Interdisciplinary Criminal Justice Reform

Fall 2021

We acknowledge that the Law School is on the traditional lands of indigenous people, including the Sélíš (Salish), Ksanka (Kootenai) & Qlíspé (Kalispel). Many others, including Blackfeet, Nez Perce, Shoshone, Bannock, and Coeur D’Alene, had and continue to have a crucial presence in the area.

We acknowledge the role the legal system has played in the removal of Indigenous peoples from these lands, and, through our commitment to education, service, and scholarship, strive to improve the quality of justice for future generations. Doing so demands respect for tribal sovereignty and Indigenous cultures as well as accountability to the needs and perspectives of Indigenous peoples, who, from time immemorial to the present and until the end of time, protect and remain connected with this land on which we gather, live, learn, and work.¹

COURSE INFORMATION

Professor Jordan Gross, Law
jordan.gross@mso.umt.edu

Dr. Laura Kirsch, Psychology
laura.kirsch@mso.umt.edu

Number and credits: LAW/PUAD 595; 3 Credit hours

Meeting Schedule

This course meets in-person Tuesdays at 4:30-7:30 p.m. in Room 201 of the Law Building. Individual class sessions may end earlier than 7:30 p.m. depending on the amount of asynchronous online engagement, instruction and feedback provided in given week.

This course includes small group interaction and peer collaboration. Regular attendance and meaningful participation in class sessions and activities are expected of all students.

This course does not offer a hyflex or remote attendance option. Under current ABA requirements and Law School policy, remote attendance cannot be offered as a convenience. All students must class in-person, subject to two exceptions:

• You have an administratively-approved accommodation permitting you to attend class remotely; accommodations will be communicated to the Instructor by the Administration
• You experience COVID 19 symptoms, test positive for COVID 19, have been exposed to COVID 19 through a close contact, or are required to quarantine due to a COVID 19 exposure or diagnosis; under these circumstances you are expected to stay home and attend class remotely if you are able

Students who are authorized to attend class remotely will be considered present for attendance policy purposes.

¹ Attribution: Land Acknowledgement statement developed by the Students and Faculty of the Law School’s Margery Hunter Brown Indian Law Clinic.
All information necessary for authorized remote attendance, including a Zoom link, is on Moodle. Please email either Dr. Kirsch or Prof. Gross if you intend to participate in class remotely so we know to set up the Zoom link in class that evening.

University and Law School policies require all of us to wear masks, and to wear them properly. **This means your mask must cover your mouth and nose.** You should also review and be familiar with the Department of Public Policy Administration COVID policies: [https://www.umt.edu/law/mpa/MPA-documents/covidfaqguideaugust2021.pdf](https://www.umt.edu/law/mpa/MPA-documents/covidfaqguideaugust2021.pdf)

Please note that the Law School requires the proper use of facemasks in all public spaces in the Law Building, such as hallways and restrooms, not just classrooms. This is different from the UM main campus facemask policy.

Compliance with institutional Law School and UM health and safety requirements are subject to the University's Student Code of Conduct. See Article V(G)(2) (faculty have authority "to exclude a student from any class session in which the student displays disruptive behavior that threatens the ... safety and well-being of others in the classroom.")

Concerns with institutional mask requirements should be directed to the Administration, not the Instructor. Students who do not comply with institutional mask policies in our classroom after being requested to do so will be asked to excuse themselves from the room and will be directed to the Law School’s Associate Dean of Academic Affairs Jonathan Byington to discuss their concerns.

**Description**

This is a seminar jointly offered by the School of Law and the Department of Public Administration and Policy. This course provides an interdisciplinary scholarly and practical framework for understanding and engaging in criminal justice reform, with a focus on the Montana criminal justice system. This course approaches criminal justice reform from a policy perspective. This course is open to graduate students from any Department or discipline.

**Learning Outcomes**

*Knowledge:* A practical, interdisciplinary understanding of theoretical, legal, and historical background of the criminal justice, with a focus on the Montana criminal justice system.

*Skills:* Interdisciplinary analysis, collaborative problem-solving, and professional/academic writing and oral presentation.
Values: Critically reflect on the quality and effectiveness of criminal justice policies; identify opportunities to affect change in the quality and administration of criminal justice; identify and address ethical considerations that present in criminal justice reform work.

