COURSE DESCRIPTION & GOALS
This class will acquaint students with issues related to social justice and equality as they pertain to the history and present state of the U.S. criminal justice system. We will discuss the history of policing, criminal courts, and imprisonment. In addition, we will examine current problems such as those related to prison policies, the war on drugs, judicial discretion and mandatory sentencing guidelines, the expansion and curtailment of defendant rights, police profiling, victim’s rights, felon disenfranchisement, the criminalization of immigration, prisoner reentry, school discipline, restorative justice, prison abolition, solitary confinement, and the death penalty. Particular attention will be given throughout the course to the ways in which both crime and the criminal justice system disproportionately impact the poor and people of color. Furthermore, specific attention will be given to how different people are impacted by crime and criminal justice policies as a result of gender and sexuality. Central to the course will be an ongoing critical attention to the historically variable relationships among legal and conventional definitions of crime and measures of social and personal harm. This course cannot pretend to be comprehensive or to represent every perspective on the issues it raises. I’ve organized it around existing problems, asking students to try to imagine solutions. I wish I could say that there are many right answers to the questions this course raises, but a more honest thing to say would be that there are no right answers. There are many possible answers and the goal is to understand the tradeoffs involved with each: what are the opportunities and challenges presented by the solutions we pose?

This course satisfies the Social Science (SSC) group requirement and the multicultural requirement for Category B: Identity, Pluralism, and Tolerance (IP). It also satisfies an upper-division elective requirement for Ethnic Studies (ES) majors and minors and a specialization requirement for General Social Sciences (GSS) majors in the Crime, Law, and Society concentration.

TEXTS
The following required texts are available at the UO Duckstore. Additional readings will be available via Canvas.


WORKLOAD EXPECTATIONS
Please note that this is a reading-intensive course. The workload for involves approximately 100+ pages of reading per week. Students should expect to devote around 4-5 hours per week to reading (40-50 hours during the term). The course’s assignments should entail an average of 4-5 additional hours per week in study time (40-50 hours total), although this time will not be distributed evenly throughout the term. *If you have difficulty keeping up with the reading, please come to see me to discuss reading and study strategies for the material. My first priority is not to intimidate you, but to help you to succeed in this course and in achieving the learning outcomes below.*

LEARNING OUTCOMES
Passing this class means that students are able

- To demonstrate a basic understanding of some of the most important problems facing the police-court-prison apparatus in the United States, with a particular view toward inequalities of race, gender, sexuality, and class;
- To demonstrate a more advanced understanding of a specific public policy issue related to the criminal-legal system;
- To understand some ways that activists, community organizers, and criminal justice professionals are working to address crime-and-punishment inequities; and
- To demonstrate a basic understanding of the history of the criminal-legal system in the United States and of alternative approaches that deemphasize the use of incarceration.

ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>80 points</td>
<td>582-600=A+</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>462-479=C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Problem Essays (3 pages)</td>
<td>300 points</td>
<td>558-581=A</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>438-461=C</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policy Brief (10-11 pages)</td>
<td>220 points</td>
<td>540-557=A-</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>420-437=C- (P)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>600 points</td>
<td>522-539=B+</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>402-429=D+ (N)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Extra Credit:</td>
<td>15 points</td>
<td>498-521=B</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>378-401=D</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>360-377=D-</td>
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<td>0-359=F</td>
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ATTENDANCE
I make an effort to organize class lectures and activities that enhance, rather than repeat, assigned reading material. What you can get out of showing up to class often can't really be
duplicated, even by class notes. As a result, attendance matters, but my attendance policy is unusual. Your “unexcused” absences determine the highest possible final grade you can receive for the course. (“Excused” absences are those for religious observances or university-related activities, if cleared in advance.) Illnesses, injuries, vacations, funerals, weddings, etc., are all “unexcused” absences. This means you really don’t have to get doctor’s notes or even tell me why you were absent. Think of these like “sick days” you get with an employer, and save them up for such occasions or for emergencies so that unexpected circumstances do not affect your grade. Excessive or frequent tardiness will also count as absence. If you have circumstances that cause you to have concern about this policy, please do not hesitate to speak with me; I am happy to make alternative arrangements as necessary.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Absences</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Highest possible final grade</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>6</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>61%</td>
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**QUIZZES**
There will be short quizzes on Canvas each week that will require you to apply concepts from the readings. The questions aim to be analytical and to assess your understanding of concepts, rather than to test your memorization. It sometimes takes students a couple passes to get a sense for how to prepare. If you have concerns, please talk to me. Your lowest two quiz grades will be dropped.

