

Criminal Justice 496(01) Special Topics: Criminalization and Punishment

Course Syllabus

Spring 2011

MW 5:00-6:20 p.m.

Location: Tillet Hall, #207

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Mondays: 3:30 to 4:30, Lucy Stone Hall, A-361 or by appointment

Purpose

Which behaviors are defined as crimes and how they are punished varies greatly across time and place. This course seeks to illuminate the causes and consequences of criminalization and punishment, with a particular focus on patterns and practices within the United States. Most course readings and assignments will focus one of four areas: 1) The monumental expansion in the USA of the criminal law, of the use of criminal justice tools and personnel to address social problems, and of formal punishment (e.g. arrest, probation, and incarceration), and 2) The dynamics within criminal justice organizations along with broader social, historical, political, and cultural forces that shape and sustain criminalization and penal practices, 3) The consequences of criminalization and mass incarceration for individuals, families, schools, and other institutions of social control, and 4) Alternatives to expanded criminalization and punishment.

In addition to illuminating topics of central importance to criminal justice, the course also aims to improve your writing skills. You will be encouraged to critically examine the way you write with a focus on clarity, flow, and organization. Finally, the course seeks to improve your ability to think critically. You will be asked to identify, analyze, and question the assumptions of authors, of society, the criminal justice system, as well as your own assumptions. You will be encouraged to become an active participant in the learning process rather than a passive, second-hand recipient of knowledge.

Required Readings

One book is required in this course. It is available at the Livingston College Book Store and for purchase on-line.

Parenti, Christian. 2008. *Lockdown America: Police and Prisons in the Age of Crisis*. 2nd edition. New York: Verso. ISBN: 1844672492

Most readings will be available as Pdf files (Requires Adobe Acrobat to view) on the sakai site. A few readings will be available on electronic reserve through the RU library.

Course Format

This course fulfills the 400-level requirement of the criminal justice major. Accordingly, the course assumes familiarity with basic criminal justice concepts and procedure. Some of the course material is more advanced than what you have likely encountered in your 200- and 300-level sociology courses. The course also requires more reading than you may be used to. As a seminar, the course emphasizes discussion and writing. You will not be tested on the abundant course readings. Rather you should think of the readings as a set of resources that are instrumental to your writing of quality papers and to your active participation in class discussions.

Course Grade

Your course grade, which is on a 100-point scale, will be apportioned as follows:

Participation:	20%
First Paper:	30%
Second Paper:	35%
Writing Homework:	15%

Participation. Twenty percent of your grade will be based on the quantity and quality of your classroom participation. If you are frequently absent from class without a valid documented excuse (see below) your participation grade will suffer. I encourage students who have not done the applicable reading to let others respond to questions first. This helps keep class discussion pertinent and flowing. Classroom participation that detracts from focused, intellectual discourse and an open, congenial classroom atmosphere will not improve your grade. Because of time limitations, I will likely be able to call on each student no more than four or five times each class period. Please limit your comments to this number and be brief, so all students have a chance to participate. Excessive participation will *reduce* your participation grade. While everyday classroom discussion participation weighs heavily in your participation grade, you will have also several special opportunities to secure a respectable participation grade:

- 1) For your first two special opportunities, you will need to sign up to be lead discussant for two of the over twenty classroom discussions. Two students will be lead discussants for each discussion (beginning with the third class session). Lead discussants are expected to be prepared to answer any questions about the readings and are encouraged to pose questions of their own. You will be judged against a high standard of preparedness, comprehension, and coherence.
- 2) The course requires two substantive papers. The last two class sessions will be devoted to short student presentations on one of their papers. Your performance on your presentation will also figure into your participation grade.
- 3) You will receive discussion questions in advance of each lecture. For extra discussion points, you can submit to me via e-mail at least four hours in advance of the lecture your responses to these questions. You may do this only twice and only when you are

not submitting these written responses as part of your writing requirement for the course (see below).

Attendance. While I do not take attendance, students are strongly encouraged to attend every class. Whether present or not, everyone is responsible for all information covered and any assignments made in every class. Only students who have an excused absence should ask me about the contents of a missed class. Other students should consult another classmate about what they missed. Documentation of valid excuses (e.g. doctor's note, airline ticket receipt, court receipt, hospital visitation receipt, funeral documentation) must be provided in a timely fashion for the excuse to be accepted. You must submit an original or a photocopy of the excuse if you expect me to take any follow-up action outside of class. Excuses that cannot be verified with documentation (e.g. most power outages, traffic jams, and car troubles) will not be accepted as valid.

