CJS 400 Senior Seminar
Punishment, Prisons, and American Culture
Monday 4:00PM – 6:30PM
LARTS 204

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Office Hours:
Monday 11:00-1:00
Tuesday by appointment
Wednesday 11:00-1:00

COURSE OVERVIEW

CJS 400 provides the opportunity for advanced investigation of a topic related to Crime and Justice Studies. For the capstone project in the seminar, students will complete a project of independent and original research and analysis, within parameters established by the instructor. Students will communicate their findings both orally and in writing.

This course focuses on the ways that various forms of punishment shape and are shaped by American culture. We will explore theories of the development of the prison, as well as analyze its place within contemporary American society. We will also view and critique representations of prisons and punishment in multiple domains of popular culture, as we consider the ways we engage (or do not engage) with the suffering of others in a prison society.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

You must purchase one book:
Michelle Brown, *The Culture of Punishment: Prison, Society, and Spectacle*

The rest of the course materials will be available online. I will post links to various sources throughout the semester. It is your responsibility to check myCourses at least once per week (before the class meeting) to see if new material has been posted.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Course-specific:
Upon completion of the seminar, students will be able to:
1. understand concepts, theories, and empirical findings in the topic area as it relates to Crime and Justice Studies;
2. utilize basic research skills including research design, data analysis, and interpretation;
3. access, understand, and synthesize professional and popular writing;
4. formulate, articulate, and analyze arguments;
5. assess the relevance and weight of evidence;
6. write clearly and persuasively; and
7. organize ideals in a focused paper and presentation.
University Studies:
Upon completion of the capstone study, students will be able to:
1. synthesize the knowledge and skills gained within major courses, independently complete a research-based project or creative work and integrate the results of both in an open-ended project or experience (projects within the major are encouraged);
2. integrate knowledge and principles from the field of study with those of the broader University Studies curriculum;
3. demonstrate advanced information literacy skills by selecting, evaluating, integrating, and documenting information gathered from multiple sources into the discipline-specific writing;
4. communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, the results of the project or experience.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

There are three major assignments for the course (other than attendance and participation):
1.) A written proposal for your research paper. The proposal must include an explanation of how the chosen topic was shaped by earlier coursework both inside and outside of the major. (Detailed instructions are provided separately.)
2.) A research-based paper of no less than 10 pages that demonstrates independent, original integration and analysis. You will be required to locate original social science research and synthesize the literature as part of the paper. (Detailed instructions are provided separately.)
3.) An oral presentation of no less than 10 minutes. You will present to the class your research question and design and/or the results of your individual projects.

ATTENDANCE: Because we only meet once per week, you are required to attend all scheduled meetings this term. Please refer to the dates and make sure that you reschedule all other commitments around these dates. If you miss one class, your attendance grade will be reduced by half; if you miss two or more classes, you will receive a zero for your attendance grade. Excused absences with proper documentation are an exception to this rule.

PARTICIPATION: The participation grade is based on your level of active and engaged participation in the class meetings, as well as your timely submission of thoughtful discussion comments/questions. **You must bring at least one discussion question/comment to each class meeting** (these must be submitted in paper format) and contribute to the discussion. Participation is worth 2.5 points for each week there is scheduled material to discuss (10 weeks), for a total of 25% of the total course grade.

GRADING CRITERIA

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<td>Proposal</td>
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<td>Research Paper</td>
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Final letter grades will be determined on the following scale:

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

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

For more information, please see these and other policies online at:
http://www.umassd.edu/studentaffairs/studenthandbook/

Academic Integrity: All students are expected to act with honor and integrity. Your work should be original and at all times be the result of your best efforts to achieve your creative goals. All UMass Dartmouth students are expected to maintain high standards of academic integrity and scholarly practice. Academic dishonesty of any variety, whether the result of a failure to understand proper academic and scholarly procedure or as an act of intentional dishonesty, will not be tolerated. You are expected to understand the necessity of citing sources in all academic work to avoid plagiarism. Any student caught engaging in academic dishonesty will fail the course.

Incomplete grades: These may only be given in exceptional circumstances at the instructor’s discretion and at the student’s request made no more than 48 hours after the final examination or class. The student must be passing at the time of the request or sufficiently close to passing for the instructor to believe that upon completion the student will pass the course. If the work is not completed within a year of recording the I, the grade will become an F(I). “I” grades cannot be changed to W.

Withdrawals: A student may withdraw from a course after the Add/Drop period, and up to the completion of the tenth week of the semester. No credit is awarded. W grades do not affect a student’s GPA. More than 24 credits of W makes the student subject to dismissal from the university.

Late Registration: All course requirements apply to all students, regardless of their first day of attending the course.

Center for Access and Success: Any students with physical or learning needs that require attention please let me know right away. I will be happy to make any necessary arrangements with you and the Center for Access and Success in Oak Glen Hall.