**PROBLEM ESSAYS**
You must write three problem essays. A problem essay should be around three pages long and should respond directly to one or two assigned readings. You should use those readings to identify and delineate the scope of a problem related to the course. While you can respond with your own opinions about the problem and offer practical solutions to it, this should not be a rant or a purely personal response. It should have a clear thesis statement (e.g., X is a problem because it results in Y, Z, and Q) and put forward an organized argument in support of that thesis (e.g., explaining why the problem matters and should be addressed). Problems may be related to any of the topics listed in the first paragraph of this syllabus or another that arises for you from the readings.

**POLICY BRIEF**
Your final project is a policy brief. You will be responsible for choosing a policy issue related to a problem for the course and writing a policy brief responding to the issue. The issue should be specific (e.g., “responding to the collateral consequences of mandatory minimum sentences for drug-related offenses” or “addressing the issues faced by mothers on release from prison” not
“the war on drugs” or “mothers in prison”). You may use assigned texts, but you should conduct research beyond those texts (for a total of at least six sources). Your policy brief should be around 2500 words/10-11 pages, plus a one- or two-page annotated bibliography of sources (short, one- or two-sentence annotations that explain the source’s relevance to the brief). Policy briefs will be due via Canvas during finals week by 5pm on Wednesday, March 22. Students are encouraged to complete this assignment in groups. Expectations for length will increase depending on the group size (e.g., two people should complete a 13-page brief with 8 sources, three people should complete a 15-page brief with 10 sources) and a single grade will be assigned to all group members regardless of contribution.

EXTRA CREDIT
It is possible to write two-page response essays (on approved films or speakers) for extra credit. A grading rubric is available on Canvas. If of sufficient quality, an extra credit response can add up to five points to your final grade. These must be turned in within one week of the speaker or film. They will not be accepted late and no more than three can be submitted per student.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Guest Speakers Awaiting Confirmation:
Civil Liberties Defense Center, UO Admissions, and Partnership for Safety and Justice

Week 1
1/9 We’ve Got a Problem
1/11 Elizabeth Hinton, “Introduction,” from The War on Poverty to the War on Crime
James Kilgore, “A Snapshot of the System,” from Understanding Mass Incarceration
Section Discussion of 13th (view outside of class)

Week 2
1/16 School Discipline
Rebecca Gordon, Libero Della Piana, and Terry Keleher, “Zero Tolerance” from Zero Tolerance
Susan Sandler, “Turning to Each Other, Not on Each Other” from Zero Tolerance
Section Discussion of Zero Tolerance (view in class)

Week 3
1/23 Policing
Joey Mogul, Andrea Ritchie, and Kay Whitlock, “The Ghosts of Stonewall” from Queer (In)Justice
Christian Parenti, Lockdown America (chapters 4-7)
Naomi Murakawa, *The First Civil Right* (chapters 1 & 3)

**Section**   Problem Essay Workshop
Week 4  Police Shootings and Drug Wars
Tonry, *Punishing Race* (chapter 4)
**First Problem Essay Due (by 4pm)**

Tonry, *Punishing Race* (chapter 3)

Section  Discussion of the War on Drugs

Week 5  Prison Conditions
2/6  Parenti, *Lockdown America* (chapters 8-9 & 11)

Section  Problem Essay Workshop

Week 6  Capital Punishment and Hate Crimes
2/13  **Guest Speaker: Honorable U.S. District Court Judge Michael J. McShane**
Naomi Murakawa, *The First Civil Right* (chapters 4-5)
**Second Problem Essay Due (by 4pm)**


Section  Discussion of *Visions of Abolition* (viewing TBA)

Week 7  Sexual Violence

Section  Problem Essay Workshop

Week 8  Queer Safety
2/27  **Guest Speaker: Christina Hanhardt, Prof. of American Studies, Univ. of Maryland**
Hanhardt, *Safe Space* (Introduction & chapter 1)
**Third Problem Essay Due (by 4pm)**

3/1  Hanhardt, *Safe Space* (chapters 4-5 & conclusion & epilogue)

Section  Discussion of *Out in the Night* (viewing TBA)
Week 9  Race and Incarceration
3/6  **Guest Speaker: Linda Hamilton, Lane County Sheriff’s Office Parole and Probation**
Tonry, *Punishing Race* (chapters 1-2)
3/8  Tonry, *Punishing Race* (chapters 5-6)
Section  Discussion of *When Will the Punishment End?* (view outside of class)

Week 10  Reentry
3/13  **Guest Speaker: Paul Solomon, Sponsors, Inc.**
Section  Policy Brief Workshop

Week 11
3/22  **Policy Briefs Due (by 5pm)**

This syllabus is not final and is subject to change.