

SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE STUDIES
Seminar in Justice and Social Theory (JS-201)
Fall 2009
Monday 5.30pm-8.15pm (MH 510)

INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Alessandro De Giorgi

EMAIL

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OFFICE HOURS

Mondays: 2pm-5pm

Wednesdays: 9.15am-10.15am

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Examines classic and contemporary theories of justice, including legal, social, economic and criminal justice and their application to current social issues. Prerequisite: graduate standing

COURSE OBJECTIVES

More than 2.3 million individuals are currently detained in US prisons and jails. With almost 1% of its total population behind bars, the United States has the largest prison population in the world, and yet crime rates have been declining for almost two decades. The current condition is the result of two distinct wars that have been waged across American cities since the late 1970s: the war on crime and the war on drugs. This graduate seminar offers a critical reconstruction of these wars, exploring their origins as well as their ongoing consequences on American society, with particular reference to the impact of mass-incarceration on existing geographies of social, economic, and racial inequality. Upon successful completion of this seminar, students will develop a sociologically informed understanding of the cultural, political, and economic dimensions of punishment in contemporary US society.

REQUIRED READINGS

- M.L. Frampton, I.H. López, J. Simon (eds.), *After the War on Crime. Race, Democracy, and a New Reconstruction*. New York: New York University Press.
- One book chosen from the list of "BOOKS AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW" (see below)
- Any material uploaded on Blackboard (see the "COURSE SCHEDULE" below)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Due</i>	<i>Percent of total grade</i>
1 PAGE WEEKLY READING RESPONSE	<i>Ongoing</i>	20% (10 responses minimum)
PRESENTATION/WRITTEN OUTLINE	<i>Ongoing</i>	30% (max 30 points)
MIDTERM TEST (2 QUESTIONS)	<i>10/26</i>	20% (max 20 points)
6 PAGES BOOK REVIEW	<i>11/30</i>	30% (max 30 points)

SPECIFICATIONS ABOUT COURSEWORK

1) WEEKLY READING RESPONSES (minimum 10 responses/max 20 points/20% of total grade)
Students are expected to prepare a *one page reading response* about the reading assigned for each week. Reading responses will receive a grade ranging from 0 to 2 points (for a maximum of 20 points in total). The reading response should offer a *critical commentary* of the reading for that week (*a simple summary is not enough to get credit!*), and at least *one question* to be debated in class.

PLEASE NOTE: *a minimum of 10 responses are required* in order to satisfy this requirement (this means that students can miss a maximum of *one response* during the semester, and that 20% of the final grade will be lost if less than 10 responses are submitted by the end of the semester).

Students are expected to come to each meeting with enough printed copies of their own reading response to distribute to all other participants (and to the instructor). The first 20 minutes of each meeting will be dedicated to reading each other's responses, and reflecting on them. This will be of great importance for the ensuing discussion. *No late response will be accepted*

2) IN CLASS PRESENTATION AND WRITTEN OUTLINE (max 30 points/30% of total grade)

Each week, one participant will give a 15 min. presentation in class, based on the relevant reading for that week. Depending on the total number of participants, presentations will be given *individually* or *in couples* (the exact calendar of presentations will be available by the second week of class. In their presentation, students are requested to summarize the reading, but also to elaborate some *meaningful critique* of its arguments, thus *offering material for debate*. At the end of each presentation there will be a discussion moderated by the instructor, or a video/movie dealing with the issues discussed in class.

PLEASE NOTE: In order to get credit for this assignment, *each presenter is required to submit a 5 pages typed outline* of his/her presentation *on the next day of class*.

3) MIDTERM TEST (max 20 points/20% of total grade)

This tests will be done in class, and will consist of 2 questions about any of the topics/readings discussed in class. Each question will receive a grade ranging between 0 and 10 (for a maximum of 20 points). You are kindly requested to *come to class with your own blue-book* on the date the test is due (10/26/2009).

