

## Res ipsa loquitor

The idea for an undergraduate summer seminar in socio-legal studies began at Oxford University as the brainchild of John Adams and Denis Galligan. Kenyon Summer Scholars were among the first beneficiaries of a program at the Centre of Socio-legal Studies. This conference was inspired by and modeled after our law and society adventures in England.



Lindsey Stevens '10      John W. Adams      Desiree Vodounon '12

### Contributors:

The Adams Summer Scholars Program in Socio-legal Studies acknowledges the contributions made by the faculty and chief academic officers at The College of Wooster, Denison University, Oberlin College, and Ohio Wesleyan University as well as the administrative offices of the Five Colleges of Ohio.

### Thanks to:

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<http://www.kenyon.edu/directories/offices-services/office-of-the-provost/funding-opportunities/student-research-opportunities/john-w-adams-summer-scholars-program-in-socio-legal-studies/>



Kenyon College's John W. Adams Summer  
Scholars Program in Socio-legal Studies  
Presents:

# Race, Crime & Social Justice:

An Undergraduate Legal Studies  
Conference

June 8—13, 2015

## Presenters

### Law and the Liberal Arts

Law is the subject of investigation in many disciplines represented in the nation's finest liberal arts institutions. Undergraduates come to know the "things" of law, the way law operates, and its meaning from a variety of perspectives. If, in fact, "law is too important to be left to the lawyers," then we must train our students to critically assess and evaluate the place of law in society. Toward this end, we assemble a faculty from multiple disciplines to join with law professors and legal practitioners to explore the questions that intrigue and inform our students

### Faculty Presenters

Prof. John Durst, Ohio Wesleyan University (Sociology)

Honorable Michelle Earley, Cleveland Municipal Court

Prof. Brian Howe, U. of Cincinnati College of Law

Prof. Sarah Hutson-Comeaux, Denison University (Psychology)

Prof. Margery Koosed, Akron U. School of Law

Prof. Judith Lipton, Case Western Reserve U. School of Law

Prof. Glenn McNair, Kenyon College (History)

Prof. Anne Nurse, College of Wooster (Sociology)

Prof. Renee Romano, Oberlin College (History)

Prof. Joann Sahl, Akron U. School of Law

Prof. Ric Sheffield, Kenyon College (Legal Studies & Sociology)

### Special Guests

Dean Gillispie, Prisoner #12345678, client who served 20 years in prison before exoneration based upon DNA evidence

Sarah Wetzel, student coordinator, Akron Law COE clinic

## Program Sessions

**Session VII Prof. of Sociology/Anthropology John Durst,  
Ohio Wesleyan University**

### **Doing Time: Race and Interactions inside the Big House**

We know that prison has been used for a long time as a means of social control, cheap labor and glaring disparities, particularly towards African-Americans. We know this starts in the streets, then the juvenile system and does not end post prison given what we today call "collateral consequences." Yet, what of the role of race while in prison, how does race impact and construct the experience of doing time. In this seminar we will look at the prison experience historically and then more currently for racial patterns and issues in the adult system (men and women). We will look at general outcomes based on race and the intersection of race and social class while serving time. Given that the focus of the conference includes an emphasis on social justice we will conclude our discussion with looking at the question of "now what?"

**Session VIII Prof. of Legal Studies and Sociology Ric Sheffield,  
Kenyon College**

### **What then is Black when "Orange is the New Black?"**

Just as many sociologists claim that "race" is a social construction, the public's understanding of what "crime" means as well as who are "criminals" is largely a construction of media. All media types and sources, ranging from conventional news programs to so-called "gangsta rap," convey a vast array of images of deviance and wrongdoers. The pervasiveness of pop culture makes it impact on the perception of these concepts, among both the lay public and those within the criminal justice system, particularly important and worthy of systematic study.

## Program Sessions

**Session V Associate Clinical Prof. Joann Sahl and Prof. of Law Margery Koosed, University of Akron School of Law**

### **Reentry: Giving Deserving Citizens a Second Chance**

One in six Ohioans has a criminal conviction. Those convictions result in civil collateral consequences that prevent Ohio citizens from finding employment and housing. The presentation will focus on the impact of these collateral consequences, and the Ohio remedies available to address them. It will also discuss race and social class in the context of reentry issues. The presenters also will discuss their experience with the reentry clinics

**Session VI Associate Prof. of Psychology Sarah Hutson-Comeau, Denison University**

### **They All Look Alike?: Cross-Racial Identification and Wrongful Convictions**

An important social justice issue is the number of people who have been wrongly imprisoned for crimes that they did not commit. According to the Innocence Project, eyewitness misidentification is a contributing factor to over 70% of convictions overturned based on DNA testing. Unfortunately, cross-racial identification was used as evidence in many of these cases. Cross-racial identification occurs when the eyewitness being questioned and the suspect being identified are of different racial or ethnic backgrounds. A well-established finding in the psychological literature, termed the cross-race effect, is that people are able to recognize individuals of their own race or ethnic group better than faces of another, less familiar race or ethnic group. Furthermore, the cross-race effect is strongest when white witnesses attempt to recognize black suspects and has significant social consequences. This seminar will explore the legal implications of the cross-race effect, by examining a number of case studies of wrongful convictions involving a cross-racial identification. Potential safeguards that have been recommended within the criminal justice system will also be examined.

