

Race, Crime, and Justice
Program in Criminal Justice 01:202:425
M/Th 10:55am-12:15pm
RAB 104

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Office hours: 2-3pm M/Th
<http://sakai.rutgers.edu>

This class explores the following question: *How much does race matter in crime and punishment in the United States?* That is, does race matter for whether people come in contact with the criminal justice system? Does it matter for what happens to them once they are there? For how the political system reacts to crime and violence? Does it influence the types of crime policies we create or the manner in which those policies are implemented? This class explores these questions historically and in contemporary context and links crime and punishment to larger issues of racial and class inequality in American politics. We will spend the first section of the course trying to understand how social scientists have approached the issue of racial bias in the criminal justice system. We will look carefully at the challenges of isolating race from other demographic variables (such as poverty or education) and we will try to come to some conclusions about the degree to which racial bias is a factor in the justice system. The second section of the course involves examining race and criminal justice in a broader, historical and political perspective. We will explore the causes of higher rates of homicide among Black Americans, the disproportionate impact of the drug war on minorities, and the causes and consequences of high rates of racial inequality across a wide range of social outcomes and their implications for race and punishment.

In the end, students should have a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of how racial bias and racial inequality have shaped – and continue to shape – issues of crime, punishment and justice in American politics.

Academic Integrity

“Academic freedom is a fundamental right in any institution of higher learning. Honesty and integrity are necessary preconditions of this freedom. *Academic integrity requires that all academic work be wholly the product of an identified individual or individuals. Joint efforts are legitimate only when the assistance of others is explicitly acknowledged.* Ethical conduct is the obligation of every member of the University community, and breaches of academic integrity constitute serious offenses.” <http://teachx.rutgers.edu/integrity/policy.html#Integrity> (emphasis added)

I expect that all of the work you hand in to me is work that you have produced on your own and that any information you obtain from other sources is properly cited. While I encourage students to study together, when you submit work for this class, it must be wholly your own. If you have any questions or concerns about plagiarism, please see the university policy on academic integrity at the URL above or see me. Plagiarizing someone else’s work (including cheating on exams) will result in a failing grade and suspected violations of academic integrity will be

referred to the appropriate Dean for investigation. If you have any questions or concerns about my expectations, please do not hesitate to ask me.

You should also be familiar with the following websites:

University Office: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu>

Office of Student Conduct: <http://judicialaffairs.rutgers.edu>

Disability Accommodation

“Rutgers University is committed to providing an environment where all students can equally participate in the academic experience. The accommodation of students with disabilities who meet admissions requirements is mandated by both federal and state law. Rutgers University supports these laws by pledging to comply with their requirements.”

<http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~polcomp/fachand.shtml#sec1>

If you anticipate needing any type of reasonable accommodation in this course or have questions about accessibility, please contact me immediately.

Reading and assignments

Required books:

Color of Justice, Walker, Spohn and DeLeone et al

Let's Get Free: A Hip-Hop Theory of Justice, Paul Butler

Additional articles are on the course sakai site and listed on the syllabus with an asterisk ()

Assignments:

Class participation (15%): This is for real! You will be judged on the quality, not quantity, of your participation in class. I will call on students randomly and expect you to make meaningful contributions most of the time. This means being prepared!

Midterm (30%): The midterm is on Thurs, March 13th. This is a closed book, in-class exam involving short answers and essay questions.

Book review: Paul Butler, Let's Get Free (20%): This is a 4-6 page review of Paul Butler's book and is due on March 31st. See page 5 for details

Final paper (35%): What explains racial disparities in crime and in the criminal justice system in the US? This paper is your assessment of the basic animating question of this class. You will rely primarily on class material but must use one other book source (I will provide a list of suggested readings)

Part I: Race and ethnicity in the criminal justice system

Week one: Thursday Jan 23rd: Disparities, discrimination, race and crime
WSD, ch 1 (pgs 5-24)

Week two: Monday Jan 27th and Thursday Jan 30th: Victims and Offenders
WSD, chapter 2
Cornel West, “Why race matters?”
Butler, chs 1 and 2

