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Classroom: 218 Admin  
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Course description & goals:

This course will present an introductory examination of the portrayal of crime, the courts, and the concept of justice in modern cinema. The course will explore different themes related to crime, the judicial and legal system, and what it means to dispense “justice” in governing systems. The course will begin with a classic movie that began the portrayal of crime in the cinema, M. The process and politics behind a trial, with a focus on the portrayal of lawyers, will be discussed within the context of two films: Anatomy of a Murder and A Civil Action. After viewing the film 12 Angry Men, the focus on juries as an integral component of the judicial and legal system will be highlighted through In the Hands of the People: The Trial Jury’s Origins, Triumphs, Troubles, and Future in American Democracy by William L. Dwyer (Thomas Dunne Books). Finally, the film Judgment at Nuremberg will help to facilitate a serious of questions, most notably when can crimes against humanity be placed on trial, as well as when can judges judge other judges. This will lead the class to discuss the book The Myth of Moral Justice: Why Our Legal System Fails to Do What’s Right by Thane Rosenbaum (HarperCollins, 2003).

Course assignments:

- **Paper**  
  - This paper should focus on a movie that presents an aspect of crime, the legal system, or issues surrounding justice. In your 5-6 page paper, you should devote the first section (following an introduction with a thesis) to a summary of the film that you selected (maximum of two pages is sufficient). Then you should turn to the various “themes” of the course that the film portrays, such as: the victims, the lawyers, the criminals, the legal theories, the judicial system, and what this film says about the legal system. All papers will be typed with normal font and margins, with the student’s last four digits of their Social Security # in the upper-left header of each page. Each paper will be graded using the “Grading Criteria” sheet found at the end of this syllabus. More discussion will be held on this paper in class.

- **Classroom Discussion:** 40% (5% each class)

- **Final Exam:** 40%  
  - This will be an essay exam that will focus on the various aspects of the law as portrayed on the big screen. It will be open-book and open-notes; further details will be discussed in class.

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Course Schedule:

The following movies and discussions will be on the following class meetings:

Thursday,
June 16: Introductory Discussion: Crime, the Legal System, and Justice Trials by Society: *M*
Begin reading *In the Hands of the People*

Monday,
June 20: Discussion of *M*
Discussion of the Role of Juries in American Legal System
Trials by Society: *12 Angry Men*

Thursday,
June 23: Discussion of *12 Angry Men* and *In the Hands of the People*

Saturday,
June 25: Trials and Lawyers: *Anatomy of a Murder*
Begin reading *Myth of Moral Justice*

Monday,
June 27: Trials and Lawyers: *A Civil Action*
Discussion of *Anatomy* and *A Civil Action*

Thursday,
June 30: Judges and Laws on Trial: *Judgment at Nuremberg*

Monday,
July 4: NO CLASS

Thursday,
July 7: Discussion on the Concept of Justice and *Judgment at Nuremberg*
Paper due

Monday,
July 11: Discussion of *The Myth of Moral Justice*

Thursday,
July 14: Final Exam