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GSU Offers Class on Death Penalty

University Park, IL, November 15, 2007 – Capital punishment is perhaps one of the most debated issues of the new century. Questions and concerns about its equitable and accurate application and about its humane implementation are currently under discussion and review at all levels of government and in the courts.

These key issues will be addressed and investigated in "The Death Penalty in America," a new course offered for the first time at Governors State University in the Winter 2008 trimester, beginning January 7. Dr. James "Chip" Coldren, Academic Program Coordinator for the GSU Criminal Justice Program, and Vincent R. Jones, GSU professor and lawyer, will teach the course.

"This course critically examines the controversial issue of capital punishment in America, both currently and historically," said Coldren. "We will cover the administration of justice in relation to death penalty cases from its use as a deterrent to miscarriages of justice, and from the costs of implementation to religious perspectives, public opinion, and constitutionality."

According to Coldren, the course is open to graduate and undergraduate students, as well as non-degree seeking students. "This is a participatory course with student presentations and distinguished lecturers who will bring their expertise and experience with the issue of capital punishment to the discussion."

Special guest lecturers include former U.S. Attorney Thomas P. Sullivan, who served as co-chair of the Illinois Commission on the Death Penalty. The Commission's 2002 report detailed injustices in the Illinois criminal justice system and recommended numerous reforms to the laws and procedures pertaining to death penalty-eligible cases. Sullivan will speak to the class in a Distinguished Lecturer, which is also open to the community, on January 17, 2007, at 7:30 p.m. Other experts in prosecution, defense, investigations, and post-conviction remedies will address the class at various times during the trimester.

"The Death Penalty in America" will meet weekly on Thursdays, from 7:30 to 10:20 p.m. Applications for Winter 2008 are currently being accepted, and class registration is on going. Governors State University is located at 1 University Parkway, University Park, Illinois. For more information, call (708) 534-4390.