Interdisciplinary Definition and Expectations

This is an interdisciplinary course. An interdisciplinary approach draws on multiple disciplines for a deep and thorough understanding of complex issues and requires synthesizing what each discipline offers before attempting to solve or address an issue.²

Student work will be assessed for proficiency in interdisciplinary methodology, and a demonstrated ability to distinguish it from cross-disciplinary methodology and multi-disciplinary methodology, using these definitions:

- Single disciplinary analysis: driven by the norms and framework of a particular discipline without consideration and incorporation of alternative views.
- Cross-disciplinary analysis: examines an issue germane to one discipline through the lens of another discipline (i.e., how physicists explore music, sociological perspectives on the purpose of religion).
- Multi-disciplinary analysis: examines an issue from multiple perspectives, without systemically integrating disciplinary perspectives.
- Inter-disciplinary analysis: examines an issue from multiple perspectives, leading to a systematic effort to integrate the alternative perspectives into a unified or coherent framework of analysis.

Interdisciplinary methodology is different from multi- or cross-disciplinary teaching in that it requires integration and synthesis of different perspectives, rather than just consideration of multiple viewpoints.

ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

Assessment in this course is based on:

1. Reflection and prompt response submissions for class-related short assignments, including quizzes, online forum posts, class participation, engagement and attendance – 20%
2. Formative research and analysis writing projects with peer feedback components – 30%
3. Summative research, analysis and integration writing project – 50%

Deadlines, descriptions and detailed instructions for all assignments will be posted on Moodle.

Short Assignments

- Part of class participation
- 20% of the overall course grade
- Graded C/NC
- Due by 4 p.m. of the day of class

Students are required to log onto Moodle and review each Session Module at least one week before that class session meets to check for short assignments and online activities.

Instructors use student submissions to structure in-class activities and discussion; no late short assignments will be accepted absent exigent circumstances.

Students have one short assignment – creating and posting a Personal Introduction – that is due before the first class session meets. Prompts, instructions, and the submission portal for the Personal Introduction assignment are on Moodle.

**Major Assignments**

- Due by [Midnight](#) on the date specified
- Weighted as follows:
  - 3 Formative assessments, which may include a peer feedback component - 10% each (30% total)
  - Summative assessment - 50%

Instructions for Formative and Summative Assessments and submission portals are in stand-alone Moodle Sections for each assignment.

**Late Assignment Policy**

Instructors use student submissions to structure in-class group activities and discussion. Formative assessment assignments may include a peer feedback component that must be timely completed in order for a project to move forward. Consequently, a failure to meet an assignment deadline in this course does not merely impact a student who misses a deadline, it disrupts the workflow of the class and inconveniences others. Meeting deadlines, furthermore, is a basic professional skill expected of all graduate students. Consequently, late assignments will not be accepted or receive credit absent exigent circumstances and Instructor permission.

**Contract Grading**

This course uses contract grading. A goal of contract grading is to reduce the anxiety about grades students may experience. In this course, it is also designed to provide a grading norm that can be standardized across disciplines. More importantly, it is designed to encourage students to develop their own motivations for excellence as an aspect of professional development. A key aspect of contract grading is to emphasize qualitative evaluative feedback over quantitative (numerical) assessments of student work.

During the semester we will not assign grades or scores to individual assignments; instead we will provide written feedback within 7 business days. In our feedback, we will identify the strong aspects of submissions, point out information or concepts that were missing from submissions, and/or suggest additional work (thinking, writing, reading, etc.) to improve understanding of the topic. In each feedback, we will indicate if the submission exceeded (E), met or almost exceeded (ME), met (M), or was below expectations (BE). Students can track this feedback on their own throughout the semester. This feedback will help deepen your understanding of the material and is aligned with best practices of professional settings.

Students will sign up for a mid-semester, individual conference with an Instructor to discuss their progress to date. The sign-up sheet for mid-semester conferences is on Moodle. Before the mid-semester conference, students will submit a one-page, single-spaced memo to the Instructors. The submission
portal for memos is on Moodle. The memo will discuss your progress to date and identify what was done well, what needs improvement, and what the Instructors can do support your learning and progress.

**Grading Criteria**

**Meets Expectations (M)** - students who meet expectations in this course will receive a grade of “B.” To meet expectations, you must do the following:

- Meet the stated criteria and follow all guidelines and instructions for all assignments
- Meet due dates for all assignments
- Attend and actively participate in all class discussions unless an absence is excused
- Ask thoughtful questions during discussions
- Include interdisciplinary sources or perspectives and analysis in discussions and written work
- Attend the required conference with instructors to discuss coursework progress
- Check UM email and Moodle class site regularly and be responsive to inquiries
- Utilize the University Campus Public Speaking and Writing Center as needed to improve written work

Students who do not meet the baseline expectations above will receive a grade of “C” or lower in this course.

