

Carleton University

Institute of Criminology & Criminal Justice

Course Outline

COURSE:

CRCJ 3400 : Mental Health & Criminalization

TERM:

Winter 2026

PREREQUISITE:

CRCJ 1000 and 3rd year standing in CCJ B.A. programs

CLASS:

Day & Time: Mondays (January 5th 2026- April 6th 2026)

Time: 11:35AM-2:25PM

Room: In person & online (synchronous and asynchronous)

INSTRUCTOR:

Cassandra Richards

TAs: Aubrey Paschal AubreyPaschal@email.carleton.ca

Murray McGill MurrayMcGill@email.carleton.ca

CONTACT:

Office: Zoom or phone appointments

Office Hrs: By appointment

Telephone:

***Email: cassandrarichards3@cunet.carleton.ca**

*You must use your Carleton email address in all correspondence with the instructor.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & AFFIRMATION

ANISHNABE

Ni manàdjiyànàni Màmìwinini Anishinàbeg, ogo kà nàgadawàbandadjig iyo akì eko weshkad. Ako nongom ega wìkàd kì mìgiwewàdj. Ni manàdjiyànàni kakina Anishinàbeg ondaje kaye ogo kakina eniyagizidjig enigokamigàg Kanadàng eji ondàpinangig endàwàdjìn Odàwàng. Ninisidawinawànàni kenawendamòdjig kije kikenindamàwin; weshkinìgidjig kaye kejeyàdizidjig. Nigijeweninmànàni ogo kà nìgàni sòngideyedjig; weshkad, nongom; kaye àyànikàdj.

ENGLISH

We pay respect to the Algonquin people, who are the traditional guardians of this land. We acknowledge their longstanding relationship with this territory, which remains unceded. We pay respect to all Indigenous people in this region, from all nations across Canada, who call Ottawa home. We acknowledge the traditional knowledge keepers, both young and old. And we honour their courageous leaders: past, present, future.

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will develop students' knowledge of forensic mental health issues throughout the criminal justice system, including the nature and extent of mental illness in our society and the various legal, social and ethical issues that arise when a mentally disordered individual comes into contact with the criminal justice system. Topics to be explored include: the medical and legal definitions of mental disorder and their relationship to each other; the criteria for state-compelled treatment and how it impinges upon individual autonomy; the changing views of the justice system's duty to accommodate victims and witnesses with mental health issues; fitness to stand trial and the defense of not criminally responsible; and the Review Board process.

2. COURSE FORMAT

This course will be delivered both in person and online. As a blended course, there will be synchronous (live) meetings as well as some asynchronous meetings each week. The course outlines indicates which courses will be in person or online, as well as synchronous or asynchronous. All course materials and Zoom links can be accessed via Brightspace.

*Please note that this course requires access to reliable high-speed Internet and a computer ideally with a webcam, and a headset with a microphone. Students are expected to use their cameras during the course.

3. PRECLUSIONS: N/A

4. LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course includes several learning objectives. At the end of the course, the aim is for students to:

- Critically evaluate the societal and systemic structures which lead to the criminalization of people living with mental illness;
- Understand the consequences of the criminalization and medicalization of people living with mental illness;
- Think critically about mental illness/madness and incarceration; examine intersectional and anti-carceral approaches to mental health.

5. TEXTS & COURSE MATERIALS

All readings, such as journal articles, can be accessed online through the Carleton University Library website or Brightspace. Students are not required to purchase textbooks or other learning materials for this course.

6. EVALUATION

- a. **Online Quiz 1:** January 26th 2026: 20%
- b. **Quiz 2:** March 9th 2026: 35%
- c. **Final Exam:** 45%

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

ONLINE QUIZ 1 (20%): January 26th 2026 at 11:45am

The quiz will open promptly on Brightspace at 11:45am. There will be a time limit for the quiz. The quiz will cover Weeks 1, 2, and 3 of class material. There will be multiple choice, true or false, or short answer format. This is an open book quiz, however you must study. Students may do this quiz in the classroom or remotely.

QUIZ 2 (35%): March 9th 2026 at 11:45am

The quiz will start promptly at 11:45am. There will be a time limit for the quiz. The quiz will cover Weeks 5-9 of class material. There will be multiple choice, true or false, or short answer format. **The format of the quiz, whether online or in person,** will be determined following the first quiz.

FINAL EXAM DATE TBD: 45%

The final exam will be similar in format to the quizzes, however with more questions. The exam **will cover material from all weeks including readings and guest speakers.** There will be multiple choice, true or false, or short answer format. The date of the exam will be determined by the University. It will be an in person exam.