EMAIL POLICY

I check email regularly, but please do not expect an immediate response. I will do my best to respond to email within 48 hours (on business days). If I don’t respond within that time frame, please assume that I didn’t receive the email and send it again. Please do not expect lengthy responses to emails. I have four designated office hours each week. This is time that has been set aside specifically for you, and I encourage you to come talk with me during this time. If you can’t make it during the scheduled hours, please let me know so we can try to schedule a meeting.

Some specifics about my email policy: *Please label the subject line of your email with the course name.* Also be sure to include both your first and last name in the email. (This is a
practice you should carry over to your other courses, as well. Trust me – your professors will appreciate it.)
*Please do not email me to ask where my office is located or when my office hours are held. This information is on the syllabus, which is posted on myCourses. If you do this, I will not respond.
*Please do not email me to tell me why you weren’t in class or to ask what you missed unless you have an excused absence with proper documentation. As mentioned above, attendance at each session is mandatory.

**LAPTOP/PHONE POLICY**

No laptops, phones, or other electronic devices should ever be used during class time (unless you have a note from the Center for Access and Success). No texting, tweeting, emailing, messaging, etc. None. Period. It’s distracting for everyone, and I will call you out on it. Repeated violation of this policy will negatively affect your participation grade. If you have an emergency, please feel free to leave the classroom to handle it.

**CLASSROOM DISCUSSION POLICY**

I aim to facilitate the creation of a space in which everyone feels safe, respected, and valued. Discussions and debates—if handled correctly—are healthy and can oftentimes encourage us to think in new and interesting ways. In order for this to happen, all parties must treat one another with dignity, recognizing that each of us enters the classroom with unique life experiences. Thus, we should be conscious of the language we use and should address others in a respectful, professional manner. Don’t make assumptions about what others know or who they are. Avoid labeling language and practice heightened awareness if/when we discuss potentially harmful topics. Any students that engage in dismissive, disrespectful, or threatening language will be removed from the classroom by the professor.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

All materials must be thoroughly read by the dates outlined below.

**Week 1: Monday, January 26: Introduction and Instructions**
- Introductions and Course Overview

**Week 2: Monday, February 2:**
- “The Body of the Condemned,” Ch. 1 of *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault
- “Erasing the Spectacle of Racialized State Violence,” Ch. 1 of *Resisting State Violence*, Joy James
Week 3: Monday, February 9:
- “The Origins of U.S. Imprisonment: Beyond the Penitentiary,” Ch.1 of Explaining U.S. Imprisonment, Mary Bosworth

Week 4: Tuesday, February 17:
- No class meeting
- Watch: “Miami Mega Jail” (Parts 1 & 2), Louis Theroux
- Work on proposals

Week 5: Monday, February 23:
- “Introduction: Notes on Becoming a Penal Spectator,” Ch. 1 of The Culture of Punishment: Prison, Society, and Spectacle, Michelle Brown
- “Prison Theory: Engaging the Work of Punishment,” Ch. 2 of The Culture of Punishment: Prison, Society, and Spectacle, Michelle Brown
- “COPS and the Visual Economy of Punishment,” Ofelia Ortiz Cuevas, Ch. 5 in Abolition Now!, ed. The CR10 Publications Collective

Week 6: Monday, March 2:
- “Prison Iconography: Regarding the Pain of Others,” Ch. 3 of The Culture of Punishment: Prison, Society, and Spectacle, Michelle Brown
- “Screening Crime: Cultural Criminology Goes to the Movies,” Majid Yar, Ch. 5 in Framing Crime: Cultural Criminology and the Image, ed. K. Hayward & M. Presdee
- Watch: “The Shawshank Redemption”

Week 7: Monday, March 9: *****PROPOSAL DUE*****
- “Black Women’s Prison Narratives and the Intersection of Race, Gender, and Sexuality in U.S. Prisons,” Breea C. Willingham
- Watch: Episode of “Orange is the New Black”

Week 8: March 16-20 - SPRING BREAK
Week 9: Monday, March 23:
- “Problematizing Carceral Tours,” Justin Piche and Kevin Walby

Week 10: Monday, March 30:
- “Prison Portents: Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib, and the War on Terror,” Ch. 5 of *The Culture of Punishment: Prison, Society, and Spectacle*, Michelle Brown
- Watch: “Standard Operating Procedure,” Errol Morris

Week 11: Monday, April 6:
- Read: Choice of work written during/after/about incarceration
- Watch: Choice of ‘prison film’

Week 12: Monday, April 13:
- “Prison Otherwise: Cultural Meanings Beyond Punishment,” Ch. 7 of *The Culture of Punishment: Prison, Society, and Spectacle*, Michelle Brown

Week 13: Monday, April 20 - NO CLASS

Week 14: Monday, April 27:
- Final Paper Presentations

Week 15: Monday, May 4:
- Final Paper Presentations
- Final Papers Due (All papers are due on this date, regardless of when your presentation is scheduled.)