

Government 3142, AMST 3142

Incarceration, Policy Response & Self-Reflection

Variable credit (1 credit to 4 credits). Place/Time TBA

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Office Hours: to be announced once class time is arranged. You can always email us to set up an office time as well.

“We learn most deeply through human connection.”
Professor Rebecca Stoltzfus, Provost Fellow for
Public Engagement,”

“Are you driving back the boundaries of your
ignorance? -Victor Stoltzfus, Past President of
Goshen College

This class is intended to provoke some hard thinking about the relationship of committed “outsiders” and advocates of change to the experience of crime, punishment, and incarceration and to the men we meet at Auburn/Cayuga who have been in most instances long-confined to prison. We will read, think, talk and write about the incarceration experience and about policies that shape this experience. We will also think self-reflexively about the character of the ‘outsider’s’ educational, political, and personal engagement. What are the motivations and what are the goals of such engagement? What are the anticipated outcomes – personal, social, educational, political, and/or moral and perhaps spiritual? In an effort to delve deeply into these questions, we will read a broad selection of work on incarceration, itself, as well as about the experience of what has come to be termed service learning, engaged learning, or civic engagement.

At the end of the semester, we should emerge with (a) some important contextual insights into the growth of the carceral system; (b) some insights into the organization of the prison (and the place of both prisoners and correctional officers within it); and, most important, (c) some introspection into the intersubjective (inter-relational) understanding of our individual and collective thinking as we work together with incarcerated students.

Requirements. Everyone should do the weekly reading and participate actively in class discussion. This is not a lecture class. Its success will depend entirely on our collective engagement with the readings and the blogs. Everyone should do the blog for week two. Students taking the class for four credits should do the weekly assignments (reading and blogs)

and a research paper (10-15 pages) described below. Students taking the course for three credits should do the reading and the blogs, but not the research paper. Students taking the course for two credits should do the reading and five blogs over the course of the semester. Students taking the course for one credit should do the readings (and of course be prepared to participate actively in class) but do need not do the blogs.

Suggestion: There are many sources of news about incarceration-related developments (in addition to Jon Stewart, John Oliver, Stephen Colbert): The most useful one-stop source for news is the Marshall Project. Do consider subscribing:

https://www.themarshallproject.org/subscribe/e85e419a4dd68cf7c?utm_campaign=em_prelaunch&utm_source=email&utm_medium=email&utm_term=email_blast

Also, do check the Sentencing Project website and consider also subscribing to their newsletters. <http://www.sentencingproject.org/template/index.cfm>

We recommend that you see one film on the web soon because it will only be there until Feb. 8. It is most relevant for the last class discussion of forgiveness: The title is “Evolution of a Criminal” and it is available from Independent Lens for streaming [here](#) through February 8.

We will likely begin most classes with each person having a chance to raise an issue, a question, a puzzle about something that occurred in the Auburn or Cayuga class – something to which you would like a reaction from the class. Not everyone needs to raise an issue each week but there will be time to do so if you wish. More than half of the class time, however, will be spent on the reading – and linking the readings to the experiences of TAing/observing.

Materials:

There is only one required book: Elie Wiesel, *The Sunflower* (available in the Campus Store) and on reserve for 3142. All other materials are on Blackboard for the course or a link/directions are supplied to their location on the web.

Assignments:

Blogging. There is a blogging assignment –really a reflection paper – with suggestions on Discussion Board and in the syllabus of questions you might want to address that invite a one-to two page piece of writing. Each blog should be submitted on the Discussion Board 24 hours before the class if at all possible (but in the case of students who have their Auburn/Cayuga class the night before, then before class itself). This may need adjusting depending on which day we decide the class will meet – so watch this space. Except for the second week for which everyone should write on the questions asked, you don’t need to be limited by the blog questions in the syllabus/Discussion Board. Feel free to write on an issue/question/paradox/puzzle that inspires you. On the last day of class, please submit a dossier with hard copies of each of your blogs (two, please, one for MK and one for RS)

Research Paper Assignment (those taking the class for four credits) – These papers should be on some aspect of prison reform. Topic must be turned in Week 4 (Feb 8-14). Provisional Bibliography and Outline must be turned in on Week 7 March 1-7. First Draft due Week 13 April 19-25. Final Draft Due: May 8 (White Hall 319 – under the door) – please provide two hard copies of everything as well as an emailed copy of everything.