GRADING SYSTEM

Letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents (%):

A+ = 90-100	A = 85-89	A - = 80-84	F = 0-49 (Fail)
B+ = 77-79	B = 73-76	B - = 70-72	
C+ = 67-69	C = 63-66	C - = 60-62	
D+ = 57-59	D = 53-56	D - = 50-52	

7. COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS

*Please note that the following schedule serves **as a guide and may be subject to change.** Students are expected to remain up to date with the readings, deadlines and due dates.

Content Note: Some materials may include discussions of gender-based violence, including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and violence against racialized and Indigenous women. Some materials describe the historical and contemporary harms of the criminal justice system as a tool of colonial violence against Indigenous peoples. They also include descriptions of racialized violence, sexual abuse, over-incarceration, and racial profiling. They may also include discussions about historical and ongoing anti-Black racism, particularly racial profiling and systemic racism. This is not an exhaustive list of all topics discussed in the materials. Please take care when reading or listening.

WEEK 1: MONDAY JANUARY 5TH 2026 (IN PERSON- SYNCHRONOUS)

Topics to be covered:

- Overview of class content
- Overview of class expectations

Readings:

- No readings.

WEEK 2: MONDAY JANUARY 12TH 2026 (ONLINE ASYNCHRONOUS)

Topics to be covered:

- Brief history of institutionalization, incarceration, and deinstitutionalization
- Key terms and concepts
- Bail & fitness to stand trial

Readings:

- Sections 2 (definition: unfit to stand trial), 493.2, 515, 672.11, 672.12, 672.13, 672.14, 672.15, 672.17, 672.19, 672.22, 672.24, 672.25, 672.27, 672.28, 672.29, 672.30, 672.31 672.33 of the [Criminal Code](#)
- Transforming the Criminal Justice System: [Mental Health and Addictions](#)
- *R v Bharwani*, 2025 SCC 26

WEEK 3: MONDAY JANUARY 19TH 2026 (IN PERSON- SYNCHRONOUS)

Topics to be covered:

- Trial issues, cross-examination, amicus appointments
- Mental health courts

Readings:

- Review readings from week of January 12th 2026
- Section 486.1, 486.2, 486.3, 715.1, 715.2 [Criminal Code](#)
- Section 6 [Canada Evidence Act](#)

WEEK 4: MONDAY JANUARY 26TH 2026 (ONLINE SYNCHRONOUS)

QUIZ 1: Weeks 1, 2, 3: 2:40pm

The quiz will open promptly on Brightspace at 11:45am. The quiz will cover Weeks 1, 2, and 3 of class material. There will be multiple choice, true or false, or short answer format. This is an open book quiz, however you must study. Students may do this quiz in the classroom or remotely.

Readings:

- No readings.

WEEK 5: MONDAY FEBRUARY 2nd 2026 (IN PERSON- SYNCHRONOUS)

Topics to be covered:

- Mental health and sentencing

Readings:

- Review *Criminal Code* sections from Week 3
- Sections 718, 718.1, 718.2 [Criminal Code](#)
- *R v Fabbro*, [2021 ONCA 494](#)
- Jane Dickson and Michelle Stewart, [Risk, rights and deservedness: Navigating the tensions of Gladue, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and settler colonialism in Canadian courts](#), Behavioral Sciences & the Law Journal, 2021 CanLIIDocs 13615.

WEEK 6: MONDAY FEBRUARY 9TH 2026 (IN PERSON- SYNCHRONOUS)

Topics to be covered:

- Police use of force
- Community interactions, policing & alternatives
- Guest speaker

Readings:

- CBC News, [“Meet the Bear Clan Patrol Group: The group easing shaken nerves in northern Manitoba”](#) (2:42).
- Justice for Myles Gray - [People in Mental Health Distress Dying in Police Encounters](#) (1:07:21)
- ‘A Day in the Life ... Mobile Crisis Teams’ [by Hope Inc. Stories](#) (5:42).
- ANCHOR: [First Year Data infographic](#).
- Kahn, K.B., Thompson, M. & McMahon, J.M. (2017). Privileged protection? Effects of suspect race and mental illness status on public perceptions of police use of force. *J Exp Criminal* 13, 171-191.

WEEK 7: MONDAY FEBRUARY 16TH- READING WEEK- NO CLASS! ENJOY!

WEEK 8: MONDAY FEBRUARY 23RD 2026 (IN PERSON- SYNCHRONOUS)

Topics to be covered:

- Special Topics: Youth Mental Health
- Guest speaker

Readings:

- Sections 1-12; 19; 26-31; 34-35; 38-60 [Youth Criminal Justice Act](#)
- Punitive Justice: [When Race and Mental Illness Collide in the Early Stages of the Criminal Justice System](#), 2022 CanLIIDocs 4330
- *R. v. “Y”*, [2015 NSPC 66](#)

WEEK 9: MONDAY MARCH 2nd 2026 (ONLINE ASYNCHRONOUS)

Topics to be covered:

- TBD based on progress in past weeks

WEEK 10: MONDAY MARCH 9TH 2026 (TBD)

QUIZ 2: Weeks 5-9: 11:45am

The quiz will start **promptly** at 11:45am. There will be a time limit for the quiz. The quiz will cover Weeks 5-9 of class material. There will be multiple choice, true or false, or short answer format. **The format of the quiz, whether online or in person**, will be determined following the first quiz.

