

PLEASE READ AND RETAIN FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

Soc. 484 Punishment, Mass Imprisonment
And Communities
Winter 2009

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8:30-9:45 & 12:00-1:30 and
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Soc. 380 focused on general theories of deviance/crime, selected types of deviance/crime (street crime, elite crime, drug use, violence) and presented an overview of forms of social control. In this class we will review the history of control efforts in the U.S. exploring the ways in which control policies are shaped by a myriad of factors – political, economic, philosophical, cultural. By the end of the 20th century, the U.S. has experienced what has been called an “imprisonment binge.” We will examine how prisons operate and the effects they have on prisoners and correctional staff. We will consider whether prisons are effective mechanism for improving public safety or increasing individual and general deterrence. The weight of prison does not fall equally across all groups. In certain disadvantaged communities, prisons play a greater role in shaping individual life chances and the nature of the community than do family, school or the economy. What does mass imprisonment do for society and for these communities? Blomberg, Lucken and Clear would argue little that is positive and a great deal that is negative. I ask you to critically assess **all** the ideas presented in class, whether presented in the readings, videos or lecture.

WRITTEN RESOURCES IT IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL YOU READ THE ASSIGNMENTS **BY THE DATE ASSIGNED**. The success of this course will depend on each student contributing to class discussion. If it appears students are not doing the reading, pop quizzes may be given. Each of the following works addresses a specific aspect of the course.

(Punishment) American Penology: A history of control, T. Blomberg and K. Lucken. 2000 New York: Aldine. The authors write that “the purpose of [this book] is to provide a story about punishment’s past, present and future.” This work “focuses upon selected demographic, economic, political, religious and intellectual contingencies that are associated with particular historical and contemporary eras to suggest how these contingencies shaped America’s punishment ideas and practices.” Pp. 1 & 2

(Mass imprisonment) Exploring Corrections: A book of readings. Tara Gray (ed.), 2002, Boston: Allyn and Bacon. Prof. Gray writes “I compiled this book because I wanted readings that were written in a lively and compelling style to provoke thought and spark discussion.” P. xvii Prof. Gray’s students played a key role in the final form of the book offering their opinions of potential readings and influencing Gray’s final selections. Prof. Gray explores the nature of daily life in prisons for both inmates and guards, how penal institutions are run, and how they might change.

(Communities) Imprisoning Communities: How mass incarceration makes disadvantaged neighborhoods worse. Todd R. Clear 2007 New York: Oxford University Press. The title of this book speaks for itself. Clear documents how mass imprisonment has removed large concentrations of people from poor places. Does imprisoning young men of color help improve their communities? Make them safer for other residents? Does mass imprisonment erode family life? How does the absence of young men affect social networks for themselves and for others? Clear provides a lucid analysis of the basic arguments that justify the extensive use of incarceration. He then reviews research that explores the impact of incarceration on communities. He helps us understand how mass imprisonment affects people's daily lives by presenting ethnographic work drawn from two communities.

COURSE ACTIVITIES

ASSIGNMENTS: Your grade in this class will be based on 4 primary activities: two exams, a project, and class participation.

EXAMS

There will be a midterm and a final exam. The dates are listed in the course schedule. The questions will be drawn from material presented in the text, readings, and lectures. I will attempt to distribute review questions prior to each exam. The exams will have multiple formats and may include true/false, multiple choice and short answer questions as well as essays. You will be allowed to bring a limited number of pages of notes to the exam.

PROJECT - Your project will involve independent work. You may select from three options: 1) scholarly book review, 2) research paper or 3) annotated bibliography. A handout will describe these options in more detail. These options will be discussed in detail the second week of class. You will select an option and a topic by Wednesday, Jan. 28.

Below are some websites that might provide useful research articles and data for your papers.

National Criminal Justice Research Service: <http://www.ncjrs.org>

U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs>

National Institute of Justice: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij>

Sourcebook on criminal justice statistics <http://www.albany.edu/sourcebook>

For those of you looking at sentencing issues try The Sentencing Project at <http://www.sentencingproject.org>

CLASS PARTICIPATION - Class participation, not simply attendance, is an important part of your activities. Despite enrollment of 40+ students, we will attempt to run the class as a seminar. Your input represents an important contribution to the class. If you attend class but make no contributions, your *participation* score will be a "C."

During some class periods, I will devote a substantial portion of the hour to lectures. I will attempt to address the general topics covered in your assigned readings and comment on

central ideas they present. Other class periods will be primarily discussion. The exam review questions will serve as a basis for discussion in class as will your course project. Once during the term, you will give a brief presentation on a website that provides useful information for the class.

It greatly improves the quality of class discussion when all students are current with the readings and come prepared for these discussions. At anytime, if you have questions about the readings or lectures please ask for clarification during class or see me during office hours.

ELECTRONIC ACCESS TO ALL CLASS ASSIGNMENTS/HANDOUTS

I will post all assignments and announcements on Blackboard CourseInfo. This website allows you access to course materials 24 hours a day. If you misplace an assignment, logon and download the handout. If you have questions for classmates and want to discuss the course readings, log on to the discussion group under COMMUNICATIONS. When I send messages via BB, they will go to your university e-mail account. Please check your e-mail for messages from me. Also check Blackboard twice a week for announcements and new course documents. If you are not familiar with Blackboard, please see me.

GRADES:	EXAM #1	30%
	EXAM #2	30%
	PROJECT	30%
	CLASS PARTICIPATION	10%
	EXTRA-CREDIT	up to 12 points

Graduate students need to consult with the instructor about additional work for the 580 course.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE (Assignment dates may be changed depending on how quickly the material is covered. I will do my best to hold the midterm exam on the date listed in the schedule. Readings should be completed BY THE LISTED DATE. With four credit hours assigned to this course, there should be ample time to complete the assigned readings.)

M 1/5 Introduction

W 1/7 Penology – Chapters 2, 3, 4

M 1/12 Penology – Chapters 5, 8, 9

W 1/14

M 1/19 No Class – MLK Day – Extra Credit: Attend an activity celebrating Dr. King.

W 1/21 Penology – Chapters 10, 12, 13

M 1/26 Corrections (Life in prison) – Readings 6, 7, 10, 11, 12

W 1/28

M 2/2 Corrections (Women in Prison) – Readings 14, 15

W 2/4 MIDTERM EXAM - Bring scantron answer sheet, #2 pencil and notes

M 2/9 Corrections (Prison administration) – Readings 16, 17, 18

W 2/11 Corrections (Control mechanisms)– Readings 19, 22, 23, 25

M 2/16 Corrections (Do prisons work?) - Readings 27, 28, Chapter 2 - Clear

W 2/18

M 2/23 Corrections (Does rehabilitation work?) - Readings 29, 30; Clear pp. 181-184

W 2/25 Clear Ch. 3 – Poor places and mass incarceration

M 3/2 Clear Chapters 4 (Coercive mobility and public safety), Ch. 5 (Impact of incarceration)

W 3/4

M 3/9 Clear Ch. 6 (Their own voices) , Ch. 8 (Community Justice) ,
Appendix (Strategy for community justice)

W 3/11

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, March 17, 10:15 p.m. Bring scantron, # 2 pencil and notes