

Faculty	Management and Social Sciences	
Department	Sociology	
Course Title	The Role of the Public Defender in Criminal Justice	
Year of Study	4	
Course Code	CSS406	
Credit Hours	2	
Contact Hours	30	
Mode of Delivery	Classroom Lectures	
Mode of Assessment		Weight%
Continuous Assessment		30%
Final Examination		70%
Total		100%
Course Lecture/Instructor	DR OYEYIPO E. J	
Course Description	An examination of the role of the Public Defender in the defence of the poor and indigent accused in criminal acts; Topics cover the role of the Public Defender in the criminal justice system, the right to counsel and death penalty controversy.	
Course Objectives	At the end of this course students should know role of the Public Defender in the defence of the poor and indigent accused in criminal acts; Topics cover the role of the Public Defender in the criminal justice system, the right to counsel and death penalty controversy.	
Learning Outcomes	At the end of this course students will know the role of the Public Defender in the defence of the poor and indigent accused in criminal acts; Topics cover the role of the Public Defender in the criminal justice system, the right to counsel and death penalty controversy.	
Teaching and Learning	The class will meet for two hours each week. Class time will be used for a combination of lectures and practical sessions	
Detailed Course Content	role of the Public Defender in the defence of the poor and indigent accused in criminal acts; Topics cover the role of the Public Defender in the criminal justice system, the right to counsel and death penalty controversy.	
Course Content Sequencing		
Weeks	Detailed Course Outline	Allocated Time
Week 1	Introduction to the Public Defender's Office Overview of the criminal justice system in the United States. The historical development of public defense. The importance of legal representation for all accused individuals.	2 hours
Week 2	The Right to Counsel The Sixth Amendment and the right to legal counsel. Gideon v. Wainwright case and its significance. The evolution of the right to counsel in various legal contexts.	2 hours
Week 3	Public Defenders vs. Private Attorneys Comparing public defenders and private defense attorneys. Pros and cons of public defender representation.	2 hours

	The challenges of representing indigent clients.	
Week 4	Pre-trial motions, bail hearings, and plea negotiations. Ensuring a fair trial for indigent defendants. Strategies for defending clients before trial.	2 hours
Week 5	The Trial Process Steps in a criminal trial. Public defender's role during trial proceedings. Challenges and ethical considerations in criminal trials.	2 hours
Week 6	Sentencing and Post-Conviction Sentencing options and factors considered. Appellate processes and post-conviction relief. Public defenders' involvement in sentencing and appeals	2 hours
Week 7	The Death Penalty Debate Overview of capital punishment in the United States. Arguments for and against the death penalty. Public defenders' role in death penalty cases.	2 hours
Week 8	Capital Defense Strategies Specialized skills required in capital cases. Mitigation and presenting a strong defense. Challenges in representing clients facing the death penalty.	2 hours
Week 9	Wrongful Convictions and Exonerations Causes of wrongful convictions. The role of public defenders in exonerations. Case studies of exoneration and the importance of a robust defense.	2 hours
Week 10	Public Defender's Impact on Criminal Justice Reform The public defender's contribution to criminal justice reform. Advocacy for policy changes and systemic improvements. Success stories and ongoing challenges in reform efforts.	2 hours
Week 11	Future of Public Defense Emerging trends and technologies in public defense. The need for increased funding and resources. The role of public defenders in ensuring a just and equitable criminal justice system.	2 hours
Week 14	Examination	

RECOMMENDED MATERIALS

Week 1: Introduction to the Public Defender's Office

Textbook: "The American Criminal Justice System: A Concise Guide" by Adam J. McKee and Frank Schmalleger.

Article: "The Role and Importance of Public Defenders" by Mary Ratliff.

Week 2: The Right to Counsel

Textbook: "Criminal Procedure: From First Contact to Appeal" by John L. Worrall.

Supreme Court Case: Gideon v. Wainwright (1963).

Week 3: Public Defenders vs. Private Attorneys

Article: "Public Defender vs. Private Attorney: Which One Is Better?" by Mark H. Sherman.

Documentary: "Gideon's Army" (2013) - Directed by Dawn Porter.

Week 4: Role of Public Defender in Pre-trial

Textbook: "Criminal Law and Procedure" by Daniel E. Hall.

Article: "The Role of Public Defenders in Bail Hearings" by Erica S. Rader.

Week 5: The Trial Process

Textbook: "American Criminal Courts: Legal Process and Social Context" by Casey Welch and Johannes Wheeldon.

Article: "Public Defenders and the Right to Effective Representation" by Rachel Porter.

Week 6: Sentencing and Post-Conviction

Textbook: "Sentencing Law and Policy: Cases, Statutes, and Guidelines" by Nora V. Demleitner et al.

Article: "Post-Conviction Relief and the Work of Public Defenders" by Sarah L. Desmarais.

Week 7: The Death Penalty Debate

Book: "Dead Man Walking: An Eyewitness Account of the Death Penalty in the United States" by Sister Helen Prejean.

Documentary: "The Execution Tapes" (2013) - Directed by Nick Read.

Week 8: Capital Defense Strategies

Textbook: "Capital Punishment and the Judicial Process" by Randall Coyne and Lyn Entzeroth.

Article: "Effective Strategies in Capital Defense" by Jon Rapping.

Week 9: Wrongful Convictions and Exonerations

Book: "Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption" by Bryan Stevenson.

Documentary: "The Innocence Files" (2020) - Produced by Netflix.

Week 10: Public Defender's Impact on Criminal Justice Reform

Article: "Public Defenders and Criminal Justice Reform" by Norman Lefstein.

Documentary: "13th" (2016) - Directed by Ava DuVernay.

Week 11: Future of Public Defense

Book: "Charged: The New Movement to Transform American Prosecution and End Mass Incarceration" by Emily Bazelon.

Article: "The Future of Public Defense" by Mary Creighton.