

**CAPSTONE IN CRIMINOLOGY, LAW AND SOCIETY**  
CRIM 495, Section DL1  
Recitation Sections 301 and 302  
Fall 2020

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**INSTRUCTOR**

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**TEACHING ASSISTANT**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The purpose of this capstone course is for students to reflect upon, evaluate, and apply the knowledge they have gained as a criminology, law and society major while exploring the theme of inequality in the criminal justice system. Throughout the semester we will explore disparities in criminal justice processing and outcomes related to policing, courts, and corrections. We will also consider efforts to reform the justice system to reduce inequality. Students will write a research paper on inequality in the justice system. The Capstone in Criminology, Law and Society is a Mason Impact course; it designated as a *Writing Intensive, Synthesis, and Scholarly Inquiry* course. Each component carries specific goals, guidelines, and learning outcomes, as detailed below.

**Mason Core Synthesis Course**

CRIM 495 meets the Synthesis course requirement in the Mason Core. Synthesis courses provide students with the opportunity to synthesize the knowledge, skills and values gained from the Mason Core curriculum and strive to expand their ability to master new content, think critically, and develop life-long learning skills across disciplines

(<https://masoncore.gmu.edu/synthesis/>). Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

- Communicate effectively in both oral and written forms, applying appropriate rhetorical standards (e.g., audience adaptation, language, argument, organization, evidence, etc.)
- Use multidisciplinary perspectives to connect issues in Criminology, Law and Society to wider intellectual, community or societal concerns
- Apply critical thinking skills to evaluate the quality, credibility and limitations of an argument or a solution using appropriate evidence or resources.

## Writing Intensive Course

CRIM 495 fulfills the Writing Intensive course requirement in the criminology, law and society major. It does so through a research paper (developed via a process of drafting, feedback, and revision) and regular writing assignments throughout the semester.

According to the Writing Across the Curriculum Committee, writing-intensive courses must “devote significant time to instruction on writing and how to complete assignments successfully. . . Students are required to revise at least one substantive assignment in the course based on instructor feedback . . . [and that assignment should be] divided into sequenced sections that receive feedback and can be revised ... All writing assignments in the course should count substantially toward the students’ final grades and students should write a minimum of 3500 words.” For more information on Writing Intensive courses:

<https://wac.gmu.edu/wi-course-resources/wi-course-criteria/>

## Scholarly Inquiry

CRIM 495 has been designated a Scholarly Inquiry course by Mason’s Office of Student Scholarship, Creative Activities and Research (OSCAR) as part of the *Students as Scholars* initiative (<https://oscar.gmu.edu/>). The *Students as Scholars* initiative encourages undergraduates to learn about and conduct scholarly research. Scholarly Inquiry courses are designed to teach students the content and skills that will make them capable of evaluating scholarly work and prepare them to conduct their own scholarly project. The general learning outcomes for Scholarly Inquiry courses include:

- Articulate a research question, problem or challenge that is generally relevant and appropriate in scope
- Communicate knowledge from a scholarly project through writing, presenting, or performing, employing some conventions appropriate to the audience and context.
- Identify some relevant ethical issues; demonstrates some attention to ethical principles at some stages of the inquiry process.

During this course, students will locate, evaluate, integrate, and use academic literature. They will engage in the scholarly process by:

- Articulating and refining a scholarly question.
- Following ethical principles.
- Gathering and evaluating evidence appropriate to the question or inquiry.
- Applying appropriate scholarly conventions when reporting.
- Assessing the reliability of key assumptions and evidence.
- Situating the scholarly inquiry within a broader context.

## REQUIRED MATERIALS

- 1) Epp, C., Maynard-Moody, S., & Haider-Markel, D. (2014). *Pulled over: How police stops define race and citizenship*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. ISBN-13: 978-0226113999.
- 2) Van Cleve, N. G. (2016). *Crook county: Racism and injustice in America's largest criminal court*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. ISBN-13: 978-1503602786.
- 3) Western, B. (2018). *Homeward: Life in the year after prison*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation. ISBN-13: 978-0871549556.

## COURSE FORMAT

This course will be taught online via Blackboard. It will include a combination of synchronous (real time) class meetings and asynchronous activities and assignments which students complete at their own pace. Professor Johnson will lead the real-time class meetings on Tuesdays, which focus on the course texts and related topics. Teaching Assistant Emily Smedley will lead the asynchronous writing labs, which focus on the research paper. Students should expect to spend 8-12 hours per week on all activities for this course.

