



Roundtable on the Future of Justice Policy

Examining Criminalization, Punitive Excess and the Courts in the United States:
Implications for Justice Policy and Practice

Co-hosted by Merritt College and the Justice Lab at Columbia University

REIMAGINE JUSTICE

CALL FOR STUDENT PAPERS

Merritt College and the Square One Project of the Columbia University Justice Lab are pleased to announce a **student writing competition** as part of the upcoming national Roundtable on the Future of Justice Policy, a three-day convening taking place at Merritt College's Newton/Seale Conference Room on March 28 to 30, 2019. The convening, titled, "Examining Criminalization, Punitive Excess and the Courts in the United States: Implications for Justice Policy and Practice," will include scholars, advocates, local community members and leaders, justice system practitioners, and others participating in a series of facilitated discussions.

The Roundtable is a component of the Columbia Justice Lab's Square One Project. Square One is focused on conducting a foundational reevaluation of justice policy in this country – imagining a new "square one" that moves toward expanding opportunity, improving true public safety in local communities, and reducing reliance on punishment as a response to social problems that are so often rooted in poverty, violence, and racial discrimination.

Paper Topics: Merritt College and Square One invite students to think critically and innovatively about these topics, and contribute their written work to the Roundtable discussion. Students are invited to prepare a paper on any of the topics on the Roundtable agenda:

THE TIE BETWEEN CRIMINALIZATION AND PUNITIVE EXCESS

Criminalization categorizes certain conduct, status, and social activity as "criminal," authorizing a response by the state. In the United States, this response is often extremely punitive. How has criminalization developed and expanded over the course of U.S. history? Why is the U.S. so punitive, and how has the political system facilitated this? Does our adversarial process contribute to criminalization and punitive excess? What is the connection with a historical racial reckoning?

HISTORY OF CRIMINALIZATION OF IMMIGRANTS

The U.S. has a history of creating and enforcing criminal laws that disproportionately impact immigrants, often creating new classifications of criminality such as drug prohibition or other mechanisms, to effectively criminalize immigrant populations. How has this history of immigrant criminalization impacted our perception of citizenship, of a person's place in civil society in relation to the state? How do immigrant detention and domestic mass incarceration relate to each other - past, present, and future?

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THE POLITICAL AND COMMUNITY DRIVERS OF PUNITIVE EXCESS

The United States is an outlier in the punitiveness of our criminal laws: we lock up more people, for longer periods of time and with broader collateral consequences, than almost any other nation in the world. What are the justifications - securing community safety, retribution, incapacitation? - that have driven these developments? How have our democratic systems facilitated punitive excess? What are the politics and American character that lay the foundation for these outcomes?

THE CONDITIONS AND CONSEQUENCES OF PUNITIVE EXCESS

Exposure to punitive excess - to seclusion, separation, lengthy sentences, mandatory minimums, and brutality, whether first-hand or proximate - traumatizes individuals who are experiencing the criminal justice system and those closest to them. What are the impacts of these traumatic experiences? How do they affect the families and communities of the person who is incarcerated? How do they affect the workers - in police departments, court systems, prisons, and jails - who are charged with enforcing and implementing the criminal law?

THE COURTS AS INSTRUMENTS OF EXECUTING CRIMINALIZATION AND PUNITIVE EXCESS

The courts and justice system work in service to large societal forces. As the mechanism intended to resolve disputes, the state is called upon to act on behalf of society. What is the role of the state in codifying the collective violence in the past and present? In regulating conduct and regulating people?

CRIMINALIZATION AND PUNISHMENT IN THE UNITED STATES: RECONCILIATION AND REMEDIES

The American history of criminalization and punishment runs alongside the country's history of racial and economic inequality. How do these threads relate to one another? What current or past efforts are successfully reducing, repairing, or removing the societal and personal breakdowns that lead to violence by individuals or by the state?

Criteria: To be considered, the following criteria must be met:

- The author must be a current undergraduate, graduate, or professional school student at a college or university in the California as of the date of the Roundtable.
- Paper length should not exceed 15 double-spaced pages and must be formatted as a PDF document with 12 point font, 1 inch margins, and a bibliography.

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- The papers must be the individual's original work and should include citations and other references as needed.
- Per California Civil Code Section 2225, students who are currently incarcerated cannot write about their felony charges in submissions that make them eligible to receive honorarium.

Deadline: Students should submit their paper to Sukyi McMahon, Manager of the Roundtable on the Future of Justice Policy, at sdm2180@columbia.edu by 11:59 PM on **Friday, March 1, 2019**.

Awards: Up to four papers may be selected as winners of the Student Paper Competition. If selected, the student will be recognized at the Opening Reception of the Roundtable at 7 p.m. on Thursday, March 28 (location TBD); have their paper included in the Roundtable reading materials; and receive a prize of \$500. Winners will also be invited to provide a brief talk (up to five minutes) about their papers at the March 28 Opening Reception.

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