

CRIM 3811 & SOC 3510: Critical Topics in Corrections Spring 2023

Days / Times
MW / 11:50AM - 1:10PM

Location:
GC 2575

Instructor: Ariel Roddy (she/her)
Office: BEH S 326
Office Hours: Wednesday 10:30 AM – 11:30 AM or by appointment
Email: ariel.rodny@soc.utah.edu

TA: Zoë Bergman (she/her)
Email: zoe.bergman@soc.utah.edu

Course description:

This course will provide an overview of current institutional practices, policies, and issues in the corrections system the United States. The course focuses on the relation of corrections to the criminal justice system, theories underlying correctional practice, and the role of institutions within the corrections system. It reviews the historical development of crime and corrections, sentencing, jails, prisons and prison life, community supervision, and challenges facing correctional populations. It will further explore the principles and practices of treatment accorded to justice-involved individuals in various types of correctional settings. The class will conclude with future directions in corrections, alternatives to incarceration, and acknowledging the work of scholars and practitioners in this area.

Course goals and objectives:

The primary goal of this course is the development of a critical understanding of current issues in American prisons; the conditions of confinement in prison for both inmates and staff; maintaining social control and social order within prisons; the role of corrections and intermediate sanctions; and the overall level of effectiveness achieved in contemporary efforts to assess and manage offenders. In addition, students are encouraged to critically assess current correctional policy and its impact on other components of the criminal justice system, as well as broader societal goals.

Required texts

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

Excerpts from:

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Between the world and me*. Text Publishing Company. 2015.

Kerman, Piper. Orange is the new black: My year in a women's prison. Thorndike Press. 2014.

Maruna, Shadd. Making Good: How Ex-Convicts Reform and Rebuild Their Lives. Amer Psychological Assn. 2001.

Podcasts:

Beyond Prison, Ear Hustle, Hidden Brain, This American Life

Documentaries:

13th, Crime after Crime, The Box

Music Albums:

To Pimp a Butterfly – Kendrick Lamar

Grades:

Exam 1: 100 points (25% of total grade)

Exam 2: 100 points (25% of total grade)

Group presentation: 100 points (25% of total grade)

Weekly assignments: 100 points total (25% of total grade)

Total points: 400 points

Exams: Exam dates are announced in the syllabus, but the instructor may move the test dates according to the progress made in class. The exams will cover materials from readings, podcasts, documentaries and lectures. These tests will be open note. HOWEVER, in order to be successful in these exams, it will be imperative that you are able to answer most questions without the text or your notes, as it will be time consuming to consult relevant texts.

Group presentation: You will be asked to present on a topic of your choice with 5 of your classmates. Presentations will be 30 minutes long. You will be graded on 1) the quality of the presentation and 2) a peer assessment on the contributions of your work.

Weekly assignments: Weekly responses to readings, podcasts, documentaries will total to 100 points over the course of the semester.

Course Organization

This course will utilize a lecture and discussion format. Students must complete the readings by the class period they are assigned (some of the in-class assignments may cover the readings). Due to the nature of the material we are discussing, there is likely to be lively discussion and disagreement. In addition, some people may feel uncomfortable, upset, or even shocked by some of the course material. This is OK and is even to be expected. I hope that this course will be challenging both intellectually and personally. The following ground rules must be followed:

- 1) Acknowledge that people in our culture have different experiences based on race, class, sex, age and sexuality. Think sociologically about these issues and critically analyze our opinions and beliefs.
- 2) Agree that our classroom should be a place where no one is made to feel embarrassed or ashamed. Disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated. This includes rude interruptions, yelling, insults, or personal attacks. We do not have to agree with one another, but we must be able to discuss our differences in a respectful manner.
- 3) Be aware that there are most likely students in the class who have experienced (or are close to someone who has experienced) some form of victimization. Comments in class should be respectful of these experiences and the impact that these experiences may have had on people's lives.
- 4) Refrain from engaging in behavior that is rude to the instructor, other students, or guests of the class. This includes coming in late, sleeping, talking, or reading outside materials in class. **PLEASE TURN OFF CELL PHONES WHILE CLASS IS IN SESSION.**
- 5) Agree to follow the rules/standards of the student code. Any student who violates these is subject to the consequences as discussed in the student code/handbook.

