

MASS INCARCERATION AND FAMILY LIFE: SOC 3850

Spring 2016, 4 credits

Professor: Anna Haskins, Department of Sociology
ahaskins@cornell.edu

Seminar: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 1:25-2:40pm, 438 Uris Hall

Office Hours: Thursdays, 3:10-4:10pm, 354 Uris Hall

Course Website: search for “Soc 3850” in Blackboard (www.blackboard.cornell.edu)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Given the dramatic rise in mass incarceration over the last 40 years, understanding the spillover consequences of this uniquely American phenomenon has become increasingly important as a growing number of American families have now had direct experience with imprisonment. The goal of this course is to provide a broad overview of the ripple effects of mass imprisonment on family life and how it shapes opportunities and disadvantage for communities, families, and especially children. This will be done through: 1) the close analysis of empirical research on the spillover and intergenerational consequences of incarceration across a range of outcomes, as well as 2) a consideration of broad accounts of how imprisonment affects family life. With the concentration of imprisonment often falling among poor, minority families, much of the readings in this course will focus on family life in urban communities, however, we will spend a little time exploring broader accounts, including those of rural communities and encourage students to consider impacts for families exposed to incarceration due to white-collar crimes.

ASSIGNED READINGS AND COURSE WEBSITE

There are **five (5) required books** for this class which are available for purchase at The Cornell Store, Kraftees, Amazon.com or are on reserve at Uris Library:

Braman, Donald. 2007. *Doing Time on the Outside*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Comfort, Megan. 2008. *Doing Time Together*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

National Research Council. 2014. *The Growth of Incarceration in the United States: Exploring Causes and Consequences*. Committee on Causes and Consequences of High Rates of Incarceration, J. Travis, B. Western, and S. Redburn, Editors. Committee on Law and Justice, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.¹

Nurse, Ann. 2002. *Fatherhood Arrested*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.

Wakefield, Sara and Christopher Wildeman. 2014. *Children of the Prison Boom: Mass Incarceration and the Future of American Inequality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Additional assigned readings are available on the course website, in which you should be automatically enrolled after registering for the course.

¹ **NOTE:** if you do not want to buy this book, the required chapters can be downloaded for free at:
http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=18613

Please come to class having read the listed assigned readings for that day!

Some readings have technical material, including complex tables and formulas. Don't be intimidated! Focus on understanding the arguments presented in the text. It is not necessary to understand the technical stuff. Assume they did it right, and feel free to ask questions about the technical material during class and in your response papers.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

The grade in this course will be composed of **four** components: **(1)** attendance and participation (15%); **(2)** response papers on the readings (20%); **(3)** a research presentation on a selected reading (5%); and **(4)** three longer but still short (5-8 page) papers (60%).

- (1) *Attendance and participation:* Since this is a seminar, coming to class is mandatory, as is doing the readings and participating in discussions. This will form 15 percent of your final grade. Participation extends beyond talking the most or talking the least. Participation is evidence of critical engagement with the subject material and quality participation constitutes being prepared, being an attentive listener, involvement with class activities, asking insightful questions, paying attention, and not hindering anyone's learning. By nature, some of the material we will cover in this class is contentious. Thus, my goal for our sections is to create an environment where open, respectful, and informed discussions can occur. In order for this to happen there must be respect on all levels and from all participants. It is important for all of us to work together to keep our classroom environment safe, engaging, and open to discussion and questions! If discussions get intense (and they may), I ask that we all keep the following guidelines in mind: **a)** Be open-minded and remember that you are in a class with people from a variety of backgrounds so be cognizant of that; **b)** Think about what you want to say first and have a reasonable justification for any stance you take; **c)** Wait to speak until the person currently speaking has finished. We can agree to disagree about ideas and theories, but personal attacks will not be tolerated.
- (2) *Response papers:* You will be asked to complete ten response papers (about 1 typed page, double spaced, 1" margins) over the course of this class. Each response counts for two points, for a total of 20 percent of your grade. These should not be mere summaries of the readings, but instead provide an opportunity to ask questions or talk through difficult issues raised in the text. They should cover all assigned readings for that day. Since these will help guide the discussion, they are due (via e-mail to me) at midnight (EST) the day before the class. I will not accept late response papers.
- (3) *Research presentation:* Starting in Week 3, each student will give a short (~6 slide) PowerPoint presentation to the class on one of the assigned research articles. More directions will be provided, but basically this will cover a summary of the research conducted, connections to class readings and current events and provide discussion questions for the class. This will constitute 5% of your final grade and can overlap with response paper readings.
- (4) *Longer papers:* You will be required to complete three longer papers (5-8 typed pages, double spaced). Each of these will count toward 20 percent of your final grade for a total of 60 percent of your grade. I will give you a better idea of each paper's topic, specific grading criteria and due date closer to their assignment, but my general

policy is that the best paper assignments are broad enough that you can showcase your knowledge of the entire area covered and the specific areas that most intrigued you. For these three papers, you lose ten (10) points per day the paper is late without a legitimate (e.g. documented illness) excuse. However, if you contact me in advance and explain why something will be late, then there may be some more flexibility.

