



Center for
Justice Reform

VERMONT LAW & GRADUATE SCHOOL



DISCOVER NEW WAYS TO THINK ABOUT CRIME AND JUSTICE

The Center for Justice Reform at Vermont Law and Graduate School provides an education to transform the criminal justice system. The center offers degree and training programs for law and master's degree students, as well as criminal justice professionals, educators, and other community members who seek to develop alternative, less punitive, responses to harm. Academic offerings include a Master of Arts in Restorative Justice (MARJ) degree, a joint JD/MARJ degree program, and a Professional Certificate in Restorative Justice (PCRJ).

OUR MISSION

The Center for Justice Reform at Vermont Law and Graduate School trains law and graduate students, community members, criminal justice professionals, educators, social service providers, and policy makers in the value of restorative and innovative criminal justice programs.

The current criminal justice system is financially and ethically untenable. Plagued by the unsustainable cost of incarceration, high recidivism rates, the devastating impact on children of incarcerating parents, the burden and collateral consequences of a criminal conviction, a “school-to-prison” pipeline borne out of excessively harsh academic disciplinary measures, and racial, economic, and geographic inequalities, our communities need alternatives to the predominant, punitive responses to harm.

The Center for Justice Reform addresses shortcomings in our justice systems and trains the next generation of justice leaders. Students gain the skills to become agents for change within the justice system.

AGENTS OF CHANGE

At Vermont Law and Graduate School, students who are committed to developing new ways of thinking about crime and justice are brought together with national and international restorative justice leaders to become the next generation of justice reformers.

Students wishing to specialize in restorative justice will combine traditional law courses with restorative justice courses, simulations, and experiential learning opportunities. Graduates are prepared to become forceful and articulate agents for change in law and restorative justice.

WHY RESTORATIVE JUSTICE?

Justice requires a new way to think about and respond to harm, conflict, and crime. Wrongdoings are not just transgressions against government or institutions; harm involves a breach of relationships. Responding to harm requires more than punishment—more than retribution—the response requires an opportunity for acceptance of responsibility, amends to the aggrieved parties, and the creation of an environment that promotes healing.

CHANGE STARTS HERE

By bringing together students committed to developing new ways of thinking about harm with national and international restorative justice leaders, VLGS educates the next generation of justice reformers—leaders who understand the workings of the existing legal system but who are also educated and equipped to infuse systems and communities with principles of inclusion, tolerance, equity, compassion, and positive change.

GET STARTED

VLGS offers a 30-credit Master of Arts in Restorative Justice (MARJ) degree or a nine-credit Professional Certificate in Restorative Justice. Both the MARJ degree and Professional Certificate may be completed online, on campus, or a hybrid of both. The MARJ can also be combined with the JD for a joint degree. VLGS offers an array of courses, conferences, and presentations that will change how you think about harm and social inequality and how you lead your organizations, community, state, and country to a more just place.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE COURSES INCLUDE

- Restorative Justice Theory and Practice
- Origins, Evolution, and Critical Issues in Restorative Justice
- Adversity, Trauma, and Victimization
- Criminal Law
- New Approaches to Domestic and Sexual Violence
- Restorative Justice in Educational Institutions
- Advanced Victim Rights Seminar
- Improv for Advocates
- Ethics and Restorative Justice
- Advanced Criminal Law Seminar: Alternative Criminal Justice Approaches
- Restorative Justice in Indigenous Communities
- Communication, Advocacy, and Leadership
- Clemency, Pardon, and Expungement
- Global Restorative Justice
- Juvenile Justice
- Principles of Restorative Justice
- Advanced Restorative Practices
- Narrative Writing Seminar
- Peacemaking Courts
- Race, Crimes, and Restorative Justice
- Police Use of Force
- Teaching Restorative Justice
- Applied Criminal Justice
- Pleas, Sentencing, and Accountability
- Drug Policy Reform

ALUMNI



SPOTLIGHT



My work as has been impacted by my master's in restorative justice because I have more of an insight on what is needed to prevent and maintain better spaces for people and communities that are suffering. I can plant seeds for future organizers to share in reforming the legal system that is a set up to fail for poor and marginalized people, especially the reentry community.”

– Vanessa Nelson-Knox MARJ'20





NATIONAL CENTER ON
**RESTORATIVE
JUSTICE**



The University of Vermont



HOME OF THE THE NATIONAL CENTER ON RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

The National Center on Restorative Justice (NCORJ) is a partnership between Vermont Law and Graduate School, the University of Vermont, the University of San Diego, and the U.S. Office of Justice Programs. The NCORJ is funded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) to educate and train the next generation of justice leaders and to support and lead research focusing on restorative justice and addressing social inequities to improve criminal justice policy and practice in the United States.

NCORJ provides justice systems education and training through semester-long and two-week summer courses delivered residentially and online. NCORJ hosts two RJ Institutes annually, deepening the RJ knowledge base for justice professionals. NCORJ expands educational opportunities for those under sentence and in a court-supervised substance abuse program. Through research and evaluations, NCORJ disseminates reports on the impact on attitudes, recidivism, and costs of the educational initiatives.



APPLY NOW

LEARN MORE

vermontlaw.edu/justice-reform

QUESTIONS?

Contact our
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