

**Spring 2008**  
**JS-111 Special Topics**  
**“Domestic Wars: Crime, Drugs and Immigration in Contemporary US Penal Politics”**  
*Monday/Wednesday 12.00-13.15 (Sweeney Hall 344)*

**Instructor**

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**Office Hours**

Mon/Wed 17.15-18.15 (MacQuarrie Hall, Room 529)

**Course Description**

After the tragic events of 9/11, public debate in the US has been dominated by the global “war on terrorism”. However, languages and practices of war had been around long before the terrorist attacks of September 2001. Indeed, since the late 1970s at least three distinct wars have been waged *inside* the US territory: the “war on crime”, the “war on drugs”, and more recently the “war on immigration”. This course offers a critical reconstruction of these “domestic wars” from the point of view of US penal politics, and with particular reference to their long-term effects on the structures of racial, ethnic and economic inequality within American society.

**Course Objectives**

This course is conceived as an interactive and cooperative learning experience, based on constant reading and discussion. In fact, participants will be asked to offer in-class presentations based on class-notes and reading materials: therefore, regular attendance and participation are crucial conditions to succeed in this course. Students will be divided into several groups during the first two weeks, and a significant part of the final grades will be based on group-work. At the end of this course participants will be expected to develop a critical understanding of the cultural and political significance of past and present “domestic wars”, as well as of their consequences in terms of social justice/injustice.

**Graded Coursework**

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Date due</i>	<i>Percent of Total Grade</i>
GROUP-PRESENTATION	Ongoing (in class)	40% (max 40 points)
TEST (5 Short-Answer Questions)	04/02 (in class)	30% (max 30 points)
READING RESPONSE	05/12 (at home)	30% (max 30 points)

### **Important Notes on Coursework**

1) **GROUP PRESENTATION:** Students will be divided into groups, whose size will depend on the overall number of participants to this course. Each group will be in charge of two consecutive presentations to class (i.e. one week of discussion), based on the readings listed below for each meeting. At the end of each presentation, there will be a debate directed and moderated by the instructor. In order to facilitate the discussion, each group will produce a one-page (computer-typed) handout to be distributed in class before each meeting (photocopies will be made in advance by the instructor). These handouts should include a short summary of the readings, as well as three questions to be discussed at the end of each presentation.

Members of each group will be graded depending on their individual contribution to the group-presentation, and to the overall discussion.

2) **TEST:** This will be done in class and will consist of 5 short-answer questions based on the readings discussed and the movies shown in class. Please, consider that notes and handouts will be allowed during the tests, but not books/articles and any other written material. If one test is missed, there is the possibility of a makeup test reserved to the students who justify their absence with a doctor's certificate.

3) **READING RESPONSE:** This will be done at home and will consist of a 3-5 pages-long (computer-typed) written essay, based on a reading other than the ones about which the group presentation was made by the student, and chosen from those assigned to each meeting or from the list of "Further Readings". Please note: all the readings will be made available by the instructor, either online or in printed form.

### **Grading Method for Assignments, Term Papers, and Coursework**

A [85 – 100]

Excellent, demonstrates original thought, superior command of written and classroom material, clarity and erudition in a structured presentation.

B [69 – 84]

Above average, some originality of thought, solid command of written and classroom materials, developed structure.

C [53 – 68]

Below average, little or no originality of thought, faltering command of written and classroom materials, awkward structure.

D [37 – 52]

Well below average. No creative response. cursory attention to detail. No appreciation for scholarship.

F [36 or below]

Does not meet minimum expectations for this course.

