



## FALL 2025 COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Number: 883-001  
Course Title: HUMAN TRAFFICKING PROSECUTION SEMINAR  
Credit Hours: 2  
Grading Mode: LETTER  
Meeting Time(s): TUE 8:10P-10:10P  
Meeting Mode: ON CAMPUS  
Exam Time(s): N/A  
Exam Mode: N/A  
Prerequisite(s): N/A  
Corequisite(s): N/A  
Instructor(s): BRANDY WAGSTAFF & ELIZABETH HUTSON

### Contact Info

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We do not hold regular office hours but are available by appointment. Absent extenuating circumstances, we will answer all emails within 24 hours. Email is the preferred method of communication outside the classroom, but we are available to speak to students via Zoom or telephone upon request. When sending an email, please include both professors on the email.

### Reading(s) & Supplement(s)

There is no textbook for this class. All readings will be made available on Canvas or can be accessed through Westlaw/Lexis.

### Course Overview

This class will provide an in-depth analysis of federal human trafficking law and application, to include an overview of the foundational human trafficking statutes and elements of both sex and labor trafficking statutes; strategic investigative steps; common pre-trial issues; trial strategies specific to human trafficking cases; common sentencing issues in human trafficking cases; building partnerships with law enforcement and NGOs; civil litigation on behalf of trafficking victims; and broader policy issues related to the prosecution of human trafficking cases. The course will focus primarily on criminal human trafficking prosecutions but will also discuss the civil remedy in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act.

### Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course students should:

1. Be able to identify the constitutional and/or statutory authority for sex and labor trafficking crimes.
2. Be able to identify the elements and applicability of sex and labor trafficking statutes.
3. Understand victim-centered, trauma-informed approaches to human trafficking investigations and prosecutions.

4. Articulate case-appropriate strategies for victim and witness interviews, issuing subpoenas, discovery, and grand jury in sex and labor trafficking cases.
5. Recognize and identify the challenges and complexities inherent in labor and sex trafficking investigations and prosecutions.
6. Be able to identify when sentencing enhancements and related statutes may apply to a particular human trafficking violation.
7. Be familiar with civil remedies available to trafficking victims.
8. Understand broader policy themes related to human trafficking.

### Grading Policies

Your grade will be based on (1) a research paper (50% of final grade); (2) class participation (25% of final grade); and (3) class assignments (25% of final grade). There will be assigned reading each week. The reading assignments are designed to stimulate discussion. Supplemental reading materials will be placed on Canvas throughout the semester.

#### Attendance:

Attendance will be taken at every class. If you know that you will be late to a class or must leave early, please let us know via email as soon as you reasonably can. Students are expected to be prepared for class. Although we usually rely upon volunteers for class discussion, we reserve the right to call on students. If students use computers or tablets during class, they should be used only for taking notes.

#### Research Paper:

Students will complete a research paper on a human trafficking legal topic of their choice, and pre-approved by the professors. The topic proposal is due by October 5, 2025. The length of the research paper must be between 15-20 pages. The paper should be double-spaced, with one-inch margins on all sides, and numbered at the bottom of the page. Please use Times New Roman Font #12 on both the body of the paper and your footnotes. Please also use proper citation, syntax, and spelling. Please properly attribute all directly quoted and paraphrased material in your paper. The research paper is due on the last day of exams.

#### Other Assignments:

In addition to the research paper due at the end of the semester, there will be four short writing assignments due throughout the semester. The dates are provided in the schedule below. These assignments will range from 1-5 pages, depending on the assignment. They are meant to be manageable and to help you build your criminal investigation and litigation skills in the context of human trafficking cases.

### Classroom Policies

**Attendance:** Per AR 3-1.4, “maintenance of matriculation requires regular class preparation, participation and attendance, registration in the course of study required for the student’s program (full-time or part-time), successive registration for each fall and spring term of each academic year until study is completed, and compliance with all other relevant requirements.”

**Absences:** Per AR 4-1.1, “if a student is absent for any reason for more than 20 percent of the sessions of a course, the student is not eligible for credit in that course. A student who is not present for at least 75 percent of a session of the course is absent from that session.”

**Participation & Preparation:** Class participation is mandatory and accounts for 25% of your final grade.

Please come prepared to discuss the reading material and any posted discussion questions each week. The best seminar classes are the ones where there is lively discussion and debate. We encourage everyone to share their opinions and points of view but remind you to do so in a respectful and professional manner, especially when discussing sensitive topics that include descriptions of violence and sexual assault.