**Class Meetings** will be held in real time most Tuesday afternoons from 1:30-2:45pm Eastern Time using Blackboard Collaborate Ultra (BBCU) or Zoom. Class meetings will consist of lecture, individual or small group work, chats, quizzes, and other activities. Students are expected to attend real time class meetings on the following dates: Aug 25, Sep 1, Sep 8, Sep 15, Sep 29, Oct 6, Oct 20, Nov 3, Nov 10, Nov 17, and Dec 1.

**Writing Lab** presentations will be posted on Blackboard on Tuesday evenings each week. Students will have two days to review this material and complete the related assignment (due Thursday by 11:59pm). Assignments will include research paper preparation exercises, individual or group work, journals, quizzes, and other activities.

The **course structure** is relatively consistent so there is a routine to the class most weeks. Generally, students will submit a reading review on Monday, attend a class meeting on Tuesday, submit writing lab and research paper assignments on Thursday, and complete a reading assignment by Sunday. There are a few weeks when this pattern differs, as indicated in the course schedule at the end of this syllabus.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND STUDENT EVALUATION

- 1) Participation in Real Time Class Meetings (4% of final grade): Beginning in Week 2, students will earn class participation points by attending real-time class meetings and engaging in class activities. Students must attend at least eight of the ten scheduled classes. Each class meeting is worth 0.5% of the course grade.
- 2) Participation in Writing Labs (5% of final grade): Students will earn writing lab participation points by viewing ten presentations and completing the related assignment. Each writing lab is worth 0.5% of the course grade.
- 3) Reading Reviews (21% of final grade): Nine reading reviews will be assigned (three for each book). Students must complete at least seven reviews; if more than seven are submitted, the highest seven scores will count toward the course grade. Each review will require a short summary and assessment of the reading. Each reading review is worth 3% of the course grade.
- 4) Class Activities (20% of final grade): In Weeks 5, 10, 14, and 15, students will engage in activities on Blackboard related to the readings and class material. Each activity is worth up to 5% of the course grade.
- 5) Research Paper (50% of final grade): Students will write a research paper on a topic of their choosing related to inequality in the criminal justice system (minimum 3,500 words). The paper will be drafted and submitted in sections, and students will receive feedback on each section draft to assist in the revision process as they produce the final paper. Students will also submit three assignments in preparation for drafting the paper. Collectively, the preparatory assignments and section drafts are worth 20% of the course grade. The final research paper is worth 30% of the course grade.

Final grades in the course will be based on the following breakdown:

Points	Percentage	Grade
93-100	93-100%	A
90-92	90-92%	A-
87-89	87-89%	B+
83-86	83-86%	B
80-82	80-82%	B-
77-79	77-79%	C+
73-76	73-76%	C
70-72	70-72%	C-
65-69	65-69%	D
0-64 points	0-64%	F

## **POLICIES ON STUDENT WORK**

***Special Note for Fall 2020:*** We are living in extraordinary times. Many of us (students and faculty alike) are operating under increased stress and are facing exceptional circumstances which necessitate greater flexibility, understanding, and support. Flexibility is built into the course requirements in terms of class participation and missed or late assignments; opportunities for make-up work are available. Please do not hesitate to reach out to the instructor or TA if you need additional accommodations beyond those described here.

Late Assignments: Students must contact the instructor ahead of time if they cannot complete an assignment by the due date (in the case of an emergency, contact the instructor as soon as possible). In most cases, late submissions will be accepted; some may receive a grading penalty. These decisions are at the discretion of the instructor.

Make-Up Opportunities: Completion of one extra reading review by the original due date (e.g. submitting eight reviews instead of the seven that are required) may help offset missing class participation points. The point values are at the discretion of the instructor.

Keep Copies of Submitted Work: Students are expected to retain an electronic copy of all work submitted; it is a good idea to keep a copy of all Blackboard submission confirmation notices as well. If transmission of the work fails, students are expected to "resend" the document according to the instructor's directions. Students are expected to verify their own Blackboard submissions by returning to the appropriate place in Blackboard after the work has been posted.