Classroom behavior. In order to maintain a civil and productive classroom atmosphere, please come to class and leave on time and silence any electronic devices during class sessions. Please also minimize side conversations after the class session has begun as this behavior can be distracting to me and students near you. In the unlikely event that a student's disruptive behavior becomes a recurring problem he or she will be directed to leave the room (see <http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~polcomp/judaff/ucsc.shtml>).

Extra Credit. I do not plan to provide opportunities for extra credit.

Writing Assignments

You will be asked to complete two major writing assignments in the course and submit them on Sakai. The first paper (Due Feb. 27th at 5 p.m.) will be about a specific type or example of criminalization and the second (Due May 6th at 5 p.m.) will be on an aspect of punishment. All papers will be judged on the depth and breadth of analysis, the quality of writing, the proper use of course and outside materials, and additional considerations to be announced. The course materials you cite can include but **MUST** not be limited to the course materials about which you submit written responses. In each paper you must cite at least two course materials beyond those referenced in your written responses. Papers should reflect an understanding of both course readings and issues and topics raised in class discussion. Students are welcome to request feedback on paper topics and on short paper outlines. However, I will not read and comment on rough drafts.

You are also expected to submit written answers to most of the discussion questions for four of the sessions. You will be graded only on the top three (five points each). Please submit them via Sakai in advance of the class session. These should be viewed as writing homework assignments rather than paper assignments. They are intended mainly to encourage you to reflect carefully upon the reading.

It is your responsibility to make sure that your papers and assignments are formatted properly and transmit properly, on time, and without viruses or macros.

To invoke the lingo of criminal justice, the instructor will fully enforce a “zero tolerance” policy for plagiarism. *If you quote from any sources, you must use quotation marks and cite your source* (and page number). You must cite the sources for any ideas that are not your own. All papers will be submitted automatically to turnitin.com which is extremely adept at detecting material that is taken from elsewhere. All suspicious work will be thoroughly and fairly investigated. Plagiarism and related violations of academic integrity will probably result in a failing grade on the assignment and could be forwarded to the University Office of Student Judicial Affairs. For more information on the University’s uniform policies and procedures concerning academic integrity violations please see <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>.

Late assignments will be deducted an additional half grade (a six-point penalty on a 100 point scale) for each additional day late beginning *immediately* after the time the assignment is due. The highest possible grade on a paper is an A+. Thus, a paper received over 48 hours after the time it was due will receive no greater than a B+.

Exceptions will be made for the *portion of the assignment’s lateness* that is due to illness or a family emergency (or other exceptional circumstances). Documentation of these valid excuses (e.g. doctor’s note, airline ticket receipt, funeral documentation etc.) must be provided in a timely fashion for the excuse to be accepted. Whenever possible, no-penalty extensions should be requested and approved in advance. If an extended illness or family situation prevents you from attending class and completing your assignments on time, you must receive a new paper due date, so your paper can be evaluated properly and fairly. *An excused absence does not mean an indefinite paper extension.*

Communications

E-mails. I understand that you may need to send me e-mails with timely questions about reading or writing assignments. I try to respond to all e-mails with 48 hours of receipt. If you expect your e-mail to be read and responded to, please respect the following guidelines. First, I prefer that you e-mail me from an account that lists your name as the sender. If you send it from another account, please make sure the subject heading signals that you are one of my students. Second, while I welcome anonymous e-mails that provide me feedback on the course, I will *not* reply to any anonymous e-mails.

List-serve. The university offers a list-serve service that Professors can use to contact our students. The list-serve automatically sends messages to your Eden account. I do not have the ability to set the e-mail address at which you will receive messages. The main purpose of the list-serve is for me to send you discussion questions as well as updates and reminders. However, do not count on the list-serve to inform you and remind you about everything important that I mention in class. If you are absent from class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed from another classmate. Occasionally I may post items to the list-serve that are relevant to a pending assignment. It is your responsibility to check your e-mail regularly. As a rule, I plan to always give at least 2 days notice for any changes I make to the readings, papers etc., and to also make any important announcements in class. To contact the whole class, send a message to criminalization_sp11@rams.rutgers.edu.