**Use of Technology & AI: Strict Use Policy:** The use of generative AI tools is not permitted for any coursework in this course. Unauthorized use will be treated as a violation of academic standards. Consistent with Academic Regulation 4-3, you may not use generative artificial intelligence (AI) to draft your research paper. If you have any questions about whether a particular use of generative AI is permissible under this policy, you should consult with your professor **before** using the tool.

### Course Schedule & Assignments

The following assignments may change as the semester progresses. We will notify you of any changes in advance. Be sure to refer to the selected statutes, as applicable, for each assignment.

Class #	Date	Class Topic	Assignment(s)
1	August 19	<b>Introduction to Human Trafficking</b>	USA Human Trafficking Bulletin—Human Trafficking: Fundamentals & The Survivor-Centered, Trauma-Informed Approach (pp. 3-15 & 39-43); John Cotton Richmond, <i>Human Trafficking: Understanding the Law and Deconstructing Myths</i> , 60 St. Louis U. L.J. 1, 41 (2015); <i>United States v. Kozminski</i> , 487 U.S. 931 (1988); Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act; Human Trafficking: Root Causes, Alliance to End Human Trafficking (2024)
2	August 26	<b>Coercion</b>	<i>United States v. Dann</i> , 652 F.3d 1160 (9th Cir. 2011); <i>United States v. Purcell</i> , 967 F.3d 159 (2d Cir. 2020) (Background & Part II.C of Discussion); <i>United States v. Mack</i> , 808 F.3d 1074 (6th Cir. 2015); Vasantha Rao, <i>Recognizing &amp; Understanding Nonviolent Coercion in Human Trafficking Cases</i> , 70 DOJ J. Fed. L. & Prac. 321 (March 2022)

Class #	Date	Class Topic	Assignment(s)
3	September 2	<b>Victim-Centered, Trauma Informed Approaches</b>	CCHT Resource Guide; USSC Crime Victims Rights Primer; DHS T-Visa Law Enforcement Resource Guide; Sample T-Visa Application; Susan Kahan & Justine “Justice” Shorter, <i>Applying Trauma-Informed Care and Disability Justice to Working with Survivors of Sex Trafficking</i> (2021)
<i>Assignment 1: Victim Interview Outline Due: September 7 by 5:00 p.m.</i>			
4	September 9	<b>Forced Labor: Overview, Domestic Servitude</b>	<i>United States v. Kaufman</i> , 546 F.3d 1242 (10th Cir. 2008); <i>United States v. Calimlim</i> , 538 F.3d 706 (7th Cir. 2008); <i>United States v. Callahan</i> , 801 F.3d 606 (6th Cir. 2015); <i>United States v. Toviave</i> , 761 F.3d 623 (2014); <i>United States v. Toure</i> , 965 F.3d 393 (5th Cir. 2020); <i>United States v. Bolarinwa</i> , Trial Brief; <i>United States v. Luong</i> , 125 F.4th 147, 158 (4th Cir. 2025)
5	September 16	<b>Forced Labor: Agricultural Cases, Religious Cults</b>	<i>United States v. Farrell</i> , 563 F.3d 364 (8th Cir. 2009); <i>United States v. Ranieri</i> , No. 20-3520-CR, 2022 WL 17544087 (2d Cir. Dec. 9, 2022); UNOI Indictment (2021)
6	September 23	<b>Sex Trafficking: Buyers of Commercial Sex, Drug-Based Coercion, Interstate Commerce Element, Fraud</b>	<i>United States v. Jungers</i> , 702 F.3d 1066 (2013); <i>United States v. Bazar</i> , 747 F. App’x 454 (9th Cir. 2018); <i>United States v. Evans</i> , 476 F.3d 1176 (11th Cir. 2007); <i>United States v. Bixler</i> , No. 21-5194, 2022 WL 247740 (6th Cir. Jan. 27, 2022); <i>United States v. Session</i> , Trial Brief (Section on Interstate Commerce)

