. Owner: Downey,Douglas B)
- Updated concurrence.pdf: updated law school concurrence  
(Concurrence. Owner: Nzitatira,Hollie Nyseth)
- Updated Cover letter Soc 3555.docx: updated cover letter  
(Cover Letter. Owner: Nzitatira,Hollie Nyseth)
- Soc 3555 Exploring the Legal System-Updated For Submission.docx: updated syllabus  
(Syllabus. Owner: Nzitatira,Hollie Nyseth)
- 2025 Sociology and Criminology curriculum maps.xlsx  
(Other Supporting Documentation. Owner: Nzitatira,Hollie Nyseth)
- Soc 3555 revision coverletter December 2025.pdf  
(Cover Letter. Owner: Nzitatira,Hollie Nyseth)
- Soc 3555 Exploring the Legal System-Updated December 2025.docx  
(Syllabus. Owner: Nzitatira,Hollie Nyseth)

## Comments

- Please see feedback email sent to department 11-18-2025 RLS (by Steele,Rachel Lea on 11/18/2025 06:27 PM)

## Workflow Information

Status	User(s)	Date/Time	Step
Submitted	Downey,Douglas B	03/20/2025 06:45 AM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Downey,Douglas B	03/20/2025 06:46 AM	Unit Approval
Revision Requested	Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal	03/21/2025 02:07 PM	College Approval
Submitted	Downey,Douglas B	04/07/2025 11:18 AM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Downey,Douglas B	04/07/2025 11:18 AM	Unit Approval
Approved	Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal	04/22/2025 08:51 AM	College Approval
Revision Requested	Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal	04/22/2025 08:53 AM	ASCCAO Approval
Submitted	Nzitatira,Hollie Nyseth	10/20/2025 09:04 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Nzitatira,Hollie Nyseth	10/20/2025 09:05 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal	10/21/2025 09:31 AM	College Approval
Revision Requested	Steele,Rachel Lea	11/18/2025 06:27 PM	ASCCAO Approval
Submitted	Nzitatira,Hollie Nyseth	12/02/2025 05:40 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Nzitatira,Hollie Nyseth	12/02/2025 05:41 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal	12/03/2025 11:43 AM	College Approval
Pending Approval	Jenkins,Mary Ellen Bigler Neff,Jennifer Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal Steele,Rachel Lea	12/03/2025 11:43 AM	ASCCAO Approval



December 2, 2025

Dear Subcommittee,

Thank you for your review of Soc 3555. I appreciated the detailed review and apologize for the small errors; it was my first time submitting a new course, and I did not realize what I needed to change with respect to what the prior Director of Undergraduate Studies had input in the system. Below, you'll find the contingencies and recommendations, as well as a list of responses to each.

**Contingency: The Subcommittee asks that the department provide more information in the syllabus regarding the actual logistics and mechanics of the on-site observations. For example, will there be a class session devoted to discussing behavior, dress, decorum, etc. during the site visits/observations? How might students know when it is and is not acceptable to take pictures (per the "Scavenger Hunt" and the "photographic evidence" requirements, Appendix A)? Will students be expected to visit alone or in groups? Will the instructor provide locations of the various courts and the days/times that they are in session, or will students be required to seek out that information on their own? Is transportation the responsibility of the student? What costs might be involved for parking, transportation, etc.?**

This information has been added to the syllabus (now comprising the majority of p. 4). Specifically, the instructor will spend the first class session detailing the logistics, expectations, and safety considerations for completing the required in-person observations. This will also cover when photos are acceptable and when they are not. Students will receive guidance on how to find information regarding when and where observations occur. Nonetheless, students will be solely responsible for scheduling and attending their in-person observations. Students are encouraged to observe with other students, but this is not mandatory. Travel time is prohibited from being counted toward the 50 hours, and the syllabus notes several options (such as driving, COTA public transport) and now provides a basic summary of possible costs. Please see the summary on p. 4 of the syllabus.

We do recognize that there are some additional costs tied to this course. We are happy to explore options (e.g., grant options) to ensure that the costs are not cost-prohibitive. We also have some modest advisory board funds that are used for student scholarships for our department education abroad program and can look into if some of these funds could be earmarked for the course if this would be preferred.

**Contingency: The Subcommittee notes that p. 7 of the syllabus indicates that the course will be graded on an S/U basis, while the information in curriculum.osu.edu (under "Offering Information") says that the course will be graded A-E. The Subcommittee requests that this be consistent throughout the proposal materials.**

This has been adjusted. The prior director of undergraduate studies input this information, and the curriculum.osu.edu information has been updated.

**The Subcommittee asks that the department alter the course description in curriculum.osu.edu (under General Information) to include mention of the course's requirements for off-campus court observations, as this is the information that students will see prior to registering for the course. The Subcommittee offers the friendly suggestion that this information replace the final sentence of the current course description, which seems to imply a "forgone conclusion" for the course.**

We have adjusted the course description to indicate the off-campus observations. We also further edited the description in curriculum.osu.edu for clarity such that now it reads: "This course involves in-person, off-campus observations of many different aspects of the US legal system. By observing the US Legal System in action, including but not limited to civil cases, evictions, environmental court, and family court, student's personal theoretical knowledge can be tested against real-world examples that are further explored in class sessions and materials."

**Contingency: The Subcommittee asks that the curriculum map be corrected, as the reference to this course still reads "4555" rather than "3555".**

This is corrected.