## Program

### **Seminar sessions**

Monday	Session 1	2:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Prof. McNair
Tuesday	Session 2	9:30 am– 11:30am	Prof. Romano
Tuesday	Session 3	2:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Prof. Howe
Thursday	Session 4	9:30 am – 11:30am	Prof. Nurse
Thursday	Session 5	2:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Prof. Sahl & Prof. Koosed
Friday	Session 6	9:30 am– 11:30am	Prof. Hutson-Comeau
Friday	Session 7	2:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Prof. Durst
Saturday	Session 8	9:30 am– 11:30am	Prof. Sheffield

### **Cleveland Municipal Court**

An up-close look at innovative approaches to criminal sentencing; conversation with Judge Earley and her staff

### **Law, Rap, and Rock 'n Roll**

Following lunch at the Hard Rock Café, the attendees will spend the afternoon at the Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame gathering data for the Law & Pop Culture trivia competition to take place the final evening of the seminar during Law Game Night.

### **Law Movie Night**

Tuesday and Thursday evenings

"If there's a reasonable doubt in your minds as to the guilt of the accused, a reasonable doubt, then you must bring me a verdict of not guilty. If however, there is no reasonable doubt, then you must in good conscience find the accused guilty... In the event that you find the accused guilty, the bench will not entertain a recommendation for mercy. The death sentence is mandatory in this case. You are faced with a grave responsibility. Thank you, gentlemen."



## Program Sessions

### Session I Prof. of History Glenn McNair, Kenyon College

#### *Why Police Shoot Black People*

The police killings of Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, and others have served to highlight one of the most significant expressions of institutional racism in the country: police use of excessive force in communities of color. For blacks of all classes, negative encounters with police are a regular feature of life, while such encounters for whites are a rarity. As a result of these disparate experiences, discussion of these deadly force incidents are difficult to have across racial lines so, accordingly, it is difficult to answer the question, "Why do police shoot black people" to the satisfaction of people of different races. Glenn McNair is black, a former law enforcement officer, and a scholar of American criminal justice. He has been compelled to answer this question from all the relevant perspectives—from both sides of the gun. He believes that police shoot black people because of a law enforcement culture that views blacks as inherently dangerous, and because of poor tactical execution when acting on these exaggerated fears. He will explore this culture and its implications in this seminar.

### Session II Prof. of History, Africana Studies & Comparative American Studies Renee Romano, Oberlin College

#### *Why Retry Old Civil Rights Murders?*

Few whites who violently resisted the civil rights struggle were charged with crimes in the 1950s and 60s. But since 1994, when a Mississippi jury convicted Byron De La Beckwith for the 1963 murder of Medgar Evers, more than one hundred civil rights-era murder cases have been reopened, resulting in more than a dozen trials. In this seminar, Renee Romano, a historian of civil rights and author of a recent book on the contemporary prosecutions of civil rights-era murders, will explore why the legal system failed to hold murderers accountable in the 1950s and 60s and consider the benefits and limitations of using the criminal justice system to rectify historic injustices. The seminar will also consider the political, legal, and ethical challenges of prosecuting decades-old murders, what these reopenings illustrate about the value accorded to the law in American culture, and whether trials can like these can contribute to a better public understanding of America's history of racial violence.

## Program Sessions

### Session III Prof. of Law Brian Howe, University of Cincinnati College of Law

#### *Toward a Deeper Understanding of Wrongful Convictions*

Over the past twenty five years, there has been a dramatic increase in awareness of wrongful convictions and the fallibility of our criminal justice system. This presentation will discuss the most common causes of wrongful convictions, the challenges in fighting wrongful convictions, and how the innocence movement has advanced over the years. Dean Gillespie, exoneree, will discuss his own experience being wrongfully incarcerated.

### Session IV Prof. of Sociology, Anne Nurse, College of Wooster

#### *Juvenile Justice: Between the School and the Prison*

In recent years, increasing attention has been paid to the adult correctional system and we have also seen interest turn to the "school to prison pipeline." But much less focus has been placed on the juvenile justice system. This is unfortunate since the juvenile system is the gateway from the school to adult prison. While the juvenile justice system is not as large as the adult system, significant numbers of youth are incarcerated, on parole, or on probation. As with the adult system, there are notable disparities in treatment and outcomes by race and ethnicity. In this seminar, we will cover some of the basics of the juvenile justice system and will contrast it with the adult system. We will discuss current policy controversies like whether the juvenile system should be merged with the adult system and whether juveniles should retain the right to have their records wiped clean.