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(additional times available by appointment)

Sociology of Mass Incarceration

Since the 1980s, the United States criminal legal system has embarked on a social experiment we now call, “mass incarceration.” The outcome – unprecedented rates of imprisonment, particularly for BIPOC communities – has had devastating consequences for individuals, families, neighborhoods, and American society. This course explores the causes and consequences of mass incarceration. Topics include: race, class, and gender in the prison system; the impacts of incarceration on children and intimate partners who get left behind; punishment strategies such as solitary confinement and the death penalty; the lucrative business of the prison industrial complex; and the promise of prison abolition. While discussing these topics, our conversations will focus on how we can collectively create a more equitable criminal legal system.

This course meets several graduation requirements: Social Inquiry, Intercultural Domestic Studies, Writing Rich 2, and Quantitative Reasoning. The course satisfies requirements for the American Studies major and the Public Policy Minor. This course is also designated Academic Civic Engagement – Theoretical.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Think critically and communicate effectively in written and oral form;
- Understand and apply sociological perspectives to mass incarceration;
- Understand the diverse impacts of mass incarceration on society and specific social groups;
- Understand major topics within the field of mass incarceration;
- Understand how sociological research is conducted and presented, and

- Understand how to read and analyze social research.

As a SOAN course, we will focus on the following learning outcomes specified by the Sociology and Anthropology Department:

- Articulate the complexity of contemporary socio-cultural phenomena
- Formulate appropriate sociological questions about socio-cultural phenomena.
- Analyze socio-cultural phenomena with sociological theories

OFFICE HOURS

I love seeing students during my office hours! In addition to getting to know each other better, a one-on-one visit can clarify course material; provide answers to questions you may have; and assist with understanding, on a deeper level, my expectations for the work students complete in this course.

Please visit [this link](#) to schedule an appointment on one of the following days and times:

- Mondays 1:30-2:30 pm (except mid-term break day)
- Tuesdays 2:30-3:30 pm
- Wednesdays 3:00-4:00 pm

Additional times are also available by appointment so please do not hesitate to contact me with some times that work better for your schedule. I will look forward to hearing from you.

I hold my office hours on the main floor of WCC. Look for me in the area by the snack bar. 😊

COURSE MATERIAL

The following books are required reading for this class. Links to additional course readings are posted to our Moodle:

Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California by Ruth Wilson Gilmore

Halfway Home: Race, Punishment, and the Afterlife of Mass Incarceration by Reuben Jonathan Miller

Let the Lord Sort Them: The Rise and Fall of the Death Penalty by Maurice Chamah

Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools by Monique W. Morris

Complete the assigned readings prior to each class and come prepared with questions and comments. To ensure a rewarding discussion of course material, you must commit to several hours of active and focused reading.

ASSIGNMENTS

Your grade in this course will be determined by your performance on several small writing assignments, a research presentation, and class participation. When completing this work, you are required to abide by [Carleton's standards for academic integrity](#), particularly as they relate to plagiarism. This course requires you to complete lots of writing and thus, it is essential that you know what plagiarism is and the different forms it can take.

A document titled, “**summary of course requirements,**” is placed at the end of this syllabus. The summary briefly describes each assignment, its distribution and submission dates, and the number of points awarded.

Finally, 15 points are devoted to class participation. You will determine which class participation goals you want to accomplish this term and you will play a role in assessing how you met these goals.

GUIDELINES FOR SUCCESS (developed by Carey Dimmitt and cited by Torrey Trust)

Attend every class. Be punctual.

Come to class prepared. Complete the readings, take notes of your reactions and insights, and show up eager to discuss.

Take responsibility for the success of the class. Be an active presence, both listening and conversing.

Respect your classmates and professor. Be open to new ideas.

Have a good attitude. We're not always in control of what happens to us but we are in control of our response to it.

Learning is constant. Forgive yourself for what you don't yet know and can't yet do.

Communicate. When you have questions, ask them.

Get to know each other. Get to know me. Let me get to know you.

Allow yourself to grow as a person and intellectual, even if the process isn't always comfortable or easy. Become self-aware, with pride in your strengths and compassion for your weaknesses.

Your self-care and self-compassion are as important as your care and compassion for others.

Please communicate with me privately (after class or by appointment) if you have any questions or concerns about the course.

INCLUSION AND ACCOMMODATION

At Carleton, we strive to create inclusive and respectful classrooms that value diversity. We recognize that our individual differences enrich and enhance our understanding of one another and of the world

around us. This class welcomes the perspectives of people of all ethnicities, genders, religions, ages, sexual orientations, disabilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, regions, and nationalities.

