



# Fundamentals of Pretrial Justice

Spring 2020 Course Syllabus  
April 7- May 19, 2021

## Course Overview

Welcome to the Fundamentals of Pretrial Justice! This six-week online course incorporates self-guided learning and interaction with instructors and classmates. This course will provide an overview of pretrial justice, its legal foundations, the latest research, and policies and practices that maximize liberty, equity, safety, and court appearance. The course integrates systems and community perspectives to evaluate pretrial decision points and identify opportunities for safe, fair and equitable outcomes. You will have the opportunity to critically examine your own pretrial system through interactive exercises, as well as the opportunity to learn from fellow students engaged in pretrial system change efforts.

This course is ideal for those who play a role in pretrial system improvement, including elected officials and their staff, government and nonprofit leaders and staff working in pretrial systems, and organizers and advocates at the local and national level. This course is best suited for those who have an interest or role in influencing pretrial policy.

## Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Describe the legal requirements and foundational research of pretrial justice
- Analyze strategies to maximize pretrial liberty, equity, safety, and court appearance.
- Assess a local pretrial system and its alignment with the law and research, including a focus on equitable practices and outcomes.
- Identify next steps for pretrial system improvement in your own work.

## **Course Faculty**

### **John Clark, Senior Associate, Pretrial Justice Institute**

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In over thirty years at PJI, John has provided technical assistance to hundreds of jurisdictions around the country, providing guidance on implementing evidence-based pretrial justice practices. He has authored numerous articles relating to pretrial justice in such publications as: the American Bar Association's *The Improvement of the Administration of Justice* series; *The Encyclopedia of Criminology and Criminal Justice*; the *Journal of Court Innovation*; and *Judicature*. He began his career in the pretrial justice field in the 1970s as a pretrial services officer in the District of Columbia. He has a Master's Degree in the Administration of Justice from American University. He is a lifetime member of the National Association of Pretrial Services Agencies and is the recipient of the Association's most prestigious honor, the Ennis J. Olgiati Award.

### **Wendy Camilla Blackwell, Senior Associate, Learning Events**

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Wendy leads PJI's portfolio of interactive learning events. Prior to joining PJI, Wendy was the Director of the Practitioner's Leadership Institute at the Center for Urban Families (CFUF), where she developed capacity-building relationships and collaborations with individuals and community. Previously, Wendy served as the Executive Director of the National Children's Museum, where she began as the Director of Education. During her decade of service, she grew the education and programs departments, developed education initiatives, and shaped the Center for Learning and Innovation. Wendy championed community collaborations that produced replication-model child and caregiver learning together programs.

### **Dr. Zaria Davis, Senior Associate, Advocacy & Community Engagement**

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Dr. Zaria Davis began her career in social work over 20 years ago with experience in mental health and social services in various settings. She has also worked in K-12, higher education, and out-of-school time settings. Zaria served as Executive Director for a local nonprofit in Lincoln Heights, OH for two years, working to move families towards self-sufficiency. In addition, Zaria has worked with various initiatives to support higher

education access for those currently and formerly incarcerated. She is passionate in her community advocacy in the areas of pre- and post-incarceration reform.

A graduate of Wilberforce University, Zaria holds a bachelor of the arts in sociology. She obtained her master of social work degree from the University of Cincinnati and doctor of social work degree from Capella University. Zaria is a participatory action researcher and believes that those who are an active part of the community are the voices that lead to change. She is a 2019 Leading with Conviction Fellow with JustLeadershipUSA, and a board member of Dress for Success Cincinnati and the Robert O'Neal Multicultural Art Center (ROMAC).

### **Course Structure and Technology**

Fundamentals of Pretrial Justice is a blended learning course that combines self-guided learning activities and live online sessions with faculty. Live sessions meet weekly on Wednesdays at 3 p.m. ET.

Most course activities can be completed on your schedule, at your own pace. Full participation in the course will require access to a computer with high-speed internet, a webcam, and either computer speakers and a microphone or a phone line.

Course materials are housed in the University of Pretrial Learning Management System.

**The course materials will be available beginning on April 7, 2021. To access the course materials:**

1. Go to [university.pretrial.org](https://university.pretrial.org)
2. Sign in
3. Click on Learning in the menu bar and select Learning (or go directly to [learning.pretrial.org/my-dashboard](https://learning.pretrial.org/my-dashboard)), then Courses
4. Click on Fundamentals of Pretrial Justice — Spring 2021

Each week, you will be able to access that week's course outline, reading materials, e-learning module, and assignment. (These components are described in detail below.)

Online forums with faculty use Zoom web conferencing technology. This is our virtual classroom, so we encourage everyone to join by video and audio to talk with the faculty and with each other.

