

PRISON HISTORY AND CULTURE
SOCIOLOGY 334
DePauw University
Spring 2014
MWF 1:40-2:40 p.m.

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar will focus on sociological analyses of prison in the United States from their inception to present day. We will consider how conceptualizations of prison, theories of punishment, and institutional practices have changed over time and how, despite historical variation, prisons have remained a unique and powerful form of social control. Because prisons control the lives of particular populations more than others (i.e., young, inner-city African-American men) we will use the intersection between racism, discrimination against the poor, and hegemonic masculinity as a central analytic frame.

We will ask ourselves the following questions and turn to a diverse set of voices (e.g., prisoners, correctional administrators, prison activists, criminologists, prison guards) to find answers: How does prison exacerbate existing race and class inequalities? Why are certain accounts of the historical development of prisons in this country accepted more than others? Why are prisons considered big business and who benefits from them? Is it accurate to say that prison actually creates crime? What is driving prison overcrowding? In addition, we will explore prison life and variation in the cultures of men's prisons, women's prisons and on death row. We end with an exploration of avenues for social change, looking specifically at the role of (anti-)prison activists and the abolition movement.

Note: This is a 300-level course with an extensive reading load (approximately 100-150 pages a week) and an emphasis on discussion. Only continue if you're willing to do the work.

COURSE GOALS

The goals for this course are as follows: 1) Learn how to analyze prisons (as a major social institution) from a sociological perspective and understand the value of doing so; 2) Understand how racism, classism and masculinity are central to the formation, history and persistence of prisons; 3) Learn what prison life is like from the perspectives of those who live and work there; 4) Recognize the complexity of social behavior, groups, organizations and institutions, and how that influences our assessment of prison; 5) Be able to conceptualize alternatives to prison and viable strategies for social change; 6) Acquire and/or fine-tune your critical reading, writing and discussion skills.

REQUIRED READINGS

A. Books.

- Abu-Jamal, Mumia. 1996. *Live from Death Row*. NY: Anchor.
- Davis, Angela. 2003. *Are Prisons Obsolete?* NY: Seven Stories.
- George, Erin. 2010. *A Woman Doing Life*. NY: Oxford University Press.
- Gordon, Robert Ellis and Inmates of the Washington Correctional Systems. 2000. *The Funhouse Mirror: Reflections on Prison*. Pullman, WA: Washington State University Press.
- Oshinsky, David. 1997. *Worse Than Slavery: Parchman Farm and the Ordeal of Jim Crow Justice*. NY: Free Press.
- Santos, Michael. 2007. *Inside: Life Behind Bars in America*. NY: St. Martin's.

B. Articles. There are a number of required readings on Moodle.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Exams. There will be two in-class exams (March 7 and May 15, 2014).

B. Papers. You will be writing 4 papers over the course of the semester.

Paper 1. (Due Friday January 31, 2014). Write a 2-page (double-spaced) essay that answers the following questions: What is your current perspective on prisons in the United States? How did you arrive at this perspective? Although this paper will not be graded, I will use it to get a sense of your writing skills and your ideas on the subject matter of the course. Your paper should have a clear thesis and an interesting title that captures your thesis. Please proofread your essay before turning it in. (Required, but not graded.)

Paper 2. (Due Friday, February 21, 2014). Using any of the readings assigned during the first four weeks of class, write a 5-6 page analytic paper. By analytic, I mean that the paper should not be a mere summary of the readings (although you might have to do some summarizing in order to develop your argument) and it should offer your original insight. You may write a critique, present an argument, compare and contrast the readings, or apply the reading to a previous reading. I will be looking for a specific, original thesis that is well developed and draws on the readings for evidence.

Paper 3. (Due Friday, April 18, 2014). Using any of the readings assigned Weeks 6-12, write a 5-6 page analytic paper. As with Paper 2, this paper should not be a mere summary of the readings and it should offer your original insight. You may write a critique, present an argument, compare and contrast the readings, or apply the reading to a previous reading. I will be looking for a specific, original thesis that is well developed and draws on the readings for evidence.

Paper 4. (Due either Monday, May 5 or Wednesday, May 7). This 2-3 page collaborative paper is tied to a small group assignment described below.

