

**Criminal Justice 425 - Race, Crime, and Justice
Spring 2015**

Mondays and Wednesdays, 3:20-4:40pm

Tillet Hall, Room 105

Course web page is available on <https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal>

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Course Overview:

The strong connection between race and crime in the United States is prominent in the media and in the minds of the public. Recent incidents in Ferguson, Missouri and Staten Island, New York make this extremely clear. But, how large are racial and ethnic differences in criminal involvement in this country? How do we know that such differences exist? How can we explain ethnoracial differentials in crime in the United States? What implications do both the “facts” and the media portrayals of the race-crime connection have for how people think and act in this society? And, how does all of this filter through the various components of the criminal justice system? In this course, we will address these and other questions to learn about the state of knowledge on the relationship between race, ethnicity, crime, and criminal justice. We will discuss data, theoretical approaches, and current research about the ways in which race and ethnicity are connected with criminal involvement and criminal justice processing. In doing so, we will learn about the complex ways in which the race-crime-criminal justice connection is both a product of societal forces and affects broader social relations.

Learning Goals

The course will further all of the learning goals for the criminal justice major.

1. *Competence* in understanding the major theoretical perspectives will be furthered through readings, lectures, discussions, and written work that address the major perspectives used to account for the sources and consequences of racial and ethnic inequality in crime and criminal justice processes. The central focus of the course is on increasing the multicultural understanding of crime and criminal justice within society based upon contemporary theoretical and empirical knowledge. In doing so, the course will address the major institutions that affect crime and that carry out the application of justice. It will also familiarize students with the major data sources and methods used in the field through reading and discussion of current research articles.
2. *Critical Thinking* will be advanced through reading, discussion, and written assignments designed to have students apply and critique perspectives and knowledge about the underlying sources and consequences of differential involvement in crime and in the application of justice within major institutes.

3. Advanced readings of scholarly articles and visits by faculty researchers will further the *scholarship* of students. In addition, all students will complete a research project that includes both an oral and written presentation of their research.

Required Texts

Walker, Samuel, Cassia Spohn, and Miriam DeLone. 2012. *Race, Ethnicity, and Crime in America*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

Russell-Brown, Katheryn. 2009. *The Color of Crime*. New York: New York University Press.

All other readings noted on the syllabus are available on the sakai class webpage.

Requirements

1. A written letter of introduction is required of each member of the class. These will provide a way for you to get to know your classmates. The letter is due in class on Monday, January 26. The letters will be read to one another in class on that day. This assignment is worth 2% of your course grade.
2. Each student will complete a written review of a recent empirical article (that is not assigned for class) on an issue related to race-ethnicity and crime or criminal justice. You will provide me with your preferences for the topic of this article and I will assign you to topics based upon these requests. The due date for the paper will correspond with the date for the topic as listed below on the course outline and on the article preference sheet that I will pass out. A description of the required content of the paper will be passed out early in the semester. The article review counts for 9% of your course grade.
3. Each student will write a paper and do a presentation about a recent criminal event or criminal justice action (e.g., major court decision, policing activity) that relates to race and ethnicity that was reported in one of the following major newspapers: the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Star Ledger*, or the *Washington Post*. You will provide me with your preferences for the due date of your paper and presentation and I will make assignments based upon these requests. A description of the required content of the paper and presentation will be passed out early in the semester. The current event paper and presentation count for 9% of your course grade.
4. Students are required to conduct a research project on an important event, practice, or legal case related to race-ethnicity and crime or criminal justice. You will then make a presentation to the class about the event, practice, or legal case that both explains its central elements and discusses how it relates to theories, concepts, and evidence discussed in class and other academic publications. Finally, you will write a paper summarizing all of your work. You will work with one or two other students in conducting the research and making your class presentation, ***but each student will write their own individual paper on the assigned topic.*** A description of the requirements for this project will be passed out early in the semester along with a list of topics. Students will indicate their preferences for project topics. I will assign you to a topic and research group based upon these preferences. Note that some in-class planning time will be provided. This assignment is worth 20% of your course grade.

5. One in-class midterm examination will be given during the semester as scheduled on the course outline below. This exam is worth 25% of your course grade.
6. A non-cumulative final examination will be given during the regularly scheduled final examination time. The time of this exam is noted below on the course outline. This final exam is worth 25% of your course grade.
7. Attendance and active participation is an essential part of this course. The success of the course depends upon the participation of all class members. Attendance and participation are worth 10% of your course grade. Participation credit is evaluated based upon a set of in-class exercises (dates not announced) and involvement in class through questions and discussion. If you must miss class, you are responsible for getting notes from someone else in the class and for finding out about any announcements made during class.

Reporting Absences

Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me.

Note

No make-up exams or late assignments will be permitted unless you contact me ***PRIOR TO THE EXAM OR THE DUE DATE.***

Academic Misconduct

Academic honesty is a subject that I take very seriously. I encourage all students to familiarize themselves with the Rutgers University policies and procedures on academic honesty, available at http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI_Policy_2013.pdf. All violations of academic integrity, for example, cheating in examinations or plagiarizing others' work for your written assignments, will be referred to the appropriate authorities and sanctioned accordingly.

Students With Disabilities

In accordance with University policy, if you have a documented disability and require accommodations to obtain equal access in this course, please contact me at the beginning of the semester. Students with disabilities must be registered with the Office of Student Disability Services and must provide verification of their eligibility for such accommodations.

