

CRMJ 431: Criminal Justice outside the Classroom
(Inside Out/Alternative Break Connections)
Spring 2015

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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UNDER GRADUATE ASSISTANT INFORMATION

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CLASS MEETING TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Mondays, 6pm to 7:15pm: CLA 3314

Wednesdays, 6pm to 7:15pm: Baltimore County Detention Center,
720 Bosley Avenue, Towson, MD 21204

COURSE OVERVIEW

The course theme is the “ethics of mass incarceration.” Students will critically engage with the history, social impact, and possible futures of mass incarceration in the United States. This course blends the Inside-Out Prison Education Program with an alternative spring break service trip (Alternative Break Connections). There will also be strong service-learning components that will allow students to gain hands-on experience and knowledge about incarceration and its impact in Maryland and Michigan.

Each of the key components of the course are described below:

Inside-Out Prison Education Program: During the regular semester, students will participate in a weekly class with incarcerated women at the Baltimore County Detention Center. The class is modeled after the Inside-Out program at Temple University. Inside-Out creates a dynamic partnership between institutions of higher learning and correctional systems in order to deepen the conversation about and transform our approaches to understanding crime, justice, freedom, inequality, and other issues of social concern. Inside-Out brings college students together with incarcerated men and women to study as peers in a seminar behind prison walls. Inside-Out is an opportunity for college students to go behind the walls to reconsider what they have come to know about crime and justice. At the same time, it is also an opportunity for those inside prison to place their life experiences in a larger framework. Inside-Out creates a paradigm shift for participants, encouraging transformation and change agency in individuals and, in so doing, serves as an engine for social change. Through

college classes and community exchanges, individuals on both sides of prison walls are able to engage in a collaborative, dialogic examination of issues of social significance through the particular lens that is the “prism of prison” (excerpted from The Inside-Out Center website).

Alternative Break Connections: “Alternative Breaks leads community service-learning trips during University breaks. Participants travel in teams to different cities, engage in active service, and have the opportunity to gain new perspectives on society while meeting community needs, and learning about and building upon community assets” (excerpted from Towson University’s Alternative Spring Break Connections website.) Students in this course will travel to Detroit and Ann Arbor, Michigan to work with American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) and Prison Creative Arts Project (PCAP). Both groups do advocacy work with and for incarcerated people and their families in Michigan.

AFSC's Michigan Criminal Justice Program “advocates for over 1,500 Michigan prisoners and their families each year, building an ‘advocacy network’ throughout the state. The program encourages dialogue among prisoners and the general public, and works for humane reform of the criminal justice system, and for the rights of prisoners” (excerpted from the AFSC Michigan website)

PCAP “was founded in 1990 with the mission to collaborate with incarcerated adults, incarcerated youth, urban youth and the formerly incarcerated to strengthen our community through creative expression” (excerpted from the PCAP website).

Service-Learning: “Service-learning is a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development. Reflection and reciprocity are key concepts of service-learning” (excerpted from Towson University’s Office of Civic Engagement and Leadership website). Service-learning moves beyond “community service” in several important ways. First, it aims to make meaningful connections between the concepts learned in the classroom and reality beyond the classroom walls. Second, students are prepared to engage in service-learning through initial discussions of the meaning and purposes of service-learning as well as through on-going reflection activities. Finally, the benefits of service-learning initiatives are, by design, reciprocal and mutually defined by students and members of the community.

Prerequisite: None

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the social impact of mass incarceration in the US.
2. Propose possible solutions to the mass incarceration and its attendant problems.
3. Explain pressing issues related to mass incarceration for incarcerated individuals and their loved ones.
4. Design and deliver a comprehensive presentation on the ethical issues surrounding mass incarceration for a general audience.

REQUIRED READING MATERIALS

Students are required to subscribe to the Marshall Project email list and to read news reports related to incarceration and related topics. To sign up for the email list, see:

<https://www.themarshallproject.org/>

CLASS FORMAT

This class employs a student-centered learning approach and requires active participation from students. It is not a class where the professor does all the talking and the student quietly takes notes. Instead, students are expected to complete assigned readings and activities prior to each class and to come to class prepared to reflect and discuss. Class time will include individual and group assignments and discussions.