Turnaround Time for Grading: Grading for an assignment usually does not begin until on or after the due date. In most cases, assignments submitted on time will be graded within 7 days of the due date (go to the "My Grades" section of Blackboard for scores and feedback).

Final Course Grades: Final course grades that are within 0.5 points of the next higher grade will automatically be bumped up to the higher grade (e.g. a 79.5/C+ will become an 80/B-). At the instructor's discretion, final course grades that are on the borderline between two grades may be bumped up to the next grade for students who show extra initiative by attending all class sessions and/or by submitting extra reading reviews.

## **BLACKBOARD AND COURSE COMMUNICATION**

Students will need to login to Blackboard (BB) several times each week to attend class and complete assignments. To login to Blackboard go to: <http://mymason.gmu.edu>, click on the Courses tab, and locate the link to CRIM 495 in your course list. For technical assistance with Blackboard, go to: <https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/>

Students must use their MasonLive accounts for all email communication with the instructor and TA. Students should check their MasonLive email account regularly for course announcements and other information.

Students with questions or concerns about the course are encouraged to reach out for assistance. Both the professor and the TA will hold weekly drop-in office hours via Blackboard Collaborate Ultra for students who want to meet in real-time. Students can also post a question in the public “Got a Question?” discussion board forum on Blackboard or email the instructor or TA. Please see the “Contact Your Instructor” page on Blackboard for information.

## **COURSE EXPECTATIONS**

Consistent with Mason’s emphasis on diversity and inclusion, I expect everyone in this course to be respectful of others and to be open to learning. Your classmates may have different perspectives and experiences related to the course topics than you (or the instructor), and views may be strongly held. I encourage everyone to speak thoughtfully, listen carefully, and be self-reflective. I expect students to follow courteous Internet etiquette. I expect all members of the class to help create a space where we can respectfully discuss opposing viewpoints and offer differing perspectives while focusing on the social scientific evidence.

## **TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND STUDENT PRIVACY**

Please see the technology requirements for online classes, available under “Policies & Expectations” on Blackboard. To participate in class meetings and complete assignments, students are expected to have reliable access to a laptop or desktop computer with an updated operating system and a stable broadband Internet connection. A functional camera and microphone are highly recommended.

Students will not be required to have their video cameras turned on during real-time class meetings; students will be able to participate via audio and text chat if they prefer.

Synchronous class meetings may be recorded and posted to Blackboard. Recordings will only be accessible to students taking this course during this semester. All course materials posted to Blackboard are private to this class; by federal law, any materials that identify specific students (via their name, voice, or image) must not be shared with anyone not enrolled in this class.

Real time class meetings that include audio, textual, or visual information from other students must be viewed privately; do not watch these live sessions with anyone who is not a member of this class. In addition, video recordings of the class meetings made by the instructor or a student that includes audio, visual, or textual information from other students are private; they must not be shared with anyone who is not a member of this class.

Please respect the privacy of any students (or instructor) who may disclose personal information in the class. Please respect everyone's right to freely choose whether to disclose or not disclose personal information.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND THE GMU HONOR CODE**

George Mason University has an Honor Code, which requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Students are expected to abide by the Mason Honor Code, which prohibits lying, cheating, stealing, and plagiarizing (<https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/>). **Posting instructor-created materials (such as assignments, exams, or grading rubrics) to public online "study" sites is considered a violation of Mason's Honor Code.**

**All graded work for this class must be completed *independently* (do not work with or compare answers with anyone else). All writing assignments will be evaluated using anti-plagiarism software.** Please be sure that the work you submit in this class is your own, and that you provide proper citations when referencing another person's words or ideas.

Instructors are required to report all violations of the Honor Code to the Mason Honor Committee. Violations of the Honor Code may result in a failing grade for the assignment or exam, a failing grade for the course, or any additional penalties determined by the committee, including dismissal from the university.

## **DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS**

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please inform the instructor and contact the Office of Disability Services at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. See <http://ds.gmu.edu> for more information.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS**

For the purposes of this course, each week is defined as **beginning at 12:01 am on Monday and ending at 11:59 pm the following Sunday**. All times listed are Eastern Time Zone.

Detailed guidelines for all assignments will be posted on Blackboard. The course schedule and assignments listed below are subject to change; any changes will be announced on Blackboard and sent to students' Mason email accounts.

