Seminar in Justice and Social Theory (JS-201)
Fall 2009
Monday 5.30pm-8.15pm (MH 510)

Instructor
Dr. Alessandro De Giorgi

Email
degiorgi@casa.sjsu.edu

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
- 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>Percent of total grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 PAGE WEEKLY READING RESPONSE</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>20% (10 responses minimum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRESENTATION/WRITTEN OUTLINE</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>30% (max 30 points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIDTERM TEST (2 QUESTIONS)</td>
<td>10/26</td>
<td>20% (max 20 points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 PAGES BOOK REVIEW</td>
<td>11/30</td>
<td>30% (max 30 points)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**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](http://www.turnitin.com) (CLASS ID: 2753964; PASSWORD: seminar).
BOOKS AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

(Please note: all books are available at MLK Library)


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 09/07  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 10/05  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)

Week 11  MIDTERM TEST
M 11/02  IN-CLASS TEST: 2 QUESTIONS (20% of total grade)

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