

San José State University
Department of Justice Studies
JS 128: Punishment, Culture and Society
Fall 2017

Instructor:	Amber Colbert
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Office Hours:	Mondays & Wednesdays 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.
Class Days/Time:	Mondays & Wednesdays 1:30 – 2:45 p.m.
Classroom:	MacQuarrie Hall 520

COURSE 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.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In order to successfully complete JS-128 students should:

SLO1: 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 should also be able to undertake a theoretically grounded analysis of contemporary U.S. penal politics, with particular reference to the impact of mass-incarceration on existing structures of racial, economic, and gender inequality in American society.

SLO 2: Engage in a critique of existing policies and reflect on possible alternative approaches to crime and drugs, as they emerge both from critical 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 U.S. society.

SLO 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, human rights, and social justice.

SLO 4: Students should read, write, and contribute to discussion at a skilled and capable level.

TEXTBOOKS

1. **The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander** (ISBN: 978-1-59558-643-8)
2. **The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison** (10th Edition) by Jeffrey Reiman and Paul Leighton (ISBN: 978-0-20513-772-5)
3. **Are Prisons Obsolete?** by Angela Davis (ISBN: 978-1-58322-581-3)

Any additional readings will be accessible through academic databases or I will provide them.

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.

CLASS DISCUSSION AND PARTICIPATION

This class **thrives** on class discussion, so it's important that you come to class ready to engage in meaningful and exciting conversation! Class discussion will be based upon the week's assigned readings and may include Socratic seminars, debates, and small group discussions. Please come to class prepared, having read the material, and ready to discuss. Also, **participation in activities is required**.

It is important to note that I do not take attendance after the withdrawal date. The reason for this is two-fold: first, you are all responsible for the investment that you make to your education and to this class. Second, **simply attending class is not going to earn you any participation points or credit**. Consistently participating in class, contributing to the learning environment in meaningful ways, and actively learning is how you will satisfy the participation component of this course. So it goes without saying, you cannot consistently participate if you are not regularly present in class.

DISCUSSION TASKS

Working in teams of 3, you will complete a series of tasks for assigned readings, including:

- (1) summarizing the reading, (2) connecting reading to previous readings, (3) identifying and defining key concepts, (4) generating discussion questions, (5) providing real-world examples of the issues discussed in the reading, and (6) relating the reading to personal experiences.

You will be assigned a number from 1, 2, or 3 within your team that indicates your "position" for the discussion task assignment. These tasks will rotate throughout the semester. Discussion tasks should reflect your own analysis of the reading. I am looking for a thoughtful and analytical discussion of the issues. Please **cite page numbers** when referring to specific material from the reading. For grading, you will receive both individual and group grades. Further instructions and expectations will be discussed.

READING RESPONSES

At the completion of each book, there will be a reading response essay. Each essay will ask specific

questions about the theories and concepts discussed in each book. Further instructions and expectations will be discussed.

CLASS FACILITATION

In your same discussion task teams, you will present your discussion tasks to the class. An emphasis should be placed on generating discussion questions, and providing examples of the issues discussed in the reading. Visual and auditory aids, such as media clips from the news/tv shows/movie/etc. and/or songs can be used to accompany facilitation. **Expect to lead the class in a discussion on the reading.** Further instructions and expectations will be discussed.

ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS

There are additional assignments which will be given during the course. A number of these assignments **must be completed in class**. If you are absent on the day that these assignments are done, you will not be able to make them up. Further instructions and expectations will be discussed.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING POLICY

Participation	10%
Discussion Tasks	20%
Class Facilitation	20%
Additional Assignments	10%
Reading Responses	40%