I do have a **Re-grading policy** in that I generally don't like to re-grade papers and if I do, 99% of the time the grade doesn't change. I take great care when grading your assignments and do my best to give the paper the grade it deserved. If I return an assignment to you and you are unsatisfied with the grade, please read over the comments I wrote *and* review the assignment's grading criteria before you come to me about a re-grading issue. I will *not* review any papers until 24 hours after I have returned the assignment. This gives you time to think about my comments related to the assignment's instructions and grading criteria. If you are still unsatisfied, you can set up an appointment with me and we can discuss your assignment. All concerns presented at this meeting should be put in writing and you should come prepared with a good argument as to why I should re-grade your paper. If you come unprepared, I will not re-grade your assignment. You have within one week after the above mentioned 24-hour period to contest a grade. Keep in mind though that re-grading does not always guarantee a grade change in the positive direction.

Final grades will be assigned on the basis of the following distribution:

99-100% = A+	80-82% = B-	63-66% = D
93-98% = A	77-79% = C+	60-62% = D-
90-92% = A-	73-76% = C	Below 60% = F
87-89% = B+	70-72% = C-	
83-86% = B	67-69% = D+	

GENERAL CLASS EXPECTATIONS AND WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM ME

Outside of the formal course requirements described above, there are a few expectations I have for you this semester. I expect you to learn from and teach each other (including me). **I expect you to be respectful of your peers and myself by not engaging in activities or conversations not pertaining to class activities (e.g. texting or inappropriate laptop/tablet use).** I expect you to let me know when you need help or do not understand something and how I can help you best learn the material.

You can expect me to work to help you better understand the material covered in class and the texts. I will take your questions seriously, learn from the things you all may teach me and learn from the mistakes I may make. I will also put great effort into making our discussions as interesting and engaging as I can. Lastly, you can expect me to be respectful of you, honoring the fact that we are all diverse with respect to race, ethnicity, gender, social class, sexual orientation, age, disability/ability, country of origin and religion. Many of these expectations are also courtesies I hope you extend to each other.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY, PLAGIARISM AND ACCOMMODATIONS

All students are expected to adhere to the university's Code of Academic Integrity (found here: <http://www.theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/AcadInteg/code.html>) and be aware of the related consequences. Your work is expected to be your own, and cheating, in any form, is truly not worth it. A clear definition of plagiarism as well as information about disciplinary sanctions for academic misconduct may be found at:

<http://plagiarism.arts.cornell.edu/tutorial/index.cfm>. If you find yourself in a bind, come talk to me. It is better to be honest and accept some minor consequences than permanently tarnish your academic record.

I am happy to make academic accommodations to students in need. As stated on the Student Disability Services website (<http://sds.cornell.edu/>), “Students requesting academic accommodations are required to provide an accommodation letter from SDS to the professor within the first two weeks of classes, or at least 2 weeks before accommodations are expected to begin if accommodations are granted or modified further into the semester. This letter verifies that the student is registered with SDS and specifies accommodations. Accommodations will not be provided retroactively. Early notification and active communication with instructors is the best way to ensure that your accommodations are handled smoothly.”

INEQUALITY MINOR

This course serves as a required course within the cross-college Inequality Minor that introduces students to the various tracks and areas of specialization that concentrators might pursue. For further information on the Inequality Minor, please consult the website for the [Center for the Study of Inequality](#) (CSI), or contact Clara Elpi the CSI administrator (office: 363 Uris Hall; email: inequality@cornell.edu; phone: 607-254-8674).

CONTACTING ME

The best way to reach me is to come talk to me during office hours. You should feel free to stop by during listed office hours or e-mail me to set up a meeting time, however, I encourage you to first consult the syllabus or a classmate with any questions.

This syllabus can be understood as a contract between us. I do, however, reserve the right to make minor changes in the course as I see necessary for the good of the class. If I do, I will make sure everyone is made aware of these changes in a timely and appropriate matter.

