

BLS 380/CJS 380/WGS 300: Abolitionism
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Crime and Justice Studies
UMass Dartmouth

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we explore penal abolitionist theory and movements. We address the racialized, sexualized, gendered and colonizing praxis of incarceration and the manners in which the criminal justice system institutionalizes violence in the place of justice.

We study the history and growth of contemporary prison and penal abolitionist movements. This will start with the theoretical and changing trajectories of **ICOPA** (International Conference on Penal Abolition) followed by abolitionist movements emerging within the United States: the history of slavery and lynching abolitionist movements and the growth of **Critical Resistance**, a modern day abolitionist movement and organization working towards abolishing the Prison-Industrial-Complex.

Finally, we will study **Black and Pink**, a prison abolitionist organization based in Boston aimed at supporting and advocating for LGBTQ prisoners while pursuing the larger goals of prison abolition. We will end the semester with shared written exercises of self-reflection through which we will interrogate the inconsistencies, contradictions and brutalities that we live with at this time, the era of incarceration. Along that way we examine how theory and practice guide abolitionist movements and interrogate the roots and objectives of justice, above and beyond the limiting and colonizing parameters of the criminal justice system.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ⊗ Learn and distinguish between various forms of abolitionism: prison, penal, police, carceral, historic and contemporary
- ⊗ Learn to differentiate between penal abolition and penal reform
- ⊗ Develop strong understandings of the histories and trajectories of Black Lives Matter movements and their relationship to global movements for racial justice.
- ⊗ Learn about historic struggles for abolition and strategies that worked, failed or become co-opted
- ⊗ Learn Afrofuturism and its role in future struggles

COURSE READINGS

All course reading will be available online. Please reference your course schedule for weekly readings. Your course website will be divided by weeks and each week will have links to your readings.

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

Discussion Posts (6 @ 5% Each)	30 %
Post Your Lecture Assignment	40%
AfroFuturism Presentation	30 %