**CRIM 495 FALL 2020 COURSE SCHEDULE**

Table Key: BB=Blackboard, WL=Writing Lab, RP=Research Paper

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Assignments and Due Dates (see Blackboard for details)</b>
<p><b>Week 1</b> <b>Aug 24-30</b></p>	<p><b>Class Meeting</b> Course Introduction</p> <p><b>No Writing Lab</b></p>	<p>Attend class meeting on Tue 8/25 at 1:30pm</p> <p>Post self-introduction by Thu 8/27 at 11:59pm</p> <p>Complete survey by Sun 8/30 at 11:59pm</p> <p>Take syllabus quiz by Sun 8/30 at 11:59pm</p> <p>Complete Reading Assignment by Sun 8/30 <i>Pulled Over</i> Chapters 1 &amp; 2 (pp 1-51)</p> <p>Skim Appendix (pp 167-173)</p>
<p><b>Week 2</b> <b>Aug 31-Sep 6</b></p>	<p><b>Class Meeting</b> Police Contact and Interactions</p> <p><b>Writing Lab</b> Overview of Research Paper &amp; Brainstorming Paper Topics</p>	<p>Submit Reading Review #1 by Mon 8/31 at 11:59pm</p> <p>Attend class meeting on Tue 9/1 at 1:30pm</p> <p>View WL #1 and submit assignment by Thu 9/3 at 11:59pm</p> <p>Complete Reading Assignment by Sun 9/6 <i>Pulled Over</i> Chapters 3 &amp; 4 (pp 52-92)</p>
<p><b>Week 3</b> <b>Sep 7-13</b></p>	<p><b>Class Meeting</b> Police Contact and Interactions</p> <p><b>Writing Lab</b> Developing Scholarly Questions</p>	<p>Submit Reading Review #2 by Mon 9/7 at 11:59pm</p> <p>Attend class meeting on Tue 9/8 at 1:30pm</p> <p>View WL #2 and submit assignment by Thu 9/10 at 11:59pm</p> <p>Complete Reading Assignment by Sun 9/13 <i>Pulled Over</i> Chapters 7 &amp; 8 (pp 134-166)</p>



Date	Topics	Assignments and Due Dates (see Blackboard for details)
<b>Week 4</b> <b>Sep 14-20</b>	<b>Class Meeting</b> Police Contact and Interactions  <b>Writing Lab</b> Conducting Library Research	Submit Reading Review #3 by Mon 9/14 at 11:59pm  Attend class meeting on Tue 9/15 at 1:30pm  View WL #3 and submit assignment by Thu 9/17 at 11:59pm  Submit RP Topic & Guiding Question by Thu 9/17 at 11:59pm
<b>Week 5</b> <b>Sep 21-27</b>	<b>Class Activity</b> On Blackboard  <b>Writing Lab</b> Creating Paper Outlines	Participate in Class Activity on BB Mon and Tues (TBA)  View WL #4 and submit assignment by Thu 9/24 at 11:59pm  Submit RP Sources & Keywords by Thu 9/24 at 11:59pm  Complete Reading Assignment by Sun 9/27 <i>Crook County</i> Introduction & Chapter 1 (pp 1-50) Skim Appendix (pp 195-216)
<b>Week 6</b> <b>Sep 28-Oct 4</b>	<b>Class Meeting</b> Courts and Colorblind Justice  <b>Writing Lab</b> Discuss Section #1 of Research Paper	Submit Reading Review #4 by Mon 9/28 at 11:59pm  Attend class meeting on Tue 9/29 at 1:30pm  View WL #5 and submit assignment by Thu 10/1 at 11:59pm  Submit RP Outline by Thu 10/1 at 11:59pm  Complete Reading Assignment by Sun 10/4 <i>Crook County</i> Chapters 2 & 3 (pp 51-125)
<b>Week 7</b> <b>Oct 5-11</b>	<b>Class Meeting</b> Courts and Colorblind Justice  <b>Writing Lab</b> Discuss Section #2 of Research Paper	Submit Reading Review #5 by Mon 10/5 at 11:59pm  Attend class meeting on Tue 10/6 at 1:30pm  View WL #6 and submit assignment by Thu 10/8 at 11:59pm  Submit RP Draft of Section #1 (Introduction) by Thu 10/8 at 11:59pm