**Meets/Almost Exceeds Expectations (ME):** students who meet and almost exceed expectations in this course, will receive a grade of “B+.” To meet/almost exceed expectations, you must do everything that you must do to earn a B, and, in addition, you must:

- Demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the material evidenced in your written work
- Demonstrate proficiency in synthesizing and integrating interdisciplinary sources and perspectives into discussions and written work
- Incorporate evidence-based analysis in discussions and written work
- Turn in assignments that are concise, carefully edited, and easy to read

**Exceeds Expectations (E):** students who exceed expectations in this course will receive a grade of “A.” To exceed expectations, you must do everything that you must do to earn a B and B+ as well as:

- Receive and respond to feedback in a professional and non-defensive manner, and incorporate feedback into subsequent work
- Demonstrate a strong commitment and willingness to learn and grow from individual and team assignments
- Reflect advanced interdisciplinary integration of perspectives and knowledge
- Submit creative, unique, and thoughtful work product that is derivative of the work or recommendations of others

To earn a grade of “A”, your performance in all aspects of this class must be of consistently exceptional and professional quality.

You are welcome to discuss this grading contract, your performance in the course or your concerns about assessment with the instructors. Questions or concerns regarding assessment are best addressed in person and earlier, rather than later.
Each assignment will receive written feedback via the Moodle assignment portal. Written feedback on assignments will include a notation as follows:

BE = below expectations
M = met expectations
ME = met/almost exceeded expectations
E = exceeded expectations

Students are expected to access institutional resources available to them to support their learning and success. We highly encourage students to use the UM’s Writing and Public Speaking Center. Online appointments with the Center can be made through this link: https://www.umt.edu/writingcenter/

**INSTRUCTOR OFFICE HOURS**

**Dr. Kirsch** - see Office Hours information posted on Moodle

**Professor Gross** - Office hours are by appointment and will be held via telephone or Zoom.

- **To schedule an appointment**, use this link: https://calendly.com/professor-gross; please do not send an email
  - In your Calendly meeting request, indicate whether you would like to meet (1) via telephone or (2) via Zoom
  - If you are requesting a telephone meeting, provide a telephone number in your scheduling notes
  - If you do not indicate a preference or do not provide a telephone number, office hour appointments will be held on Zoom
  - If you schedule a meeting and cannot make it you are expected to cancel the meeting in a timely manner through the Calendly link

- **To attend a confirmed office hours appointment on Zoom**, use this link:
  - https://umontana.zoom.us/j/92314925588?pwd=ZVd1eEhlemNESk90SUYyTkwx5RDlJQT09 Meeting ID: 923 1492 5588; Passcode: 693142
  - This link is only for office hours or other confirmed appointments, not for remote attendance

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

All students must practice academic honesty. It is your responsibility to read and adhere to the University of Montana’s Student Conduct Code and any applicable Departmental conduct codes. Law Students must adhere to the Law School Honor Code.

A student engaging in academic misconduct will be subject to an academic penalty. Academic penalties may include, but are not limited to, receiving a score of “0” on any assignments in which a student engages in academic misconduct, or receiving a failing grade for the course. You may also be subject to a disciplinary sanction by your Department or the University.

**EQUAL ACCESS**

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and the University of Montana Office for Disability Equity (“ODE”). If you think you may have a disability adversely effecting your academic performance and you have not already
connected with ODE, please contact ODE through one of the options listed at: https://www.umt.edu/disability/Students/inquire/default.php. The Law School will work with you and ODE to provide an appropriate accommodation.
**Interdisciplinary Criminal Justice Reform**  
**Professor Jordan Gross, Law**  
**Fall 2021**  
**Dr. Laura Kirsch, Psychology**

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

Readings, materials, and assignments for this course are updated continually to reflect its dynamic subject matter. Individual sessions have a comprehensive module on Moodle that includes a topic overview, readings and assignments for that session. Readings and materials will include academic and scholarly writings, news articles, opinion pieces, podcasts, videos and interactive resources. Assignments will include quizzes, reflections and prompt responses, and online forum posts. All materials for this course are available on Moodle.

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<td>Class 7</td>
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<td>Oct. 12</td>
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