



***Victoria Rivera Laugalis***

Dissertation Defense  
College of Criminal Justice  
Department of Criminal Justice  
and Criminology  
Ph.D. in Criminal Justice

### **Assessing Public Punitiveness Toward Emerging Adult Sentencing**

This study explores public opinion regarding emerging adult (18-to-25-year-old) sentencing, with attention to punitiveness and the consideration of biopsychosocial factors that may influence emerging adults' culpability and potential for rehabilitation. Data was collected by administering a survey with factorial vignettes to emerging adult college students. Quantitative analyses were employed to answer exploratory questions about the influence of emerging adult age and biological, psychological, and social information about a defendant convicted of homicide on respondents' sentence choices and perceptions of responsibility and rehabilitation potential. The findings inform policies about sentencing emerging adults and areas for future research.

#### Event Information

07 March 2024  
12:00 P.M.  
Criminal Justice Center

#### Committee Members

Dr. Stuti S. Kokkalera  
Dr. Eric J. Connolly  
Dr. Michael S. Vaughn



**Sam Houston State University**

**PUBLIC DEFENSE ANNOUNCEMENT**