Class #	Date	Class Topic	Assignment(s)
7	September 30	<b>Sex Trafficking: Benefitting Financially and “Anything of Value,” Minors (Reasonable Opportunity to Observe, Recklessly Disregard), Victim- Perpetrator Dilemmas</b>	<i>United States v. Flanders</i> , 752 F.3d 1317 (11th Cir. 2014); <i>United States v. Whyte</i> , 928 F.3d 1317 (11th Cir. 2019); <i>United States v. Wearing</i> , 865 F.3d 553 (7th Cir. 2017); <i>United States v. Patel</i> , No. 13-286 (E.D. La. 2015), Plea Agreement
Topic Proposal for Final Paper Due: October 5 by 5:00 p.m.			
8	October 7	<b>Investigative Tools: Grand Jury, Search Warrants, Subpoenas</b>	<i>United States v. McCoy</i> , Trial Transcript (Impeaching Witness based on Grand Jury Testimony); CCIPs Sample Search Warrant; Sample Discovery Letter; Sample Subpoena; Sample Cellebrite Extraction Report; Sample Protective Order  <i>Guest Speaker: Matt Markovich</i>
Assignment 2: Investigative Plan Due: October 12 by 5:00 p.m.			
9	October 14	<b>Charging Strategies and Culpability Considerations</b>	USA Human Trafficking Bulletin—Criminal Conduct of Victims: Policy Considerations (pp. 139-47); USA Human Trafficking Bulletin—Chapter 77 and Beyond: Charging Strategies in Human Trafficking Cases (only read pp. 49-57, starting with Section IV); Sabrina Balmgamwalla, <i>Trafficking in Narratives: Conceptualizing and Recasting Victims, Offenders, and Rescuers in the War on Human Trafficking</i> , 94 Denv. L. Rev. 1, 23 (2016).
10	October 21	<b>Pre-Trial Issues</b>	USA Human Trafficking Bulletin— Federal Rule of Evidence 412: Admissibility of Prior and Subsequent Prostitution Evidence in Sex Trafficking Prosecutions (pp. 67-78); Masha Simonova, <i>Climate of Fear: Admission of Prior Bad Acts to Establish Coercion in Human Trafficking Cases</i> , 26 Cardozo J. Equal Rts. & Soc. Just. 29 (2019).
Assignment 3: Motion in Limine Due: October 26 by 5:00 p.m.			

Class #	Date	Class Topic	Assignment(s)
11	October 28	<b>Trial: Direct Examination of Victims, Cross Examination of Defendants, Expert Witnesses, Pro Se Defendants</b>	Selected Trial Transcripts
<p>November 4: No Class – Election Day</p> <p><i>Assignment 4:</i> Direct Examination of Victim or Cross Examination of Defendant Due: November 9 by 5:00 p.m.</p>			
12	November 11	<b>Sentencing Issues &amp; Restitution</b>	<p><i>United States v. Royal</i>, 442 F. App'x 794 (4th Cir. 2011); Brandy Wagstaff, <i>Securing Restitution for Victims of Human Trafficking</i>, 70 DOJ J. of Fed. Law &amp; Practice 339 (March 2022); <i>United States v Anthony</i>, 39 F.4th 1247 (10th Cir. 2022); <i>United States v. Edwards</i>, 995 F.3d 342 (4th Cir. 2021)</p> <p><i>Final Paper Topic Presentations</i></p>
13	November 18	<b>Civil Remedies Under the TVPA</b>	<p>Amara Vacatur Toolkit; Clearing the Slate: Seeking Effective Remedies for Criminalized Trafficking Victims, CUNY Law School International Women's Human Rights Clinic (February 2014); <i>Noble v. Weinstein</i>, 335 F. Supp. 3d 504, 521 (S.D.N.Y. August 14, 2018); <i>Geiss v. Weinstein Co.</i>, 383 F. Supp. 3d 156, 168-69 (S.D.N.Y. Apr. 18, 2019); <i>Doe v. Wyndham Hotels &amp; Resorts</i> Complaint; News Article: California Hotel Chains Can't Duck Sex Trafficking Complicity Claims (March 14, 2025), available at <a href="https://www.courthousenews.com/california-hotel-chains-cant-duck-sex-trafficking-complicity-claims/">https://www.courthousenews.com/california-hotel-chains-cant-duck-sex-trafficking-complicity-claims/</a></p> <p><i>Guest Speaker: Martina Vandenberg</i></p>
Paper Due: December 15			

## [Student Resources](#)

[Antonin Scalia Law School Academic Regulations](#)

[GMU Common Course Policies Addendum](#)

[Mason Square Services](#)

[Mason Square Police](#)

Van Metre Hall, Room 110

Emergency - Dial 911

Escort Services - 703-993-8070

Dispatch – 703-993-2810

[Student Support and Advocacy Center \(SSAC\)](#)

Mason Square Sexual Assault Services:

Van Metre Hall, Room 222D

703-993-8186

Notice of Mandatory Reporting of Sexual Assault, Sexual Harassment, Interpersonal Violence, and Stalking:

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Non-Confidential Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If a student wishes to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703 -380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703 -993-2380. Students may also seek assistance or support measures from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703 -993-8730, or emailing [titleix@gmu.edu](mailto:titleix@gmu.edu).

[Mason Square Clinic](#)

Van Metre Hall, Room B102

703-991-2831

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