Anti-Mafia investigations are as old as the Mafia, yet the debate about what the Mafia is remains unresolved. The main purpose of this course is to understand how questions of legal knowledge – doubt, certainty, suspicion and surprise – shape the struggle over the relationship between the state and society in Sicily.

The course is organized around a six criminal investigations that took place from the 1950s to the present (two are undergoing appeal these days). After the introductory section, we will spend two weeks (four meetings) on every one of these cases. We will follow investigators’ and magistrates’ attempts to understand the Mafia, procure evidence about it and prove that they know best what the Mafia is. We will then expand our inquiry to the questions that the case raises about social relations, law, the uses of culture, and the anthropological imagination. Within each two-week section, the first session will be a lecture and the remaining will combine lecture and discussion of the assigned items, which include both primary and secondary sources.

*No previous knowledge of anthropology required*