I strive to make this course is accessible to all students in a variety of living situations and with various abilities. If you have any concerns about or difficulties with course materials or requirements, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can work towards rectifying the situation.

E-MAIL AND MOBILE DEVICE POLICIES

Please use your Carleton account to send e-mail to my Carleton account: anierobisz@carleton.edu. You can address me as Dr. Nierobisz, Professor Nierobisz, or Annette (which is actually what I prefer). Please refrain from addressing me as Mrs. Nierobisz (that's my Mom!) or Ms. Nierobisz.

I make every effort to respond to e-mail in a timely manner: within 24-36 hours on weekdays. If you have not heard back from me within a couple of business days, it's possible your message got lost in my inbox; please always feel welcome to resend your message.

To facilitate your attention and engagement in the classroom, please keep **all electronic devices, sometimes even laptops, out of sight**. However, let me know if your laptop assists with a disability. If so, we'll work with Carleton's Office of Accessibility Resources to accommodate your request (see below for more detail).

RECORDING AND DISSEMINATION OF COURSE MATERIAL

The materials developed for this course, including, but not limited to, lecture notes and slides, handout, assignments, and emails are my intellectual property. These materials have been developed for student use only and are not intended for wider dissemination and/or communication outside of this course. Posting or providing unauthorized audio, video, textual material of lecture content, and emails to third-party websites violates faculty intellectual property rights.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Writing Center: Carleton's writing center provides a space to meet with peer writing consultants. They can work with you during any stage of the writing process, from brainstorming to final proofreading. Hours and more information can be found on the [writing center website](#). You can reserve specific times for conferences by using their [online appointment system](#).

Term-Long Program for Multilingual Writers: If English is not your first language and you believe you might benefit from working regularly with a writing consultant this term, email Melanie Cashin, [Multilingual Writing Coordinator](#), at mcashin@carleton.edu. She can arrange once- or twice-a-week meetings between you and a specific writing consultant throughout the term.

Quantitative Resource Center: The [Quantitative Resource Center](#) (QRC) offers remote and in-person help for students working with numbers in their non-Math/Stats classes. Chat, drop in, or make an

appointment with a trained peer tutor for help with: graphs, charts, and writing with numbers; Excel, R, and statistical analysis; and math up through Pre-Calculus.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Carleton is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Office of Accessibility Resources (Henry House, 107 Union Street) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations. If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, autism spectrum disorders, chronic health, traumatic brain injury and concussions, vision, hearing, mobility, or speech impairments), please contact OAR@carleton.edu or call Sam Thayer ('10), Director of the Office of Accessibility Resources (x4464), to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.

Assistive Technologies: The Assistive Technologies program brings together academic and technological resources to complement student classroom and computing needs, particularly in support of students with physical or learning disabilities. Accessibility features include text-to-speech (Kurzweil), speech-to-text (Dragon) software, and audio recording Smartpens. If you would like to know more, contact aztechs@carleton.edu or visit go.carleton.edu/aztech.

Gould Library: Carleton's library staff can help you find and evaluate articles, books, websites, statistics, data, government documents, and more. [You can make an appointment with a librarian](#), get help via chat 24/7 from any page on the library's website, [email, or call](#). The Library building has lots of great study spaces, and we'd love for you to visit! For more information and our hours, visit the Gould Library website at carleton.edu/library.

Student Well-Being: Your health and well-being should always be your first priority. At Carleton, we have a wide-array of health and wellness resources to support students. It is important to recognize stressors you may be facing, which can be personal, emotional, physical, financial, mental, or academic. Sleep, exercise, and connecting with others can be strategies to help you flourish at Carleton. For more information, check out [Student Health and Counseling](#) (SHAC) or the [Office of Health Promotion](#).

Speech Coaching: A speech coach can help you practice and prepare for class presentations, comps talks, participation in class discussions, and speech-related events unrelated to coursework. The speech coach can work with you on tailoring your content for a particular audience, organization, clarity, persuasive impact, body language and eye contact, and dealing with stage fright. To request a meeting, visit the [Speech Coaching website](#).