CANVAS

I will post notices, the study sheets for exams, and your grades on CANVAS as semester goes on. I will not place all the PowerPoint slides (I may place a few) on CANVAS. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to either get the notes from CANVAS and fill them out on your own or get the notes from a fellow classmate. Be sure to check the class on CANVAS frequently.

Support and Resources for Student Success

Wellness Statement. Your personal health and wellness are essential to your success as a student. Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, cross-cultural differences, etc., can interfere with a student's ability to succeed and thrive in this course and at the University of Utah. Please speak with the instructor or TA before issues become problems. And, for helpful resources, contact the Center for Student Wellness at www.wellness.utah.edu or 8015817776.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability & Access (<https://disability.utah.edu/>), 162 Olpin Union Building, 801-581-5020. CDA will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations.

Academic Misconduct Statement. Per University of Utah regulations (Policy # 6-400). “A student who engages in academic misconduct,” as defined in Part I.B. and including, but not limited to, cheating, falsification, or plagiarism, “may be subject to academic sanctions including but not limited to a grade reduction, failing grade, probation, suspension or dismissal from the program or the University, or revocation of the student's degree or certificate. Sanctions may also include community service, a written reprimand, and/or a written statement of misconduct that can be put into an appropriate record maintained for purposes of the profession or discipline for which the student is preparing.” Please refer to the Student Code for full elaboration of student academic and behavioral misconduct policies (<http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>).

Sexual Misconduct. Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran’s status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).

Safety Statement. The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a courtesy escort, call campus police at 801-585-COPS (801585-2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages regarding campus safety via text message. For more information regarding safety and to view available training resources, including helpful videos, visit safeu.utah.edu.

Emergency Preparedness Information [CSBS EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS SYLLABUS PAGES](#)

- 1)Familiarize yourself with the information in this page, making sure that you know the evacuation plan for each relevant building.
- 2) You will also need to add the page to each of your syllabi.
- 3)Keep in mind that it is likely students will not pay much attention to this information, so the responsibility falls on you to know it and be able to guide them if the need arises.

As the only institution in the state classified in the highest research category (R1), at the University of Utah you will have access to state-of-the-art research facilities and be able to be part of the knowledge creation process. You will have the opportunity to do research of your own with faculty who are leading experts in their field, engaging in programs that match your research interests. Further, you will interact with and often take classes with graduate students that provide an advanced understanding of the knowledge in your field.

Week	Monday Class	Wednesday Class	Subject + Description
1	9-Jan	11-Jan	Class Introduction
2	16-Jan	18-Jan	What Is Corrections? Describe the growth of the U.S. corrections system, name the components of the corrections system, distinguish between the Pennsylvania and New York systems, understand the goals of punishment
3	23-Jan	25-Jan	Origins of American Corrections Explain the various types of sentences that judges hand down, differentiate between indeterminate and determinate sentences, discuss the growing recognition of wrongful convictions and how they happen
4	30-Jan	1-Feb	Jails Describe the history and functions of jails, who is in jail and why, discuss the kinds of jails in the U.S., list the main issues facing jails today
5	6-Feb	8-Feb	Community Corrections Describe the history and development of community corrections, the types of intermediate sanctions, critically assess the future of probation/parole and community corrections
6	13-Feb	15-Feb	Prisons and Prison Privatization Discuss the goals of incarceration, understand how incarceration is organized, explain who is in prison, discuss the explanations for the increase in the incarceration rate, be familiar with prison overcrowding
7	-	22-Feb	Midterm exam
8	27-Feb	1-Mar	Solitary Confinement Discuss issues with how solitary confinement is utilized in correctional contexts, understand implications on gender/racial groups
9	6-Mar	8-Mar	Spring Break!

10	13-Mar	15-Mar	Women's prison experiences Understand special issues/dynamics in women's prisons.
11	20-Mar	22-Mar	The death penalty Describe the ethical, moral, and economic implications related to the death penalty, describe the racial/geographic distribution of death penalty cases
12	27-Mar	29-Mar	Reentry and Revidivism Understand the function and operations of parole supervision and parole release, be familiar with the origins of parole, understand the challenges of prisoner reentry and reintegration
13	3-Apr	NO CLASS	Exam 2
14	10-Apr	12-Apr	Reimagining Corrections Understand the key problems in contemporary corrections and state level reform efforts to tackle the problem of mass incarceration, understand what good leadership means for corrections, describe the impact of politics on the U.S. correctional system
15	17-Apr	19-Apr	Group Presentations
16	24-Apr		Class Reflections