**Contingency: The Subcommittee asks that the instructor explain more clearly in the syllabus the connection between the podcasts, the readings, and the course content. They note that Appendix D (syllabus pp. 24-25) provides only the podcast's "official" description; the Subcommittee asks that this be amended by or replaced with some material that helps students to understand how the podcast supports the course's expected learning outcomes (syllabus, p. 3). On a related note, the Subcommittee notes that there are two different Appendices marked "Appendix D"; each has different descriptions of the podcast.**

The appendices are now corrected. Additionally, the syllabus now includes explanations of why the two podcasts and the readings were selected.

***Recommendation:* The Subcommittee suggests that the department include benchmarks along the way for the observation hours (e.g. 10 hours due by the end of Week 5, 30 hours due by the end of Week 10, and 50 hours due by the end of Week 15 or similar), to help students pace their time throughout the course.**

Please note we did not include this at the time but that the instructor will implement it when the course is taught. Thank you for this suggestion.

***Recommendation:* The Subcommittee recommends removing all but one of the Mental Health statements on pp. 16-18 of the syllabus; only the statement from the campus of offering should be used, though students from multiple campuses may potentially enroll in the course.**

We followed this recommendation. Thank you!

Hollie Nyseth Nzitatira  
Director of Undergraduate Studies  
Sociology



# Syllabus

## **SYLLABUS: SOCIOLOGY 3555 EXPLORING THE US LEGAL SYSTEM FALL 2025**

3 Credit Hours

### **Course overview**

#### **Instructor**

- Instructor: Jaclyn A. Bowe
- Email address: [Bowe.14@osu.edu](mailto:Bowe.14@osu.edu) (Carmen email message preferred)
- Office hours: By Appointment via Zoom
- Course Zoom Link: TBD

**Note:** My preferred method of contact is Carmen message, but direct email is fine.

#### **Prerequisites**

**Either Sociology 3410 or Sociology 3488**

Students should have a theoretical background in Sociology, Criminology, Social Work, Political Science, and/or a related field before engaging with this course. Students must be able to articulate their current understanding and views of the US Legal System during the first week of the semester.

#### **Course description**

By the time students enter this experiential learning course, they should have familiarity with multiple theoretical explanations about how US society is constructed, and how individuals are impacted. Many theoretical explanations highlight the disparity between the “haves” and the “have



nots” in the US, with many theories discussing how this directly impacts individual criminal defendants. While this framework is important, the US Legal System is much vaster than just the Criminal Justice System, and the consequences for individuals can sometimes be equally as devastating (for example, losing one’s home or one’s children). This course will give students an opportunity to examine how theories apply to real-life contexts.

By observing many different aspects of the US Legal System, including civil cases, evictions, and family court, students’ personal theoretical knowledge can be tested against real-world examples. By first articulating their expectations, students will then have the opportunity to see if the US Legal System is really as “good” or as “bad” as they are expecting, or just more nuanced.

Practically speaking, by having a firm understanding of how the US Legal System works, and having the confidence to interact with it, students may be able to affect social change. By exploring the various employment opportunities available in the US Legal System, students may discover a career that is impactful. By understanding how laws are made, students may find another avenue to create change without necessarily dedicating their career to the US Legal System. It is also possible that students may want to completely avoid the US Legal System in the future altogether. Regardless, empathy is an expected byproduct of this experience.

Students will also have a prepared ePortfolio by the end of the semester that highlights their observations, experiences and reflections. This project may be useful to students when applying to continuing education, employment, or volunteer opportunities.

## **Course details**

This course qualifies as a 3-credit hour Experiential Learning Requirement for Sociology/Criminology Majors. The course requires students to observe and reflect on different aspects of the Legal System for at least 50 hours; attend one and a half (1.5) hours of class synchronously online each week to focus on different aspects of the US Legal System, discuss podcasts that explore the Legal System, discuss case studies, read and discuss journal articles, and engage in reflection (see Appendix B for guided reflection



questions); and produce and present a PebblePad Portfolio reflecting on experiences throughout the semester.

## Course expected learning outcomes

The primary objective is to observe, interact with, reflect and analyze various aspects of the US Legal System. This experience will be unique to each student based on their own history, their own identities, and their own choices. The following course objectives will guide this process:

- 1) Engage in pre-exposure analysis and self-reflection to identify thoughts, expectations, and potential stereotypes and biases about the US Legal System;
- 2) Develop a familiarity with the major features of the US legal system;
- 3) Identify areas of the US legal system that function as theoretically expected and consider who (what groups) this benefits/harms;
- 4) Analyze the conditions under which the US legal system does not meet its stated goals; and
- 5) Engage in ongoing post-exposure analysis and self-reflection regarding thoughts, expectations, stereotypes and biases about the US Legal System.

## How this course works

### Mode of delivery

This Course requires **in-person observations** for 50% of the content hours and **online required synchronous meetings** for the other 50% of the contact hours. Additionally, this is an Experiential Learning Course requiring observation, interaction, analysis and reflection. There will also be some additional homework that will supplement the experiential learning process.

