Evolution of Criminal Justice

This course is meant to prepare prospective pre-law students for the complexities of their undergraduate studies as well as give them an understanding of the history behind many modern-day societal controversies.

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the agencies and entities that are responsible for detecting, adjudicating, and sanctioning criminal offenders. In order to achieve this understanding, students will initially be exposed to the historical elements and evolution of criminal justice, constitutional limitations, and criminal defense. We will then explore the constitutional limitations of enforcement through the lens of US Supreme Court decisions and the rationale of the 4th, 5th, 6th, and 14th Amendments. In the following section of the course,

We will discuss the legal principles and formalities of the criminal justice system, its proceedings, and its main actors in the courtroom. We will conclude this course by analyzing its impacts on our society today and the many shortcomings that have disadvantaged key groups throughout the United States. We will discuss the next steps for those interested in pursuing a career in the legal field and explore empirical data that analyze the future of Criminal Justice.

Topics:

1) **History of Criminal Justice, Models, Patriot Act**
2) **Gun Crime and Gun Control**
3) **Sources and Limits of Law, Elements of a Crime**
4) **Criminal Intent, Causation, Legal Defenses**
5) **History of Policing and Police Strategies**
6) **4th Amendment, Exclusionary Rule, and its Exceptions**
7) **5 Amendment, Self-Incrimination, Miranda**
8) **Exceptions to Miranda**
9) **Courtroom Workgroup & Decision Making**
10) **Initial AppearancePreliminary Hearing Pretrial Motions**
11) **Trial & Verdict**
12) **Prisons & Jails Today**

As we are exploring these topics through the interpretations and decisions of the Supreme Court, students will be required to write one legal brief on a case of their choosing at the finality of the course. This exercise will help students improve their ability to read complicated legal documents, concisely summarize the decision, and demonstrate their understanding of the case.

The main method of communication with students will be via email. All required readings will be **short,** and additional optional readings will be provided should the topic be of interest to the students. Reading assignments will be sent via email prior to the class that they are due.