

SYLLABUS
Justice, Technology & AI
Rutgers University
Fall 2024

Instructor Information

Dr. Sarah Lageson, sarah.lageson@rutgers.edu

Office hours: Tuesdays 12:00-1:00 PM; Thursdays 9:00-10:00 AM (Zoom link on Canvas)

Course Description

This course examines the rapidly evolving role of technology and artificial intelligence (AI) in public policy and in the criminal legal system. Recent years have seen a dramatic rise in the use of big data and algorithmic approaches to sentencing, recidivism risk assessments, predictive policing, facial recognition investigations, and forensics. These shifts have fundamentally changed the dynamics of the criminal justice system, creating both new opportunities and new causes for concern.

This course will introduce the legal processes implicated by AI, describe the constitutional criminal procedure rules at stake, and deepen your understanding of how these technologies work and are evolving. We will learn the fundamentals of how these new technologies work and analyze their development, implementation, and effects through a social science lens.

Course Goals

- Stimulate your thinking about how AI interacts with public policy and is used within the criminal legal system
- Understand the rules of evidence and criminal procedure rights affected by AI
- Engage with recent court cases and policy debates concerning the use of AI in the criminal legal system
- Develop skills in deliberating with others about pressing law and technology problems
- Develop original arguments and analysis of challenges raised by using AI

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites, but a course in criminal justice or criminal procedure would be helpful.

Texts

All readings will be posted on Canvas. See the course schedule for more details.

Grading

Course Requirements		Grading	
Attendance	14 points	A	93-100%
Participation	36 points	B+	88-92%
Paper	50 points	B	82-87%
		C+	78-81%
		C	72-77%
Total Points	100 points	D	62-71%

COURSE ELEMENTS

Participation & Attendance

You will receive one point toward your final grade for attending each weekly course meeting and submitting a brief written response to a question posed on Canvas **prior to class** for 14 total grade points.

Additionally, you will be assigned two class periods where you will be expected to lead a discussion with me and your classmates about the class material. On your designated days, I will ask you to brief our materials by preparing a 2 page summary of the readings and two discussion questions per reading. In class, be prepared to raise these questions and actively respond to others. Each of these participation days is worth 18 grade points, so it is critical to come well prepared.

Please **email this document to me by Wednesday at 4:00 pm, prior to your assigned class**. If you cannot attend class, still submit your discussion notes by the due date for half credit for the weekly attendance point.

Final Paper

You have three options for your final paper, which is worth 50 points and is due December 13. For each scenario, you will analyze one application of AI in the criminal legal context.

A brief summary of your planned paper topic is due via email by November 7.

Option 1: Persuasive legal brief

You will prepare an 8–10-page persuasive brief calling for the inclusion or the exclusion of a particular technology within a specific sector of the criminal legal system. Your aim here is to persuade a judge who is tasked with determining the constitutionality of this tool, as well as considerations of unintended consequences and/or public benefits.

Option 2: Expert report

For this assignment, you will submit an objective social science-driven expert report of 8-10 pages that critically assesses the state of research regarding a particular technological tool as used in a specific criminal legal system application. Your goal here is to inform the court or legislature about the current state of knowledge regarding this tool.

Option 3: Social history

This assignment asks you to develop a social history of an AI tool in an 8–10-page paper, drawing upon multidisciplinary sources and engaging theoretically with the literature on science, technology, and history.

Course Calendar

Note: all required readings are posted to Canvas under “Modules.” As the semester progresses, I will assign readings relevant to student interests.

Week 1 9/5/24	Introduction to AI and the Criminal Legal System
Week 2 9/12/24	AI: Theory and Practice
Week 3 9/19/24	Bias and discrimination
Week 4 9/26/24	Facial Recognition
Week 5 10/3/24	Predictive Policing
Week 6 10/10/24	Search, Seizure & AI
Week 7 10/17/24	Risk Analysis
Week 8 10/24/24	AI in the courtroom and in legal practice
Week 9 10/31/24	Evidence & Expert Witnesses
Week 10 11/7/24	Async class: Algorithmic Forensics Paper topic due via email
Week 11 11/14/24	No class meeting: American Society of Criminology Conference
Week 12 11/21/24	AI-enabled Crimes and Punishments
Week 13 11/26/24	Tuesday meeting: Policy, Regulation, and AI for Social Good?
Week 14 12/5/24	Class presentations and celebration
Final paper due Friday, December 13 by 11:59 PM to Canvas	

Accommodation and Support Statement: Rutgers University Newark (RU-N) is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students and the University as a whole. RU-N has identified the following resources to further the mission of access and support:

For Individuals Experiencing Disability: The Office of Disability Services (ODS) works with students with medical, physical, and/or mental conditions who encounter disabling barriers in order to determine reasonable and appropriate accommodations for access. Students who have completed the process with ODS and have approved accommodations are provided a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) specific to each course. To initiate accommodations for their course students must both provide the LOA to and have a conversation with the course instructor about the accommodations. This should occur as early in the semester as possible. More information can be found at the [RU-N ODS website \(ods.newark.rutgers.edu\)](https://ods.newark.rutgers.edu). Contact ODS at (973) 353-5375 or via email at ods@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Individuals who are Pregnant: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy. Students may contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance at (973) 353-5063 or via email at TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Short-term Absence Verification: The Office of the Dean of Students can provide assistance for absences related to religious observance, emergency or unavoidable conflict (illness, personal or family emergency, etc.). Students should refer to [University Policy 10.2.7](#) Students requesting a letter of verification should submit information using the following link: <https://go.rutgers.edu/Verification>.

For Individuals with temporary conditions/injuries: The Office of the Dean of Students can assist students who are experiencing a temporary condition or injury (broken or sprained limbs, concussions, or recovery from surgery). Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury should submit a request using the following link: <https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu>.

For Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance can assist students who are experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking. Students can report an incident to the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance by calling (973) 353-1906 or emailing TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu. Incidents may also be reported by using the following link: <https://go.rutgers.edu/RUNReportingForm>.

For support related to Interpersonal Violence: The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance (VPVA) can provide any student with confidential support. The office does not have a reporting obligation to Title IX. Students can contact the office by calling (973) 353-1918 or emailing run.vpva@rutgers.edu. There is also a confidential text-based helpline available to students; students can text (973) 339-0734 for support. Students do not need to be a victim/survivor of violence; any student can receive services, information and support.

For Crisis and Concerns: The Campus Awareness Response and Education (CARE) Team works with students in crisis to develop a plan of support plan and address personal situations that might impact their academic performance. Connect with the CARE Team by using the following link: <https://go.rutgers.edu/RUNReportingForm> or emailing careteam@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Psychological Support (Stress, Mood, Family Issues, Substance Use concerns and other personal challenges): The Rutgers University-Newark Counseling Center provides individual therapy and support groups for students dealing with psychological issues. To schedule an appointment, email counseling@newark.rutgers.edu or call (973) 353-5805. Additional support is available through Uwill services:

- Uhelp: Crisis support at 833-646-1526 (available 24/7/365).
 - Urise: Wellness-based video collection with a free account.
 - Umatch: Teletherapy with flexible scheduling, starting with a free account.
- Access Uwill@RUN at <https://my.rutgers.edu> using your netid. Services are confidential and free.

For emergencies, call 911 or Rutgers University Police Department at (973) 353-5111.