**Class will meet each Wednesday synchronously via Zoom from 5:15-6:45 p.m. You must attend at least eleven (11) full class**



**sessions (no more than 3 misses) as one requirement to pass the course.**

## **In-Person Observation Expectations**

During the first synchronous Zoom class session (Overview/Intro. & Safety), students will discuss the logistics, expectations, and safety considerations for completing the required in-person observations. Students will receive guidance on how to find information regarding when and where observations occur. Nonetheless, students will be solely responsible for scheduling and attending their in-person observations. Students are encouraged to observe with other students, but this is not mandatory. Students are solely responsible for commuting to the observation sites (generally the Courthouse, but potentially other non-campus locations) and are solely responsible for any costs incurred. Transportation time is **expressly prohibited** from being counted towards the minimum 50 hours of observation.

Transportation by COTA public bus can be an economical choice; bus stops are located close to campus and close to most potential observation sites. However, it may take around 30 minutes or more each way such that students are encouraged to plan ahead.

Driving is also possible, but there is little to no free parking Downtown Columbus, so parking costs should be considered. Some walking will also be required. Driving from Columbus Campus, parking, and walking to the Municipal Court Building at 375 S. High Street, for example, would likely take around 20 minutes each way. Metered parking, hourly parking lots/garages and flat fee lots are all available, with costs from about \$1.35/hour to more than \$10.

All other safety and logistical issues will be discussed during the first class session, including appropriate dress, observation expectations, photographic evidence considerations, recommended times to visit, etc. We will return to briefly discuss these topics during the second class session as well.



## Pace of activities

As a practicing attorney in Juvenile Law and a Master's in Sociology, I will bring a unique perspective to the course materials. I will be your guide as you explore various aspects of the US Legal System, including the Criminal Justice System and many other areas. You will be responsible for scheduling your required observations and interactions. We will meet together as a class for one and a half (1.5) hours per week; you must complete at least fifty (50) hours of observation/interaction by the end of the semester. Some experiences will be required, and some will be left to your discretion. Additionally, you will be expected to reflect on your experiences and to complete a PebblePad Workbook and ePortfolio based on your experiences over the semester.

## Credit hours and work expectations

Three credit hour courses require approximately 112.5 hours of combined in-class instruction and outside of class homework. This typically includes 37.5 hours of in-class instruction. However, this three (3) credit hour course is experiential-focused; instead of three hours per week in classroom instruction, this class will only meet for one and a half (1.5) hours per week (approximately 21 hours total). The out-of-class portion of this course is therefore approximately ninety (91.5) hours. At least fifty (50) hours of observation and interaction will be required (**see Appendix A**). The additional required hours will include required weekly podcasts; following current cases and/or completing case studies weekly; reading and analyzing at least four (4) journal articles; other current event reading or watching; analyzing and reflecting on your experiences; and completing a PebblePad Workbook and ePortfolio along with a Presentation. **See Appendix C for more information.**

{FYI: The Ohio Department of Higher Education guidelines state, "One semester credit hour will be awarded for a minimum of 750 minutes [i.e., 12.5 hours] of formalized instruction that typically requires students to work at out-of-class assignments an average of two hours for every hour of formalized instruction [i.e., 25 hours]. The instructor bears primary responsibility for formalized instruction, which may be delivered in a variety



of modes.” Further, “credit hours may be awarded on a different basis for other types of instructional activities,” but in all cases the foundational assumption is that one semester credit is the equivalent of approximately 2,250 minutes [i.e., 37.5 hours] of coursework, combining formalized instruction with out-of-class work.}

## Participation requirements

Your attendance is based on your online activity and participation in our class zoom sessions. The following is a summary of students’ expected participation:

### Participating in online synchronous zoom meetings

When attending class meetings, students must be logged in via <http://zoom.osu.edu> with a name displayed on the screen. Students are expected to turn cameras on during discussions.

Each class meeting will offer in-class opportunities to earn participation points and these will only be available during the class period.

## Course communication guidelines

Respectful engagement: Your participation will be evaluated in part on your ability to communicate constructively and respectfully with other members of the class. To create a space that is welcoming to all learners, please maintain a respectful tone in your posts and responses, even when there is disagreement. Often when we disagree, asking questions of each other is an opportunity for us to learn more, challenge ourselves and grow in our ways of thinking.

The following are my expectations for how we should communicate as a class. Above all, please remember to be respectful and thoughtful.

- **Writing style:** While there is no need to participate in class discussions as if you were writing a research paper, you should remember to write using good grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Informality (including an occasional emoticon) is fine for non-academic topics.



- **Tone and civility:** Let's maintain a supportive learning community where everyone feels safe and where people can disagree amicably. Remember that sarcasm doesn't always come across online.
- **Citing your sources:** When we have academic discussions, please cite your sources to back up what you say. (For the textbook or other course materials, list at least the title and page numbers. For online sources, include a link.)
- **Backing up your work:** Consider composing your academic posts in a word processor, where you can save your work, and then copying into the Carmen discussion.

## Course materials and technologies

### Course technology

#### Technology support

For help with your password, university email, Carmen, or any other technology issues, questions, or requests, contact the Ohio State IT Service Desk. Standard support hours are available [at it.osu.edu/help](https://it.osu.edu/help), and support for urgent issues is available 24/7.

