

**San José State University**  
**Justice Studies Department**  
**“Critical Issues and Ideas in Justice”**  
**JS-115 (section 01 #27671)**  
**Spring 2011**

**Instructor:** Alessandro De Giorgi

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**Office Hours:** MON: 10.30am-1.30pm  
WED: 7pm-8pm (online)

**Class Days/Time:** M-W: 1.30pm-2.45pm

**Classroom:** MH-523

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Interdisciplinary, historical and comparative examination of justice concepts and controversies, including the state’s role in promoting justice and perpetuating injustice; legitimate versus illegitimate violence; human rights, stateless persons, and the international community; the relationship between social justice and criminal justice.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

In the last three decades, largely as a consequence of the “war on drugs”, the American prison population has grown to unprecedented levels. However, this prison explosion has disproportionately affected poor and minority communities, leading to the mass-imprisonment of an entire generation of young African Americans and Latinos. In turn, this process has increased social inequalities along the lines of race, class and gender.

In this course we will examine these developments from two perspectives. First, throughout the semester students will familiarize with a range of sociological critiques of recent American penal politics. Second, participants will *analyze* and *discuss* an extended ethnographic study of urban marginality in the United States. This will give us the opportunity to analyze the relations between crime, punishment, and social injustice not only from a scholarly perspective, but also from the point of view of those “public enemies” (drug dealers, gang members, ghetto hustlers, street “thugs”) whose voices are usually silenced in public and academic discourses about crime, punishment, and social justice.

## TEXTBOOKS

- 1) JS-115 *Reader*, available at Maple Press, 481 E San Carlos Street, San José.
- 2) P. Bourgois, *In Search of Respect. Selling Crack in El Barrio*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2002 (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Available at Spartans Bookstore.

## CLASSROOM PROTOCOL

*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.

## DROPPING AND ADDING

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc. [Information on add/drops are available at http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbggen/narr/soc-fall/rec-298.html](http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbggen/narr/soc-fall/rec-298.html). [Information about late drop is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/sac/advising/latedrops/policy/](http://www.sjsu.edu/sac/advising/latedrops/policy/). Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for adding and dropping classes.

## ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING POLICY

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Due</i>	<i>Percent of total grade</i>
IN-CLASS TEST (1): Two short-answer questions	2/16 (in class)	20%
IN-CLASS TEST (2): Two short-answer questions	3/23 (in class)	20%
IN-CLASS TEST (3): Three short-answer questions	5/16 (in class)	30%
THREE 1-2 PAGES REFLECTION PAPERS	SEE SCHEDULE (at home)	30%

## SPECIFICATIONS ON COURSEWORK

- 1) IN-CLASS TESTS 1-2-3 (20% + 20% + 30% of total grade):  
These tests will be done in class, and will consist of short-answer questions covering the readings assigned throughout the course (except the book *In Search of Respect*). Each question will receive a grade ranging between 0 and 10 (for a maximum of 30 points for each quiz). You are kindly requested to come to class with your own blue-book on the dates the tests are due. Please remember that *grammar*, *syntax*, and *structure* are relevant elements of your grade: always double-check your assignments before submitting them. Please note: during the tests *no notes, books, open laptops, mobile phones* will be allowed.

2) REFLECTION PAPERS (10% + 10% + 10% of total grade)

Throughout the semester you are asked to write three 1-2 pages long (computer typed, double-spaced) reflection papers on the book by Philippe Bourgois, *In Search of Respect*. These papers are due on 3/7, 4/11 and 5/2. In each paper, you are asked to write a comment on the book, based on what you will have read at the time of each paper. In the commentary, you should feel free to express your point of view on the book as openly as possible, also making reference to your own experience. However, your commentary should always be *about the book's content, meaning, message, etc.* (i.e., not simply about your own opinions, life experiences, etc.). Please remember that *grammar, syntax, and structure* are relevant elements of your grade: always double-check your assignments before submitting them. Each reflection paper will receive a grade between 0 and 10.

**GRADING SYSTEM**

<i>Grading System</i>	<i>Grade</i>
98-100	A+
94-97	A
91-93	A-
88-90	B+
84-87	B
81-83	B-
78-80	C+
74-77	C
71-73	C-
68-70	D+
64-67	D
61-63	D-
<60	F

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Students should know that the University's [Academic Integrity Policy is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial\\_affairs/Academic\\_Integrity\\_Policy\\_S07-2.pdf](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial_affairs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_S07-2.pdf).

Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University's integrity policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The website for [Student Conduct and Ethical Development is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial\\_affairs/index.html](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html).

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person's ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU's Academic Policy F06-1 requires approval of instructors.

### **CAMPUS POLICY IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE AMERICAN DISABILITIES ACT**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make 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 must register with the DRC (Disability Resource Center) to establish a record of their disability.

### **STUDENT TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES**

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of Clark Hall and on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library.

A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include digital and VHS camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm, slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

### **LEARNING ASSISTANCE RESOURCE CENTER**

The Learning Assistance Resource Center (LARC) is located in Room 600 in the Student Services Center. It is designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to motivate them to become self-directed learners. The center provides support services, such as skills assessment, individual or group tutorials, subject advising, learning assistance, summer academic preparation and basic skills development. [The LARC website is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/larc/](http://www.sjsu.edu/larc/).

### **SJSU WRITING CENTER**

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. [The Writing Center website is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/).