C. Supermax Control Unit exercise. On Friday, April 25 you will be assigned to a group of 4 people and given a specific exercise to complete that will require group planning, discussion, a 2-3 page paper written collaboratively, and a 15 minute presentation. Presentations will be May 5 and 7 (the last week of class).

D. Class participation. (Due every class session) Everyone is expected to come to class having completed, thought about and prepared to discuss and/or write about the assigned readings. Class participation will be assessed in terms of the quality and regularity of your contribution. I will ask for a self-assessment prior to deciding on a grade.

F. Prison Tour. At the beginning of the semester I will poll the class on your interest in going on a prison tour (or two). Tours will be scheduled for either Tuesday/Thursday morning/afternoon. Because the tour will take place outside of class, participation is voluntary. I cannot excuse you from other classes or obligations.

COURSE POLICIES

A. How grades are calculated. Grades will be determined using the following point and percentage systems. In order to pass the course, students must complete all of the assignments.

Exam 1	100 points
Exam 2	100 points
Paper 1	Read but not graded
Paper 2	50 points
Paper 3	50 points

Group paper	20 points
Group presentation	20 points
Group participation	10 points

Class participation	50 points (25 each half)
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Total	----- 400 points
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Final grade: 90% and above = A-, A
80%-89% = B-, B, B+
70%-79% = C-, C, C+
60%-69% = D
59% and below = F

B. What the Grades Mean.

A = Work that goes beyond the requirements of assignments by adding new insight, creativity and/or particularly thoughtful analysis. Demonstrates a comprehensive command of the course material, an exceptional ability to apply concepts to the real world, and a superior ability to organize and express ideas.

B = Work that adequately meets the requirements of the assignments. Demonstrates a solid command of the course material, an ability to apply concepts to the real world with only minor problems, and good organization and expression of ideas.

C = Work that partially meets the requirements of the assignments. Demonstrates acceptable command of the course material, a basic ability to apply concepts to the real world with some gaps and problems, and moderate skill in the organization and expression of ideas.

D = Work that marginally meets the requirements of the assignments. Demonstrates little command of the course material, minimal attempt to apply concepts to the real world, and limited ability to organize and express ideas.

F = Work that does not meet the requirements of the assignments. Demonstrates no command of the course material, unable to appropriately or consistently apply concepts to the real world, and insufficiently organizes and expresses ideas.

C. Late Work/Make-up Work. All papers are due in class on the dates indicated on the syllabus, unless I receive, in advance, an official notification that you will be off campus on university business (e.g., athletic event) or if you are gravely ill and contact me before class and make alternate arrangements. Unexcused late papers will be penalized 5 points for every 24 hour period in which they are late. Out of fairness to the entire class, no exceptions will be made (this includes missing class for job interviews, weddings, cheaper airfare, senioritis, etc.).

D. Security Measures. Please keep copies of all of the work you hand in. All assignments should be handed in to me directly. Do not put assignments in my mailbox or under my office door. If you are turning in something late, it is your responsibility to contact me and make arrangements to drop off the material.

E. Extra Credit. None. No exceptions.

F. Honor Code. As with all courses at DePauw University, you are bound by the policy on academic integrity. I highly encourage you to reread the policy if you have not reread it this semester: <http://www.depauw.edu/handbooks/student/acadlife/app/aip/dishonesty/> Academic dishonesty includes the following: cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, plagiarism, multiple submissions, abuse of academic material, deception and misrepresentation, electronic dishonesty, and carelessness. Each of these violations is described in detail in the Student Handbook. See me if you have any questions about your obligation to uphold this policy. While I encourage you to work together in small groups and discuss the course material among yourselves outside of class, papers 1-3 should be written without collaboration and should reflect your independent ideas.

G. Special Accommodations. According to Pamela Roberts, Coordinator of Academic Success and Student Disability Services, “DePauw University is committed to providing equal access to academic programs and University administered activities and reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Amendments (ADAAA). Accommodations are determined on a case by case basis. Any student who feels she or he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability or learning challenge is strongly encouraged to contact Pamela Roberts, Coordinator of Academic Success and Student Disability Services for further information on how to receive accommodations and support. Academic Success and Student Disability Services is located at 101 E. Seminary St., [765-658-6267](tel:765-658-6267). It is the responsibility of the student to share the letter of accommodation with faculty and staff members. Accommodations will not be implemented until the faculty or staff member has received the official letter. Accommodations are not retroactive. It is the responsibility of the student to discuss implementation of accommodations with each faculty and staff member receiving the letter.”