WEEK 11: MONDAY MARCH 16TH 2026 (IN PERSON- SYNCHRONOUS)

Topics to be covered:

- Not-criminally responsible (NCR)
- Ontario Review Board

Readings:

- Sections 2 (definition: mental disorder), 16, 672.35, 672.36, 672.37, 672.45, 718 of the [*Criminal Code*](#)
- Review *Criminal Code* sections from Week 3
- Kimberly Hyslop, [Raising the NCR Defence at Trial](#), 2017 29th Annual Criminal Law Conference 10, 2017 CanLIIDocs 3835

WEEK 12: MONDAY MARCH 23rd 2026 (ONLINE- ASYNCHRONOUS)

Topics to be covered:

- Detention, incarceration, provincial & federal institutions, and lived experiences

Readings:

- Ashley Smith: Out of Control ([2010](#)) | [The Fifth Estate](#)
- Locked Up with Dignity? Canada's Federal Prison for [Women \(Crime Documentary\)](#) | [Real Stories](#)
- Extracts: [Office of the Correctional Investigator Annual Report](#) (To be posted)
- Solitary confinement by any other name is still torture: <https://theconversation.com/solitary-confinement-by-any-othername-is-still-torture-149670>

WEEK 13: MONDAY MARCH 30TH 2026 (IN PERSON)

Topics to be covered:

- Possible Futures: Community resources & alternatives, thinking outside the system
- Guest speaker

Readings:

- JHSO: [Unlocking Change: Decriminalizing Mental Health Issues in Ontario](#) (2015)
- JHSO: [Closed Quarters: Challenges and Opportunities in Stabilizing Housing and Mental Health Across the Justice Sector](#) (2019)
- JHSO: [Broken Record: The Continued Criminalization of Mental Health Issues](#) (2021)
- Other readings may be added.

WEEK 14: APRIL 6TH 2026 (ONLINE)

Topics to be covered:

- I will be available by Zoom during class time to answer any questions for the upcoming exam.

PLAGARISM

The University Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, artworks, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else, including the unauthorized use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT)
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment
- using another’s data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement
- submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one’s own failing to acknowledge sources with proper citations when using another’s work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Classroom teaching and learning activities, including lectures, discussions, presentations, etc., by both instructors and students, are copy protected and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s). All course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, outlines, and other materials, are also protected by copyright and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s).

Students registered in the course may take notes and make copies of course materials for their own educational use only. Students are not permitted to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly for commercial or non-commercial purposes without express written consent from the copyright holder(s).

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

AI use in this course: Students may use AI tools for basic word processing functions, including grammar and spell checking (e.g. Grammarly, Microsoft Word Editor, Copilot)

Documenting AI use: It is not necessary to document the use of AI for the permitted purposes listed above. If you have questions about a specific use of AI that isn't listed above, please consult your instructor.

Why have I adopted this policy? This policy ensures that student voices and ideas are prioritized and authentically represented, maintaining the integrity of the work produced by students while allowing basic support to enhance clarity, correctness, layout and flow of ideas. The goal of adopting a limited use of AI is to help students develop foundational skills in writing and critical thinking by practicing substantive content creation without the support of AI.

STATEMENT ON MENTAL HEALTH

As a student you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. For more information, please consult <https://wellness.carleton.ca/>

Here is a list of resources that may be helpful:

Emergency Resources ([on and off campus](#))

- Suicide Crisis Helpline: call or text 9-8-8, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- For immediate danger or urgent medical support: call 9-1-1

Carleton Resources

- Mental Health and Wellbeing: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>
- Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>
- Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>
- Academic Advising Centre (AAC): <https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>
- Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/>
- Equity & Inclusivity Communities: <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

Off Campus Resources

- Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: call 613-238-3311, text 343-306-5550, or connect online at <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
- Mental Health Crisis Service: call 613-722-6914 or toll-free 1-866-996-0991, or connect online at <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- Empower Me Counselling Service: call 1-844-741-6389 or connect online at <https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/>
- Good2Talk: call 1-866-925-5454 or connect online at <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: for online or on-site service <https://walkincounselling.com>

REQUEST FOR ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. The accommodation request processes, including information about the *Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances*, are outlined on the Academic Accommodations website (students.carleton.ca/course-outline).

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working

and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services>