- Self-Service and Chat support: [it.osu.edu/help](https://it.osu.edu/help)
- Phone: 614-688-4357(HELP)
- Email: [8help@osu.edu](mailto:8help@osu.edu)
- TDD: 614-688-8743

#### Technology skills needed for this course

- Basic computer and web-browsing skills
- Navigating Carmen ([go.osu.edu/canvasstudent](https://go.osu.edu/canvasstudent))
- CarmenZoom virtual meetings ([go.osu.edu/zoom-meetings](https://go.osu.edu/zoom-meetings))

#### Required Equipment

- Computer: current Mac (MacOs) or PC (Windows 10) with high-speed internet connection
- Webcam: built-in or external webcam, fully installed and tested
- Microphone: built-in laptop or tablet mic or external microphone



- Other: a mobile device (smartphone or tablet) to use for BuckeyePass authentication

## Required software

- Microsoft Office 365: All Ohio State students are now eligible for free Microsoft Office 365. Full instructions for downloading and installation can be found at [go.osu.edu/office365help](https://go.osu.edu/office365help).

## Carmen Access

You will need to use BuckeyePass ([buckeyepass.osu.edu](https://buckeyepass.osu.edu)) multi-factor authentication to access your courses in Carmen. To ensure that you are able to connect to Carmen at all times, it is recommended that you take the following steps:

- Register multiple devices in case something happens to your primary device. Visit the BuckeyePass
- Request passcodes to keep as a backup authentication option. When you see the Duo login screen on your computer, click **Enter a Passcode** and then click the **Text me new codes** button that appears. This will text you ten passcodes good for 365 days that can each be used once.
- Download the Duo Mobile application to all of your registered devices for the ability to generate one-time codes in the event that you lose cell, data, or Wi-Fi service

If none of these options will meet the needs of your situation, you can contact the IT Service Desk at 614-688-4357(HELP) and IT support staff will work out a solution with you.

## Grading and instructor response

This course is graded Satisfactory (S) / Unsatisfactory (U). You will receive criteria for major assignments and will get feedback on your work in Carmen. **To pass the course, you must complete a Final ePortfolio including all assignments listed below, earn at least 75 points**



**(75%), and attend at least eleven (11) full class sessions (no more than 3 misses).** Attending and participating in class meetings is a requirement to complete this course. Barring significant circumstances, you must attend and participate in a minimum of eleven (11) full class meetings.

Please see Course Schedule for an outline of major assignments and see the CarmenCanvas course for specific due dates.

Assignment or category	Points
Initial Self-Reflection	10
Weekly Podcast/Case Study/Journal article Completion & Discussion during Class Meeting	15
Required Minimum 50 hours observation/interaction	50
PebblePad Workbook with Analysis & Reflections	10
PebblePad ePortfolio with Reflection & Presentation with Peer Reviews	15
Total	100

*See course schedule, below, for due dates*

## Assignment information

- 1. Initial Self-Reflection (10%):** An Initial Self-Reflection is due at the beginning of the Semester to gauge your current perceptions, expectations, stereotypes and biases about the U.S. Legal System. This guided Self-Reflection should be between 750-1,000 words or 7 to 10 minutes long. \*\*\*Any late projects, without an accepted excuse, will be penalized 10% and will only be accepted up to seven (7) days after the due date.\*\*\*
- 2. Class Participation (15%):** Weekly participation is valuable and important. Each week will include a participation activity or activities totally approximately one (1) point. Generally, points will be earned by listening to the required podcast (generally 45 minutes to 60 minutes



in length) (See Appendix D and E for an overview of podcasts) and approximately four (4) total Journal Articles (see Appendix F for selection) prior to Wednesday's class meeting and participating in discussion about the episode, as well as following a case and/or a case study and/or reading and analyzing a minimum of four journal articles throughout the semester, including preparation prior to class, for approximately one (1) hour. See the Course Schedule & Carmen for the list of podcasts (subject to change). You must attend at least 11 class sessions (regardless of the other amount of points earned) in order to pass the class.

3. **Required Minimum 50 hours of Observation/Interaction (50% of grade):** At least fifty (50) hours of observation and interaction will be required (see Appendix A). Some items are required, and some are left to your discretion. A log and photographic evidence of all activities is required and will be posted in PebblePad. All hours shall be completed and documented by the last day of classes, December 10, 2025.
4. **PebblePad Workbook with Reflections (10%):** A PebblePad Workbook will be provided to document your reflection on each interaction/observation. Each guided interaction/observation will be a minimum of 200 words long (but there is no upper limit). Students are encouraged to update the PebblePad Workbook as soon as possible after their interaction/observation. The completed Workbook is due by the end of the scheduled final exam time of December 18, 2025 at 7:45 p.m. (See Appendix B)
5. **PebblePad ePortfolio and Presentation (15%):** A final ePortfolio will be crafted to help you reflect on your experiences over the semester and to help you document any change your experiences induced. You will present a draft of your ePortfolio to your classmates (full class or in groups, depending on class size) during the last week of class and provide peer review. The final ePortfolio is due by the end of the scheduled final exam time of December 18, 2025 at 7:45 p.m.
6. **PLEASE NOTE:** All Subject to Change due to potential University directives.

## Late assignments



**Any late assignments, without an accepted excuse, will be penalized 10%.**

## **Instructor feedback and response time**

I am providing the following list to give you an idea of my intended availability throughout the course. (Remember that you can call **614-688-HELP** at any time if you have a technical problem.)

## **Grading and feedback**

For most weekly assignments, you can generally expect feedback within **7 days**. Major projects may take a bit longer.

