**Course:** EXTD 254: Imaginary Crimes and Courts: The Law in Literature

**Time:** T and Th 2:50-4:00

**Place:** FND 423

**Instructor:** Mr. Kruse

**Office:** Founders 411

**Office Hours:** M 9:30 – 10:30, Th 12:30 – 1:30, and by appointment

**Texts:**
- Sophocles. *Antigone.* Dover Thrift
- Shakespeare. *The Merchant of Venice.* Penguin
- Dickens. *Great Expectations.* Oxford
- Melville. *Billy Budd and other tales.* Signet
- Kafka. *The Trial.* Schocken
- Doctorow. *Ragtime.* Plume
- Schlink. *The Reader.* Vintage

**The course:**
Both in literature and in law, language shapes rhetorical worlds which seek to represent, constitute, interpret and criticize the world created and inhabited by human beings. From its beginnings through the twentieth century, imaginative literature, in turn, has embodied critical depictions of the law in the lives of individuals and societies. In our course, we will examine texts from classical Greek to contemporary literature in order to trace the ways in which issues of law and justice have been treated in dramatic and narrative literature.

How do these texts present the role(s) of the law, its institutions, agents, and participants in their respective societies? What is the relationship of the law to other central values and institutions of these societies: justice, love, honor, religion, family, the state, etc. How is the imaginative treatment of the law embedded in and related to the other major themes of these texts? These are some examples of the kinds of questions we will pursue and discuss.

**Expectations:**
Timely, careful and thoughtful reading of the assigned texts is of critical importance as it is the foundation of consistent and active class participation. There will be a short paper (5 pages) and a longer final paper (10-15 pages). I will also ask you, either as an individual or as a member of a team, to do an in-class oral presentation, in which you will argue one side of a case or an issue central to these texts.

**Grading:**
Class participation: 30%; oral presentation: 20%; short paper: 20%; final paper: 30%.