1. Course Description and Objectives

This course will introduce students to the evolving field of U.S. Sentencing Law. The United States has the highest documented incarceration rate in the world. It also has the highest total documented prison population in the world. At the moment, there are over 7.3 million people in the U.S. on probation, in jail or prison, or on parole. This equals 3.2% of U.S. adult residents (equivalent to 1 out of every 31 people in the U.S.). Furthermore, 2.3 million U.S. adult residents are incarcerated (which equals 1% of U.S. adult residents).

This class will broadly examine the principles and practices of sentencing. While federal sentencing law has received the most attention in recent years, particularly since the creation of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, it is impossible to understand the current dynamics or the likely future trends of federal sentencing without also looking more broadly. As such, along with federal sentencing, this course will examine state sentencing systems and alternatives to sentencing in both the federal and state systems. Furthermore, as incarceration is the central tenet of American sentencing law, this course will introduce students to the U.S. prison system.
2. **Class Time and Room**

This class meets Mondays and Wednesdays from 11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. in room 251 of the Law School. The course meets from Wednesday, January 20, through Wednesday, April 27, 2016.

3. **Contact Information**

   a. **General.** My office is Room 250. Telephone number is 618-453-8797. E-mail address is ldervan@law.siu.edu.

   b. **Office Hours.** My scheduled office hours are as follows: Thursdays – 2:30-4:30pm (except when there is a scheduling conflict, such as a faculty meeting). I will also be at the law school most weekdays, so please feel free to stop by my office if the door is open. If for some reason you cannot meet during the scheduled office hours or at another time when I am in the office, please email me so we can schedule a time to meet.

   c. **Electronic Communication.** Check your e-mail daily. I will use your SIU e-mail address to send messages pertaining to class. I often send messages through the TWEN page.

4. **Course Materials**

Our primary classroom text will be *Sentencing Law and Policy: Cases, Statutes, and Guidelines*, Nora Demleitner, Douglas Berman, Marc Miller, and Ronald Wright (Third Edition). This book is available at the SIU campus bookstores, the 710 Bookstore, and the Saluki Bookstore. Other course materials can be found on the Westlaw TWEN page associated with this course. You are responsible for checking the TWEN page and for reading any assigned materials posted to the TWEN page.

5. **Grading and Evaluation**

This course will be graded as follows:

   a. **Final Examination (60%).** The final examination will be a comprehensive, in-class essay examination. The examination may also include some multiple-choice and short answer questions. I will provide more details about the final later in the semester. The final exam is scheduled to occur on Wednesday, May 4, 2016 at 1:15p.m.

   b. **Preparation and Class Participation (10%).** As an advanced upper level class, participation is critical both to your enjoyment of the subject and your mastering of the material. As such, participation is part of your final grade. I will discuss class participation further during our first class.

   Students will not be permitted to “note out” in this course. Each student will, however, be permitted one (1) pass during the semester. To exercise your pass, simply say “Pass” when called upon.
c. Writing Across the Curriculum Assignment (20%). Towards the middle of the semester, students will be broken into teams, and each team will be assigned to one side of a sentencing issue. The respective teams will each prepare a presentation to the class regarding their position, during which the team (either collectively or through a representative) will discuss its strongest arguments. The presentations will be graded pass/fail.

As part of the WAC assignment, students will also individually draft a paper regarding the same sentencing issue. These papers will be graded on a 4.0 scale. Receipt of a failing grade on the presentation will result in a 0.3 point reduction of team members’ individual written assignment grades.

Further details regarding the assignment will be distributed later in the semester.

d. Poster Presentation (10%). Each student will be required to research a sentencing issue and create a poster presentation regarding the issue. More details regarding the research project and the poster presentations will be provided during the semester. Posters will be graded on a scale from 1 to 10.

6. Attendance Policy

Attendance is required, and you may miss no more than six (6) classes during the semester. This maximum number of class absences includes absences due to illness (except in extraordinary situations, which will be addressed at my sole discretion on a case-by-case basis). As such, do not use up all of your absences early in the semester. Please also note that students who arrive in class visibly ill will be required to leave and will be counted as absent. Those exceeding the maximum number of absences will be subject to the ramifications described in the Law School’s attendance policy. See School of Law Rules III.5(e)-(f).

It is anticipated that this class will also include two prison visits - one to a federal prison and one to a state prison. These prison visits are mandatory, and students may be involuntarily withdrawn from the course should they miss any. Because these prison visits will likely take much of the day, these visits may conflict with your other classes. As such, please take note of this possibility when utilizing permitted absences in other classes. You will not be excused from the prison visits because you have utilized all of your available absences in other classes. I will alert you as soon as possible to the dates of these prison visits.

An attendance sheet will be distributed at the beginning of each class. Please sign the attendance sheet acknowledging that you are (1) present, and (2) prepared to participate in the class discussion. If you are late for class, you may not sign the attendance sheet and will be counted as absent. You may not sign for anyone but yourself.
7. **Classroom Etiquette**

   Please be courteous to your fellow students during classroom discussion. This includes ensuring that all cell phones are turned off prior to the beginning of class. If you have an emergency that requires you be available by cell phone, simply let me know before class begins.

8. **Reading Schedule**

   I will post the reading schedule for each two to three week period well in advance. This will ensure that if we need to spend extra time on a particular concept, we can do so without having to constantly adjust an already published reading schedule.

9. **Video Recording of Class**

   This class is not being recorded. If you miss class, you will not have access to a recording of the class. Students may not personally audio or video record class meetings.

10. **S/U Grading**

    The grades of students who have elected to take this course with S/U grading will be converted by the Registrar according to the following scale: 2.1 or greater = Satisfactory; below 2.1 = Unsatisfactory. Only students who receive a Satisfactory grade will earn academic credit for the course.”

11. **Students with Disabilities**

    Disability Support Services provides the required academic and programmatic support services to students with permanent and temporary disabilities. DSS provides centralized coordination and referral services. To utilize DSS services, students must come to the DSS to open cases. The process involves interviews, reviews of student-supplied documentation, and completion of Disability Accommodation Agreements. [http://disabilityservices.siu.edu/](http://disabilityservices.siu.edu/). Upon completion of a Disability Accommodation Agreement with DSS, students should bring the agreement to the School of Law Registrar’s Office to ensure the School of Law provides the proper classroom and examination accommodations.

12. **Saluki Cares**

    The purpose of Saluki Cares is to develop, facilitate and coordinate a universitywide program of care and support for students in any type of distress—physical, emotional, financial, or personal. By working closely with faculty, staff, students and their families, SIU will continue to display a culture of care and demonstrate to our students and their families that they are an important part of the community. For Information on Saluki Cares: (618) 453-5714, or [siucares@siu.edu](mailto:siucares@siu.edu), [http://salukicares.siu.edu/index.html](http://salukicares.siu.edu/index.html). At the School of Law, Assistant Dean Judi Ray is also available to help students access university resources. Her email is judiray@siu.edu, and her phone number is (618) 453-3135.
13. **Emergency Procedures**

Southern Illinois University Carbondale is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. Because some health and safety circumstances are beyond our control, we ask that you become familiar with the SIUC Emergency Response Plan and Building Emergency Response Team (BERT) program. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus, available on the BERT’s website at [www.bert.siu.edu](http://www.bert.siu.edu), Department of Public Safety’s website [www.dps.siu.edu](http://www.dps.siu.edu) (disaster drop down) and in the Emergency Response Guidelines pamphlet. Know how to respond to each type of emergency.

Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting your location. **It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during an evacuation or sheltering emergency.** The BERT will provide assistance to your instructor in evacuating the building or sheltering within the facility.