

**POLS 3600**  
**Criminal Justice Administration**  
**Spring 2026**

Professor Richard L. Vining, Jr.

Office: Baldwin 380C

Email: [rvining@uga.edu](mailto:rvining@uga.edu)

Office hours: Tuesday 1:00-2:00pm

Classroom: Baldwin 102

Meetings: Tu & Th 11:35-12:55

Required prerequisites

POLS 1101 or POLS 1101E or POLS 1101H or POLS 1101S

Course description

The actors and agencies in the administration of criminal law in the United States. Surveys processes critical to criminal punishment: arrest, bail, prosecution, conviction, sentencing, and corrections.

This course examines the actors and institutions that make up the American criminal justice system. The role each will be discussed, as will the current and developing policies relevant to their activities and effectiveness. Political and constitutional questions central to criminal justice administration will be considered, as will their practical effects.

Course Objectives

The Student Learning Outcomes are as follows: Students will understand the legal, political, and social dynamics of the criminal justice system. Students will be familiar with the relevant institutions and actors involved with the various stages of the criminal justice system, including consideration of law enforcement, courts, and corrections. Students will have critically analyzed criminal justice system practices and procedures. Students will have developed an ability to discuss criminal justice policy issues from multiple perspectives in a disciplined and cogent manner.

UGA Well Being Resources

*UGA Well-being Resources promote student success by cultivating a culture that supports a more active, healthy, and engaged student community.*

*Anyone needing assistance is encouraged to contact Student Care & Outreach (SCO) in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-8479 or visit [sco.uga.edu](http://sco.uga.edu). Student Care & Outreach helps students navigate difficult circumstances by connecting them with the most appropriate resources or services. They also administer the Embark@UGA program which supports students experiencing, or who have experienced, homelessness, foster care, or housing insecurity.*

*UGA provides both clinical and non-clinical options to support student well-being and mental health, any time, any place. Whether on campus, or studying from home or abroad, UGA Well-being Resources are here to help.*

- Well-being Resources: [well-being.uga.edu](http://well-being.uga.edu)

- *Student Care and Outreach: sco.uga.edu*
- *University Health Center: healthcenter.uga.edu*
- *Counseling and Psychiatric Services: caps.uga.edu or CAPS 24/7 crisis support at 706-542-2273*
- *Health Promotion/ Fontaine Center: healthpromotion.uga.edu*
- *Accessibility and Testing: accessibility.uga.edu*

*Additional information, including free digital well-being resources, can be accessed through the UGA app or by visiting <https://well-being.uga.edu>*

### Academic integrity

Neither plagiarism nor cheating will be tolerated. Appropriate citations are expected and encouraged. All students are expected to behave in accordance with the guidelines of the UGA Honor Code. If you are unsure whether certain actions are acceptable, consult your instructor. Use of artificial intelligence (e.g., ChatGPT) to write class assignments will not be tolerated and will result in a failing grade (F). You may use generative AI tools responsibly to assist with the research process.

UGA Student Honor Code: *"I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others. A Culture of Honesty, the University's policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at [honesty.uga.edu](https://honesty.uga.edu). Every course syllabus should include the instructor's expectations related to academic honesty.*

A Culture of Honesty, the University's policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at [www.uga.edu/ovpi](https://www.uga.edu/ovpi).

### Topical Outline

#### Part One: Crime and the Criminal Justice System

1. The Criminal Justice System
2. Crime and Justice in America
3. Criminal Justice and the Rule of Law

#### Part Two: Police

4. Police
5. Police Officers and Law Enforcement Operations
6. Police and Constitutional Law
7. Policing: Issues and Trends

#### Part Three: Courts

8. Courts and Adjudication
9. Pretrial Procedures, Plea Bargaining, and the Criminal Trial
10. Punishment and Sentencing

#### Part Four: Corrections

11. Corrections
12. Community Corrections: Probation and Intermediate Sanctions
13. Incarceration and Prison Society
14. Reentry to the Community

Part Five: The Juvenile Justice System  
15. Juvenile Justice

*The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.*

**Readings.** The following textbooks are required:

G. Cole, C. Smith, and C. DeJong, Criminal Justice in America, 10th ed. (2021; ISBN 0357456335)  
R. Vining and T. Wilhelm, Administering Justice: Placing the Chief Justice in State Politics (2023; ISBN 9780472056309 – online and e-version [Kindle, Nook, etc.] are free of charge)

**Examinations.** There will be a midterm examination and a final examination. No exceptions will be made for the scheduled examination times except in the case of a documented medical emergency. If you have additional needs or have permission from the Disability Resource Center for extra time on exams, please contact me privately and arrangements will be made.

