



EDUCATION JUSTICE PROJECT
an initiative of the University of Illinois



info@educationjustice.net

217.300.5150

1001 S. Wright Street

Champaign, IL 61820

www.educationjustice.net

April 2026

Resources @ EJP

UIUC Courses Related to Incarceration and Justice

Here is a list of regularly-offered undergraduate and graduate courses on UIUC campus that relate to incarceration and criminal legal system. We also encourage students to explore “special topics” courses, especially in the departments of Sociology, Social Work, Landscape Architecture, and Anthropology.

Undergraduate Courses

AAS 370/LLS 372 Immigration, Law, and Rights

Simi Kang | simikang@illinois.edu

Exploration of the histories, cultures, and experiences of immigration to the United States by examining cultural production (literary and visual narratives and texts) alongside legal discourses (legislation, federal court cases).

AFRO 219/HIST 219/LA 221 History of the Prison

Rebecca Ginsburg | rginsbur@illinois.edu

History of prison architecture, landscapes, and carceral regimes from medieval times until the present. Topics include philosophy of punishment, the invention of the modern prison, the advent of mass incarceration, and 21st century geographies of incarceration. The course focuses on the western experience. Interdisciplinary approach includes readings in architectural history, urban planning, sociology, philosophy, psychology, history, and landscape studies.

ANTH 387 Anthropology of Crime

Ellen Moodie | emoodie@illinois.edu

This course takes an anthropological perspective to challenge “common-sense” notions about crime. We will compare ideas about and representations of lawbreaking, criminality, danger, policing, and violence in different parts of the world, considering how they diverge from, and yet also overlap with, each other. Our goal is to find new ways to understand both how something becomes “crime” and also how it then quickly becomes sensationalized, stereotyped and simplified as it enters public debate.

LAW 302 Transitional Justice

Colleen Murphy (2023) | colleenm@illinois.edu; Maxim Krupskiy (2026) | krupskii@illinois.edu

Wrongdoing is part of the history of many, if not most, political communities around the globe. This course examines the moral questions that dealing with past wrongdoing raise. Our focus is specifically on political wrongdoing, that is, wrongdoing inflicted on individuals by the state or groups contesting the state. Such wrongdoing has taken different forms, from slavery, to forced disappearances, to programs of torture and of land appropriation. We also focus on two specific political contexts: the United States and South Africa. In this course, we survey a range of legal measures including criminal punishment, truth commissions, reparations, and apology, that have been, and can be used, to deal with legacies of wrongdoing.

LAW 303 Living the Law

Jennifer Pahre | jpahre@illinois.edu

Combines the study of major areas of law with small-group simulations to explore how the law operates in different contexts in American society. Students interested in experiencing how lawyers, lawmakers, prosecutors, and judges work with the law will benefit from this course. Substantively, the class surveys the roots of American law; the creation of the United States Constitution; the evolution of equal protection and due process law; and provides an overview of Contracts, Torts, Criminal Law, Family Law, and legal ethics and procedure.

LLS 468 Latinas/os & the Law

Aja Y. Martinez | aym@illinois.edu

Examines the Latina/Latino experience in the U.S. how and when the law, through the courts, has most often operated as an instrument of subordination and oppression, but has also at times been leveraged for positive social transformation. Students will come to understand that the law is a deeply contested social space that is central to U.S. social hierarchies based upon race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, class, immigration status, and religion.

PHIL 436 Phil of Law and of the State

Helga Varden | hvarden@illinois.edu

Examination of issues in the philosophy of law, such as the nature of law, law and morality, justice, liberty and authority, punishment, and legal responsibility.

PS 370 Justice in the Law

Benjamin Miller | bm50@illinois.edu

Explores fundamental questions about the ideal of a just society. Introduces students to the close connection between theories of justice and legal reasoning used by courts. Court cases and topics include enforcing sexual morality, protecting free expression, religious liberty, regulating labor markets, guaranteeing the rule of law, ensuring equal opportunities through schools and elections, establishing group rights, and regulating reproductive rights.

PSYC 339 Restorative Justice: Principles and Methods

Mikhail Lyubansky | lyubansk@illinois.edu

Pulling from a variety of applied disciplines and areas of scholarship, this course provides an overview of the contemporary restorative justice movement and critically examines restorative justice principles and methods. Starting with the problems and limitations associated with mainstream (punitive) responses to crime and rule violations, we examine how restorative justice presents an alternative set of philosophical principles of justice and seek to understand the costs and benefits associated with the different methods developed to apply that philosophy.

PSYC 468 Psych and Law

Sara Glass | skglass2@illinois.edu

Examines relationship of the administrative, civil, and criminal justice systems to educational and mental health institutions; individual rights, social issues, and psychological well being.

REL 322 Crime, Punishment, and Redemption in the U.S.

Stephanie Thurston | smthurst@illinois.edu

The criminal-penal system in the United States is a complex web of mutually reinforcing institutions, practices, and moral values. This course fosters a deep analysis of the U.S. criminal-penal system with special attention to the role of religion and explores the religious concepts that have informed our moral imaginations regarding crime, punishment, redemption, and the socio-political resistance against our criminal-penal system.

SOC 375 Criminal Justice System

Anna-Maria Marshall | amarshll@illinois.edu

Exploration of the actors, institutions, and processes that make up the criminal justice system. We review sociological and other social scientific research on topics including the police, prosecutors, the courtroom work-group, forensic evidence, juries, sentencing, and the impact of mass incarceration. Grades are based on exams, research exercises, and ethnographic observations of criminal courtrooms.

SOC 479 Law and Society

Daniel John Steward | djs@illinois.edu

Examination of the social and political organization of the legal system, including the development of disputes, the role of gatekeepers to the legal system, and the political significance of litigation. Examines the role of law in sustaining and dismantling structural forms of inequality, as well as the relationship between law and social change.

Graduate Courses

LA 590 History of the Prison

Rebecca Ginsburg | rginsbur@illinois.edu

History of prison architecture, landscapes, and carceral regimes from medieval times until the present. Topics include philosophy of punishment, the invention of the modern prison, the advent of mass incarceration, and 21st century geographies of incarceration. The course focuses on the western experience. Interdisciplinary approach includes readings in architectural history, urban planning, sociology, philosophy, psychology, history, and landscape studies.

LAW 604 Criminal Law

Jacqueline E. Ross (Fall) | jeross1@illinois.edu; Eric A. Johnson (Spring) | ejohnsn@illinois.edu

Sources and purposes of the criminal law; the meaning of criminal responsibility; and the characteristics of particular crimes. **Law students only.**

LAW 657 International Human Rights Law

Patrick Keenan | pjkeenan@illinois.edu

Studies established and developing legal rules and procedures governing the protection of international human rights, including Marxist and Third World, as well as Western, conceptions of those rights.

Law students only.

SOCW 589 Social Work and the Law

Sandie Kopels | kopels@illinois.edu

Legal procedures and issues of special relevance to social work practice; includes legal provisions related to poverty, family development and crises, racial and ethnic minorities, institutionalized persons, crime and delinquency, legal authority of social agencies, and regulation of the profession.

Compiled by: Mariah Cade and Farah Hasan, EJP interns