

Sociology 710: American Criminal Justice Philosophy: Myths and Realities

Social and Behavioral Sciences GCR
IN ACAD 329, M 10:00 to 12:30
CRN: 36253
SOC 3 prerequisite

Should criminal defendants be given more Constitutional rights? Do private attorneys provide better representation? How do lawyers' perceptions of their clients influence their work? What are the effects of the increased role of plea-bargaining in the court process? Is our court system just? American Criminal Justice Philosophy: Myths and Realities attempts to answer these questions. This course addresses the ongoing debate about what criminal justice is and ought to be in our society by concentrating on the process and decision-making that occurs in criminal courts in Washington D.C. Students will observe and study the court process at various stages including bail hearings, trials and sentencing hearings, as well as interview the key players involved such as prosecutors, defense attorneys, public defenders, judges, members of advocacy groups, and law professors at The George Washington University. Using evidence from observations and interviews, students themselves decipher the myths and realities of American criminal justice.

Charis Kubrin is an Assistant Professor in the Sociology Department. Professor Kubrin's research interests include neighborhood correlates of crime and violence, with an emphasis on race and violent crime. She has taught undergraduate courses including Introduction to Criminal Justice and Deviant Behavior and the graduate course, Race and Crime, at The George Washington University.