READING AND CLASS SCHEDULE

Week One: Thursday, Jan. 22 **Class Organizing:** Find a Class Time, Explain Credits

Week Two: Jan. 25-31 **Social Construction and the Prison Experience. “Why are you working with *those people*?”**

Social construction is, to put it parsimoniously:

- “The story that comes to be told about something”
- “The interpretative process through which we come to see a given phenomenon as truth.”

Req.

Barbara Babcock, “Defending the Guilty,” in Abbe Smith & Monroe H. Freedman, *How Can You Represent Those People* Palgrave 2013

Suki Kim, “The Good Student,” *NYT Magazine*, Nov. 2, 2014

Excerpts from Tocqueville, Dickens (from the tour of the Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia, and one page intro to paper by Prof. Katzenstein

We will take some time to provide handouts on basic data on incarceration in the US/NY

Week Three Feb 1-7 **What are we doing in Auburn/Cayuga? Why is there “No other place I’d rather be?”**

Req.

Michael Powell, “A Better Society? Or a Better Resume?” *NYT* March 25, 2007

Ivan Illich, “To Hell with Good Intentions”

“Rising Incarceration Rates,” in National Research Council, *The Growth of Incarceration in the United States*,” pp 33-70 (read for main points) This whole book can be downloaded for free. It is expensive to buy as a paperback.

<http://www.nap.edu/catalog/18613/the-growth-of-incarceration-in-the-united-states-exploring-causes>

Week Four Feb 8-14 **Engaged Learning: A visit with Dr. Richard Kiely, Director of Engaged Learning and Research, Cornell**

Req.:

Collier and Williams, “Reflection in Action”

Wertheimer and Kahne, “Educating the Good Citizen”

Week Five (Break) 14-18 **Blogging (by faculty)**

Req.

Compare/contrast the write-ups about their experiences in Auburn by Maurice Rediker Barry Strauss, and Julia Adolphe

http://cpep.cornell.edu/data/2009_09_03_Teaching_the_Slave_Ship_to_Prisoners.pdf

<http://barrystrauss.com/correction-course/>

Julia Adolphe music blog <http://www.newmusicbox.org/articles/incarceration-musical-inspiration-part-1-meeting-the-men-at-auburns-maximum-security-prison/>

Eddy Ellis on Language <http://centerforleadership.org/current-projects/the-languge-letter-campaign/>

Simone Weil Davis, (on confessions)

Week Six Feb 22-28 **What IS the purpose of education? Is there a distinct prison pedagogy?**

Req. Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Chapter Two, available at: <http://www.webster.edu/~corbetre/philosophy/education/freire/freire-2.html>

Karpowitz, "Prison, College, and the Paradox of Punishment," *Crime and Punishment: Perspectives from the Humanities, Studies in Law, Politics and Society*, Vol. 37, 2005, 305-331.

Week Seven March 1-7 **The Prison – Correctional Officers, Prisoners-visitor to be arranged Can you stand in someone else's shoes?**

Carceral, K.C. 2004. Chapters 5-8 from: *Behind a convict's eyes*. Belmont,CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

Conover, Ted. 2000. Excerpt from Chapter 4 of: *New Jack: Guarding Sing Sing*. New York: Random House.

Strongly recommended "Rising Incarceration Rates," in National Research Council, *The Growth of Incarceration in the United States*, "Chapter 6, "The Experience of Imprisonment," This whole book can be downloaded for free. It is expensive to buy as a paperback. <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/18613/the-growth-of-incarceration-in-the-united-states-exploring-causes>

Week Eight March 8-14 **Race and Incarceration: Why are incarceration rates so racially (ethnically) skewed?**

Req.

Alexander, Michelle. 2010. Introduction and Chapter 1 from: *The new Jim Crow: Mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness*. New York: New Press.

Cacho, Lisa Marie. 2014. The presumption of white innocence. *American Quarterly* 66(4): 1085-1090.

Rec.