COURSE WORK AND GRADING POLICY

Each component of the final course grade and the percentage of the final grade which it comprises are described below:

Student Attendance and Participation (60 points, 20% of final grade):

Class attendance and active participation in class activities and discussions is critical to a successful course. Showing up to class is not sufficient—students must also demonstrate active involvement in the classroom. This includes active listening, participation in discussions, and contributions to in-class activities.

Reflection Papers (105 points, 35% of final grade): Seven (7) reflection papers will be assigned throughout the course. Guidelines for the papers are included on a separate handout. Each paper will be worth 15 points. Papers **will only be accepted in class on the dates they are due**. No emailed assignments will be accepted.

Information Sheets/Interviews (45 points, 15% of final grade):

Students will create information sheets for use by incarcerated people in the Baltimore County Detention Center. At least one (1) interview must be conducted with a knowledgeable person in order to generate these information sheets. More information on the interviews and the sheets is provided on a separate handout.

Final Presentation and Report (45 points, 15% of final grade): Students will deliver a final presentation on the ethical issues of mass incarceration to the wider campus community on Wednesday, April 22. In addition, students will submit a report summarizing their preparation for the final presentation as well as assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the presentation. More information on the final presentation and report are included on a separate handout.

Final Paper (45 points, 15% of final grade): Each student will submit one final paper at the end of the course. Guidelines for the paper are included on a separate handout.

Extra Credit: There will be no extra credit opportunities available for this course.

NOTE: Always keep a copy of any papers or written work that you submit. These records may prove invaluable should there be a grade recording error.

CLASS POLICIES

Attendance: This is a special course, many of which will be held in the Baltimore County Detention Center or on site in Ann Arbor and Detroit. The course is dialogue-based and, therefore, highly interactive. Given the unique nature of this class, it is imperative that each student attend and fully participate in every class. Since we have clarified scheduling issues with you prior to your enrolling in the course, there should be no problems with attendance. If, due to serious and verifiable circumstances, you are unable to attend, you must contact the instructor prior to class. Any absence will change the dynamics of the group, as well as disappoint those who will be participating in the course.

Arriving late/leaving early: It is absolutely necessary to be on time when meeting the group at the jail. Students who do not arrive on time may be denied access to the classroom. More importantly, late arrivals can prove to be burdensome for detention center personnel as staff must be taken from their normal duties to escort students—we do not wish to make our course disruptive to the facility. Similarly, unless a student is ill, s/he will not be permitted to leave class early.

Late Papers: All homework assignments must be submitted in hard copy in class on the date that they are due; no emailed papers will be accepted.

Prohibited Items: Do not bring any of the following to the Detention Center: weapons, illegal drugs, medications (unless cleared ahead of time by the Detention Center), alcohol, cigarettes or other tobacco products, maps, chewing gum, cell phones, car alarm remotes, wallets, purses, bags, umbrellas, cameras, food, drinks, or make-up (including lip balm).

Dress/Attire: Attire must be appropriate for a professional environment. Shorts, skirts, and dresses must reach the knee. Slits in skirts or dresses may be no higher than the knee. No see-through or sheer clothing. No spandex or form-fitting clothing. Shoulders, back, midriff, and excessive cleavage/bust must be covered. Footwear and undergarments must be worn. No clothing displaying profanity, obscene images or promoting drugs, alcohol, violence or gangs is permitted.

Communication and exchanges between students: Inside and outside students are prohibited from communicating outside of the classroom—this includes both when the course is in session and after the course is complete. In addition, students may not exchange any items/goods. Outside students who attempt to bring items into the facility for inside students will be prosecuted. Students who violate these prohibitions will be dropped and receive an “F” in the course. Finally, students are forbidden from exhibiting displays of physical affection beyond a handshake.

FINAL GRADES

Below is a list of the points required to achieve each available letter grade for this course. There are 300 points available to be earned over the course of the semester. Note: Towson University does not award the following grades: A+, C-, and D-.

A:	279 points or more	C+:	231 to 239 points
A-:	270 to 278 points	C:	210 to 230 points
B+:	261 to 269 points	D+:	201 to 209 points
B:	249 to 260 points	D:	180 to 200 points
B-:	240 to 248 points	F:	179 points or lower

Other possible grades and their explanations:

FX: Issued in place of the “F” but only if a student has completed less than half of the expected work for a course.