H. Laptops No laptops in class unless I specifically ask you to bring them. This means that you will need to make hardcopies of the readings posted on Moodle and/or bring in notes from the reading.

COURSE SCHEDULE

NOTE: All readings should be done before coming to class on the day listed.

<p>WEEK 1 Jan 27, 29, 31</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">INTRODUCTION AND CONCEPTUAL FRAME</p> <p>I. A Glimpse of Prison</p> <p>M: Introductions.</p> <p>W: Gorden, Robert et. al. 2000. <i>The Funhouse Mirror</i>. Pullman, WA: WSU Press, pp. xi-43. [book]</p> <p>F: Gorden, Robert et. al. 2000. <i>The Funhouse Mirror</i>. Pullman, WA: WSU Press, pp. 44-108. [book] Paper 1 due in class.</p>
<p>WEEK 2 Feb 3, 5, 7</p>	<p>II. Sociological Theories of Punishment</p> <p>Macro Theories:</p> <p>M: Garland, David. 1990. <i>Punishment and Modern Society</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 3-22. [Moodle]</p> <p>W: Foucault, Michel. 1977. <i>Discipline and Punish</i>. NY, pp. 508-513. [Moodle]</p> <p>Micro Theories:</p> <p>F: Goffman, Erving. 1961. <i>Asylums</i>. NY: Doubleday, pp. 3-74. [Moodle]</p>

<p>WEEK 3 Feb 10, 12, 14</p>	<p>III. Conceptual Lenses: Race, Social Class and Masculinity</p> <p>M: Tonry, Michael. 2011. <i>Punishing Race</i>. NY: Oxford, pp. 26-52. [Moodle] Sabo, Don et al. 2001. <i>Prison Masculinities</i>. Philadelphia: Temple, pp. 3-18; 61-77. [Moodle]</p> <p style="text-align: center;">HISTORY OF U.S. PRISONS</p> <p>III. History of Prisons (1830s-1930s)</p> <p>W: Rothman, David. 1994. "Perfecting Prison: United States, 1789-1865," pp. 100-116. [Moodle]</p> <p>F: Rotman, Edgardo. 1994. "The Failure of Reform: United States, 1865-1965," pp. 151-177. [Moodle]</p>
<p>WEEK 4 Feb 17, 19, 21</p>	<p>M: Oshinsky, David M. 1997. <i>Worse than Slavery</i>. NY: Free Press, pp. 1-29. [book]</p> <p>W: Oshinsky, David M. 1997. <i>Worse than Slavery</i>. NY: Free Press, pp. 31-84. [book]</p> <p>F: Oshinsky, David M. 1997. <i>Worse than Slavery</i>. NY: Free Press, pp. 85-106. [book] Paper 2 due in class.</p>
<p>WEEK 5 Feb 24, 26, 28</p>	<p>M: Oshinsky, David M. 1997. <i>Worse than Slavery</i>. NY: Free Press, pp. 109-177. [book]</p> <p>W: Oshinsky, David M. 1997. <i>Worse than Slavery</i>. NY: Free Press, pp. 179-255. [book]</p> <p>IV. Contemporary U. S. Prisons (1970s-present)</p> <p>F: Bosworth, Mary. 2010. <i>Explaining U.S. Imprisonment,</i> pp.148-198 [Moodle]</p>