## **To join the live weekly forum from your computer or other device:**

Participation in the weekly session is an essential part of the course. If you need to miss a session, it can be recorded upon request to the course faculty. To allow participants to speak freely on the live sessions, recordings are password-protected and only available for a limited time. If you have any concerns about the course technology, please contact **Bryan Taylor at [bryan@pretrial.org](mailto:bryan@pretrial.org)**.

## **Pre-Course Work**

To participate in the course, you must be a member of the University of Pretrial. Prior to the start date of the course, please visit [university.pretrial.org](http://university.pretrial.org) to create a free member account if you have not already done so. To create an account, click the “**Join**” link in the upper right-hand corner of the screen.

On **April 7th**, the live session will be a Course Orientation, including a technology check. Each participant will have the opportunity to log in to the course materials and the web conferencing technology.

## **Course Schedule**

### **Course Orientation**

**April 7, 2021**

### **1. The State of Pretrial Justice**

**April 14, 2021**

- Define pretrial justice and its goals
- Describe how those goals are being met nationally
- Describe the consequences of failing to meet the goals, including the human impact
- Define equity
- Explore the role of race and ethnicity in the current state of pretrial justice

### **2. Enhancing Early Decision Making**

**April 21, 2021**

- Articulate the elements of an equitable and high functioning pretrial justice system
- Identify opportunities for deflection and diversion from law enforcement encounter through first appearance
- Describe how citation and release strategies can be applied by law enforcement
- Articulate the rationale for review of charges by an experienced prosecutor
- Understand why rigorous defense is crucial to first appearance/bail hearing

### **3. Legal Foundations & Recent Litigation**

**April 26, 2021**

- Define bail, bond, and key legal terms
- Articulate the genesis of those key terms and concepts
- Analyze the relevance of constitutional provisions, federal statute, and case law to pretrial policy
- Identify the bail laws of your jurisdiction
- Reflect on themes and consequences of emerging litigation

### **4. Conducting Fair Bail and Detention Hearings**

**May 5, 2021**

- Describe the principles of procedural justice and their contribution to pretrial success
- Further explore participants' legal framework for pretrial release and preventive detention
- Examine the elements of effective bail hearings and preventive detention hearings
- Critique a bail hearing

### **5. Promoting Pretrial Success**

**May 12, 2021**

- Review the types of supports that promote pretrial success
- Critically examine the use of pretrial risk assessment and supervision strategies
- Develop strategies for meaningful community engagement to achieve pretrial success

### **6. Assessing and Enhancing Your System**

**May 19, 2021**

- Analyze a local system reform effort through a case study
- Conduct a self-assessment of a pretrial system in which you are invested, its alignment with the law and the research, and a focus on equity.
- Identify opportunities for next steps and the role you can play in system enhancement
- Anticipate potential unintended consequences of system change and opportunities for mitigation

### **Course Evaluation**

**May 26, 2021**

#### **Closes:**

- Course materials will be available to access through **June 15, 2021**.
- All participants who have completed the course requirements will be issued a Certificate of Completion the week of **June 15, 2021**.

## Course Components

Each session includes the following components.

- **Readings and Materials:** You will be asked to review materials such as white papers, news articles, and videos. In some cases, these are embedded in the e-learning module, and in some cases included separately.
- **E-Learning Module:** Each session includes an interactive, self-guided online lesson that reviews the law, research, best practices, and key questions on the session's topic.
- **Assignments:** Participants will be asked to complete a brief assignment each session that focuses on practical applications of the week's materials. **The assignments for each session are due by 12 noon ET the Tuesday before each live session.**
- **The Roadmap:** This session guide provides details about each session's learning objectives, self-guided lesson directions, session materials, important deadlines, and optional extended reading materials.
- **Weekly Forum:** Live online forums with faculty will take place each Wednesday at 3pm Eastern. These sessions will be a fairly informal opportunity for discussion and analysis.

## Course Completion Requirements

Fundamentals of Pretrial Justice is a course for professionals, and all participants enter the course with different levels of baseline knowledge and experience, and different goals for the course. As a result, we anticipate that everyone will focus their energy in different places, and will apply the content in different ways. Therefore, the course requirements focus mainly on engagement with the material and with each other each week. To receive a certificate of completion for the course, participants must:

- Access the weekly course materials and e-learning module;
- Complete weekly assignments and submit to course faculty by the due date;
- Participate in weekly live forums; and
- Complete the course evaluation.

Certificates will indicate that the participant completed a 36-hour course. The course has not been certified for continuing education credits. If any participants wish to seek continuing education credits independently, this syllabus should contain the necessary information for submission, but if additional information is needed please contact Wendy Blackwell at [blackwell@pretrial.org](mailto:blackwell@pretrial.org).

## **Your Learning Experience**

This course is designed to meet the needs of diverse professionals in pretrial justice, but everyone's interests and needs are different. You are encouraged to bring your perspective and needs to the conversation to ensure that this course will be useful and applicable to you and your work. Ask questions, challenge the faculty and your colleagues, and make the most of the course!