COURSE OUTLINE

The dates provided here are tentative and could change depending on how this class proceeds. In other words, some topics may take a bit more time than indicated below and some may take somewhat less time than indicated. Any changes in dates, including changes in exam dates will be announced in class. You are responsible for finding out about any announcements made in class.

I. RACE, ETHNICITY, AND PATTERNS OF CRIMINAL INEQUALITY

Wednesday, January 21 - Introduction to the Course; What are Race and Ethnicity?

Monday, January 26 - Sources of Data and General Patterns of Inequality

Reading: Walker, Spohn, and DeLone, Chapter 1: *Race, Ethnicity, and Crime*

Letter of introduction due in class.

Wednesday, January 28 - Victims and Offenders: Who Are they?

Reading: Walker, Spohn, and DeLone, Chapter 2: *Victims and Offenders*

Monday, February 2 - What Do We Hear in the Media about Race and Crime? And How Do We Act?

Reading: Russell-Brown, Chapter 1: *Media Messages* and Chapter 2: *The Skin Game*

II. ACCOUNTING FOR DIFFERENTIAL PATTERNS OF CRIMINAL INVOLVEMENT

Wednesday, February 4 - Historical Underpinnings

Readings: Russell-Brown, Chapter 3: *History's Strange Fruit*

Provine, Doris Marie. 2006. "Creating Racial Disadvantage: The Case of Crack Cocaine." Pp. 277-294 in *The Many Colors of Crime: Inequalities of Race, Ethnicity and Crime in America*, edited by Ruth D. Peterson, Lauren J. Krivo, and John Hagan. New York: New York University Press.

Monday, February 9 - The Case of Tulia, Texas

Tulia, Texas, film and discussion

Wednesday, February 11 & Monday, February 16 Social Structure and Criminal Inequality:
Theories and Evidence

Reading: Walker, Spohn, and DeLone, Chapter 3: *Race, Ethnicity, Social Structure, and Crime*

Peterson, Ruth D. and Lauren J. Krivo. 2009. "Race, Residence, and Violent Crime: A Structure of Inequality." *Kansas Law Review* 57:903-933.

III. PERCEPTIONS, EXPRESSIONS, AND MEANINGS OF CRIME AND JUSTICE

Wednesday, February 18 - Race and Perceptions of Justice

Reading: Russell-Brown, Chapter 5: *Are We Still Talking About O.J.?*

Monday, February 23- Racial Hoaxes

Reading: Russell-Brown, Chapter 6: *Racial Hoaxes*

Wednesday, February 25 – A Conversation with Katheryn Russell-Brown

Guest speaker via Skype, Professor Katheryn Russell-Brown, University of Florida.

Monday, March 2 - White Crime?

Readings: Russell-Brown, Chapter 7: *White Crime*

We will also have review time for the midterm exam.

Wednesday, March 4 - Midterm

IV. RACE, ETHNICITY, AND THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Monday, March 9 - Overview and Policing

Readings: Russell-Brown, Chapter 4: *Discrimination or Disparity?*

Walker, Spohn, and DeLone, Chapter 4: *pp. 129-154, Justice on the Street?*

Wednesday, March 11 - Policing, Continued

Readings: Brunson, Rod K., Anthony A. Braga., David M. Hureau, and Kashea Pegram. 2013. "We Trust You, But Not That Much: Examining Police–Black Clergy Partnerships to Reduce Youth Violence." *Justice Quarterly*.

Guest speaker, Professor Rod Brunson, Rutgers University-Newark.

The list of academic sources for your research project is due in class.

Monday, March 16 & Wednesday, March 18 – No Class; Spring Break

Monday, March 23 - Ferguson in Context: A Conversation from the Ground

Guest speaker via Skype, Professor Hillary Potter, University of Colorado. Professor Potter will speak to us from Ferguson, MO about her ongoing ethnographic field research on Law Enforcement, Community Action, and Justice.

Wednesday, March 25 – Policing, Continued

Readings: Walker, Spohn, and DeLone, Chapter 4: *pp. 154-183, Justice on the Street?*

Monday, March 30 - The Courts: Pretrial Processes

Readings: Walker, Spohn, and DeLone, Chapter 5: *The Courts: A Quest for Justice During Pretrial Process*

Wednesday, April 1 - No class, project work time

Monday, April 6 - The Courts: Trial and Adjudication

Readings: Walker, Spohn, and DeLone, Chapter 6: *Justice on the Bench? Trial and Adjudication in Criminal Court*

Wednesday, April 8 - Sentencing

Readings: Walker, Spohn, and DeLone, Chapter 7: *Race and Sentencing: In Search of Fairness and Justice*

Monday, April 13 - Incarceration

Readings: Walker, Spohn, and DeLone, Chapter 9: *Corrections in America: A Portrait in Color*

Bobo, Lawrence D. and Victor Thompson. 2010. "Racialized Mass Incarceration: Poverty, Prejudice, and Punishment." Pp. 322-355 in *Doing Race: 21 Essays for the 21st Century*, edited by Hazel R. Markus and Paula Moya. New York: Norton.

Wednesday April 15 – Incarceration, Continued

Broken on All Sides, film and discussion

Monday, April 20 - The Criminal Justice Pipeline

Readings: Rios, Victor M. 2009. "The Consequences of the Criminal Justice Pipeline on Black and Latino Masculinity." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*. 623:150-162.

Wednesday, April 22 - Research Project Presentations

Monday, April 27 - Research Project Presentations

Wednesday, April 29 - Research Project Presentations

Monday, May 4 - Research Project Presentations and Review for Final Exam

WEDNESDAY MARCH 13 FINAL EXAM - noon-3:00pm in the regular classroom