I (Incomplete): Given to a student who for documented medical or other exigent reasons beyond her/his control is unable to finish all the work that must be completed in a course. This grade is at the discretion of the faculty member and will only be issued if the student could still earn a passing grade of “D” or higher once all work is finished. A grade of “incomplete” automatically turns to an “F” at the end of the next 15 week

semester if a change of grade is not entered. Students can request a one semester extension of an “incomplete” if they are unable to finish the required work.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

In recent years, the faculty of the department has faced a growing challenge in the area of student cheating and plagiarism. As a result of this challenge, the department drafted the following statement on academic dishonesty. This policy represents a *department-wide* commitment to address academic dishonesty in consistent and meaningful ways.

Department Statement on Academic Dishonesty:

The faculty of the Department of Sociology, Anthropology & Criminal Justice takes a strong stand against *Academic Dishonesty* of all forms. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in any class. It includes, but is not limited to, any form of cheating or unapproved help on an exam or academic exercise, copying someone else’s written work without citation, presenting fabricated information as legitimate, any unauthorized collaboration among students, or assisting someone to cheat in any way.

All students have the ethical responsibility for doing their own work. A student who is uncertain about whether or not something constitutes academic dishonesty in a particular class has the obligation to see their instructor for clarification.

Consistent with university policy, the minimum penalty for academic dishonesty in any form is determined by the individual faculty member in each class, and may consist of “a reduced grade (including “F” or zero) for the assignment; a reduced grade (including “F”) for the entire course,” or other options as stipulated in the TU Student Academic Integrity Policy. Students who are charged with academic dishonesty must remain enrolled in the course and cannot withdraw.

Instructors who make the determination that academic dishonesty has occurred will notify the student in writing of the finding, the penalty, and the process for appeal. The same written notice will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct and Civility Education, the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts, and to the Chair’s Office in the department.

Academic Dishonesty undermines the legitimate efforts of students and involves serious repercussions. The faculty of the department urge all our students to act with integrity with regard to work submitted.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

In addition to the professor, there are various, free campus resources available to support student learning and success.

General Academic Support: The Academic Achievement Center (Cook Library, Room 524; Phone: 410-704-2291; E-mail: achieve@towson.edu) provides a variety of support services for students, including tutoring, academic coaching, and student skills workshops.

Writing: The Writing Lab provides individual help to Towson students at each stage of the writing process. Appointments with a writing tutor can be made by stopping by the Liberal Arts Bldg Room 5330 or calling 410-704-3426.

Disability and Support Services: Students who have, or suspect that they may have, a disability should seek services through Disability Support Services. Students must be registered with DSS and receive written authorization to obtain disability-related accommodations. If you need accommodation due to a disability, please visit DSS for guidance. The office is located at 7720 York Road, AD 232, Ph: 4-2638 or 3475.

Counseling: The Counseling Center provides free, short-term counseling for students who need support. The Counseling Center is located in the Glen Esk building at the center of campus. They can be contacted at: 410-704-2512 or counseling@towson.edu.

POLICY ON REPEATING A COURSE

Students may not repeat this course more than once (make a third attempt at this course) without the prior approval of the Academic Standards Committee. Please call 4-4351 or visit ES 235 for more information.

EMERGENCY STATEMENT

In the event of a University-wide emergency, course requirements, classes, deadlines and grading schemes are subject to changes that may include alternative delivery methods, alternative methods of interaction with the instructor, class materials, and/or classmates, and a revised semester calendar and/or grading scheme. In the case of a University-wide emergency, I will attempt to communicate with you via e-mail and the Blackboard site.

For more general information about any emergency situation, please refer to the following:

TU Web Site: www.towson.edu

Emergency Updates Telephone Number: 410-704-2000

If you have not already, consider registering for the TU Text Alert System. This is a service designed to alert the Towson University community via text messages to cell phones when situations arise on campus that affect the ability of the campus - students, faculty and staff - to function normally. For more information and to register, see <http://www.towson.edu/adminfinance/facilities/police/campusemergency/>

COURSE CALENDAR

Monday, January 12 (or Monday, January 26)

- 9:15am to 10:30am: Security Orientation at the Baltimore County Detention Center

Monday, January 26 (Main Campus)

- Topic: Course Overview and “What is service-learning?”