Week three: Mon Feb 3rd and Thurs Feb 6th: Competing views of race and the justice system
*Alexander, ch. 1 *The New Jim Crow*
*Forman, James, “Racial Critiques of Mass Incarceration: Beyond the New Jim Crow”

Week four: Mon Feb 10th and Thurs Feb 13th: Police
WSD, chapter 4
Heumann and Cassak, “The debate over racial profiling”
Butler, ch. 5

Week five: Mon Feb 17th and Thurs Feb 20th: Courts
WSD, chapter 5 and 6
Butler, ch. 4

Week six: Mon Feb 24th and Thurs 27th: Sentencing
WSD, chapter 7
**Miller-el v. Dretke*, Supreme Court decision (excerpts)

Week seven: Mon March 3 and Thurs March 6: Youth and drugs
WSD, chapter 10
Butler, chs. 3 and 7

Week eight: Mon March 10: Guest speakers on alternatives to incarceration
Speakers TBA
*Readings TBA

Thurs March 13th: IN-CLASS MIDTERM

March 17th: SPRING BREAK

Part II: Race, crime and American politics

Week nine: Mon March 24th and Thurs March 27th: Inequality and crime
WSD, ch. 3
Butler, ch. 9
*Massey and Denton, “American Apartheid”

Week ten: Mon March 31st and Thurs April 3rd: Media, race and crime

*Entman and Rojecki, “Violence, Stereotypes and African-Americans in the News”

*Dixon and Linz, “Race and the misrepresentation of victimization on TV news”

Monday, March 31: Book reviews due

Week eleven: Mon April 7th and Thurs April 10th: Lethal violence and race in the US

*Zimring and Hawkins, “New Perspectives on African-American Violence”

*Roth, ch 1

*WSD, ch 3

Week twelve: Mon April 14th and Thurs April 17th: Race and social policy in the US

*Katznelson, “When Affirmative Action was White,” excerpts

*Sundown Towns, ch 1: <http://sundown.afro.illinois.edu/content/sundown-introduction.pdf>

Week thirteen: Monday April 21st and Thurs April 24th: Realities of urban violence and race

*Peterson and Krivo, “Racial structure, segregation and crime”

*Patillo-McCoy, Black Picket Fences (excerpt)

<http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/649288.html>

Week fourteen: Monday April 28th and Thurs May 1st: The politics of crime and punishment

*Guest speakers: NJ lawmakers

*Readings TBA

Week fifteen: Monday May 5th: Final paper discussions

Final papers are due on Monday, May 12th.

Book review and final paper guidelines

Book review: Paul Butler's, *Let's Get Free: A Hip-Hop Theory of Justice*.

A scholarly book review consists of three main elements:

1. A brief summary of the core claims of the book
2. An assessment of those claims with respect to their merits and de-merits
3. Your analysis of Butler's theory of justice.

Note that section 2 is the most important and also the most difficult. You should reflect not on your personal reaction to the book or your personal opinion of his claims. Rather, you should consider the book through the lens of the other course material we have read up to this point. Some of the material will support some of Butler's claims while other material will contradict or challenge it. How do you assess the main claims of the book in light of what else you have learned in this class so far? Are his empirical claims valid? If so, which ones, if not, which ones? What evidence from class supports or contradicts (or challenges) Butler's claims?

The first section should not be more than one and a half pages maximum. This means that you should focus on the two or three points that you think are the most important elements of the book. The last section should be no more than one page and should provide your view of Butler's theory. I am not asking for your opinion but, rather, your considered analysis of his argument.

The paper is 4-6 pages long, double-spaced, (double-sided, if possible) and include your name (NO title page!). Papers handed in up to 24 hours late will be penalized 10 points. No papers will be accepted more than 24 hours after the due date without written documentation of an emergency.

Final paper: How much does race matter in crime and criminal justice in the US?

This paper asks you to assess the primary question in the class using class material and one additional book source (see attached suggested readings). I will provide more information about the paper topic in class.

The paper should include:

- A clear thesis statement
- Reference to class readings from each week

Your paper should be 12-15 pages, double-spaced (double-sided, if possible) and include your name. It is due on May 12th.