

## **IMPRISONMENT (SOCIOLOGICAL / SOCPSY 3RR3)** Term 2, Winter 2024

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## **Course Description**

This course will introduce students to the history, politics, and consequences of incarceration in North America and abroad. We will examine why and how we have punished in the past, the reasons and methods for punishment in contemporary society, and how punishment is experienced by people housed in prisons and those released back into society. Using “the prison” as our unit of analysis, we will tackle both theoretical and substantive issues around incarceration and explore questions such as: 1) What is the relationship between incarceration and class, race, ethnicity, gender, and age? 2) What determines the scope of incarceration and what impact does it have on those housed in prisons, their families, and the communities they come from? 3) How do prisons contribute to the growing penalization of poverty in modern society? 4) How do we go about studying prisons, and what are the strengths and limitations of various approaches?

## **Course Objectives**

By the end of the course, students will have learned about:

- The politics, history, and collateral consequences of incarceration
- How we punish and the multiple (and often contradictory) aims of incarceration
- The racial, ethnic, and gendered aspects of who we incarcerate
- The overlap between victims and offenders
- The prisoner society, prison codes, and how prisons operate
- Correctional officer culture, discretion, and the dynamics of authority in a total institution
- How to improve their writing and analytical skills
- How to think critically about research and media depictions of prisons and those currently and formerly housed in these spaces.

## **Required Materials and Texts**

Course material will consist primarily of lectures, journal articles, book chapters, and audio/visual resources (e.g., documentaries, podcasts, short video clips, etc.). All of this material will be organized and available to you on Avenue to Learn. If you are unable to access the website, please contact your instructor to enroll you. Please check the website frequently for class announcements and other important information.

*N.B. Students should be aware that, when accessing electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor*

## **Class Format**

The classroom will be our learning community. Students are expected to complete all readings before class each week, come prepared to engage with the material, and be ready to participate – as we will have in-class discussions and small group activities based on the course material. Tests and exams are based on required readings and weekly lectures. As such, attending class is necessary for success in this course. In order to learn with and from each other, it is important that we all come to class with an open mind, ready to share ideas and opinions – and, potentially, have those ideas and opinions challenged by others in the classroom. The rule is that we do this respectfully.

## **Course Evaluation – Overview**

1. Midterm Test (25%): Friday, February 16
2. Group Video Presentation (15%): Friday, March 15 or 22
3. Review Essay (35%): Friday, April 5
4. Final Exam (25%): TBD by Registrar (\*This is final test for the course)

## **Course Evaluation – Details**

### **Test 1 (25%), Friday, February 16<sup>th</sup>**

This test will consist of multiple-choice and true/false questions. It will assess your knowledge of the lecture material, assigned readings, and audio/visual materials for WEEKS 1 to 5 of the course. More detailed information about the structure of the test will be communicated to you in class and via email.

### **Group Presentation (15%), Friday, March 15<sup>th</sup> or March 22<sup>nd</sup>**

In Week 2, you will be assigned to a “presentation group” consisting of 5 students (alternatively, you can choose your own group members). This assignment requires that you work on a course-related topic of your choosing (more details about these topics to follow) and delivering an in-class presentation during Week 10 or 11. The presentations should be approximately 15 minutes long. More detailed information about this assignment will be shared in class and via email.

### **Review Essay (35%), Friday, April 5<sup>th</sup>**

This paper will be a “review essay,” where you will examine an imprisonment-related question. This essay should not only summarize the existing literature on your topic, but also evaluate it, take a stance, and suggest directions for future research. I will provide a more comprehensive list of potential topics for you to choose from in Week 4 (or you can pick your own topic, with the TA’s approval). Your essay should not exceed 1500 words, excluding title page and references. More detailed information about this assignment will be shared in class and via email.

**Final Exam (25%), TBD by Registrar**

This examination will consist of multiple-choice and true/false questions. It will assess your knowledge of the lecture material, assigned readings, and audio/visual materials for WEEKS 8 to 13 of the course. More detailed information about the structure of the final exam will be communicated in class and via email.

## **Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings**

### **Week 1 (Friday, January 12)**

#### **Introduction to the Course & The Birth of the Prison**

Readings:

Rubin, A. 2018. "Prison History." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Criminology*, pp. 1-32.

### **Week 2 (Friday, January 19)**

#### **Why We Punish**

Readings:

Garland, D. 1990. *Punishment & Modern Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, "Chapter 11: Punishment as a Cultural Agent."

### **Week 3 (Friday, January 26)**

#### **Mass Incarceration: Causes & Consequences**

Readings:

Garland, D. 2001. "Introduction: The Meaning of Mass Imprisonment." *Punishment and Society*, 3(1): 5-7.

Western, B., 2006. *Punishment and Inequality in America*. Russell Sage Foundation. "Chapter 1: Mass Imprisonment," pp. 11-33.

Pager, D. 2003. "The Mark of a Criminal Record." *American Journal of Sociology*, 108(5): 937-975.

Comfort, M. 2007. "Punishment Beyond the Legal Offender." *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 3: 271-296.

