Gun violence is a frequently debated issue on both the national and state political scene. In the aftermath of the December, 2012 Newtown, Connecticut shootings, the state of Tennessee passed a bill that required mental-health professionals to report “dangerous patients” to local officials, National Rifle Association vice president Wayne LaPierre’s called for a “national registry” of persons with mental illness, and commentator Ann Coulter provocatively claimed that “guns don’t kill people—the mentally ill do.” Meanwhile, geneticists plan to study Adam Lanza’s DNA for individual-level “abnormalities or mutations”, and subsequent mass shootings spur research on the brains of mass-shooters.

Dr. Metzl will explore the connections between gun violence, mass shootings, neuroscience, and mental illness. He will discuss how mass shootings reveal more about particular instances than they do about population-level actions. And, how decisions about which crimes American culture diagnoses as “crazy” and which crimes it labels as “sane” are driven as much by the politics of particular cultural moments as by the actions of individually disturbed brains.

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For additional information, please visit vandyconte.org