**COURSE SCHEDULE
SPRING 2016**

INTRODUCTION

Week 1—Jan 28

1/28: Introduction and Course Overview

MASS IMPRISONMENT

Week 2—Feb 2 & 4

2/2: The Basics, part 1: History, Stats and Trends

Assigned readings: Garland 2001; NRC 2014 (ch. 2 & 4)

2/4: The Basics, part 2: Causes and Consequences

Assigned readings: Beckett & Western 2001; Hattery & Smith 2012; Wakefield & Uggen 2010

Sign up for Research Presentations (starting 2/11)

COMMUNITIES

Week 3—Feb 9 & 11

2/9: Spatial Concentration of Mass Incarceration

Assigned readings: Sampson & Loeffler 2010; Wacquant 2001

2/11: Consequences for Communities

Assigned readings: Clear 2007 (ch.6); Lynch & Sabol 2004; Eason 2014 (skim)

Week 4—Feb 16 & 18

2/16: No Class (February Break)

2/18: Implications for Inequality

Assigned readings: Hagan & Foster 2012; Wildeman & Muller 2012 (pgs.1-10); Brayne 2014

FAMILIES (qualitative work)

Week 5— Feb 23 & 25

2/23: Implications for Family Life in Communities

Assigned readings: Rose & Clear 2003; Wildeman & Muller 2012 (pgs. 11-22); NRC 2014 (ch.10)

First long paper assignment given (due 3/10 by start of class)

2/25: Fatherhood Arrested

Assigned readings: Nurse 2002 (ch.1-2)

Week 6—March 1 & 3

3/1: Fatherhood Arrested

Assigned readings: Nurse 2002 (ch.3-4)

3/3: Doing Time on the Outside

Assigned readings: Braman 2004 (Introduction and Part 2; skip Part 1)

Week 7—March 8 & 10

3/8: Doing Time on the Outside

Assigned readings: Braman 2004 (Part 3)

3/10: Doing Time on the Outside

Assigned readings: Braman 2004 (Part 4 and Conclusion)

First long paper due by start of class

Week 8—March 15 & 17

3/15: Doing Time Together

Assigned readings: Comfort 2008 (ch.1-2)

3/17: Doing Time Together

Assigned readings: Comfort 2008 (ch.3-4)

Week 9—March 22 & 24

3/22: Doing Time Together

Assigned readings: Comfort 2008 (ch.5-6)

3/24: Surveillance and Relationship Maintenance

Assigned readings: Goffman 2009; Lageson 2015

Second long paper assignment given (due 4/19 by start of class)

Week 10—March 29 & 31

3/29: No Class (Spring Break)

3/31: No Class (Spring Break)

FAMILIES (*quantitative work*)

Week 11—April 5 & 7

4/5: Relationships and Health

Assigned readings: Lopoo & Western 2005; Massoglia, Remster & King 2011; Wildeman, Schnittker & Turney 2012

4/7: Parenting and Resources

Assigned readings: Turney, Schnittker, & Wildeman 2012; Edin, Nelson and Paranal 2004; NRC 2014 (ch.9, pgs.260-270)

Week 12—April 12 & 14

4/12: Alternative Care Arrangements (kinship care)

Assigned readings: Turney 2014; Demby 2012; Turanovic, Rodriguez & Pratt 2012

4/14: Alternative Care Arrangements (foster care)

Assigned readings: Swann & Sylvester 2006; Andersen & Wildeman 2014

CHILDREN (*qualitative & quantitative work*)

Week 13—April 19 & 21

4/19: Children of the Prison Boom

Assigned readings: Wakefield & Wildeman 2014 (ch.1-3; skim 1)

Second long paper due by start of class

4/21: Mental Health, Behavior, and Delinquency

Assigned readings: NRC 2014 (ch.9, p.270-280); Wakefield & Wildeman 2014 (ch.4); Foster and Hagan 2013; Roetterger & Swisher 2011 (skim); Whalen & Loper 2014 (skim)

Week 14—April 26 & 28

4/26: Education

Assigned readings: Haskins 2014; Turney & Haskins 2014; Nichols & Loper 2012

4/28: Physical Health

Assigned readings: Wakefield & Wildeman 2014 (ch.5-6)

WRAP-UP and FINAL PAPER MEETINGS

Weeks 15 and 16—May 3, 5 & 10

5/3: Consequences for Intergenerational Inequality

Assigned readings: Wakefield and Wildeman 2014 (ch.7-8); Foster and Hagan 2015

Third long paper assignment given (due 5/20 by midnight)

5/5: Consequences for Societal Inequality

Assigned readings: NRC (ch.11&13)

5/10: Final Paper Meetings

Third long paper due by 11:59pm on Friday, May 20th, 2016

**Note, this syllabus is subject to change, if changes occur you will be notified in class.