Date	Topics	Assignments and Due Dates (see Blackboard for details)
<b>Week 8</b> <b>Oct 12-18</b>	<b>No Class Meeting</b> (Fall Break)  <b>No Writing Lab</b>	Continue working on research paper assignment (Draft of Section #2: Nature of the Problem) due next week  Complete Reading Assignment by Sun 10/18 <i>Crook County</i> Chapters 4, 5 & Conclusion (pp 127-190)
<b>Week 9</b> <b>Oct 19-25</b>	<b>Class Meeting</b> Courts and Colorblind Justice  <b>Writing Lab</b> Discuss Section #3 of Research Paper	Submit Reading Review #6 by Mon 10/19 at 11:59pm  Attend class meeting on Tue 10/20 at 1:30pm  View WL #7 and submit assignment by Thu 10/22 at 11:59pm  Submit RP Draft of Section #2 (Nature of the Problem) by Thu 10/22 at 11:59pm
<b>Week 10</b> <b>Oct 26-Nov 1</b>	<b>Class Activity</b> On Blackboard  <b>Class Activity</b> Documentary <i>13th</i>  <b>No Writing Lab</b>	Participate in Class Activity on BB Mon and Tue (TBA)  Watch Documentary <i>13th</i> by Wed 10/28  Participate in Class Activity on BB Thu and Fri (TBA)  Continue working on research paper assignment (Draft of Section #3: Solutions and Reforms) due next week  Complete Reading Assignment by Sun 11/1 <i>Homeward</i> Chapters 1 & 3 (pp 1-10 and 26-45) Skim Chapter 2 (pp 11-25)
<b>Week 11</b> <b>Nov 2-8</b>	<b>Class Meeting</b> Incarceration and Inequality  <b>Writing Lab</b> Discuss Section #4 of Research Paper	Submit Reading Review #7 (by Mon 11/2 at 11:59pm)  Attend class meeting on Tue 11/3 at 1:30pm  View WL #8 and submit assignment by Thu 11/5 at 11:59pm  Submit RP: Draft of Section #3 (Solutions and Reforms) by Thu 11/5 at 11:59pm  Complete Reading Assignment by Sun 11/8 <i>Homeward</i> Chapters 6 & 9 (pp 83-100 and 139-155)

Date	Topics	Assignments and Due Dates (see Blackboard for details)
<b>Week 12</b> <b>Nov 9-15</b>	<p><b>Class Meeting</b> Incarceration and Inequality</p> <p><b>Writing Lab</b> Discuss Section #5 of Research Paper</p>	<p>Submit Reading Review #8 (by Mon 11/9 at 11:59pm)</p> <p>Attend class meeting on Tue 11/10 at 1:30pm</p> <p>View WL #9 and submit assignment by Thu 11/12 at 11:59pm</p> <p>Submit RP Draft of Section #4 (Conclusion) by Thu 11/12 at 11:59pm</p> <p>Complete Reading Assignment by Sun 11/15 <i>Homeward</i> Chapters 10 &amp; 11 (pp 156-189)</p>
<b>Week 13</b> <b>Nov 16-22</b>	<p><b>Class Meeting</b> Incarceration and Inequality</p> <p><b>Writing Lab</b> Recommendations for Research Paper Revisions</p>	<p>Submit Reading Review #9 by Mon 11/16 at 11:59pm</p> <p>Attend class meeting on Tue 11/17 at 1:30pm</p> <p>View WL #10 and submit assignment by Thu 11/19 at 11:59pm</p> <p>Submit RP Draft of Section #5 (References) by Thu 11/19 at 11:59pm</p>
<b>Week 14</b> <b>Nov 23-29</b>	<p><b>Class Activity</b> On Blackboard</p> <p><b>No Writing Lab</b> (Thanksgiving Break)</p>	<p>Participate in Class Activity on BB Mon and Tue (TBA)</p> <p>Work on Writing/Revising Research Paper</p>
<b>Week 15</b> <b>Nov 30-Dec 6</b>	<p><b>Class Meeting</b> Course Wrap Up</p> <p><b>No Writing Lab</b> (Office Hours Available)</p>	<p>Attend class meeting on Tue 12/1 at 1:30pm</p> <p>Submit Reflection Journal (TBA)</p> <p>Work on Writing/Revising Research Paper</p>
<b>Finals Week</b>		<p>Submit Final Research Paper by Tue 12/8 at 11:59pm</p>