COURSE DESCRIPTION
The course will critically explore the phenomenon of wrongful convictions with an emphasis on systemic bias and the intersection of race, gender, class, age, and mental disability; the causes of wrongful convictions – eyewitness testimony, informants, expert testimony; forensic evidence; tunnel vision, interrogation techniques; and the biases of the police, the prosecution, and the judiciary, as well as, ineffective defense counsel.

REQUIRED TEXTS
The following books are required and available at the University Bookstore.

- *When Justice Is a Game*, 2009, Maidment, Fernwood Press, JG

Note: In addition, further required readings have been uploaded to **Readings** on the class’ OWL homepage.
LEARNING OUTCOMES
The successful student will be able to:
1. Think critically about the way in which the criminal justice system perpetuates wrongful convictions.
2. Understand the etiology of systemic bias through examining the impact of factors associated with the wrongful convictions of those who are marginalized in this country.
3. Make an argument about the relevance of racial or gender or class bias on the wrongful conviction phenomenon in a particular case.
4. Identify what remedies are available once a finding of systemic bias has been made.
5. Identify and propose areas of reform to address the fallibility of the criminal justice system.

METHOD OF EVALUATION
Weekly Forum Postings (Asynchronous)  35%
Group PPP and Script Assignment  25%
Video Project  40%

COURSE PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS:
Students must have access to a stable internet connection and a laptop or computer. All class work is asynchronous.

Weekly Forum Postings (Asynchronous) (35%)
On a weekly basis, starting Wednesday, September 23rd, students will post under headings in the designated “Forums” section for each week’s readings. Students will have until the following Monday at 5pm to upload their postings, based on the readings and articles, to the “Forums” section heading. Students must post under three (3) separate headings and cannot replicate other students’ ideas, already posted. During the term, students must post in seven (7) out of the nine (9) sessions to fulfill their participation.

Group Power Point Presentation (25%)
There are 40 students in the class – students in the first two weeks, will be assigned to a team of four or five members. The designated weekly group will not participate/post in the Forum discussion for their week. This team will work together to create a power point presentation (20 slides) that covers their designated lecture readings. Along with the slides, the student group will develop a script for each slide. The PPP will highlight key ideas, theories, and concepts from the designated week’s texts and readings. It will also review the key factors leading to the wrongful conviction of the exonoree examined, in a given week.
The group’s power point slide presentation and script will be uploaded to the “Assignment” tab for that week, on the following Monday at noon.
Note: Template for each week in term
For example, the first session (Pretrial Issues) opens Wednesday, September 23rd. On the following Monday (28th), the designated student group uploads their PPP and script to the designated “Assignment” tab by noon. The class will post explanations and clarifications of the 'headings' under each weekly issue, starting each Wednesday morning and closing the following Monday at 5pm. Students must post under 3 separate headings.

The Forum discussion headings and their content will be an important resource upon which students can draw in developing and creating their video examining the factors, concepts and theories relevant to their chosen Exonoree.

Exonoree Video Project (40%)

Students will create a documentary about an “Exonoree” of their choice. The purpose of the 15 minute video is to identify and analyze the various factor(s) that contributed to the wrongful conviction. A list is provided below, but this is only a guide as some of these factors may or may not apply to the case that you are examining in your video.

“Exonorees” cannot be one from the Andersons’ text.

In the video, credits must be listed at the end of the documentary.

Some factors students should consider when developing their video, include the following:

- Target practices of the police
- Suppression/falsification of evidence
- Falsified forensic evidence
- Judicial malpractice
- Police bullying/intimidation of witnesses
- Police tactics- e.g. Mr. Big
- Prosecution and defense misconduct
- Judicial error or misapplication of the law
- Media bias or prejudice in reporting
- Eyewitness Testimony
- The significance of being granted/not being granted bail
- Financial status of the accused
- Confessions obtained in the absence of a lawyer
- The role of plea-bargaining
- Community pressure for a conviction
- Age of the victim
- Possession of a criminal record
- Race
Note: This is not an exhaustive list so please do not hesitate to include any other factor(s) that come to your attention with respect to the wrongful conviction case that you are using as the basis of your video.

Note:
A rubric will be used to assess the video and will be posted. Please note that the link to your video is due to be uploaded to the Assignment folder on Monday, December 7th by 5pm. Late videos submitted after the due date without adequate academic documentation will be subject to a 5% penalty each day following the date the video link is due to be uploaded to the Assignment folder tab, on the left side of the OWL Home Page.

Plagiarism
Given the unique evaluation tools in this course, plagiarism is not likely to happen, but students must write and develop their power point presentations and scripts, in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

Plagiarism Checking
If necessary, work will be uploaded to Turnitin.com on the class web site. Said papers will be subject to submission for textual similarity review. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (http://www.turnitin.com).

Late Assignments
You should understand that academic accommodation will not be granted automatically on request. If, due to medical illness, you cannot submit an assignment by the due date, it is your responsibility to follow the University’s new “Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness”. This policy can be accessed at: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Grades and Grading
Grades (except the final year-end mark) will be posted to the OWL site as they become available.

Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness
Western’s policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness can be found at www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.
Students must see the Academic Counsellor and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain accommodation:

http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical_accommodation.html

**Accessibility Options:**
Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 519 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar’s website:

www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated_exams.html

**Scholastic Offences**
Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site:

www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

**Mental Health**
Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.

**Email**
Every so often Professor Ashby will be sending out mass emails to the class and you are responsible for any information (your grade, missed assignments, etc.) in those emails. This means that you are expected to check your UWO account at least five times a week. If you have your UWO mail forwarded to another account (Hotmail, Yahoo, etc.), it is your responsibility to insure that messages do not bounce back because your disk quota is full.

If you have any questions about the course, the quickest way to have them answered is to contact Professor Ashby via email or OWL's “Message” tab. If at all possible, each message will be answered within 2 working days. Please check the syllabus or the course homepage on OWL before writing to see if the information you want is posted there.

Because an active UWO email account is needed to access OWL, and because the use of OWL is an important part of this course, only questions sent using your UWO account will receive an answer. If you use your UWO email account, please insert “Soc 3312” into the subject line. Sometimes, I do not read e-mails on the weekends.