

**San José State University**  
**Department of Justice Studies**  
**JS 128: Punishment, Culture, & Society (Fall 2015)**

**Course and Contact Information**

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<b>Office Hours:</b>	Tuesday/Thursday 3:00 – 4:15
<b>Class Days/Time:</b>	Tuesday/Thursday 4:30 – 5:45
<b>Classroom:</b>	MH 520

**Justice Studies Department Reading and Writing Philosophy**

The Department of Justice Studies is committed to scholarly excellence. Therefore, the Department promotes academic, critical, and creative engagement with language (i.e., reading and writing) throughout its curriculum. A sustained and intensive exploration of language prepares students to think critically and to act meaningfully in interrelated areas of their lives—personal, professional, economic, social, political, ethical, and cultural. Graduates of the Department of Justice Studies leave San José State University prepared to enter a range of careers and for advanced study in a variety of fields; they are prepared to more effectively identify and ameliorate injustice in their personal, professional and civic lives. Indeed, the impact of literacy is evident not only within the span of a specific course, semester, or academic program but also over the span of a lifetime.

**Course Catalogue Description**

Critical analysis of the cultural, political and economic dimensions of penal politics in contemporary American society, with particular reference to the relationships between criminal justice and social justice. Emphasis on issues of racial, economic, and gender inequality.

Pre/Co-requisite: Any 100w; Must achieve a grade of "C" or better to fulfill Justice Studies major requirements.

**Course Description**

This course asks students to think about the cultural relationship between prisons and democracy. It begins with an examination of the prison as a system of representation and an artifact of cultural politics by looking at nineteenth century prison architecture and the turning of those prisons into state museums and haunted houses. The course uses the idea of the prison as it was expressed in architecture and social design to open onto a set of critical questions about civil death and its relationship to slavery and emancipation in the United States. After developing a collective theoretical framework and critical vocabulary for thinking about prisons and power, students will engage in individual projects on state prison systems, as the class works collaboratively to map US punishment in the context of changing arguments about democracy and the meaning of freedom.

## Learning Outcomes and Course Goals

### Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

CLO 1: Competently define and describe the multiple facets of current penal policies and critically reflect on the complex relationship between criminal justice and social justice. Students will also be able to undertake a theoretically grounded analysis of contemporary US penal policies, with particular reference to the impact of mass incarceration on existing structures of racial, economic, and gender inequality in American society (as measured by assignment two)

CLO 2: Engage in a critique of existing policies and reflect on possible alternative approaches to crime, as they emerge both from critical and historical scholarship and social justice activism. Students will also be able to write an original paper documenting a scholarly appreciation of the cultural, political, and economic dimensions of penalty in contemporary US society (as measured by assignment three).

CLO 3: Engage in reflection and argumentation about the socioeconomic and political implications of penal policies, particularly from the point of view of racial, economic, and gender equality, as well as human rights and social justice (as measured by assignment one).

CLO 4: Read, write, and discuss course materials at skilled and capable levels (as measured by assignments one, two, and three).

### Required Texts/Readings

#### Textbooks

Angela Y. Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?*  
Michael Welch, *Escape to Prison*  
Colin (Joan) Dayan, *The Story of Cruel and Unusual*  
Scott Reynolds Nelson, *Steel Drivin' Man*  
Darius Rejali, *Torture and Democracy*

#### Library Liaison

Silke Higgins, [silke.higgins@sjsu.edu](mailto:silke.higgins@sjsu.edu), (408) 808-2118  
<http://libguides.sjsu.edu/justicestudies>

### Course Requirements and Assignments

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in [University Policy S12-3](#) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>.

[University policy F69-24](#) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F69-24.pdf> states that “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.”

### Classroom Protocol

*Students should attend all class meetings and participate in class exercises, assignments and discussions. During class time, we work collectively to read widely in the field. Your cell phone should not ring. You should not text under the desk. You do not need your computer. Please bring your course materials, a notebook, and a*

*pen to class. Late arrivals are inappropriate. If you absolutely must enter late, please be prepared to enter quietly and without disruption. Please be respectful of your colleagues during class discussions and exams.*

## **Course Requirements, Assignments, Grading Policy**

Assignment One: Participation	30% of course grade
Assignment Two: Midterm Exam	30% of course grade
Assignment Three: Final Exam	40% of course grade

### Assignment One: Participation (accomplishes CLOs 3&4)

One half (15%) of the participation grade will be based on a student's routine engagement with course materials during class discussions and in short assignments that may require sharing popular culture images of the prison. Students may occasionally be called on in class to read out loud or to answer reading comprehension questions. This means that you are expected to be in class, and to bring your materials to class. The other half of the participation grade (15%) will be based on the presentation of the course project. An excellent presentation will demonstrate the student's commitment to the research process, and incorporate knowledge gathered from internet archives, photographs, maps, and secondary sources.

### Assignment Two: Midterm Exam (accomplishes CLO 1&4)

The midterm exam is comprised of short 2-3 page essays that ask student to identify key terms, and to connect those concepts to the major themes of the class. Students should explain, referring to key texts where appropriate, the significance of each question for the study of punishment, culture, and society. Each answer will require a minimum of 3 cited sources and a balance between paraphrase and direct citation (quotation).

### Assignment Three: Final Exam (accomplishes CLOs 2&4)

The take-home final exam will consist of short essays, but will be cumulative and comprehensive. One question will require that students analyze the state prison from their course projects, while the other questions will require a deep knowledge and engagement with the course readings. Each answer should be typed and three pages in length (for a total of six pages).