Grading System	Grade
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

Grade	Guidelines
A	Student prepares exceptional assignments, handouts, visuals, etc. Student completes all assigned reflections, in-class assignments, and midterm at an exceptional level. Student's participation in class discussions reflects a thorough reading of the text. Group discussions reflect student's current research. The student's work goes beyond the minimum requirements. Assignments are handed in on time and are at college level with respect to presentation, vocabulary and grammar. Outstanding achievement will also be reflected by the student's ability to apply class content to real world settings through either concrete or abstract methods.
B	Student prepares assignments, handouts, visuals, etc. at more than minimum level. Student completes all assigned reflections, in-class assignments, and midterm at a noteworthy level. Student's participation in class discussions reflects a thorough reading of the text. Group discussions reflect student's current research. The students work goes beyond the minimum requirements. Assignments are handed in on time and are at college level with respect to presentation, vocabulary and grammar.
C	Student prepares assignments, handouts, visuals, etc. at a minimum college level. Student completes all assigned reflections, in-class assignments, and midterm at a minimum college level. Student only participates in class readings and group discussions when asked. Student's work demonstrates only minimum requirements and is at a minimal college level with respect to presentation, vocabulary and grammar.
D	Student demonstrates a marginal understanding for the areas covered in the course work. Some assignments were not adequately completed as evidenced by nothing being turned-in or by assignments being turned-in late. Participation in class may have been reluctant with respect to class readings and discussion, which is exhibited in a lack of preparation. Assignments sometimes demonstrate substandard collegiate work as they do not follow the given guidelines. Language use in presentations and written assignments shows limited ability.
F	Student failed to demonstrate even a marginal understanding for many areas covered in the course work. This failure was exhibited in missing or excessively late assignments. Assignments that were turned in did not employ the directions given and may have also been weakened by limited language ability. Participation was lacking as student was late or absent repeatedly.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism is not only unfortunate, it's unnecessary. It will not be tolerated in this class. You are all bright, capable people with a mind of your own. Be sure to give credit where credit is due by citing all references. When working with other students, be sure to use your own words. You are expected to be honest and ethical at all times in the pursuit of academic goals.

SJSU has a clear Student Academic Honesty Policy that must be adhered to:

"Your commitment, as a student, to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The [University Academic Integrity Policy F15-7](#) 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. Visit the [Student Conduct and Ethical Development](#) website for more information."

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 [Accessible Education Center](#) (AEC) to establish a record of their disability. Students authorized by AEC to receive reasonable accommodations should meet with me during my office hours in order to ensure confidentiality.

STUDENT TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and on the 2nd 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 1st 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/) .

COURSE EXPECTATIONS (KEYS TO SUCCESS)

- I expect everyone to **come to class prepared**, having completed assigned readings and any assigned homework and prepared to share. I encourage active learning and I encourage us to work together to create a vibrant learning environment.
- **Bring your book** (or reading materials) with you to class so that you are prepared to engage in academic, source-based discussions.
- **Check Canvas and your email regularly and often**. It is **YOUR** responsibility to stay up to date on what is going on in-class, what assignments are due, test dates, etc.
- If you are ever **unsure** about what is happening in class, **take the following steps**:
 1. Check Canvas
 2. Check your email
 3. Contact at least one classmate
 4. Very last, email me (I will ask you if you have taken the first 3 steps)
- When emailing me, be sure to **identify your full name, class, and section number**. I DO NOT accept assignments through email. Feel free to email me your thoughts, questions, interesting information that corresponds to the class material or concerns at any time. However, please be aware that I reserve the right to respond to emails within 24 to 48 hours after I have received the email. I will usually address concerns during the following class period.
- Important dates are located online (<http://www.sjsu.edu/registrar/calendar/2174/index.html>). Remember that it is your responsibility to make sure you adhere to deadlines for adding and dropping classes. If you choose to stop attending class, it is your responsibility to officially drop the course. At the end of the semester, students who stopped attending class without withdrawing will receive an “F” grade.
- All activities, discussion boards, assignments, etc. are **due on their assigned due dates at 1:30 p.m.** You can turn in **FOUR** late assignments throughout the semester (with the exception of the Reading Responses). **Late work must be completed within 7 days of its original due date.**
- You may have strong opinions about some of the topics we will be discussing in class. The classroom is a **safe place** for the exchange of ideas and opinions. Please **be respectful** of other classmates and their opinions, especially if they differ from your own, during class discussions.
- This class will touch on a variety of issues and topics including, but not limited to, gender, sex and sexual behavior, religion, ethnicity, and race. **Hate of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated, along with intolerance and mistreatment of any student for any reason.** Please be respectful of one another and realize that we can all learn from our diverse backgrounds and various walks of life.
- The syllabus and schedule are **subject to change**. If there are any changes, you will be notified.