## **Carmen messages/E-mail**

I will reply to Carmen messages/emails within **24-48 hours on school days**.

## **Communication preference**

Please use Carmen message or email for direct communication with me.

## **Academic policies**

### **Academic Misconduct**

Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research, and other educational and scholarly activities. Thus, The Ohio State University and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) expect that all students have read and understand the University's Code of Student Conduct, and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Students must recognize that failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the University's Code of Student Conduct and this syllabus may constitute Academic Misconduct.



The Ohio State University's Code of Student Conduct (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University or subvert the educational process. Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University's Code of Student Conduct is never considered an excuse for academic misconduct, so please review the Code of Student Conduct and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct.

If an instructor suspects that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, the instructor is obligated by University Rules to report those suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that a student violated the University's Code of Student Conduct (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in the course and suspension or dismissal from the University.

If students have questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, they should contact the instructor.

### **Artificial Intelligence and Academic Integrity**

There has been a significant increase in the popularity and availability of a variety of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including ChatGPT, Sudowrite, and others. These tools will help shape the future of work, research and technology, but when used in the wrong way, they can stand in conflict with academic integrity at Ohio State.

All students have important obligations under the Code of Student Conduct to complete all academic and scholarly activities with fairness and honesty. Our professional students also have the responsibility to uphold the professional and ethical standards found in their respective academic honor codes. Specifically, students are not to use unauthorized assistance in the laboratory, on field work, in scholarship, or on a course assignment unless such assistance has been authorized specifically by the course instructor. In addition, students are not to submit their work without acknowledging any



word-for-word use and/or paraphrasing of writing, ideas or other work that is not your own. These requirements apply to all students undergraduate, graduate, and professional.

To maintain a culture of integrity and respect, these generative AI tools should not be used in the completion of course assignments unless an instructor for a given course specifically authorizes their use. Some instructors may approve of using generative AI tools in the academic setting for specific goals. However, these tools should be used only with the explicit and clear permission of each individual instructor, and then only in the ways allowed by the instructor.

### **Religious Accommodations**

Ohio State has had a longstanding practice of making reasonable academic accommodations for students' religious beliefs and practices in accordance with applicable law. In 2023, Ohio State updated its practice to align with new state legislation. Under this new provision, students must be in early communication with their instructors regarding any known accommodation requests for religious beliefs and practices, providing notice of specific dates for which they request alternative accommodations within 14 days after the first instructional day of the course. Instructors in turn shall not question the sincerity of a student's religious or spiritual belief system in reviewing such requests and shall keep requests for accommodations confidential.

With sufficient notice, instructors will provide students with reasonable alternative accommodations with regard to examinations and other academic requirements with respect to students' sincerely held religious beliefs and practices by allowing up to three absences each semester for the student to attend or participate in religious activities. Examples of religious accommodations can include, but are not limited to, rescheduling an exam, altering the time of a student's presentation, allowing make-up assignments to substitute for missed class work, or flexibility in due dates or research responsibilities. If concerns arise about a requested accommodation, instructors are to consult their tenure initiating unit head for assistance.



A student's request for time off shall be provided if the student's sincerely held religious belief or practice severely affects the student's ability to take an exam or meet an academic requirement **and** the student has notified their instructor, in writing during the first 14 days after the course begins, of the date of each absence. Although students are required to provide notice within the first 14 days after a course begins, instructors are strongly encouraged to work with the student to provide a reasonable accommodation if a request is made outside the notice period. A student may not be penalized for an absence approved under this policy.

If students have questions or disputes related to academic accommodations, they should contact their course instructor, and then their department or college office. For questions or to report discrimination or harassment based on religion, individuals should contact the [Civil Rights Compliance Office](#).

Policy: [Religious Holidays, Holy Days and Observances](#)

### **Disability Statement (with Accommodations for Illness)**

The university strives to maintain a healthy and accessible environment to support student learning in and out of the classroom. If students anticipate or experience academic barriers based on a disability (including mental health and medical conditions, whether chronic or temporary), they should let their instructor know immediately so that they can privately discuss options. Students do not need to disclose specific information about a disability to faculty. To establish reasonable accommodations, students may be asked to register with Student Life Disability Services (see below for campus-specific contact information). After registration, students should make arrangements with their instructors as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that accommodations may be implemented in a timely fashion.

If students are ill and need to miss class, including if they are staying home and away from others while experiencing symptoms of viral infection or fever, they should let their instructor know immediately. In cases where illness interacts with an underlying medical condition, please consult with Student Life Disability Services to request reasonable accommodations.



## **Columbus**

[slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu)

<https://slds.osu.edu/>

098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Ave

614-292-3307 phone

## **Intellectual Diversity**

Ohio State is committed to fostering a culture of open inquiry and intellectual diversity within the classroom. This course will cover a range of information and may include discussions or debates about controversial issues, beliefs, or policies. Any such discussions and debates are intended to support understanding of the approved curriculum and relevant course objectives rather than promote any specific point of view. Students will be assessed on principles applicable to the field of study and the content covered in the course. Preparing students for citizenship includes helping them develop critical thinking skills that will allow them to reach their own conclusions regarding complex or controversial matters.

