The judicial process is filled with myths. These myths are often generated by and reinforced through films, television shows, music, and often fueled popular culture. For example, many see the judicial process as little more than a set of specific procedures, specialized personnel, and institutional arrangements with the goal of adjudicating cases filed in courts. The reality, however, that there are no clear signs to mark the outer edges of the judicial process. Why? Because law is social and political—it is part of our everyday lives. We think that the judicial process ensures just results. Yet, the reality is that the process can and does produce injustices. We will explore why this is as well as many other myths and realities relating to law, law school, the legal profession, attorneys, courts, judges, and other actors involved in the process.

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Field Observation Report
An important part of learning is experience. In this course you are required to participate (attend, observe, and possibly interact in) at least one aspect of the judicial process. It is your responsibility to arrange this. Past students have observed court proceedings, visited law firms and spent the day with an attorney, done ride-alongs with police officers, and visited jails. There are other opportunities as well. You may NOT use your own personal involvement with the legal process or a past experience. If you are unsure whether your field observation will be acceptable, please discuss it with the instructor first.

The field report must address four topics:
1) a personality you observed (a particularly charismatic or intriguing person) noting the leadership skills, rhetoric, and emotion, if any that are exhibited;
2) the process (what procedure took place in public, and even behind the scenes);
3) how justice was either further or inhibited (possibly both) by what you observed;
4) a discussion of how what you observed relates to the course material (lecture, readings, films, etc.). Be specific by referencing at least three specific aspects of the readings, lectures, and/or films. Vague references to course concepts do not count. Be as specific as you possibly can (for example, chapters and page numbers in the textbook).

This write-up should be 3-4 pages long (typed double-spaced, 12-pt. times new roman font, one-inch margins) printed out and turned in at the start of class on the due date. Failure to meet the minimum page and content requirements, and other directions, will result in full grade deductions. Also, poor writing including spelling and sentence construction errors will result in a lower grade.

Field Observation Presentation
You must prepare a PowerPoint or similar presentation that contains the information in your report and post your presentation to Blackboard by the date listed on the syllabus. Failure to upload your presentation will result in a zero. You may not alter your presentation once it is uploaded. You must make your presentation in class. It should be 5-7 minutes long. Shorter or longer presentations will receive full-grade deductions so time yourself and practice. Your grade will be based on how well your in-class presentation reflects the report requirements. A sign-up sheet will be circulated in class with presentation time slots. If you miss classes you may have little or no choice for the date and time of your presentation and may possibly miss your chance to give a presentation which will result in a zero for the presentation grade.

Extra Credit: You will earn ten extra credit points on your presentation grade for attending all of the final presentation days (Apr 10-May 3).

Due Dates! No Late Work Allowed.
• Field Observation Report due at start of class on Tue Apr 3.
• Field Observation Presentation due Mon Apr 9 end of day (midnight) – post to Blackboard.
• Both exams must be completed by Wed May 2nd Noon.

The Fine Print
Cheating and Plagiarism - PLAGIARISM, SIMPLY DEFINED, IS TAKING SOMEONE ELSE’S WORDS OR IDEAS AND REPRESENTING THEM AS BEING YOUR OWN. It is specifically prohibited by University regulations, which state: “Good academic work must be based on honesty. The attempt of any student to present as his or her own work that which he or she has not produced is regarded by the faculty and administration as a serious offense. Students are considered to have cheated if they copy the work of another during an examination or turn in a paper or an assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else. Students are guilty of plagiarism, intentional or not, if they copy material from books, magazines, or other sources without identifying and acknowledging those sources or if they paraphrase ideas from such sources without acknowledging them. Students guilty of, or assisting others in, either cheating or plagiarism on an assignment, quiz, or examination may receive a grade of F for the course involved and may be suspended or dismissed from the university” (Undergraduate Catalog). Furthermore, pleading carelessness or ignorance is no excuse.

Statement Concerning Students with Disabilities - Northern Illinois University is committed to providing an accessible educational environment in collaboration with the Disability Resource Center. Any student requiring an academic accommodation due to a disability should let his or her faculty member know as soon as possible. Students who need academic accommodations based on the impact of a disability will be encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center if they have not done so already. The Disability Resource Center is located in the 4th floor of the Health Services Building, and can be reached at 815-753-1303 [v], 815-753-3000 [TTY] or email at drc@niu.edu.