Wednesday, January 28 (Main Campus)

- Topic: Mass Incarceration Overview
- Assignment Due: Complete initial assessment, review and sign course contract

Monday, February 2 (Main Campus)

- Topic: Preparing for the Detention Center
- Reading Due: “Prisons and Jails: Punishment at Any Cost?” by Barkan and Bryak
- Assignment Due: Reflection Paper #1

Wednesday, February 4 (Detention Center)

- Topic: Getting to know each other

Monday, February 9 (Main Campus)

- Topic: Facilitating conversation, first combined meeting debrief
- Readings Due: Articles for “Collateral Damage” Event on Monday, February 16
- Assignment Due: Reflection Paper #2

Wednesday, February 11 (Detention Center)

- Topic: What are prisons/jails for?

Monday, February 16

- Topic: “Collateral Damage” event, Cook Library Room 507
- Assignment Due: Reflection Paper #3

Wednesday, February 18 (Detention Center)

- Topic: Topics of Interest to Incarcerated Individuals

Monday, February 23 (Main Campus)

- Topic: Information Sheets and Interviews
- Assignment Due: Reflection Paper #4

Wednesday, February 25 (Detention Center)

- Topic: Why do people commit crime? (Facilitated by Ian Hamilton)

Monday, March 2 (Main Campus)

- Topic: Incarceration and Mental Health (Facilitated by Liz Hayden)
- Assignment Due: Reflection Paper #5

Wednesday, March 4 (Detention Center)

- Topic: Myths and Realities of Prison Life

Monday, March 9 (Main Campus)

- Topic: Alternative Spring Break preparations
- Assignments Due: Reflection Paper #6

Wednesday, March 11 (Detention Center)

- Topic: Punishment and Rehabilitation

Saturday, March 14 through Saturday, March 21

- Alternative Spring Break in Ann Arbor/Detroit

Monday, March 23:

- No class

Wednesday, March 25 (Detention Center)

- Topic: Information Sheets Review

Monday, March 30 (Main Campus)

- Topic: Thinking beyond incarceration
- Assignment Due: Reflection Paper #7

Wednesday, April 1 (Detention Center)

- Topic: Final Project

Monday, April 6 (Main Campus)

- Students meet to finalize final presentation

Wednesday, April 8 (Detention Center)

- Topic: Final project, Closing celebration discussion

Monday, April 13 (Main Campus)

- Students meet to finalize final presentation

Wednesday, April 15 (Detention Center)

- Topic: Closing celebration and presentation of information sheets

Monday, April 20:

- Students meet to finalize final presentation

Monday, April 22:

- Final presentation to campus community

Monday, May 4

- Assignment Due: Final Presentation Report

Monday, May 18

- Assignments Due: Post course evaluation, Final Paper

EXTENDED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Below is a list of additional readings on race and crime. Students may opt to one of these books for the book review project option.

Alexander, Michelle. (2010). *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: The New Press.

Conover, Ted. (2001). *Newjack*. New York: Vintage Books.

- Davis, Angela. (2003). *Are Prisons Obsolete?* New York: Seven Stories Press.
- Johnson, Robert. (2001). *Hard Time: Understanding and Reforming the Prison*. Wadsworth Publishing
- Loury, Glenn. (2008). *Race, Incarceration, and American Values*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Mauer, Marc & Chesney-Lind, Meda. (Eds.).(2003). *Invisible Punishment: The Collateral Consequences of Mass Imprisonment*. New York: New Press.
- Mauer, Mark. (2006). *Race to Incarcerate*. Washington, DC: The Sentencing Project.
- Oparah, J. C. (2005). *Global Lockdown: Race, Gender, and the Prison-Industrial Complex*. New York: Routledge.
- Parenti, Christian (2003). *Lockdown America: Police and Prisons in the Age of Crisis*. London: Verso.
- Tonry, Michael. (2011). *Punishing Race: A Continuing American Dilemma*. Cary, NC: Oxford University Press.
- Western, Bruce. (2007). *Punishment and Inequality in America*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.