## **Grievances and Solving Problems**

According to University Policies, if you have a problem with this class, you should seek to resolve the grievance concerning a grade or academic practice by speaking first with the instructor or professor. Then, if necessary, take your case to the department chairperson, college dean or associate dean, and to the provost, in that order. Specific procedures are outlined in Faculty Rule 3335-8-23. Grievances against graduate, research, and teaching assistants should be submitted first to the supervising instructor, then to the chairperson of the assistant's department.

## **Creating an Environment Free from Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct**

The Ohio State University is committed to building and maintaining a welcoming community. All Buckeyes have the right to be free from harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct. Ohio State does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS



status, military status, national origin, pregnancy (childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery therefrom), race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or protected veteran status, or any other bases under the law, in its activities, academic programs, admission, and employment. Members of the university community also have the right to be free from all forms of sexual misconduct: sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, and sexual exploitation.

To report harassment, discrimination, sexual misconduct, or retaliation and/or seek confidential and non-confidential resources and supportive measures, contact the Civil Rights Compliance Office (CRCO):

Online reporting form: <http://civilrights.osu.edu/>

Call 614-247-5838 or TTY 614-688-8605

[civilrights@osu.edu](mailto:civilrights@osu.edu)

The university is committed to stopping sexual misconduct, preventing its recurrence, eliminating any hostile environment, and remedying its discriminatory effects. All university employees have reporting responsibilities to the Civil Rights Compliance Office to ensure the university can take appropriate action:

- All university employees, except those exempted by legal privilege of confidentiality or expressly identified as a confidential reporter, have an obligation to report incidents of sexual assault immediately.
- The following employees have an obligation to report all other forms of sexual misconduct as soon as practicable but at most within five workdays of becoming aware of such information: 1. Any human resource professional (HRP); 2. Anyone who supervises faculty, staff, students, or volunteers; 3. Chair/director; and 4. Faculty member.

## Copyright

The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course.



Copyright law must be considered before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course.

## **Counseling and Consultation Services / Mental Health Statement**

### **Columbus:**

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing.

If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting [ccs.osu.edu](https://ccs.osu.edu) or calling 614-292-5766. CCS is located on the 4th floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766 and 24-hour emergency help is also available through the 24/7 by dialing 988 to reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

### **Military-Connected Students**

The [Military and Veterans Services](#) (MVS) Office offers a wide range of resources for military-connected students. Whether using educational benefits or not, all military-connected students are encouraged to learn more about how the university supports military-connected students (i.e., information about tutoring, transition services, access to the veteran's lounge, etc.). For service members, should you receive military orders during the semester or know of classes that will be missed due to service commitments, please speak with your instructor as soon as possible on possible accommodations. MVS contact information: [milvets@osu.edu](mailto:milvets@osu.edu); 614-247-VETS; [veterans.osu.edu/](https://veterans.osu.edu/); 185 Student Academic Services Building, 281 W. Lane Avenue.



## Course Schedule (Refer to our Carmen course page for up-to-date assignment due dates and readings, which can also be found below in the Appendix.)

### Dates

8/26-9/2

**Tuesday,  
Sept. 2**

9/2-9/9

**Tuesday,  
Sept. 9**

9/9-9/16

9/16-9/23

9/23-9/30

9/30-10/7

10/7-10/14

10/14-10/21

10/21-10/28

10/28-11/4

11/4-11/12

11/12 - 11/18

11/18 - 11/25

11/25-12/2

12/2-12/9

### Topic & Assignments

1) Syl. Review, Overview/Intro. & Safety

#### **Initial Self-Reflection Due!**

2) Overview of Civil Law & (47 minutes):

More Perfect Podcast: American Pendulum Reprise & Journal article

#### **Courthouse Scavenger Hunt & Reflection Due!**

3) Share & Reflect on Access/Barriers #1 & (51 minutes):

Serial Season 3 Podcast: Episode 1 "A Bar Fight Walks into the Justice Center" & Case Study

4) Overview of Criminal Substantive Law & (56 minutes):

Serial Season 3 Podcast: Episode 2 "You've Got Some Gauls" & Journal article

5) Overview of Criminal Procedural Law & (60 minutes):

Serial Season 3 Podcast: Episode 3 "Misdemeanor, Meet Mr. Lawsuit" & Case Study

6) Overview of Juvenile Law & (58 minutes):

Serial Season 3 Podcast: Episode 4 "A Bird in the Jail is Worth Two on the Street" & Journal article

7) Overview of Family Law & (58 minutes):

Serial Season 3 Podcast: Episode 5 "Please Baby Pleas" & Case Study

#### **NO CLASS – Fall Break**

8) Overview of Eviction & Environmental Law & (49 minutes):

Serial Season 3 Podcast: Episode 6 "You in the Red Shirt" & Case Study

9) Overview of Appellate Law & (37 minutes):

More Perfect Podcast: Kittens Kick The Giggly Blue Robot All Summer & Case Study

10) Overview of the Legislative Process & (53 minutes):

Serial Season 3 Podcast: Episode 7 "The Snowball Effect" & Journal article

11) Overview of Legal Jobs #1–Lawyer/Judges & (63 minutes):

Serial Season 3 Podcast: Episode 8 "A Madman's Vacation" & Case Study

12) Overview of Legal Jobs #2 – Police/Pos & (48 minutes):

Serial Season 3 Podcast: Episode 9 "Some Time When Everything Has Changed" & Case Study

#### **NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Break**

13) Share & Reflect on Access/Barriers #2 & (45 minutes):

More Perfect Podcast: The Political Thicket Reprise & Case Study



12/9-12/10

**Thursday,  
Dec. 18, by  
7:45 p.m.**

14) ePortfolio Presentations & Peer Review & all Observations/  
Interactions & Reflections

**Final ePortfolio due.**



## Appendix A: Example Log

*Note to students about hours: The mandatory hours are included in parentheses, but you will need to complete more than the required minimums to reach 50 hours. This Example shows the required minimums and also provides one example for achieving the 50 required hours. You must provide photographic evidence and a Reflection for each Observation/Interaction Experience.*

Exploring the US Legal System  
50 hours of observation/interaction outside the classroom are required.