Title IX: Carleton is committed to fostering an environment free of sexual misconduct. Please be aware all Carleton faculty and staff members, with the exception of Chaplains and SHAC staff, are "responsible employees." Responsible employees are required to share any information they have regarding incidents of sexual misconduct with the Title IX Coordinator. Carleton's goal is to ensure campus community members are aware of all the options available and have access to the resources they need. If you have questions, please contact Laura Riehle-Merrill, Carleton's Title IX Coordinator, or visit the Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response website: <https://www.carleton.edu/sexual-misconduct/>.

COURSE OUTLINE

Date	Topic	Reading
1/5	Welcome to our course!	Angela Davis. 2003. "Introduction – Prison Reform or Prison Abolition?" Pp. 9-21 in Are Prisons Obsolete? New York: Seven Stories Press.
Part I Mass Incarceration and Social Inequality		
1/7	Media representations	<p>Cecil, Dawn K. 2015. "Televised Prison Dramas." Pp. 49-65 in <i>Prison Life in Popular Culture: From the Big House to Orange is the New Black</i>. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.</p> <p>Elderbroom, Brian, Felicity Rose, and Zoë Towns. 2021. People First: The Use and Impact of Criminal Justice Labels in Media Coverage. Report produced for People First. June 22, 2021. Just read pages 11-35.</p>
1/10	Incarceration's landscape	<p>Beckett, Katherine and Naomi Murakawa. 2012. "Mapping the Shadow Carceral State: Toward an Institutionally Capacious Approach to Punishment." <i>Theoretical Criminology</i> 16(2): 221-244.</p> <p>Sampson, Robert J. and Charles Loeffler. 2010. "Punishment's Place: The Local Concentration of Mass Incarceration." <i>Dædalus: Journal of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences</i> Summer 2010: 20-31.</p>
1/12	Racial and ethnic disparities	<p>Western, Bruce and Becky Pettit. 2010. "Incarceration and Social Inequality." <i>Dædalus: Journal of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences</i> Summer 2010: 8-19.</p> <p>Davis, Angela. 2003. "Slavery, Civil Rights, and Abolitionist Perspectives Toward Prison." Pp. 22-39 in Are Prisons Obsolete? New York: Seven Stories Press.</p> <p>Reuben Jonathan Miller. 2021. "Something Like an Introduction." Pp. 3-19 in <i>Halfway Home</i>. New York: Little, Brown and Company.</p>
1/14	Collateral consequences	<p>Wildeman, Christopher and Hedwig Lee. 2021. "Women's Health in the Era of Mass Incarceration." <i>Annual Review of Sociology</i> 47:543-565.</p> <p>Siegel, Jane A. 2011. "Introduction. Journeying into the Worlds of Prisoners' Children." Pp. 1-20 in <i>Disrupted Childhoods: Children of Women in Prison</i>. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.</p>

Part II Mass Incarceration and the Sociological Imagination		
1/17	Birth of prisons	<p>Davis, Angela. 2003. "Chapter 3. Imprisonment and Reform." Pp. 40-59 in <i>Are Prisons Obsolete?</i> New York: Seven Stories Press.</p> <p>Beccaria, Cesare. 1819/2012. "Of Crimes and Punishment." Pp. 406-414 in Joseph E. Jacoby, Theresa A. Severance, and Alan S. Bruce (eds.), <i>Classics of Criminology, 4th Edition</i>. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc.</p>
1/19-24	Prison expansion in the Golden State	<p>1/19 Mills, C. Wright. 1959. "The Promise." Pp. 3-24 in <i>The Sociological Imagination</i>. London: Oxford University Press.</p> <p><i>Golden Gulag</i>, Chapter 1 "Introduction"</p> <p>1/21 <i>Golden Gulag</i>, Chapter 2 "The California Political Economy"</p> <p>1/24 <i>Golden Gulag</i>, Chapter 3 "The Prison Fix"</p> <p><i>Golden Gulag</i>, Chapter 4 "Crime, Croplands, and Capitalism"</p>
1/26	Library session with Kristin Partlo	Readings to be announced
1/28	COVID-19 in Prison	<p>Lewis, Nicole. 2021. <i>How We Survived COVID-19 in Prison</i>. The Marshall Project, April 22, 2021.</p> <p>Widra, Emily. 2021. <i>Since You Asked: What Information is Available about COVID-19 and Vaccinations in Prison Now?</i> Prison Policy Initiative, December 16 2021.</p>
Part III Contemporary Topics in Mass Incarceration		
1/31-2/4	School to prison pipeline	<p>1/31 Mallet, Christopher A. 2016. "Chapter 1 The Punitive Generation." Pp. 1-8 in <i>The School to Prison Pipeline: A Comprehensive Assessment</i>. New York: Springer Publishing.</p> <p>King, Ryan and Marc Schindler. 2021. <i>"Reconsidering Police in Schools."</i> <i>Contexts</i> 20(4): 28-33.</p> <p><i>Pushout</i>, Introduction</p>

