

## Approaches to Justice

How do we seek justice in this country? What issues surround incarceration? How are the effects of mass incarceration felt in local communities? I am currently addressing these research questions, among others, as I engage with the criminal justice system through my year-long research at Emory's Oxford College and in prisons and with nonprofits throughout Georgia. I am reading and evaluating texts centering around theories of incarceration, the death penalty, and criminal justice reform, including Bryan Stevenson's *Just Mercy* and Michelle Alexander's *New Jim Crow*. I also interned with The Georgia Innocence Project this past summer and will use my experience to propel my research. I was selected to participate in the Oxford Research Scholars program where I am working with Sarah Higinbotham, a professor at Oxford College who directs a statewide college-in-prison program; I will join her as she teaches at Georgia prisons to gain more experiential knowledge about incarceration.

Why is criminal justice research relevant? The United States incarcerates more people per capita than any other country, meaning very few people live their lives without encountering the system. Therefore, it is crucial that we understand how our country seeks justice and examine to what extent this system is sustainable.

At the 2018 Georgia Undergraduate Research Conference, I propose to present my ongoing research on justice and the criminal justice system. I will discuss how I became interested in criminal justice reform despite the unlikelihood I will ever come into contact with the system. I will also describe my experience engaging with people who are incarcerated at Georgia prisons as well as working with the Georgia Innocence Project. I plan to discuss the texts I have engaged with thus far: *Just Mercy*, *New Jim Crow*, and *A Colony in a Nation*. I will also ask for any feedback from the audience on the direction in which I should take my project as it continues.