PLEASE NOTE: during the tests *no notes, no books, no laptops* will be allowed. If one test is missed due to family/health/work problems, there is the possibility of a makeup test, reserved only to the students who adequately certify the reasons for their absence (e.g. doctor's certificate, employer's statement, etc.).

4) BOOK REVIEW (max 30 points / 30% of total grade):

In order to complete this assignments, students will have to write a 6 pages long review of one book of their choice among the ones listed under the section "BOOKS AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW" (see below). In order to be accepted, the book review should include the following:

- a) INTRODUCTION describing the book's topic and its relevance;
- b) ANALYSIS of the books main arguments and of its contribution to the debate;
- c) CRITIQUE considering such elements as: clarity/originality/coherence/argumentation;

Further guidance about how to write a book review will be provided in class. *The deadline for submitting the book review is 11/30/2009.*

PLEASE NOTE: The book review should be submitted in *printed form*, together with a *certificate of originality* from: www.turnitin.com (CLASS ID: 2753964; PASSWORD: seminar).

BOOKS AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

(PLEASE NOTE: ALL BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE AT MLK LIBRARY)

- Abramski, S. (2007). *American Furies. Crime, Punishment and Vengeance in the Age of Mass-Imprisonment*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Beckett, K., Sassoon, T. (2000). *The Politics of Injustice. Crime and Punishment in America*. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press.
- Clear, T. (2007). *Imprisoning Communities. How Mass-Incarceration Makes Disadvantaged Neighborhoods Worse*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Cole, D. (1999). *No Equal Justice. Race and Class in the American Criminal Justice System*. New York: The New Press.
- Garland, D. (2001). *The Culture of Control*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gilmore, R. (2007). *Golden Gulag*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Harcourt, B. (2001). *Illusion of Order. The False Promise of Broken Windows Policing*. Harvard: Harvard University Press.
- Jarvis, B. (2004). *Cruel and Unusual. Punishment and US Culture*. London: Pluto Press.
- Lynch, M.J. (2007). *Big Prisons Big Dreams. Crime and the Failure of America's Penal System*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Mauer, M. (2006). *Race to Incarcerate*. New York: The New Press (2nd edition).
- Parenti, C. (1999). *Lockdown America. Police and Prisons in the Age of Crisis*. New York: Verso.
- Provine, D.M. (2007). *Unequal Under Law. Race in the War on Drugs*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Simon, J. (2007). *Governing Through Crime*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tonry, M. (2004). *Thinking about Crime. Sense and Sensibility in American Penal Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Useem, B., Piehl, A.M. (2008). *Prison State. The Challenge of Mass Incarceration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wacquant, L. (2009) *Punishing the Poor. The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Welch, M. (2005). *Ironies of Imprisonment*. London: Sage.
- Western, B. (2006). *Punishment and Inequality in America*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

JS 201 “SEMINAR IN JUSTICE AND SOCIAL THEORY”

FALL 2009 COURSE SCHEDULE

(® = READING RESPONSE DUE)

Week 1 INTRODUCTION

M 08/24 General Introduction: Main Topics/Requirements/Grading/Attendance

Week 2 THE PUNITIVE TURN IN THE UNITED STATES ®

M 08/31 Reading: Beckett – Sassoon, *The Politics of Injustice* (Blackboard)

Week 3 NO CLASS

M 09/7 *Campus Closed*

Week 4 USA 1970-2000: FROM WELFARE STATE TO PENAL STATE? ®

M 09/14 Reading: *After the War on Crime* (Chapter 1)

Week 5 PUNISHMENT AND POVERTY IN THE US ®

M 09/21 Reading: Western – Beckett, *Governing Social Marginality* (Blackboard)

Week 6 PUNISHMENT AND THE RACE QUESTION IN THE US ®

M 09/28 Reading: *Deadly Symbiosis* (Blackboard)

Week 7 THE WAR ON DRUGS AND ITS VICTIMS ®

M 10/5 Reading: Mauer *The War on Drugs and the African American Community* (Blackboard)

Documentary: Herrman – Whalen, *Tulia, Texas* (USA 2008, 57 min.)