### **PEER MENTOR CENTER**

The Peer Mentor Center is located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of Clark Hall in the Academic Success Center. The Peer Mentor Center is staffed with Peer Mentors who excel in helping students manage university life, tackling problems that range from academic challenges to interpersonal struggles. On the road to graduation, Peer Mentors are navigators, offering “roadside assistance” to peers who feel a bit lost or simply need help mapping out the locations of campus resources. Peer Mentor services are free and available on a drop-in basis, no reservation required. [Website of Peer Mentor Center is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/muse/peermentor/](http://www.sjsu.edu/muse/peermentor/).

**JS-115 Critical Issues and Ideas in Justice**  
 MON-WED: 1.30 pm – 2.45 pm (MH-523)

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

PLEASE NOTE: *This course is heavily based on in-class participation and debate. Throughout the semester, students will be asked to introduce the readings and take part in the debate. Students are required to come to class having done the readings assigned for each session, since this is a necessary condition for successful completion of the course.*

WEEK	DATE	TOPICS, READINGS, ASSIGNMENTS, DEADLINES
1	W: 1/26	SYLLABUS/ASSIGNMENTS/DEADLINES
2	M: 1/31 W: 2/2	INTRODUCTION: THE AMERICAN PUNITIVE TURN <u>Reading:</u> Wacquant, <i>The Great Penal Leap Backward</i> , JS-115 Reader MASS-INCARCERATION IN THE U.S. (I) <u>Reading:</u> Mauer, <i>The Incarceration Experiment</i> , JS-115 Reader
3	M: 2/7 W: 2/9	MASS-INCARCERATION IN THE U.S. (II) <u>Reading:</u> Western, <i>Mass Imprisonment</i> , JS-115 Reader MASS-INCARCERATION IN THE U.S. (III) <u>Reading:</u> Alexander, <i>Lockdown</i> , JS-115 Reader
4	M: 2/14 W: 2/16	THE ETHNOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE: AN INTRODUCTION <u>Reading:</u> Bourgois, <i>Introduction</i> <b>IN-CLASS TEST (1): 20% OF TOTAL GRADE</b>
5	M: 2/21 W: 2/23	ETHNOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE (1) <u>Reading:</u> Bourgois, <i>Violating Apartheid in the United States</i> RACE AND PUNISHMENT IN THE U.S. (I) <u>Reading:</u> Mauer, <i>African Americans and the CJS</i> , JS-115 Reader
6	M: 2/28 W: 3/2	ETHNOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE (2) <u>Reading:</u> Bourgois, <i>A Street History of El Barrio</i> RACE AND PUNISHMENT IN THE U.S. (II) <u>Reading:</u> Alexander, <i>The Rebirth of Caste</i> , JS-115 Reader
7	M: 3/7 W: 3/9	ETHNOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE (3) <b>Reflection paper due (10%)</b> <u>Reading:</u> Bourgois, <i>Crackhouse Management</i> THE AMERICAN WAR ON DRUGS <u>Reading:</u> Mauer, <i>The War on Drugs</i> , JS-115 Reader
8	M: 3/14 W: 3/16	ETHNOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE (4) <u>Reading:</u> Bourgois, <i>Goin' Legit: Disrespect and Resistance at Work</i> PUNISHMENT AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY (I) <u>Reading:</u> Western, <i>The Labor Market After Prison</i> , JS-115 Reader

WEEK	DATE	TOPICS, READINGS, ASSIGNMENTS, DEADLINES
9	M: 3/21 W: 3/23	PUNISHMENT AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY (II) <u>Reading:</u> Western, <i>Invisible Inequality</i> , JS-115 Reader <b>IN-CLASS TEST (2): 20% OF TOTAL GRADE</b>
10	M: 3/28 W: 3/30	<u>NO CLASS: SPRING RECESS</u> <u>NO CLASS: SPRING RECESS</u>
11	M: 4/4 W: 4/6	MOVIE: K. Booth, <i>American Drug War</i> (USA, 2007): Part I MOVIE: K. Booth, <i>American Drug War</i> (USA, 2007): Part II
12	M: 4/11 W: 4/13	ETHNOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE (5) <b>Reflection paper due (10%)</b> <u>Reading:</u> Bourgois, <i>School Days: Learning to be a Better Criminal</i> FROM THE WELFARE STATE TO THE PENAL STATE? <u>Reading:</u> Wacquant, <i>The Place of the Prison</i> , JS-115 Reader
13	M: 4/18 W: 4/20	ETHNOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE (6) <u>Reading:</u> Bourgois, <i>Redrawing the Gender Line on the Streets</i> FAMILIES AND MASS-INCARCERATION (I) <u>Reading:</u> Braman, <i>Families and Incarceration</i> , JS-115 Reader
14	M: 4/25 W: 4/27	ETHNOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE (7) <u>Reading:</u> Bourgois, <i>Families and Children in Pain</i> FAMILIES AND MASS-INCARCERATION (II) <u>Reading:</u> Comfort, <i>Papa's House</i> , JS-115 Reader
15	M: 5/2 W: 5/4	ETHNOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE (8) <b>Reflection paper due (10%)</b> <u>Reading:</u> Bourgois, <i>Vulnerable Fathers</i> DOCUMENTARY: K. Epps, <i>Straight Outta Hunter's Point</i> (USA 2005)
16	M: 5/9 W: 5/11	ETHNOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE (9) <u>Reading:</u> Bourgois, <i>Conclusion</i> DOCUMENTARY: N. Cousino, <i>Concrete and Sunshine</i> (USA, 2002)
17	M: 5/16	<b>IN-CLASS TEST (3): 30% OF TOTAL GRADE</b>