The judicial process is filled with myths. These myths are often generated by and reinforced through films, television shows, music, and often fueled by 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.

We will Cover These Topics in This Order

**Module 01** - Ch.1 Myth & Reality in the Judicial Process
**Module 02** - Film: *Rashomon*
**Module 03** - Ch.2. Legal Education & Law School
**Module 04** - Film: *The Paper Chase*
**Module 05** - Ch.3 Lawyers & Law Practice
**Module 06** - Ch.4 Organization of Courts
**Module 07** - Ch.5 Choosing Judges
**Module 08** - Ch.6 Civil Law
**Module 09** - Film: *A Civil Action*

The **Midterm Exam** will cover Modules 01-09.

**Module 10** - Ch.7 Criminal Law
**Module 11** - Film: *Gideon’s Trumpet*
**Module 12** - Ch.8. Trials
**Module 13** - Film: *12 Angry Men*
**Module 14** - Ch.9 Appeals
**Module 15** - Ch.10 The Supreme Court
**Module 16** - Ch.11 Implementation & Impact

The **Final Exam** will cover Modules 10-16.
Course Requirements

On-Line Participation
You are required to go to the discussion board on Blackboard and for each module post one (and not more than two) messages (roughly 3-4 sentences) about the relevant course material or anything that relates to the course. You can either start your own thread or respond to a post that has already been made either by the instructor or another student. You should also read the posts that the other students in the class make. Your participation grade will be posted at the end of the course and is based on making at least one quality post in each of the different modules. Thus, making one quality post in each forum will earn you a perfect score for participation. You must complete all of your posts by the end of the semester by the date and time posted on the syllabus.

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 many NOT use your own personal involvement with the legal process or a past experience and you may not observe NIU-related activities (campus police, etc.). 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.

Mid-Term & Final Exams
The mid-term will be an on-line, objective test consisting of both true-false and multiple choice questions. Once you begin the exam, you will have 30 minutes to answer 25 questions. Each question is worth 4 points each for a total of 100 points. The test will cover all of the material listed on the syllabus up until midterm exam point on the syllabus. The final exam is the same format as the midterm but will only include the course material covered AFTER the midterm exam. The exams will be available on Blackboard throughout the semester. You may take them at any time but you must complete them before the end of the course on the date specified on the syllabus. The exams cannot be made up under any circumstances. If you wait until the last day or so of the course to take them, you are taking an awful gamble that something will go wrong (you get sick, have a personal or technical issue, etc.). Thus, I strongly recommend that you complete the exam way in advance of the due dates.