Week 8 MOVIE

M 10/12 K. Booth, *American Drug War. The Last White Hope* (USA 2008, 118 min.)

Discussion

Week 9 THE MEANING OF “ZERO TOLERANCE” ®

M 10/19 Reading: Herbert, *Policing the Contemporary City* (Blackboard)

Week 10 THE PRISON CRISIS ®

M 10/26 Reading: Frampton, *After the War on Crime* (Chapter 4)
Documentary: S. Mason, *Writ Writer* (USA 2008, 54 min.)

Week 11 MIDTERM TEST

M 11/02 IN-CLASS TEST: 2 QUESTIONS (20% of total grade)
Documentary: L. Garbus, *The Farm. Angola* (USA, 1998, 89 min.)

Week 12 GOVERNING AMERICA THROUGH FEAR ®

M 11/09 Reading: Frampton, *After the War on Crime* (Chapter 3)

Week 13 OLD AND NEW PENAL SUBJECTS ®

M 11/16 Reading: Frampton, *After the War on Crime* (Chapter 6)

Week 14 THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX ®

M 11/23 Reading: Davis, *Globalism and the Prison Industrial Complex* (Blackboard)

Week 15 A CULTURE OF CONTROL? ®

M 11/30 Reading: Garland, *The Culture of High Crime Societies* (Blackboard)
BOOK REVIEW DUE (30% of total grade)

Week 16 FINAL COMMENTS/FEEDBACK

M12/7 Feedback on book review/Final comments/How to improve?

STUDENT CONDUCT

Attendance: According to University policy F69-24 “Students should attend all meetings of their classes, not only because they are responsible for material discussed therein, but because active participation is frequently essential to insure maximum benefit for all members of the class. Attendance per se shall not be used as a criterion for grading”. Attendance is taken at each class meeting using sign-in sheets.

Etiquette: While in class please turn your cell phone off. If your laptop has wireless access you may use it to access information relevant to the discussion, but please do not read emails, newspapers or other non-class related material during class. Students are encouraged to speak up with questions and comments, and to respond to points raised by other students. However, the maintenance of an effective discussion space in class requires all of us to act with respect for everyone else in the room.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Course Add/Drop Statement

Instructors are permitted to drop students who fail to attend the first scheduled class meeting and who fail to inform the instructor prior to the second class meeting of the reason for any absence and their intention to continue in the class. Some instructors will drop students who do not meet the stated course prerequisites. However, instructors are not required to drop a student from their course. It is the student’s responsibility to make sure classes are dropped. You are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, withdrawal, etc. found at: http://sa.sjsu.edu/student_conduct

Academic Integrity Statement

Academic integrity is essential to the mission of San José State University. As such, students are expected to perform their own work without the use of any outside resources. Academic integrity ensures that all students are fairly graded. Violations to the Academic Integrity Policy undermine the educational process and demonstrate a lack of respect for oneself, fellow students and the course instructor: therefore, they will not be tolerated under any circumstance. We all share the obligation to maintain an environment which practices academic integrity. Violators of the Academic Integrity Policy will be subject to failing this course and being reported to the Office of Student Conduct & Ethical Development for disciplinary action which could result in suspension or expulsion from San José State University.

The policy on academic integrity can be found at: http://sa.sjsu.edu/student_conduct. To better understand plagiarism and to aid you in making sure that you are not plagiarizing, please see the instructor and visit:

<http://tutorials.sjlibrary.org/plagiarism/index.htm>

American with Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations register with DRC to establish a record of their disability.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

The full statement on Student Rights and Responsibilities may be found at: <http://www2.sjsu.edu/senate/s90-5.htm>