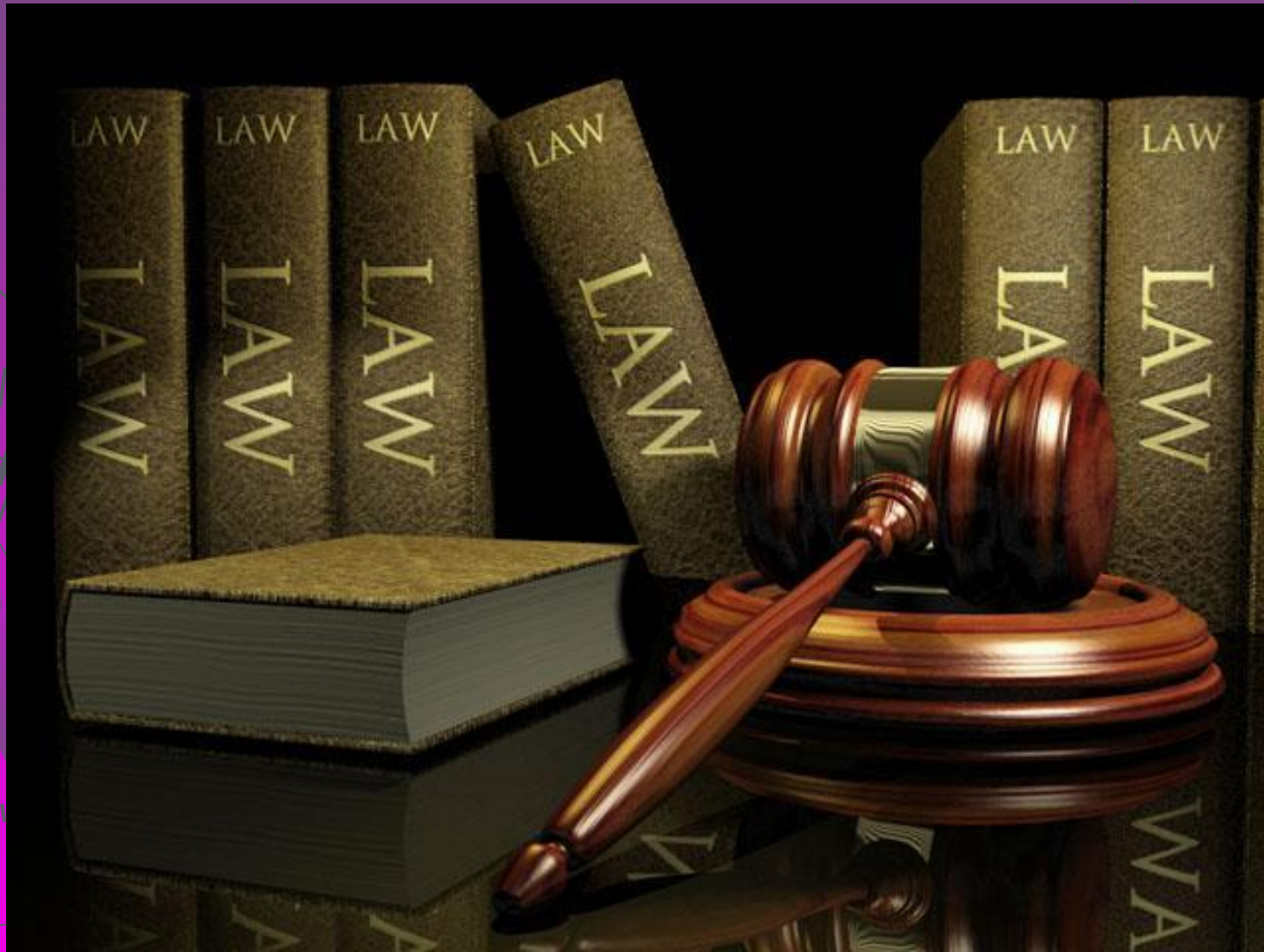


Introduction to Law



What is Law?

- Law—a set of rules or regulations a government uses to regulate the conduct of people within a society
- Jurisprudence—the study of law
- U.S. system strongly tied to traditional Judeo-Christian values about right and wrong (stealing, perjury, murder, etc.)

