

## 2007-2008 ADJ Honors Seminar Description

### **ADJ 491/492. Balancing Civil Liberties and Security in a Time of Terrorism: The Views of Lawyers and Law Enforcement Professionals**

Since September 11, 2001 legal experts have debated the proper balance between security and civil liberties in response to the threat of terrorism. To what extent, if at all, should American society reduce civil liberties in pursuit of increased homeland security? Opinion polls periodically ask the public this question, but we know little of the views of the law enforcement professionals and lawyers who bring the cases to court and who sit in judgment of the cases, despite the fact that these issues have been central to the “war on terror.” For example, should the president be able to designate and detain enemy combatants indefinitely? What rights should detainees have? Is it acceptable to use physical coercion or torture when interrogating terror suspects? Should “material witness” warrants be used to hold terror suspects? Because lawyers and law enforcement professionals both influence and make key decisions that affect the balance of civil liberties and security in America, it is very important to know how they view these issues. This honors seminar will conduct original research to learn how the key decision makers in criminal justice and criminal law feel about striking the balance between civil liberty and security in a time of high anxiety about terrorism.

Students in the 2007-2008 Honors Seminar will conduct original research on this topic. They will design and administer a mail or e-mail survey of law enforcement and legal professionals (police, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and judges). Before doing this, they will study what has already been written about these important legal issues and learn how the American public feels about them. Then students will conduct a few in-depth interviews with lawyers and law enforcement professionals to develop and refine the questions they will ask on the mail/e-mail survey. Students will also learn how to construct and administer the survey, as well as how to analyze the data collected. Students will work collaboratively in small teams, an excellent preparation for a professional career in law or criminal justice. The final product will involve an analysis and report of the data that the class has collected. Students will be encouraged to present their work to legal professionals and researchers and to publish their findings. **In short, this is a hands-on opportunity for students to conduct interesting policy research and to interact with justice officials.**

The Honors Seminar meets as a 3-credit course in the fall and a 3-credit course in the spring. These credits can be used to fulfill any category of ADJ course requirements. **The Honors Seminar should appeal to students who want to pursue a career in law, criminal justice, or would like to strengthen their application to graduate school.** Students who successfully complete ADJ 491/492 with a grade point average of 3.5 or above will receive on their university transcript the honors designation in Administration of Justice when they graduate.

The 2007-2008 Honors Seminar will be directed by **Professor Linda Merola**. Professor Merola holds a law degree from George Washington University and a doctorate from Georgetown University. She is a member of the Virginia State Bar. She has conducted research on civil liberties, the judiciary, public opinion, media and political psychology. The seminar will meet Thursdays from 1:30-4:10pm on the Prince William Campus. Enrollment is controlled.

**VISIT THE ADJ WEBSITE FOR APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS AND  
INSTRUCTIONS**

<http://adj.gmu.edu/resources/honors.html>