## Class Topics and Assignments

<b>Week 1</b> Mon 01/21 Wed 01/23	<b>Introduction</b> No Lecture General Introduction/Course Requirements/Syllabus/Exams
<b>Week 2</b> Mon 01/28  Wed 01/30	<b><i>Domestic Wars</i> and US Penal Politics: An Overview</b> Introduction: From the “War on Poverty” to the “War on Terror”  Punitive Democracy? Penal Excess in the United States [Reading: Beckett & Sasson, <i>The Politics of Crime</i> , pp. 47-74]
<b>Week 3</b> Mon 02/04 Wed 02/06	<b>Explaining Mass Imprisonment in the US [Group 1]</b> Reading (1): Tonry, <i>Why So Many Americans are in Prison</i> , pp. 21-61 Reading (2): Mauer, <i>The Incarceration Experiment</i> , pp. 16-39
<b>Week 4</b> Mon 02/11 Wed 02/13	<b>The “Governing Through Crime” Hypothesis [Group 2]</b> Reading (1): Simon, <i>Governing Through Crime</i> , pp. 171-190 Reading (2): Beckett, <i>Setting the Public Agenda</i> , pp. 14-28
<b>Week 5</b> Mon 02/18 Wed 02/20	<b>The “Prison Industrial Complex” Hypothesis [Group 3]</b> Reading (1): Davis, <i>Globalism and the Prison Industrial Complex</i> , pp. 145-157 Reading (2): Schlosser, <i>The Prison-Industrial Complex</i> , pp. 51-77
<b>Week 6</b> Mon 02/25 Wed 02/27	<b>Movie 1</b> Movie: <i>Prison Song</i> , 2003 (Intro/Part I) Movie: <i>Prison Song</i> , 2003 (Part II/Discussion)
<b>Week 7</b> Mon 03/03 Wed 03/05	<b>“Deadly Symbiosis”: Ghettos, Prisons and Race in the US [Group 4]</b> Reading (1): Wacquant, <i>Deadly Symbiosis</i> , pp. 95-133 Reading (2): Wacquant, <i>Race as Civic Felony</i> , pp. 127-142
<b>Week 8</b> Mon 03/10  Wed 03/12	<b>The “Political Economy of Punishment” Approach [Group 5]</b> Reading (1): Western & Beckett, <i>How Unregulated is the US Labor Market? The Penal System as a Labor Market Institution</i> , pp. 1030-1060 Reading (2): Beckett & Western, <i>Governing Social Marginality. Welfare, Incarceration and the Transformation of State Policy</i> , pp. 43-59
<b>Week 9</b> Mon 03/17 Wed 03/19	<b>Movie 2</b> Movie: <i>Clockers</i> , 1995 [Intro/Part I] Movie: <i>Clockers</i> , 1995 [Part II/Discussion]

<b>Week 10</b>	<b>Midterm Test</b>
Mon 03/31	No Lecture
Wed 04/02	<u>In-Class Test: Five Short-Answer Questions</u> [30% of total grade]
<b>Week 11</b>	<b>From the War on Crime to the War on Drugs [Group 6]</b>
Mon 04/07	Reading (1): Reinerman & Levine, <i>Crack in Context. Politics and Media in the Making of a Drug Scare</i> , pp. 535-577
Wed 04/09	Reading (2): Goode & Ben-Yehuda, <i>The American Drug Panic of the 1980s</i> , pp. 1-13
<b>Week 12</b>	<b>Racial Implications of the War on Drugs [Group 7]</b>
Mon 04/14	Reading (1): Mauer, <i>The War on Drugs and the African American Community</i> , pp. 157-177
Wed 04/16	Reading (2): Mauer & King, <i>A 25 Year Quagmire. The War on Drugs and its Impact on American Society</i> , pp. 1-33
<b>Week 13</b>	<b>Movie 3</b>
Mon 04/21	Movie: <i>Bordertown</i> , 2007 [Intro/Part I]
Wed 04/23	Movie: <i>Bordertown</i> , 2007 [Part II/Discussion]
<b>Week 14</b>	<b>From the War on Crime/Drugs to the War Immigration [Group 8]</b>
Mon 04/28	Reading (1): Miller, <i>The Impact of Mass Incarceration on Immigration Policy</i> , pp. 214-238
Wed 04/30	Reading (2): Welch, <i>The Role of the INS in the Prison-Industrial Complex</i> , pp. 73-88
<b>Week 15</b>	<b>Border Wars and the Criminalization of Immigrants [Group 9]</b>
Mon 05/05	Reading (1): Kil & Menjivar, <i>The War on the Border</i> , pp. 164-188
Wed 05/07	Reading (2): Brownell, <i>Border Militarization and the Reproduction of Mexican Migrant Labor</i> , pp. 69-92
<b>Week 16</b>	<b>Conclusion/Make-Up Tests</b>
Mon 05/12	Conclusions/Reading Response Submission/Make-up Tests

### Further Readings

- Garland, D., *The Culture of High Crime Societies*, in “The British Journal of Criminology”, 40/2000, pp. 347-375
- Godoy, A., *Converging on the Poles. Contemporary Punishment and Democracy in Hemispheric Perspective*, in “Law & Social Inquiry”, 30/2005, pp. 515-548
- *Kimbrough v. United States*, 06-6330 [US Supreme Court decision on Crack/Cocaine Federal Sentencing Guidelines, 12/10/2007]
- De Genova, N., *Migrant Illegality and Deportability in Everyday Life*, in “Annual Review of Anthropology”, 31/2002, pp. 419-447
- Dunn, T., *Border Militarization Via Drug and Immigration Enforcement: Human Rights Implications*, in “Social Justice”, 28/2001, pp. 7-30

## **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](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 will not be tolerated. It also demonstrates a lack of respect for oneself, fellow students and the course instructor. 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](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 students with disabilities requesting accommodations must 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>