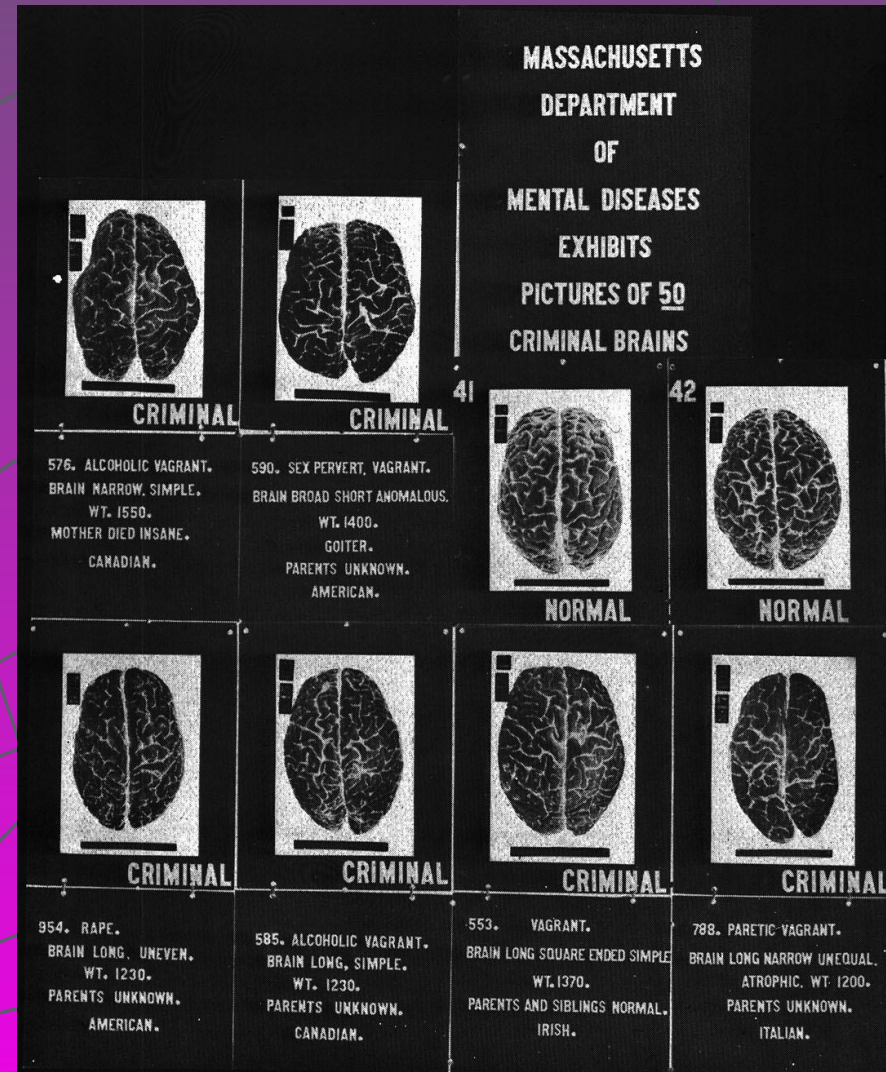
Kinds of Law

• Criminal

- Sets rules for society and penalties for crimes
- Must prove guilty **beyond a reasonable doubt**

• Offenses

- Misdemeanor— <1 year in jail
- Felony— > 1 year in jail



Kinds of Law cont.

• Civil Law

- Regulates relations between individuals or groups and individuals
- Must prove guilty by a **preponderance of evidence** (who does the fact finder side with more)



Punishment—why does society punish criminals

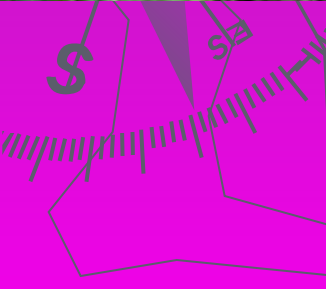
- Retribution—revenge is gained (execute the murderer)
- Deterrence—discourage further criminal activity (20 years of hard time)
- Rehabilitation—change/reform the individual (education, counseling, drug treatment)



Judicial Systems



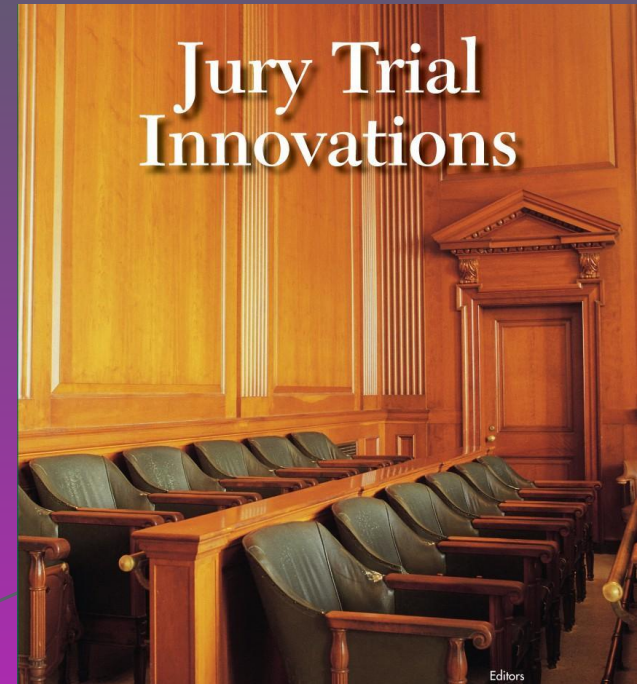
- Adversarial system—used in U.S.; two opposing sides
- Inquisitional system—European system; judge has an active roll in court (gathering evidence, asking witnesses to appear, etc.)



Jury Trials

- Jury of your peers
- Criminal
 - 6th Amendment
 - Defendant decides
- Civil
 - 7th Amendment
 - Plaintiff or defendant
 - More than \$20

Jury Trial Innovations



Court Structure

- Trial Court— hears the facts/decides verdict
- Appeals Court— decides if original court made a mistake
 - Error of law—judge made a mistake (grounds for appeal)
 - Precedent—ruling that must be followed by lower courts
 - Supreme Court
 - 9 members, 1 chief justice
 - Appointed by President—approved by Senate
 - Serve for life
 - Majority, dissenting, concurring opinions

The United States Federal Courts

SUPREME COURT

UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT

APPELLATE COURTS

U.S. Courts of Appeals

12 Regional Circuit Courts of Appeals
1 U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit

TRIAL COURTS

U.S. District Courts

94 judicial districts
U.S. Bankruptcy Courts

U.S. Court of International Trade

U.S. Court of Federal Claims

FEDERAL COURTS AND OTHER ENTITIES OUTSIDE THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

Military Courts (Trial and Appellate)

Court of Veterans Appeals

U.S. Tax Court

Federal administrative agencies and boards

Geographic Boundaries

of United States Courts of Appeals and United States District Courts

