



## What would it look like to redesign the criminal legal system?

Justice Innovation Lab (JIL) and The George Washington University Law School launched JIL@GW to answer this question.

At JIL@GW, students work alongside legal practitioners, data scientists, researchers, and human-centered design specialists to tackle the justice system's most pressing and complex problems. JIL@GW helps communities improve justice system outcomes, using real-world criminal justice data, systems-thinking, and human-centered design.



### Data-Informed Problem Solving

JIL's first-of-its-kind project integrates three components – experiential course work, quantitative and legal research, and multi-stakeholder convenings – in service of solving problems identified by communities around the US. JIL@GW is building the evidence base for what a more fair and effective justice system could look like.

**“Our true legacy is to equip an army of change agents who are passionate, who understand that law is a tool for justice, and are prepared to use it. That’s what JIL is doing, and it gives me great hope for the future.**”

Dayna Bowen Matthew, JD, PhD  
Dean of The George Washington University Law School



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## WHAT GW LAW STUDENTS ARE SAYING

**“It’s probably the most creative class I’ve ever taken – it has the ability to help facilitate a new wave of innovative law students.”**

**“This is a such a unique and excellent program that it reminded me why I came to law school.”**

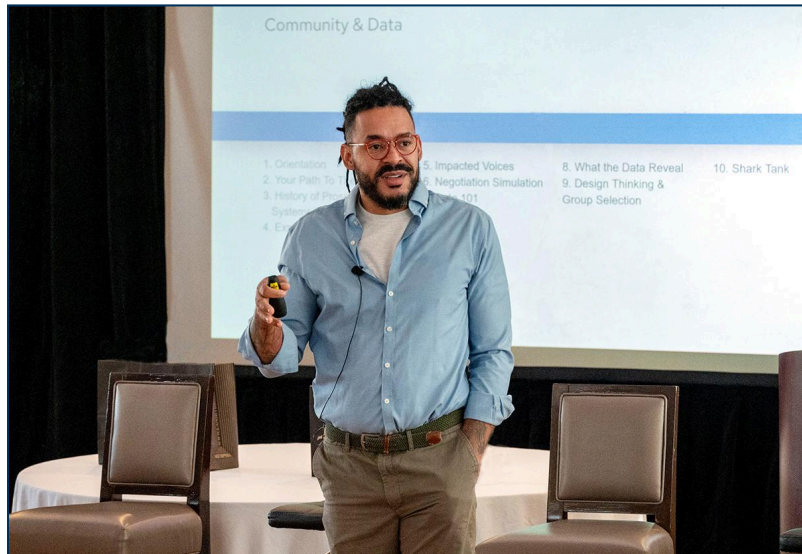
**“It’s easily my favorite course in law school. It’s so unique because our projects are solving real problems in real jurisdictions.”**

**“I learned and developed practical skills, and I know I will be a better lawyer (and human being) because of it.”**

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## Training the Next Generation of Change Makers

Our 3-credit seminar course at GW Law allows students to learn through action. Students think critically about the criminal legal system, while simultaneously helping solve real-world justice problems. The syllabus includes disciplines not typically taught in law school, such as systems-thinking, project management, statistics, storytelling, teambuilding, and human-centered design. Nearly 80 law students have now participated in the JIL@GW course. The course is ready to be scaled to support our partner academic institutions, which would enable us to assist more jurisdictions.



## Building the Evidence Base

JIL@GW’s quantitative and qualitative research focuses on criminal justice innovations to evaluate whether community-driven reforms are achieving their objectives.

Our first law review article, “Prosecutors in the Passing Lane: Racial Disparities, Public Safety, and Prosecutorial Declinations of Pretextual Stops,” will be published in the *San Diego Law Review* in Spring 2024. This article describes how a policy to reduce nonpublic safety pretextual traffic stops reduced inequitable treatment without adversely impacting public safety.

Our second article, “The Prosecutorial Paradox: How Race-Neutral Prosecution Drives Racial Inequality and How to Fix It,” will be submitted in 2024.

## Bringing Diverse Voices Together

Each year, JIL@GW hosts workshops and expert panel discussions to grapple with the most pressing justice issues of our time. JIL@GW convenes diverse voices from across the criminal legal system, government, and academia to improve justice system outcomes. Topics include innovations in prosecution, racial disparities in incarceration, forming authentic community partnerships, police accountability, and artificial intelligence.

## Origin Story

Jared Fishman, JD '04, was a senior civil rights prosecutor at the U.S. Department of Justice, when he received a call from Solicitor Scarlett Wilson, the chief prosecutor of the Charleston, SC, area. Fishman first met Solicitor Wilson during the investigation and prosecution of the murder of Walter Scott, a 50-year-old Black man, who was shot by a North Charleston Police Department officer. Fishman led the successful federal prosecution of the officer who killed Scott.

Walter Scott's murder exposed many structural inequalities in Charleston's criminal legal system, and Solicitor Wilson wanted to know whether her office could use existing data to answer the question: *Are we being fair?* Fishman turned to his law school alma mater for support and was connected with GW Law Professor Donald Braman.

JIL@GW was one of five seed grant projects of GW's Equity Institute Initiative, a cross-disciplinary group of GW faculty dedicated to supporting community-engaged research that reduces racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic inequality in the United States and worldwide.

JIL continues to work in Charleston, SC, where we are currently running a first-of-its-kind randomized control trial (RCT) of the screening process JIL helped design. We expect to have initial results by November 2024. JIL's work has now expanded to include seven different jurisdictions across the United States, including Memphis, TN; Cincinnati, OH; St. Paul, MN; and multiple counties in Georgia.

## JIL@GW Team

**Donald Braman, Ph.D.**, is Faculty-Director of JIL@GW and an Associate Professor of Law at GW Law. He teaches courses on criminal law, evidence, policing, evidence-based policymaking, and data-driven criminal justice reform.

**Jared Fishman** is Founder and Executive Director of Justice Innovation Lab and Co-Director of JIL@GW. Prior to founding JIL, Jared served for 14 years as a federal prosecutor in the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division.

**Jarvis Idowu** is the Program Advisor at Justice Innovation Lab, Professorial Lecturer of Law at GW Law, and a former prosecutor, who investigated and litigated criminal cases in New York City.

**Rory Pulvino** is Director of Analytics at Justice Innovation Lab, Professorial Lecturer of Law at GW Law, and a former data scientist with the Office of the Attorney General for the District of Columbia and the San Francisco District Attorney.

JIL is reimagining the justice system through this partnership with the Equity Institute at GW, thanks in part to funding by Microsoft. For more information, visit [www.justiceinnovationlab.org/jil-at-gw-law](http://www.justiceinnovationlab.org/jil-at-gw-law)

