

**Rutgers University**  
**Prisons and Prisoners**  
**Spring 2012**

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**Texts: Tregea, W. & Larmour M. (2009) The Prisoners' World**  
**Ross, J & Richards, S. (2003) Convict Criminology**

### **Course Description**

**Prisons are environments that exert extra-ordinary control (social, emotional, physical, etc) over its prisoners. This is an analytical exploration of the correctional process utilizing the theories of environmental press and prisonization to explore the prisons social forces (custody and convict), their effect upon those confined, and its consequences for society. The course is intended to challenge common views of prison operations that perpetrate myth and misunderstanding to result in a perspective that will query both current and proposes uses of the prison as a social institution. Prisons, especially now, exert a tremendous financial obligation from taxpayers, politicians for the past 40 years have used it as a platform for elections, and it has become a repository for the nation's minorities, addicts and mentally among others. These issues similarly affect the social fabric.**

**A few words about Convict Criminology: Convict Criminology proposes a methodology, a theory, and a perspective about the study of correctional environments and its occupants. Its study could easily occupy a full semester of work. This semester will provide you with an introduction to that theory and that perspective for your consideration. Dr. Richards ends every email with the message, "we have been tough on crime, now we need to be smart on crime." This semester proposes to offer an exploration or prisons and prisoners with the tenets of convict criminology as its underpinnings.**

Learning Goals:

A Statement of Principles

The Program Committee for the Program in Criminal Justice at Rutgers University in New Brunswick has adopted a series of learning goals for students who complete the major. These goals represent the consensus of the faculty regarding the concepts a student should grasp and the skills a student should acquire in the course of completing the major. These goals guide the choices faculty make about the structure of the curriculum and the requirements for our majors. Moreover, they guide faculty and instructors preparing course material and teaching courses.

The Program in Criminal Justice will provide students with a rich

understanding of crime and criminal justice in the United States and abroad through an interdisciplinary approach that blends a strong liberal arts educational experience with pre-professional instruction in the field of criminal justice. Graduates of the program will be well-informed citizens on the topic of crime and justice, and qualified for graduate study or for employment as practitioners in a variety of legal, policymaking, and law enforcement fields.

Criminal justice majors graduating from a research university should be able to use critical thinking, factual inquiry, and the scientific approach to solve problems related to individual and group behavior. In addition, students should have an understanding of the legal, political and policymaking processes that affect criminal justice systems in the United States and elsewhere in the world. Finally, students should be familiar with the institutional structures and latest developments in the field in order to engage in meaningful debate about current public policy issues.

#### Learning Goals for Criminal Justice Majors

##### 1. Competence:

- a.) Theory. Students who complete the major in criminal justice should understand and be able to articulate, both orally and in writing, the core theoretical concepts that form the foundation of analysis and research in criminology and criminal justice today. Core concepts are derived from explanations of crime from a variety of perspectives, including biogenic, psychological, and sociological approaches. There are myriad theories of crime that are informed by these perspectives, including, classical, control, critical, ecology, labeling, learning, strain, and trait-based approaches. Theoretical literacy should extend to multicultural and international understanding.
- b.) Institutions. Students who complete the major in criminal justice should understand the special role of three types of institutions: Police, Corrections, and Courts. In addition, students should know how institutional forms vary across jurisdictions and how these institutions interact with and influence each other.
- c.) Research Methods. Students who complete the criminal justice major should be familiar with the tools, techniques, and data sources necessary for empirical analysis. Students should understand the various ways that empirical analysis is used in the scientific approach: for description, for developing, and for testing theories. They should be able to analyze data using computer applications and should be familiar with basic statistical techniques and regression analysis. They should be able to read and assess research from a wide range of

sources, including general interest, academic, and government publications.

2. **Critical Thinking:** Upon completion of the major students should be able to apply their understanding of core concepts and quantitative tools to analyze and research real world problems, and evaluate alternative policy proposals on a range of criminal justice issues, from micro-level analyses relevant to particular cases to management concerns to macro-level analyses of legislative and other broad-scale policies. Accomplishment of this goal will require that students can apply their literacy and numeracy skills to different institutional structures, within the U.S. and across countries.

3. **Scholarship:** Qualified majors should have an opportunity through such avenues as advanced coursework, internships, and faculty interactions to conduct independent research on matters of central relevance to the field of criminal justice.

**Scholarship: Students will complete a research paper as one of their course requirements. They will adhere to a rubric and the topics applicable to the course content.**