**Paper.** Paper. An 8-10 page (double-space) paper is due late in the semester (11:59 PM via ELC, date TBA). A list of possible paper topics is located at [www.stateofthejudiciary.com](http://www.stateofthejudiciary.com). See the ‘Educational Activities’ section for four potential writing prompts. More instructions will follow in a separate handout distributed via ELC and discussed in class.

**Grading.**  
Midterm examination 30%; term paper 30%; final examination 40%

Grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

100-94	A	89-86	B+	79-76	C+	69-66	D+
93-90	A-	85-83	B	75-73	C	65-60	D
	82-80	B-		72-70	C-	59-00	F

**Attendance.** This course will not have a graded attendance component, but much of the lecture material will not appear in the readings. Everyone is encouraged to attend regularly. Students will be informed of any adjustments to regular course attendance by the instructor via ELC and/or e-mail.

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student’s legal name. Please advise me early in the semester if I need to make any appropriate changes to my records regarding your preferred name.

In the absence of written authorization from the UGA Disability Resource Center, students may not make a visual or audio recording of any aspect of this course. Students who have a recording accommodation agree in writing that they:

- Will use the records only for personal academic use during the specific course.
- Understand that faculty members have copyright interest in their class lectures and that they agree not to infringe on this right in any way.
- Understand that the faculty member and students in the class have privacy rights and agree not to violate those rights by using recordings for any reason other than their own personal study.

- Will not release, digitally upload, broadcast, transcribe, or otherwise share all or any part of the recordings. They also agree that they will not profit financially and will not allow others to benefit personally or financially from lecture recordings or other course materials.
- Will erase/delete all recordings at the end of the semester.
- Understand that violation of these terms may subject them to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct or subject them to liability under copyright laws.

## Course Outline

Week 1: Introductory meeting

Week 2: The Criminal Justice System

Cole and Smith, *Criminal Justice in America*, Ch. 1

Week 3: Crime and Justice in America

Cole and Smith, *Criminal Justice in America*, Ch. 2

Week 4: Criminal Justice and the Rule of Law

Cole and Smith, *Criminal Justice in America*, Ch. 3

Week 5: Police and Law Enforcement

Cole and Smith, *Criminal Justice in America*, Ch. 4

Week 6: Contemporary Issues in Policing

Cole and Smith, *Criminal Justice in America*, Ch. 5

Week 7, part 1: Police and Constitutional Law

Cole and Smith, *Criminal Justice in America*, Ch. 6

Week 7 part 2-Week 8 part 1: Courts and Adjudication

Cole and Smith, *Criminal Justice in America*, Ch. 7

Week 8, part 2: Court Administration

G. Linhares. 2012. “Vision, Function, and the Kitchen Sink: The Evolving Role of the State Court Administrator.” In *Future Trends in State Courts 2012*, pp. 20-25.

R. Vining and T. Wilhelm. 2023. “The Chief Justice as Administrator.” Ch. 3 in *Administering Justice: Placing the Chief Justice in State Politics*, pp. 65-80.

Week 9, part 1: Court and Justice System Leadership

R. Vining and T. Wilhelm. 2023. “The Chief Justice as Advocate.” Ch. 4 in *Administering Justice: Placing the Chief Justice in State Politics*, pp. 80-110.

R. Vining and T. Wilhelm. 2023. “The Chief Justice as Politician.” Ch. 5 in *Administering Justice: Placing the Chief Justice in State Politics*, pp. 111-130.

Skim the State of the Judiciary Archive at <http://www.stateofthejudiciary.com>

Week 9, part 2: MIDTERM EXAM

Week 10, part 1: Accountability Courts

Week 10, part 2-Week 11, part 1: Pretrial Procedures, Plea Bargaining, and Criminal Trials

Cole and Smith, *Criminal Justice in America*, Ch. 8

Week 11, part 2-Week 12: Punishment and Sentencing  
Cole and Smith, *Criminal Justice in America*, Ch. 9

Week 12: Corrections  
Cole and Smith, *Criminal Justice in America*, Ch. 10

Week 13 part 1: Incarceration and Prison Society  
Cole and Smith, *Criminal Justice in America*, Ch. 11

Week 13, part 2: Community Corrections  
Cole and Smith, *Criminal Justice in America*, Ch. 12

Week 14, part 1: *Parole Board: Missouri* screening and discussion

**\* paper due \***

Week 14, part 2: Reentry into the Community  
Cole and Smith, *Criminal Justice in America*, Ch. 13

Week 15, part 1: Juvenile Justice  
Cole and Smith, *Criminal Justice in America*, Ch. 15

Week 15, part 2: Review day

**FINAL EXAM DATE PER ACADEMIC CALENDAR: MAY 5, 12-3pm**