Session Topics, Required Reading, and Dates

Please do the reading corresponding to a class in advance. (Topics and readings are subject to change at least two days in advance of the scheduled date.). If the reading specifies a page range (e.g. pp. 76-82) rather than a whole chapter or article, begin the reading on the first section that *begins* on the first page in the range and end the reading after the last section that *ends* on the last page in the range. If no section begins or ends on a page in the range as described above, use *paragraphs* as markers instead of sections.

Reserve: On electronic reserve. Other readings are on Sakai under 'Resources'

Date	Topics/Assignments	Readings Prior to Class
Jan. 19	Introduction to the course.	None
Jan. 24	Theories of Criminalization	Muncie "Theory and Politics of Criminalization", Jenness, "Explaining Criminalization"
Jan. 26	Criminalization of Alcohol and Drugs	Musto "America's First Cocaine Epidemic", Gusfield "Moral passage" <i>Optional:</i> http://www.harmreductionjournal.com/content/3/1/22
Jan. 31	Criminalization of poverty/the poor	Ehrenreich, "Is it a Crime to be Poor"; Beckett & Herbert, Intro (5-9; 12-15), Ch. 1 (31-35).
Feb. 2	Criminalization of School Discipline	Hirschfield & Celinska, "Beyond Fear"
Feb. 7	Police Partnerships	Kupchik, Ch. 3, "Police Presence in Schools"; Beckett & Herbert, Ch. 4 (90-100)
Feb. 9	Criminalization of (Some) Youth	Rios, Ch. 3-4
Feb. 14	Criminalization of Youth (cont).	Rios, Ch. 5
Feb. 16	Criminalization and Gender	Snider, "Criminalizing Violence Against Women" (pdf 40), Block "Street Sweeping" Youth Radio, "Arresting Youth In Sex Trafficking"
Feb. 21	Student Choice on Criminalization	TBA
Feb. 23	Non-criminalization	Chambliss (139-157); Hagan (194-201); non-criminalization news articles,
Feb. 28	Functions of Criminalization and Punishment; Paper Due at 5 p.m. on Feb. 27 th .	Reiman, "Bonus of Bias" (pdf 22); Gilligan, "Symbolism of Punishment"
Mar. 2	The Politics of Mass Incarceration	Parenti, Ch. 1-3 (Optional Reserve: Beckett, From Crime to Drugs)

Date	Topics/Assignments	Readings Prior to Class
Mar. 7	The Social Transformation of Policing	Parenti, Ch. 4-6 (See also http://www.harmreductionjournal.com/content/3/1/22)
Mar. 9	The Prison-Industrial Complex	Parenti, Ch. 8 & 11
Mar. 14 & 16	SPRING BREAK!	
Mar. 21	Role of criminal justice actors	Beckett, "Institutionalizing Law & Order"; http://abclocal.go.com/wabc/story?section=news/investigators&id=7305356&pt=print ; Moskos (118-125; 153-157).
Mar. 23	Public Opinion and Punishment	Beckett, "Setting the Public Agenda" Beckett, "Crime and Punishment in American Political Culture,"
Mar. 28	Film (TBA)	TBA
Mar. 30	The Media and Punishment	Beckett, "Crime and Drugs in the News"; Males, "Wild in Deceit" <i>Optional</i> : Christensen et al. "Selling the Police."
Apr. 4	Race and Punishment	Mauer: "African-Americans and the Criminal Justice System." Alexander, "The New Jim Crow"; Dwyer "Whites Smoke Pot"; <i>Optional</i> ASA, "Race, Ethnicity, and the Criminal Justice System"
Apr. 6	Role of Geography	Bass, Sandra "Policing Space, Policing Race"; Feld, "Justice by Geography: Urban, Suburban, and Rural Variations"
Apr. 11	Punishment and Crime	Currie, "Of Punishment and Crime Rates"; Lynch and Sabol (13-21).
Apr. 13	Consequences of mass incarceration	Roberts, "Social and Moral Cost of Mass Incarceration in African American Communities"
Apr. 18	International Comparisons	Hörnqvist, "Birth of Public Order Policy"; "Criminalization in Britain news articles"
Apr. 20	De-criminalization and other alternatives	DiChiara & Galliher "Marijuana Decriminalization" Winship "Boston cops and black churches"
Apr. 25	Film or Guest Speaker (TBA)	
Apr. 27	Student Presentations	None
May. 2	Student Presentations. <i>Final Papers Due, May 6th at 5 p.m.</i>	None