## **Grading Policy**

**No late papers will be accepted.**

97-100	A+
93-96	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
63-69	D
60-62	D-
<60	F

## **University Policies**

### **Academic integrity**

Your commitment, as a student, to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The [University Academic Integrity Policy S07-2](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf> requires 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 [Student Conduct and Ethical Development website](http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/) is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/>.

### **General Expectations, Rights and Responsibilities of the Student**

As members of the academic community, students accept both the rights and responsibilities incumbent upon all members of the institution. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with SJSU's policies and practices pertaining to the procedures to follow if and when questions or concerns about a class arises. See [University Policy S90-5](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S90-5.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S90-5.pdf>. More detailed information on a variety of related topics is available in the [SJSU catalog](http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/catalog/rec-12234.12506.html), at <http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/catalog/rec-12234.12506.html>. In general, it is recommended that students begin by seeking clarification or discussing concerns with their instructor. If such conversation is not possible, or if it does not serve to address the issue, it is recommended that the student contact the Department Chair as a next step.

### **Dropping and Adding**

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester's [Catalog Policies](http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html) section at <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html>. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic year calendars document on the [Academic Calendars webpage](http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/) at [http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic\\_calendars/](http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/). The [Late Drop Policy](http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/) is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/>. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes. Information about the latest changes and news is available at the [Advising Hub](http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/>.

### **Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material**

[University Policy S12-7](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf), <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf>, requires students to obtain instructor's permission to record the course and the following items to be included in the syllabus:

Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor's permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material.

Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent.

### **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](http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf) at [http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD\\_1997-03.pdf](http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf) requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the [Accessible Education Center](http://www.sjsu.edu/aec) (AEC) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aec> to establish a record of their disability.

### **Accommodation to Students' Religious Holidays**

San José State University shall provide accommodation on any graded class work or activities for students wishing to observe religious holidays when such observances require students to be absent from class. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor, in writing, about such holidays before the add deadline at the start of each semester. It is the responsibility of the instructor to make every reasonable effort to honor the student request without penalty, and of the student to make up the work missed. See [University Policy S14-7](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S14-7.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S14-7.pdf>.

## Justice Studies 128: Punishment, Culture, & Society

*The schedule is subject to change with fair notice.*

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
0	Thursday, August 20	Course Opening
1	Tuesday, August 25	Screening: Paul Rucker, "Proliferation" (no readings) <a href="http://paulrucker.com/projects/proliferation#/images/sized/images/uploads/Proliferation1-602x400.jpg">http://paulrucker.com/projects/proliferation#/images/sized/images/uploads/Proliferation1-602x400.jpg</a>
1	Thursday, August 27	Angela Y. Davis, Introduction to <i>Are Prisons Obsolete?</i>
2	Tuesday, September 1	Angela Y. Davis, Introduction to <i>Are Prisons Obsolete?</i>
2	Thursday, September 3	Michael Welch, <i>Escape to Prison</i>
3	Tuesday, September 8	Michael Welch, <i>Escape to Prison</i>
3	Thursday, September 10	Discussion of Paul Rucker, "Proliferation" (no readings) Discussion of course project and state sign-ups
4	Tuesday, September 15	Library shelf walks and course project research
4	Thursday, September 17	Angela Y. Davis, Chapter Three, <i>Are Prisons Obsolete?</i>
5	Tuesday, September 22	Michel Foucault, <i>Discipline and Punish</i> (excerpt from <a href="http://foucault.info/doc/documents/disciplineandpunish/foucault-disciplineandpunish-panopticism-html">http://foucault.info/doc/documents/disciplineandpunish/foucault-disciplineandpunish-panopticism-html</a> )
5	Thursday, September 24	<i>Discipline and Punish</i>
6	Tuesday, September 29	<i>Discipline and Punish</i>
6	Thursday, October 1	Angela Y. Davis, Chapter Two, <i>Are Prisons Obsolete?</i> <i>Ruffin v. Commonwealth [of Virginia]</i> (1871) (PDF)

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</b>
7	Tuesday, October 6	Dayan, <i>The Story of Cruel and Unusual</i>
7	Thursday, October 8	Dayan, <i>The Story of Cruel and Unusual</i>
8	Tuesday, October 13	Kim Gilmore, "Slavery and Prison" (PDF)
8	Thursday, October 15	W.E.B. Du Bois, "Jesus Christ in Texas" (PDF)
9	Tuesday, October 20	Midterm review.
9	Thursday, October 22	No class. Instructor at conference.
10	Tuesday, October 27	Midterm exam due.
10	Thursday, October 29	Film Screening: <i>The Last Graduation</i>
11	Tuesday, November 3	Scott Reynolds Nelson, <i>Steel Drivin' Man</i>
11	Thursday, November 5	Scott Reynolds Nelson, <i>Steel Drivin' Man</i> (discussion of course projects in relation to Virginia)
12	Tuesday, November 10	course project advising: questions and discussion
12	Thursday, November 12	Course project presentations
13	Tuesday, November 17	Course project presentations
13	Thursday, November 19	Course project presentations
14	Tuesday, November 24	Course project presentations

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</b>
14	Thursday, November 26	<b>No Class. Holiday.</b>
15	Tuesday, December 1	Darius Rejali, <i>Torture and Democracy</i>
15	Thursday, December 3	Darius Rejali, <i>Torture and Democracy</i>
16	Tuesday, December 8	Course closing.
<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>Friday, December 11</b>	<b>2:45 PM</b>