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Criminology Department

2024 / 2025



CHAIR'S FOREWORD

It is my honor to present the Criminology Department newsletter for the 2024-2025 academic year, which highlights some of the activities engaged in over the last year, student and faculty achievements, and what some of our amazing students have planned for the future (page 10-11).

We have so many things to be thankful for, including moving to the Lincoln Park Campus and continued and sustained growth in the program. This academic year we welcomed new students, three full-time faculty members (two Assistant Professors and one Teaching Professor), and several new adjunct faculty members. Faculty members presented at national academic conferences on various criminology-related topics and one of our faculty members was honored by the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration for his dissertation (page 5). The Department, in collaboration with the Alpha Phi Sigma Honor Society, hosted several events, including a Law School Panel in the fall (page 7) and a winter quarter event on prison education that brought educators together from across the Great Lakes Region (page 8).

In all, this year offered us the opportunity to come together as a learning community to explore, examine, and question how the criminal legal system operates and its impact on individuals, families, and communities.

Cheers,

Megan Alderden, PhD
Associate Professor and Chair

ABOUT US

HISTORY

The Criminology major was established in 2017 with the goals of preparing students for professional careers, serving justice-impacted populations, and humanizing the criminal legal system. Since then, we have grown into the second largest major within the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences.

As an applied discipline, Criminology emphasizes the importance of collaboration between criminal justice agencies and community partners to strengthen and stabilize communities in an effort to reduce crime and promote community safety and well-being. The curriculum critically examines the social, political, and economic inequities in society, while also equipping students with the leadership and administrative skills necessary to address the daily challenges facing law enforcement, courts, corrections, and communities. Our graduates work in various capacities across the criminal legal system.

VINCENTIAN VALUES

Inspired by our Vincentian values, the Criminology Department at DePaul offers a perspective of Criminology rooted in community engagement, moral reflection, and the amplification of marginalized voices. We reject draconian policies and seek to address the social conditions that foster criminal behavior. We envision a Criminology major that actively engages in social and political transformation and empowers those most impacted by crime and interpersonal violence to propose solutions and cultivate spaces of resistance.

At DePaul University, we are guided by care and compassion for one another and for the communities we serve. We draw inspiration from Saint Vincent de Paul, who ministered to prisoners aboard the galley ships of his time. In Criminology, we follow in his footsteps by promoting a humane and just criminal legal system.

OUR FACULTY

Our faculty have experience working in the criminal legal system as researchers, practitioners, and advocates. They are deeply committed to the principles of social justice and criminal justice reform and actively share their expertise with the public, government officials, and academic community. Our full-time faculty are joined by a team of adjunct faculty members made up of current and former practitioners who bring their talents and expertise to the classroom on an array of topics.



Megan Alderden, PhD

Associate Professor and Department Chair

Interests: Victimology, Gender-based violence, Targeted violence prevention



Kayla Freemon, PhD

Assistant Professor

Interests: Systems accountability, Caribbean criminology, Program evaluation



Xavier Perez, PhD

Assistant Professor

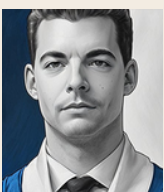
Interests: Latinx criminology, Inside-Out pedagogies, Community justice



Yong-Chan Rhee, PhD

Assistant Professor

Interests: Policing, Public administration, Organizational behavior & management



Joseph Rice, MSW

Teaching Professor

Interests: Restorative justice, Social work



Melissa Swauncy-Coleman, PhD

Assistant Professor

Interests: State violence, Racial/ethnic violence, Political violence, Hate crimes

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR – DR. YONG-CHAN RHEE

Professor Yong-Chan Rhee joined the DePaul Criminology Department in Fall 2024 after receiving his PhD from Rutgers University. His dissertation, “Policy Implementation and Leadership in the Context of Organizational Culture: The Case of Police Killings,” was awarded the *Best Dissertation Award* from the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA). The award is given to only one doctoral graduate in the field of public administration and policy in recognition of the quality of their dissertation. Professor Rhee also received a Doctoral Manuscript Award from NASPAA in 2023, and was recently granted a DePaul Humanities Center Fellowship for his research paper, “Justice and Police Stops: Symbolic Effects of Police-Citizen Encounters.”

Dr. Rhee has published his research in highly recognized journals in the field of public administration, such as *Public Management Review* and *Review of Public Personnel Administration*. He is currently working on multiple research projects and his long-term goal is to study how bureaucratic and citizen decision-making are linked to the coproduction of policy outcomes.



ALPHA PHI SIGMA: DEPAUL'S CRIMINOLOGY HONORS SOCIETY

Alpha Phi Sigma is the national Criminal Justice Honor Society that focuses on academic excellence, leadership, service, and unity. At DePaul, Alpha Phi Sigma students embody these ideals, acting as leaders in the classrooms by performing at the highest levels academically, educating others on the topics they learn, and serving others with care, knowledge, and empathy. DePaul's Alpha Phi Sigma chapter collaborates with the Criminology Department in hosting regular events that promote these ideals, student engagement, and, address student needs and interests



From left to right: Konrad Gostomski, Margaret Jemian, Roberto Morales, Dr. Xavier Perez, Alyssa Unger, Misael Reyna

2024-2025 OFFICERS

President: Roberto Morales

Vice President: Misael Reyna

Secretary: Konrad Gostomski

Treasurer: Margaret Jemian

Event Coordinator: Alyssa Unger

Faculty Sponsor: Xavier Perez, PhD

2024-2025 EVENTS

LAW SCHOOL PANEL

SEPTEMBER 2024

The Law School Panel featured criminology alumni who shared their experiences and challenges of attending law school. Topics included the application process, qualifying tests, adjusting to the first year, class types, homework load, and self-advocacy.