### EXAMPLE - SYLLABUS EXHIBIT A Required Observations/Interactions

	Date	Observation/ Interaction Time	Link to Photo & Reflection on Experience
1) Courthouse Complex Scavenger Hunt	6-Sep	2	
2) Observe Juvenile Court (5th or 4th floor) (minimum 2 hours)	8-Sep	3	
3) Observe Family Court (3rd or 6th floor) (minimum 2 hours)	12-Oct	3	
4) Observe Eviction Court (minimum 2 hours)	13-Sep	3	
5) Observe Environmental Court (minimum 2 hours)	4-Nov	3	
6) Observe Municipal Court (arraignments or any other courtrooms) (minimum 2 hours)	18-Nov	3	
7) Observe Common Pleas Court (minimum 2 hours)	27-Aug	3	



8) Observe Ohio Supreme Court Oral Arguments, live in-person or recorded (minimum 2 hours)	20-Sep	3		
9) Observe Ohio Statehouse Session, live in-person or recorded (minimum 2 hours)	24-Nov	3		
10) Attend at least 2 Columbus Bar Association section meetings	28-Aug 8-Sep	3		
11) Interview anyone connected to the US Legal System	17-Nov	2		
Time Total:		31	Total:	31
Other Potential Observations/Interactions:				
A) Tour of Ohio Statehouse		2		
B) Tour of Ohio Supreme Court		2		
C) Observe Ohio Appellate Court oral arguments, live in-person or recorded		3		
D) Police Department ridealong		3		
E) Shadowing anyone connected to the US Legal System		3		
F) Exploring/observing any of the Federal Courts		3		
G) Anything else (please ask instructor if there is any concern about activity qualifying)		3		
Time Total:		19	Total: Grand Total:	19 50



## Appendix B

### **Sociology 3555 Reflection Prompts to be completed for EACH Observation/Interaction; Reflections will be collected in Pebblepad along with photographic proof of each observation/interaction**

Please consider the following questions (minimum of 200 Words per observation/interaction):

1. How did you arrive at your observation?
2. Where did you observe?
3. How long were you there?
4. Were you in one spot the whole time or did you move around?
5. What is your initial reaction?
6. What is one thing that stood out the most?
7. Did your observation meet your expectations? Why or why not?
8. What kind of people did you see during your observation?
9. Are there any generalizations or conclusions that you can draw?
10. What is one thing you learned from this observation?
11. How did you feel about this experience?
12. Did you recognize any Sociological Theories?



**Appendix C**  
**Sociology 3555 Distribution of**  
**Course Hours**

	Hours:	Times:	Total:
In-Class time	1.5	14	21
Out-of-Class Observation	2.5	20	50
Out-of-Class Observation Reflections	0.5	20	10
Weekly Podcasts	1	12	12
Weekly Case Reviews/Case Studies and/or Journal Articles (minimum of 4 articles)	1	12	12
Initial Self-Reflection	2	1	2
PebblePad ePortfolio with Reflection & Presentation with Peer Reviews	5.5	1	5.5
	Total:		112.5



## Appendix D

### Official Description from Serial Season 3 podcast webpage

“*Serial* is heading back to court. This time, in Cleveland. Not for one extraordinary case; instead, *Serial* wanted to tackle the whole criminal justice system. To do that we figured we’d need to look at something different: ordinary cases.

So we did. Inside these ordinary cases we found the troubling machinery of the criminal justice system on full display. We chose Cleveland, because they let us record everywhere — courtrooms, back hallways, judges’ chambers, prosecutors’ offices. And then we followed those cases outside the building, into neighborhoods, into people’s houses, and into prison.

We watched how justice is calculated in cases of all sizes, from the smallest misdemeanor to the most serious felony.

This season, we tell you the extraordinary stories of ordinary cases. One courthouse, week by week.”

### WHY THIS PODCAST?

While the mandated in-person observations will provide glimpses of how the US Legal System works, context and background are likely to be missing. You may only observe one interaction on a particular case; reviewing and discussing all episodes of the Serial podcast will speak to many of the stated learning objectives, as it provides a more in-depth look at a series of real life cases, helping you to develop a familiarity with the major features of the US legal system; identify areas of the US legal system that function as theoretically expected and consider who (what groups) this benefits/harms; and analyze the conditions under which the US legal system does not meet its stated goals.



**Appendix E**  
**Official Description from**  
**More Perfect Podcast (NPR)**

“We’re taught the Supreme Court was designed to be above the fray of politics. But at a time when partisanship seeps into every pore of American life, are the nine justices living up to that promise? More Perfect is a guide to the current moment on the Court. We bring the highest court of the land down to earth, telling the human dramas at the Court that shape so many aspects of American life — from our religious freedom to our artistic expression, from our reproductive choices to our voice in democracy.”

