

San José State University
Department of Justice Studies
JS 128: Punishment, Culture, & Society (Fall 2016)

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Sara M. Benson
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Office Hours:	Tuesday/Thursday 10:30 – 12:00
Class Days/Time:	This is an online class requiring Canvas.

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: 100W. Students must achieve a grade of "C" or better to fulfill Justice Studies major requirements.

Course Format

Technology Intensive, Hybrid, and Online Courses

This course adopts an online delivery format. You will need a computer and a reliable internet connection, as well as access to Canvas at SJSU.

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

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 thematic essays documenting a scholarly appreciation of the cultural, political, and economic dimensions of penalty in contemporary US society

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

CLO 4: Read, write, and discuss course materials at skilled and capable levels

Required Texts/Readings

Textbooks

Angela Y. Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?*

Michael Welch, *Escape to Prison*

Caleb Smith, *The Prison and the American Imagination*

Library Liaison

Silke Higgins, silke.higgins@sjsu.edu, (408) 808-2118

<http://libguides.sjsu.edu/justicestudies>

Course Preparation

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>.

Course Requirements, Assignments, Grading Policy

Quizzes	25% of course grade (5% for each quiz)
Critical Responses	30% of course grade (10% for each response)
Prison Architecture Analysis	15% of course grade
Final Exam	30% of course grade

Quizzes

(accomplishes CLOs 1&4)

Each quiz will consist of multiple choice and/or short answer questions. Quizzes must be completed by 5 pm on Canvas. See the schedule for due dates. No late quizzes will be accepted.

Critical Responses

(accomplishes CLOs 2&3)

Students should submit short 2 or 3-page typed double-spaced essays via Canvas that offer a critical response to each of the four assignments posted on Canvas. Assignments vary in length so please read the assignment instructions carefully. No late work will be accepted.

Prison Architecture Analysis

(accomplishes CLOs 2&3)

For this assignment, each student will select an image of a prison in the United States and use the readings from the class to analyze the architecture or façade of the prison to think critically about the relationship between prisons and governance using an intersectional lens.

Final Exam

(accomplishes CLOs 1, 3&4)

The take-home final exam will consist of short essays, but will be cumulative and comprehensive. In responding to the prompts posted on Canvas, students will 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 term 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). No late exams will be accepted.

Grading Information and Policies

No late papers will be accepted.

No extra credit is available.

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

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>. Please review the information about university policies on plagiarism, which may result in a failing grade. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development.

Justice Studies 128: Punishment, Culture, & Society

The schedule is subject to change with fair notice.

Week	Due Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	Friday, August 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review SJSU Library Plagiarism Tutorial at http://libguides.sjsu.edu/c.php?g=436654&p=2976508 • Take Plagiarism/Syllabus Quiz (Quiz 1) via Canvas by 5 pm
2	Friday, September 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch Paul Rucker, “Proliferation” at https://prisonphotography.org/2011/03/19/proliferation-by-paul-rucker/ • Review Critical Response 1 Assignment (see Canvas) • Submit Critical Response 1 via Canvas by 5 pm
3	Friday, September 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Introduction to Angela Y. Davis’s <i>Are Prisons Obsolete?</i> • Review the work of Sandow Birk (described in the Davis chapter) at http://www.sandowbirk.com/paintings/prisonation/
4	Friday, September 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Critical Response 2 Assignment (see Canvas) • Submit Critical Response 2 via Canvas by 5 pm
5	Thursday, September 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Critical Response 3 Assignment (see Canvas) • Submit Critical Response 3 via Canvas by 5 pm
6	Friday, September 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Michael Welch, Chapters 1-3, <i>Escape to Prison</i> • Take Quiz 2 by 5 pm
7	Friday, October 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read http://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/travel_news/article-3115323/Go-inside-stunning-hotels-PRISONS.html
8	Friday, October 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Michael Welch, Chapter Four, <i>Escape to Prison</i> • Take Quiz 3 by 5 pm • Begin Prison Architecture Analysis Assignment (see Canvas)
9	Friday, October 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Caleb Smith, <i>The Prison and the American Imagination</i> (pgs. ix-52) • Take Quiz 4 by 5 pm
10	Friday, October 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Caleb Smith, <i>The Prison and the American Imagination</i> (pgs. 53-80)
11	Friday, November 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Caleb Smith, <i>The Prison and the American Imagination</i> (pgs. 81-112) • Take Quiz 5 by 5 pm
12	Friday, November 11	<i>No Assignment. Veteran’s Day.</i>

Week	Due Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
13	Friday, November 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Prison Architecture Analysis via Canvas by 5 pm
14	Friday, November 25	<i>No Assignment. Campus Holiday.</i>
15	Friday, December 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Davis, Chapter Three, “Imprisonment and Reform”
16	Friday, December 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access Final Exam Guidelines and Instructions via Canvas
Final Exam	Friday, December 16	Final exam due via Canvas by 5 pm