CRIMINOLOGY OPEN HOUSE

OCTOBER 2024

The Open House featured Dr. Hermogenes Del Toro, adjunct professor, Introduction to Forensic Science, who shared his personal story and advice. Students also learned more about the criminology major, internship and research opportunities, upcoming events, and the Alpha Phi Sigma Honor Society.



ALPHA PHI SIGMA (APS) INDUCTION CEREMONY

JANUARY 2025

At the APS Honor Society Induction Ceremony, held in DePaul's Cortelyou Commons, newly accepted members were formally welcomed into the honor society.



2024-2025 EVENTS

RIPPLES OF CHANGE: PRISON EDUCATION PANEL MARCH 2025

Dr. Perez facilitated the "Ripples of Change: Prison Education" Inside-Out Webinar Conference. Students gathered with educators from across the country (some virtually) who discussed their experiences teaching in jails and prisons as well as future goals for prison education.



CRIMINOLOGY SENIOR NIGHT MAY 2025

The Criminology Department hosted its annual Senior Night to celebrate the graduating Class of 2025. Dr. Swauncy-Coleman opened the event, followed by heartfelt remarks from Dr. Alderden and Alphi Phi Sigma President Roberto Morales. Guest speakers Rachel Perales, a current DePaul law student, and Janneth Bolesteros, an alumni, shared their experiences and advice.



SENIOR SPOTLIGHTS

The Criminology Program has some truly exceptional students. Three graduating seniors share their post-graduation plans and how their experience at DePaul impacted their future goals.

RACHEL PERALES, OUTSTANDING SENIOR AWARD, 2024-2025

What are your goals after graduation, and where do you see yourself in the next few years?

- “After completing the 3+3 program and earning my J.D. from DePaul College of Law, I hope to work as a civil rights litigator representing inmates in prison facilities and defending their 5th and 8th Amendment rights. In the next few years, I see myself gaining hands-on experience representing clients in court while also staying involved in policy work that pushes for more humane sentencing laws and better reentry resources. I hope to represent a voice of the incarcerated which has been suppressed and ignored for too long.
- Long-term, I want to combine direct legal advocacy with systemic reform, especially to support communities like mine that have been disproportionately impacted by incarceration.”

How has your experience in the Criminology program at DePaul shaped and influenced your future goals?

- “The Criminology program at DePaul has had a huge impact on my path. From my very first classes, I felt like I was finally able to name and analyze the injustices I had seen growing up. Taking the Inside-Out course at Stateville (Correctional Center) was especially powerful; it reminded me why I want to pursue this work and gave me a deeper understanding of the system from the inside. I also had opportunities to get involved outside the classroom, like working with [Parole Illinois](#) and advocating for legislation alongside people who have been directly affected. All of these experiences helped me realize that I want to be a lawyer who not only fights for individuals but also works to change the system as a whole. The Criminology faculty pushed me to think critically, stay grounded, and believe that real change is possible, and that’s something I carry with me every day in law school.”

JO TRASOWECH, COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER

What are your goals after graduation, and where do you see yourself in the next few years?

- “Currently I plan to travel abroad after graduation. When I return, I hope to apply for graduate school and eventually work in education. Specifically, I would love to work with late-high school or early-college age students.”

How has your experience in the Criminology program at DePaul shaped and influenced your future goals?

- “The Criminology program at DePaul impacted my college experience by shaping my relationship with the City of Chicago as a whole. Everything I learned helped me form a critique of racialized capitalism and I hope that moving forward I can work with other like-minded individuals to create grounds for economic justice for marginalized communities in the city.”

ROBERTO MORALES, PRESIDENT, ALPHA PHI SIGMA, 2024-2025

What are your goals after graduation, and where do you see yourself in the next few years?

- “In the next few years, I see myself as a project manager helping companies of various industries achieve their professional goals. Through different management strategies, I plan to implement pathways to success that ensure the needs and aspirations of clients are being met and achieved. I plan to keep working on my professional development and skills to ensure I am providing an efficient service.”

How has your experience in the Criminology program at DePaul shaped and influenced your future goals?

- Through the Criminology Department, I had the privilege to serve as Alpha Phi Sigma president. Here, I learned the value of working as a team to achieve goals under a shared set of values. This has enabled me to be a professional who will always aspire to lead teams to take the next steps alongside them. Being a part of the process which leads to proven and continuous success is an unmatched feeling and I would love nothing more than to keep nurturing this feeling working in different industries, including criminal justice.”



CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2025!!!



Contact Us: For more information about
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