<p>WEEK 6 March 3, 5, 7</p>	<p>V. The Prison Industrial Complex</p> <p>M: Davis, Angela. 2003. <i>Are Prisons Obsolete?</i> NY: Seven Stories Press, pp. 9-21; 84-104. [book]</p> <p>W: Huling, Tracy. 2002. "Building a Prison Economy in Rural America," pp. 197-213. [Moodle]</p> <p>F: Exam 1</p>
<p>WEEK 7 March 10, 12, 14</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">PRISON LIFE</p> <p>VI: A Male Prisoner's Perspective</p> <p>M: Santos, Michael. 2006. <i>Inside: Life Behind Bars in America</i>. NY: St. Martin's, pp. 1-49. [book]</p> <p>W: Santos, Michael. 2006. <i>Inside: Life Behind Bars in America</i>. NY: St. Martin's, pp. 50-101. [book]</p> <p>F: Santos, Michael. 2006. <i>Inside: Life Behind Bars in America</i>. NY: St. Martin's, pp. 102-155. [book]</p>
<p>WEEK 8 March 17, 19, 21</p>	<p>M: Santos, Michael. 2006. <i>Inside: Life Behind Bars in America</i>. NY: St. Martin's, pp. 156-195. [book]</p> <p>W: Santos, Michael. 2006. <i>Inside: Life Behind Bars in America</i>. NY: St. Martin's, pp. 196-244. [book]</p> <p>F: Santos, Michael. 2006. <i>Inside: Life Behind Bars in America</i>. NY: St. Martin's, pp. 245-290. [book]</p> <p>March 21—last day to drop class.</p>

<p>WEEK 9 March 24, 26, 28</p>	<p>Spring break!</p>
<p>WEEK 10 March 31, April 2, 4</p>	<p>VII. A Female Prisoner's View</p> <p>M: George, Erin. 2010. <i>A Woman Doing Life</i>. NY: Oxford, pp. 1-44. [book]</p> <p>W: George, Erin. 2010. <i>A Woman Doing Life</i>. NY: Oxford, pp. 45-60. [book]</p> <p>F: George, Erin. 2010. <i>A Woman Doing Life</i>. NY: Oxford, pp. 61-84. [book]</p>
<p>WEEK 11 April 7, 9, 11</p>	<p>M: George, Erin. 2010. <i>A Woman Doing Life</i>. NY: Oxford, pp. 85-129. [book]</p> <p>W: George, Erin. 2010. <i>A Woman Doing Life</i>. NY: Oxford, pp. 154-185. [book]</p> <p>F: No class (RB at conference)</p>
<p>WEEK 12 April 14, 16, 18</p>	<p>VIII. Death Row</p> <p>M: Abu-Jamal, Mumia. 1996. <i>Live from Death Row</i>. NY: Anchor, pp. 169-188; xi-xxxiv. [book]</p> <p>W: Abu-Jamal, Mumia. 1996. <i>Live from Death Row</i>. NY: Anchor, pp. 3-36. [book]</p> <p>F: Abu-Jamal, Mumia. 1996. <i>Live from Death Row</i>. NY: Anchor, pp. 37-70. [book] Paper 3 due in class.</p>
<p>WEEK 13 April 21, 23, 25</p>	<p>M: Abu-Jamal, Mumia. 1996. <i>Live from Death Row</i>. NY: Anchor, pp. 73-111. [book]</p> <p>W: Abu-Jamal, Mumia. 1996. <i>Live from Death Row</i>. NY: Anchor, pp. 115-165. [book]</p> <p>F: Get small group assignment</p>

<p>WEEK 14 April 28, 30, May 2</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">PRISON ACTIVISM AND SOCIAL CHANGE</p> <p>M: Davis, Angela. 2003. <i>Are Prisons Obsolete?</i> NY: Seven Stories, pp. 105-115. [book]; Samuels, Liz and David Stein, “Perspectives on Critical Resistance,” pp.1-14. [Moodle]; Wimsatt, William. 2001. <i>No More Prisons</i>. NY: Soft Skull Press, pp. 144-156. [Moodle]</p> <p>W: Newman, John. 1998. “Not All Prisoner Lawsuits are Frivolous,” pp. 55-57. [Moodle]; Wright, Paul and Dan Pens. 1998. “<i>Prison Legal News</i>’ Top Ten Non-Frivolous Prisoner Lawsuits,” pp. 58-61. [Moodle]</p> <p>F: Burton-Rose, Daniel. 1998. “Solidarity in Stillwater,” pp.127-131. [Moodle]; Attica Liberation Faction. 1971. “Manifesto of Demands and Anti-Depression Platform,” pp. 303-309. [Moodle]</p>
<p>WEEK 15 May 5, 7</p>	<p>M: Group Presentations (Group 1-2) Paper 4 due in class (Groups 1-2)</p> <p>W: Group Presentations (Group 3-4) Paper 4 due in class (Groups 3-4)</p>
<p>Final Exam Week</p>	<p>Exam 2 (Thursday, May 15, 8:30-11:30 a.m.)</p>