		<p>2/2 <i>Pushout</i>, Chapter 1 “Struggling to Survive”</p> <p><i>Pushout</i>, Chapter 2 “A Blues for Black Girls When the ‘Attitude’ is Enuf”</p> <p>2/4 <i>Pushout</i>, Chapter 4 “Learning on Lockdown”</p> <p><i>Pushout</i>, Chapter 5 “Repairing Relationships, Rebuilding Connections”</p>
2/7	MIDTERM BREAK	Enjoy your day off!
2/9,11	Pregnancy and incarceration	<p>2/9 Sufrin, Carolyn, Lauren Beal, Jennifer Clarke, Rachel Jones and William Mosher. 2019. “Pregnancy Outcomes in US Prisons, 2016–2017.” <i>American Journal of Public Health</i> 109(5): 799-805.</p> <p>Hayes, Crystal, Carolyn Sufrin, Jamilla Perritt. 2020. “Reproductive Justice Disrupted: Mass Incarceration as a Driver of Reproductive Oppression.” <i>American Journal of Public Health</i> 110(S1): S21-S24.</p> <p>2/11 Guest speaker: Rachel Freeman-Cook Freeman-Cook, Rachel. 2020. <i>I just go cry in the car if I have to...it’s just one of those things:” Prison Doulas, Emotional Labor, and the Personal Costs of Care</i>. Comps paper submitted to the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Carleton College.</p>
2/14-21	Death penalty	<p>2/14 <i>Let the Lord Sort Them</i>, Prologue</p> <p>Please also watch this short video of Maurice Chammah discussing his book, <i>Let the Lord Sort Them</i></p> <p>2/16 <i>Let the Lord Sort Them</i>, Chapters 1-4 (p. 23-105)</p> <p>2/18 <i>Let the Lord Sort Them</i>, Chapters 5-9 (p. 106-189)</p> <p>2/21 <i>Let the Lord Sort Them</i>, Chapters 10-13 (p. 190-262) and Epilogue.</p>
2/23-28	Life after incarceration	2/23

		<p><i>Halfway Home</i>, I: Debt (chapters 1-3)</p> <p>2/25</p> <p><i>Halfway Home</i>, II: Wage (chapters 4-6)</p> <p>2/28</p> <p><i>Halfway Home</i>, III: Salvation (chapters 7-9)</p>
3/2	<p>Guest Speaker:</p> <p>Professor Deborah Appleman</p>	<p>Appleman, Deborah. 2019. "Prelude" and Chapters 1-4 in <i>Words No Bars Can Hold: Literacy Learning in Prison</i>. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.</p>
3/4	Student presentations	Readings to be determined by presenters
3/7	Student presentations	Readings to be determined by presenters
3/9	Student presentations	Readings to be determined by presenters
3/11	Revisiting prison abolition	<p>Davis, Angela. 2003. "Chapter 6 – Abolitionist Alternatives." Pp. 105-115 in Are Prisons Obsolete? New York: Seven Stories Press.</p>

SUMMARY OF COURSE ASSIGNMENTS			
Assignment	Distribution date	Submission date	# of points
Initial reflection paper	1/5	1/6	3
Mandatory one-on-one meeting	1/5	1/17-1/24	2
Two public outreach papers (pick 2 of the 4 available topics)	1/7	Several dates: 1/18, 1/27, 2/8, 2/25	15 points each (30 pts total)
Teaching presentation	1/10	Several dates: 1/31(topic statement) 2/15 (presentation outline) 3/1 (slides, script, and reading for classmates) 3/4-9 (presentation)	30 points
Reading questions: <i>Golden Gulag</i>	1/17	1/21 and 1/24	5 points
Reading questions: <i>Pushout</i>	1/31	2/2 and 2/4	5 points
Reading questions: <i>Let the Lord Sort Them</i>	2/16	2/18 and 2/21	5 points
Reading questions: <i>Halfway Home</i>	2/23	2/25 and 2/28	5 points
Participation and course engagement reflection	1/7	Course engagement reflection due on 3/11	15 points

Grade range: "A" = 90-100%; "B" = 80-89%; "C" = 70-79%; "D" = 60-69%; "F" <= 59%