James Forman, "Racial Critiques of Mass Incarceration," *NYU Law Review*, April 2012 [Yale Law School, Public Law Working Paper No. 243](http://www.law.yale.edu/documents/pdf/Faculty/Forman_RacialCritiques.pdf)
http://www.law.yale.edu/documents/pdf/Faculty/Forman_RacialCritiques.pdf

Robert D. Crutchfield, "Race and Crime: From Slavery to Social Class to Disadvantage"

Marie Gottschalk, "Interview on the Diane Rehm Show"
http://thedianerehmshow.org/shows/2015-01-07/marie_gottschalk_caught_the_prison_state_and_the_lockdown_of_american_politics
Also see her book *Caught: The Prison State and the Lockdown of American Politics*, Princeton University Press, 2015.

Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness; Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010

Goffman, Alice, *On the Run; Fugitive Life in an American City* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014

Victor Rios, *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Hispanic Boys in Oakland* New York: NYU Press, 2011

Week Nine March 15-21 What explains disproportionate "Black Violence"?

Req.:

Sampson, Robert J., and Janet L. Lauritsen. 1997. Racial and ethnic disparities in crime and criminal justice in the United States. *Crime and Justice* 21: 311-374.

Or possibly: Robert D. Crutchfield, "Race and Crime: From Slavery to Social Class to Disadvantage."

Week Ten March 22-28 **Bipartisan Sentencing Reform**

Req.:

Joe Margulies on the ideological lessons from Ferguson:
<http://verdict.justia.com/2014/11/26/lessons-ferguson>

One reading to be added

We are leaving several of the following weeks open for now so that we can select among a number of topics that might prove of interest: Solitary Confinement, families and communities, Participatory Action Research, Reentry, Fines and Fees, Several videos, “The Two Americas” “The House I live in”, “The Last Graduation”

Spring Break March 30-April 4

Week Eleven April 6-11

Week Twelve April 12-18

Week Thirteen April 19 -25 **Felony Murder and the Moral Society**

Req.:

ˆ Guyora Binder, “Making the Best of Felony Murder.”

Jeffrey Reiman, “The Moral Ambivalence of Crime in an Unjust Society”

Week Fourteen April 26 – May 2 **Forgiveness** - Last Formal Class (Dinner at Prof. Katzenstein’s)

Req.: Elie Wiesel, *Sunflower* (to purchase – available in Campus Store)

Week Fifteen May 4-6 Presentation, Discussion of final papers

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Cornell University *Code of Academic Integrity*. This means that any written work you submit in this course will be your own. The Code of Academic Integrity and Acknowledging the Work of Others is found in the Policy Notebook for the Cornell Community and also on the web at <http://www.cornell.edu/UniversityFaculty/docs/main.html>. An additional document you may want to consult is posted at <http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html>. A Cornell tutorial called Recognizing and Avoiding Plagiarism can be found at <http://plagiarism.arts.cornell.edu/tutorial/index.cfm>. If you are in any doubt about how to cite material that you wish to use please consult your TA. You are required to submit your paper in both hard and electronic form. The electronic version will be run through a special software program that verifies the originality and authenticity of your work. Your enrollment in this course signifies implies that you have granted your permission to submit your written work to services that check the authenticity and originality of your work. You should also be aware of the fact that you may not turn in the same piece of work (or part thereof) for credit in multiple classes, either in the same semester or while at Cornell in general.

OTHER UNIVERSITY POLICIES

I respect and uphold Cornell University policies and regulations pertaining to the observation of religious holidays; assistance available to the physically handicapped, visually and or/hearing impaired student; sexual harassment; and racial or ethnic discrimination.

Students with Disabilities: In compliance with the Cornell University policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for student with disabilities. Students are encouraged to register with Student Disability Services to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations. Students seeking accommodations should submit to me an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services within the first two weeks of the semester.

Religious Observances: Students may ask for reasonable and timely accommodations for sincerely held religious beliefs. Please review the syllabus closely to determine if your religion will present any scheduling conflicts with any of the assignments. You must inform me of any conflicts within the first two weeks of the semester.

Copyright Material: Whether it is especially marked as copyright material or not, the instructor expressly prohibits students to buy or sell any of the course material. Such a behavior constitutes a very serious academic misconduct that neither the instructor nor Cornell will tolerate

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of Turnitin.com service is subject to the Usage Policy posted on the Turnitin.com site.