**WHY THIS PODCAST?**

While the mandated in-person observations will provide glimpses of how the US Legal System works, context and background are likely to be missing. The few curated podcasts from this series highlight some of the more high-level impacts that the US Supreme Court has on the entire US Legal System. This will speak to many of the stated learning objectives as it provides a more in-depth look at real life cases and their impacts. Specifically, they will help you to develop a familiarity with the major features of the US legal system; identify areas of the US legal system that function as theoretically expected and consider who (what groups) this benefits/harms; and analyze the conditions under which the US legal system does not meet its stated goals.



## Appendix F Journal Articles

### WHY THESE READINGS?

While the mandated in-person observations will provide glimpses of how the US Legal System works, context and background are also critical. These articles highlight certain areas of the US Legal System, providing additional context and analytical assessment. This, in turn, will help you to develop a familiarity with the major features of the US legal system; identify areas of the US legal system that function as theoretically expected and consider who (what groups) this benefits/harms; and analyze the conditions under which the US legal system does not meet its stated goals.

### **For Civil Law -**

Access to Civil Justice Free

Margaret Y K Woo, Connor Cox, Sarah Rosen

*The American Journal of Comparative Law*, Volume 70, Issue Supplement\_1, October 2022, Pages i89–i117, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ajcl/avaco20>

Published: 07 September 2022

### **For Criminal Law -**Bias in the Criminal Legal System

- Published by: Stanford Law School & National Immigration Project (2024)
- Summary: This report synthesizes decades of research on racial bias in policing, prosecution, and sentencing. It highlights how systemic and individual biases disproportionately affect Black and Latinx individuals, especially in minor offenses and immigration-related proceedings.

### **For Juvenile Law -**

Achieving Juvenile Justice through Abolition: A Critical Review of Social Work's Role in Shaping the Juvenile Legal System and Steps toward Achieving an Antiracist Future  
by

Durrell M. Washington \*, Toyon Harper, Alizé B. Hill and  
Lester J. Kern

Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice, University of Chicago,  
Chicago, IL 60637, USA

\*Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.

*Soc. Sci.* 2021, 10(6), 211; <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci10060211>



Submission received: 1 May 2021 / Revised: 29 May 2021 / Accepted: 2 June 2021 / Published: 5 June 2021

**For Legislative Process -**

Legislative Effectiveness in the American States

Published online by Cambridge University Press: 15 February 2024

PETER BUCCHIANERI, CRAIG VOLDEN, and

ALAN E. WISEMAN



Outlook

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**Re: Updated concurrence request**

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**From** Nzitatira, Hollie <nzitatira.1@osu.edu>**Date** Thu 10/16/2025 10:04 AM**To** Ralph, Anne <ralph.52@osu.edu>

Hi Anne,

Thanks so much!

Hollie

Hollie Nyseth Nzitatira, she/her  
Professor of Sociology  
hollienysethnzitatira.com



Hear my name

Land Acknowledgement: The Ohio State University occupies the ancestral and contemporary lands of the Shawnee, Potawatomi, Delaware, Miami, Peoria, Seneca, Wyandotte, Ojibwe, and Cherokee peoples. The university resides on land ceded in the 1795 Treaty of Greenville and obtained via the forced removal of tribal nations through the Indian Removal Act of 1830.

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**From:** Ralph, Anne <ralph.52@osu.edu>**Sent:** Thursday, October 16, 2025 9:53 AM**To:** Nzitatira, Hollie <nzitatira.1@osu.edu>**Subject:** Re: Updated concurrence request

Hi, Hollie,

Thanks for your email. The College of Law is pleased to grant concurrence.

Thanks,

Anne

**Anne E. Ralph**

Morgan E. Shipman Professor in Law

Associate Dean for Academic Affairs & Strategic Initiatives

Michael E. Moritz College of Law

55 West 12th Avenue | Columbus, OH 43210

614-247-4797 Office | [ralph.52@osu.edu](mailto:ralph.52@osu.edu)

Pronouns: she/her/hers

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**From:** Nzitatira, Hollie <nzitatira.1@osu.edu>

**Date:** Tuesday, October 14, 2025 at 9:23 AM

**To:** Ralph, Anne <ralph.52@osu.edu>

**Subject:** Updated concurrence request

Hi, Anne!

I hope your week is going well. In the spring, you granted concurrence for the attached course. I took over as director of undergrad studies in the summer and have worked with the instructor to add readings (see the appendix at the end) and enhance the rigor a bit while also dropping the course number. I noted your concern about the readings in your initial concurrence email, and I'm wondering if this looks better and if you're willing to grant concurrence (I'll upload this email chain instead of the prior one you had with Doug Downey about this course).

Thanks so much,

Hollie

Hollie Nyseth Nzitatira, she/her

Professor of Sociology

[hollienysethnzitatira.com](http://hollienysethnzitatira.com)



Land Acknowledgement: The Ohio State University occupies the ancestral and contemporary lands of the Shawnee, Potawatomi, Delaware, Miami, Peoria, Seneca, Wyandotte, Ojibwe, and Cherokee peoples. The university resides on land ceded in the 1795 Treaty of Greenville and obtained via the forced removal of tribal nations through the Indian Removal Act of 1830.