### **Week 4 (Friday, February 2)**

#### **The Pains of Imprisonment, Prison Codes, & Human Rights Issues**

Readings:

Crewe, B. 2011. "Depth, weight, tightness: Revisiting the pains of imprisonment." *Punishment & Society*, 13(5): 509-529

Gawande, A. 2009. "Hellhole: The United States holds tens of thousands of inmates in long-term solitary confinement. Is this torture?" *The New Yorker*. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2009/03/30/hellhole>  
(Please use this link)

### **Week 5 (Friday, February 9)**

#### **Correctional Officers, Social Order, & Control Inside Prisons**

Readings:

Liebling, A. 2000. "Prison Officer, Policing, and the Use of Discretion." *Theoretical Criminology*, 4(3): 333-357.

Haggerty, K. and Bucerius, S. 2020. "Picking Battles: Correctional Officers, Rules, and Discretion in Prison." *Criminology*. Online First

### **Week 6 (Friday, February 16): \*\*\*MIDTERM TEST\*\*\* (25%)**

### **Week 7 (Friday, February 23)**

**\*Mid-Term Recess – No Class\***

### **Week 8 (Friday, March 1)**

#### **Incarceration & Social Inequality: Race, Class, & Gender (Part I)**

Readings:

Beckett, K. and Western, B. 2001. "Governing Social Marginality: Welfare, Incarceration, and the Transformation of State Policy." *Punishment & Society*, 3: 43-59.

Alexander, M. 2010. *The New Jim Crow*. New York: New Press.  
"Introduction," pp. 1-19.

Chartrand, V. 2019. Unsettled times: Indigenous incarceration and the links between colonialism and the penitentiary in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 61(3): 67-89.

Tetrault, J. E., Bucerius, S. & Haggerty, K. 2020. Multiculturalism under confinement: Prisoner race relations inside western Canadian Prisons. *Sociology*, 54(3): 534-555.

### **Week 9 (Friday, March 8)**

#### **Incarceration & Social Inequality: Race, Class, & Gender (Part II)**

Readings:

Wacquant, L. 2001. "Deadly Symbiosis: When Ghetto and Prison Meet and Mesh." *Punishment & Society*, 3(1): 95-133.

Kruttschnitt, C. 2011. "Women's Prisons." In *Oxford Handbook of Crime and Criminal Justice*, Ed. M. Tonry. Oxford University Press, pp. 897-924.

Bucerius, S., Haggerty, K., & Dunford, D. 2020. "Prison as Temporary Refuge: Amplifying the Voices of Women Detained in Prison." *The British Journal of Criminology*, Online First

**Week 10 (Friday, March 15) – \*\*\* Group Presentations \*\*\***

**University of Alberta Prison Project & Group Presentations**

Readings

Bucerius, S. & Haggerty, K. 2019. "Fentanyl behind bars: The implications of synthetic opiates on prisoners and correctional officers." *Journal of International Drug Policy* 71:133-138.

Bucerius, S., Haggerty, K., Berardi, L. "The everyday life of drugs in prison." *Crime and Justice* 52(1): 83-123.

**Week 11 (Friday, March 22) – \*\*\* Group Presentations \*\*\***

**Nordic Exceptionalism & Group Presentations**

Readings

Pratt, J. 2008. "Scandinavian exceptionalism in an era of penal excess: Part I: The nature and roots of Scandinavian exceptionalism." *The British Journal of Criminology*, 48(2): 119-137.

Pratt, J. 2008. "Scandinavian exceptionalism in an era of penal excess: Part II: Does Scandinavian exceptionalism have a future?" *The British Journal of Criminology*, 48(3): 275-292.

**Week 12 (Friday, March 29)**

**\*Good Friday – No Class\***

**Week 13 (Friday, April 5): \*\*\* DUE: ESSAY \*\*\* (35%)**

**Rehabilitation, Reentry, & Reintegration**

Readings:

Morenoff, Jeffrey D. and David J. Harding (2014) "Incarceration, prisoner re-entry and communities." *Annual Review of Sociology*, 40: 411-429

Western, B. 2018. *Homeward: Life in the Year After Prison*. New York: Russel Sage Foundation, 'Chapter 3: Transitions,' pp. 26-45.

*\*This schedule and list of materials is subject to change by the instructor.*



## **Course Policies**

### **Submission of Assignments**

- All assignments, tests, and exams must be completed in order to pass the course.
- Please submit your assignment electronically to the TA, on or before the due date.
- Assignment Formatting: 12-point font, Times New Roman, double space, one-inch margins.
- All assignments, tests, and exams will be returned to you in a timely fashion.

### **Late Assignments**

Barring exceptional circumstances (i.e., serious illness), there will be a deduction of 10% per day, including weekends (10% for the whole weekend) for all late assignments. Deductions are calculated per day, not per 24-hour period. After 5 days, late assignments will no longer be accepted (unless an extension has been granted). Please submit your late assignments to your TA via email.

### **Absences, Missed Work, Illness**

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

### **Avenue to Learn**

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

## **University Policies**

### **Academic Integrity Statement**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty

- Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- Improper collaboration in group work.
- Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

### **Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

### **Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)**

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a [RISO](#) accommodation should submit their request to their Faculty Office normally within 10 working days of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

### **Conduct Expectations**

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, whether in person or online.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

## **Copyright and Recording**

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

## **Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy**

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

## **Course Modification**

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

## **Extreme Circumstances**

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

## **Grades**

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
90-100	A+
85-89	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F