#### **Course Objectives:**

**To understand the history of the prison, its uses and changes in operation**

**To understand the role of prison in society**

**To understand the theory of prisonization and why this theory effectively explains prison functioning**

**To dispel the myths that surround prison**

**An introduction to Convict Criminology**

**To explore the perceptions of ex-offenders and others about the correctional process**

**To understand the progression through prison for a convict**

**To understand the costs of imprisonment**

**To Challenge students to continue their inquiry into the correctional experience.**

#### **Course Schedule:**

**Jan. 18**

**Intro to the Course**

**Reading the text**

**Writing the papers**

**Why this course is Important - We are Hooked on Jail**

**Goals of the Course**

**Goals of Punishment**

**Text Assignment: The Prisoners' World part 1 Chapters 1, 2 & 3**

**Convict Criminology Preface, Intro Chapters 1, 2, 3 & 4**

**Response question 1st Journal Entry: Do prison sentences make society safer?**

**Jan 23, 25, 30 and Feb 1 Intro to Punishment and History of the Prison  
200 years of failed reform movements**

**Text Assignment The Prisoners' World Part 1 Chapters 1,2 & 3  
Convict Criminology chapters 5, 6 & 7**

**Video - ACA History of prison**

**SUBMIT: Title for Book Critique**

**SUBMIT : Topic for research**

**Feb. 6, 8, 13, 15 The Prison Experience pt 1**

**Introduction to theory of prisonization and Environmental Press  
Quarantine and introduction to life in the cell**

**Video - Lewisburg Video - Let the Doors be of Iron**

**Text Assignment The Prisoners' World Part 1 Chapters 1,2 & 3**

**Part 2 Chapters 4 & 5**

**Part 3 Chapters 6 & 7**

**Convict Criminology chapters 11, 12 & 13**

**Feb 20 Text Assignment The Prisoners' World Part 3 Chapters 8 & 9**

**Part 4 Chapters 10, 11, 12**

**Feb 22, 27 and Mar 5 and 7 The Prison Experience pt 1 cont.**

**Stages of Prisonization**

**Classification and general population**

**Text Assignment The Prisoners' World Part 2 Chapters 4 & 5**

**Part 3 Chapters 6 & 7**

**\*\*\*Mar 7 Review for mid-term**

**\*\*\*\*\*Submit one half of journal entries**

**Mar 19 Mid Term**

**Mar 21, 26, 28 and April 2 The Prison Experience pt. 2**

**PIC, Sex, Violence,**

**Text Assignment The Prisoners' World Part 3 Chapters 13, 14, 15, 16  
& 17**

**Convict Criminology Chapters 8, 9 & 10**

**\*\*\*March 28 BOOK CRITIQUE DUE**

**April 4, 9, 11, 16 Work, Idleness in prison**

**Text Assignment Prisoners' World Part 3 Chapters 13, 14, 15, 16 & 17  
Convict Criminology Chapter 13**

**April 18, 23, 25 Release from Prison**

**Text Assignment The Prisoners' World Part 5 Chapters 18 & 19  
Convict Criminology Chapter 14 & 15 and**

**April 23<sup>rd</sup> submit papers and 2<sup>nd</sup> half of journals LAST DAY**

**April 30 Conclusion – Release from prison  
review for final**

**Reading days May 1 and 2**

**Final Exam May 7**

**GRADING**

**Tests – Mid term - 30%  
Final - 30%**

**Paper - 15%  
Book Critique - 15%**

**Journals - 10%**

**Total Points 100%**

**Grades will be determined by numerical grades from tests and assignments. ALL assignments must be completed satisfactorily. Those assignments are: 1 Book Critique 2 pages, 1 paper, 1 journal with a minimum of 24 1 page entries and 1 final reflection**

**Syllabus change**

**NOTE: You must see Dr. Sheridan for all absences**

**BOOK critique: The book critique is mandatory and is not a book report. You are to READ the book and do an analysis of the content of the experience. All books read for the critique must be approved by Dr. Sheridan. See Bibliography as a guide. This is a critical review and you are to compare and contrast book content to material discussed in class. Length – 4 pages minimum**

**Journal - 25 entries are to be a response to some personal perception of corrections (prisons) and why it is your belief, that is a response to something discussed in class, that is a response to a movie, TV show, media report or, talk show, newspaper**

editorial, book that has been read, etc. Journal entries are no more than 1 paragraph long. List of topics below

Final journal entry is your personal assessment of progress – a review of all entries and a reaction to how you have developed, thinking affected, and next steps to furthering your understanding of prison environment. Assessment may include general statement of affect. The final entry will be no less than 2 pages long and typed. Other entries may be carefully handwritten and are a reaction which will be discussed in class

**Journal Topics to be completed before Class one or right after Class one**

1. Does Prison make society safer
2. Does the media (TV, Movies, News) accurately reflect prison
3. Who goes to prison
4. How old are prisons
5. What are the goals of prison
6. Why do people fail after prison

**Other journal entries**

1. Who controls the prison and how
2. Do prisons rehabilitate?
3. How do so few correction officer successfully manage so many convicts
4. What is the purpose and value of work in prison
5. Is there sex in prison
6. What is a prison fantasy
7. Is there treatment in prison
8. How do convicts get released
9. How is parole determined for convicts
10. What do prisons cost society
11. When and why do convicts escape from prison

## **CREDIT ASSIGNMENTS**

**Paper Requirements:**

1. The paper must address the topic. They are not comprised of opinions they are based on research. Your opinion may be used as a starting point from which you will develop the paper from your research. **See Rubric for grading guide**
2. The paper must satisfy the instructors guidelines to be rated as satisfactory otherwise they will be handed back as unsatisfactory
3. All papers will be on white paper and typed.
4. **Papers must adhere to the requirements of English Grammar.**
  - a. Proof all work prior to submission for mistakes of grammar
  - b. Proof all work prior to submission for spelling errors
  - c. Papers will be written on one side of the page

- d. Papers will NOT contain cross outs.**
- 5. References are to be documented, this includes the use of your textbook or class notes.**
- 6. Papers may not be plagiarized.**
- 7. The length of paper will be a minimum of 6 typed.**

**Paper topic(s) will be discussed in first class**

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