- If you have any questions, concerns, thoughts – **please do not hesitate to contact me**. I'm here to help to the best of my ability!

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Chapter	Book
8/23	Syllabus	
8/28	Introductions Team Formation	
8/30	Chapter 1: The Rebirth of Caste	The New Jim Crow
9/4	NO CLASS	
9/6	Chapter 2: The Lockdown (p. 59 – 78) Discussion Task (TNJC Chapter 2) Due	The New Jim Crow
9/11	Chapter 2: The Lockdown (p.78-96)	The New Jim Crow
9/13	Chapter 3: The Color of Justice (p.97 – 119) Discussion Task (TNJC Chapter 3) Due	The New Jim Crow
9/18	Chapter 4: The Cruel Hand (pg. 140 – 158)	The New Jim Crow
9/20	Chapter 4: The Cruel Hand (pg. 158 – 177) Discussion Task (TNJC Chapter 4) Due	The New Jim Crow
9/25	<i>Voices of Hope</i>	<i>Documentary</i>
9/27	Chapter 5: The New Jim Crow (pg. 178 – 220)	The New Jim Crow
10/2	<i>13th</i>	<i>Documentary</i>
10/4	Chapter 4: How Gender Structures the Prison System	Are Prison's Obsolete?
10/9	<i>At Risk Girls & Delinquency</i> New Jim Crow Response Paper Due	Cougar Courses
10/11	<i>The Gendered Nature of Risk Factors for Delinquency</i>	Cougar Courses
10/16	<i>Violence Against Girls Provokes Girl's Violence</i> <i>Cyntoia's Story</i>	Cougar Courses
10/18	<i>Tough Guise</i>	<i>Documentary</i>
10/23	<i>Murder as Self-Help</i>	Cougar Courses
10/25	<i>Women at Risk in Sex Work</i> <i>My Boyfriend the Sex Tourist</i> Discussion Task (Gender Readings) Due	Cougar Courses
10/30	Chapter 1: Crime Control in America (pg. 11 – 33)	The Rich Get Richer & The Poor Get Prison
11/1	Chapter 1: Crime Control in America (pg. 34-51) Gender Response Paper Due	The Rich Get Richer & The Poor Get Prison
11/6	Chapter 2: A Crime by Any Other Name (pg. 65-86)	The Rich Get Richer & The Poor Get Prison
11/8	Chapter 2: A Crime by Any Other Name (pg. 86 – 106) Discussion Task (RGRPGP Chapter 1) Due	The Rich Get Richer & The Poor Get Prison
11/13	Chapter 4: To the Vanquished Belong the Spoils	The Rich Get Richer & The Poor Get Prison

11/15	Chapters 1: Introduction – Prison Reform or Prison Abolition Chapter 2: Slavery, Civil Rights, and Abolitionist Perspectives Toward Prison Discussion Task (RGRPGP Chapter 2) Due	Are Prison's Obsolete?
11/20	Chapter 5: The Prison Industrial Complex The Hidden History of ALEC	Are Prison's Obsolete? Cougar Courses
11/22	HOLIDAY	
11/27	<i>Billions Behind Bars</i>	<i>Documentary</i>
11/29	Chapter 6: The Fire This Time Rich Get Richer Response Paper Due	The New Jim Crow
12/4	Chapter 8: Moving Toward Justice for Female Juvenile Offenders	Cougar Courses
12/6	Conclusion: To The Vanquished Belong the Spoils	The Rich Get Richer & The Poor Get Prison
12/11	Chapter 6: Abolitionist Alternatives	Are Prison's Obsolete?
12/18	FINAL @ 11:30 a.m. Reformation Response Paper Due	

* The syllabus and schedule for this class are **subject to change**. I do not foresee any changes, but if there are any, you will be notified.