47: 202: 402 Contemporary Problems in Corrections
3 Credits
Fall 2017

Tuesdays and Thursdays
2:30 – 3:50PM, CPS 104

I. Course Information

Instructor Information:

Instructor: Danielle M. Shields
Email: danielle.shields@rutgers.edu
Office Hours: By appointment only

Course Overview: This course explores the impact of alternatives to incarceration, the growing prisoner rights movement, strikes by correctional employees, and public resentment toward persistently high rates of recidivism are major topics discussed in this course. In addition, the class provides for an in-depth study of issues concerning correctional education, job training, work release, and post-incarceration employment.

Prerequisite: None

B.S., Criminal Justice Program Learning Goals

Upon completion of the B.S. in Criminal Justice at Rutgers University-Newark, students should be able to:

1) Describe the development and functions of major criminal justice institutions (e.g., police, courts, corrections, and juvenile justice), the activities of actors within these institutions, and how they relate to one another as well as the broader social, political, and economic world.

2) Describe the mechanisms, correlates, theoretical underpinnings, and situational contexts of crime, criminal behavior and opportunity, and techniques for prevention and treatment.
3) Apply and analyze theories related to the policies and practices of the criminal justice system and its major institutions.

4) Demonstrate the ability to gather, explain, and apply empirical research in the field of criminal justice.

5) Obtain a comprehensive knowledge about the process of conducting criminal justice research, and develop the skills to conduct criminal justice research with appropriate methodologies.

**Course Learning Objectives:**

**Learning Goals for Contemporary Problems in Corrections**

1. Understand the theoretical rationale and justification of current trends in corrections and punishment
2. Critically analyze criminological research findings within the field of corrections
3. Describe the modern-day issues facing the United States correctional system, such as institutional and community-based programs for inmates, prisoner recidivism and re-entry, mass incarceration, and populations with unique needs (e.g., juveniles, the mentally ill)
4. Articulate the intersections between political forces, public opinion, key stakeholders, and crafting effective correctional policies and practices
5. Prepare a group presentation that demonstrates proficiency with a specific problem or issue relating to corrections

**Required Readings:**


**Course Requirements:**

Students are expected to complete the assigned reading prior to the class in which the topics are to be discussed to facilitate participation and generate more interesting discussions.

Students are also expected to regularly check Blackboard, as it will be used for course announcements and communication. I will announce changes to the syllabus, readings, and class schedule as well as other information pertinent to the course through Blackboard. Additionally, grades will be regularly updated on Blackboard.

**Course Structure:**

This course will be conducted in a lecture-based format with the use of PowerPoint presentations. Class discussions and short, in-class writing assignments will also be regularly incorporated.
throughout the semester. In order to successfully pass this course, students must regularly keep up with the assigned readings and attend class regularly. When class is in session, I expect that you will regularly participate and be ready to discuss the material scheduled on the syllabus and that all electronics will be silenced. When discussions are in progress, please be respectful to your fellow classmates and stay on topic.

If at any point in the semester you have questions or concerns about the course, please reach out to me through e-mail and I will respond within 48 hours.

II. Course Schedule

Please note that this schedule is tentative in nature. (HW) denotes readings from Herivel and Wright’s book while readings posted on Blackboard are indicated by (BB).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Topic</th>
<th>Readings &amp; Assignments Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9/5, 9/7</td>
<td>Course Overview</td>
<td>• Cullen and Jonson, Chapter 1-2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Corrections Overview</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9/12, 9/14</td>
<td>The Politics of Imprisonment</td>
<td>• Greene (HW)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Levingston (HW)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Hunter and Wagner (HW)</td>
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<td>• Elsner (BB)</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/19, 9/21</td>
<td>Retribution and Deterrence</td>
<td>• Cullen and Jonson, Chapter 3-4</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
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<td>9/26, 9/28</td>
<td>Incapacitation and Punitive Sentencing</td>
<td>• Cullen and Jonson, Chapter 5</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/3, 10/5</td>
<td>Restorative Justice and Alternatives to Incarceration</td>
<td>• Cullen and Jonson, Chapter 6</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/10, 10/12</td>
<td>Rehabilitation and Correctional Programming</td>
<td>• Cullen and Jonson, Chapter 7</td>
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<td>• Shapiro (HW)</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mass Incarceration and Inequalities in</td>
<td>• Mauer, (BB)</td>
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| Week 8 | 10/24, 10/26 | Punishment | Western and Pettit (BB)  
| Week 8 | 10/24, 10/26 | Punishment | Alexander (BB)  

**MID-TERM EXAM (10/24)**

The Prisoner Rights Movement

Private Imprisonment

- Jackson (HW)
- Hylton (HW)
- Von Zielbauer (HW)
- Talvi (HW)
- Reutter (HW)

**Week 9**

10/31, 11/2

Incarceration and Mental Illness

Film: *The New Asylums*

- Slate and Johnson (BB)
- Slate and Johnson (BB)

**Week 10**

11/7, 11/9

Women in Prison

Film: *Women Behind Bars*

- Shelden (BB)
- Wright et al. (BB)

**Week 11**

11/14, 11/16

Early Intervention

Unique Prison Populations

- Cullen and Jonson, Chapter 9
- Herivel (HW)
- Shelden (BB)
- Symer and Burbank (BB)

**Week 12**

11/21, 11/23

***THANKSGIVING BREAK, NO CLASS***

- Cullen and Jonson, Chapter 8

**Week 13**

11/28, 11/30

Prisoner Reentry and Recidivism

- Pager (BB)
- Kurlychek, Brame, and Bushway (BB)

**Week 14**

12/5, 12/7

Life After Release

Group Presentations

- Pager (BB)

**Week 15**

12/12

Group Presentations Cont’d

- Complete group presentation rubric

***FINAL EXAM (12/16)***
III. Course Assessment and Grading

The final grade will be assessed based upon your performance on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment Description</th>
<th>Linked to SLO</th>
<th>% of Course Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment #1 Mid-term Exam</td>
<td>SLO #1-4</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment #2 Final Exam</td>
<td>SLO #1-4</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment #3 Participation</td>
<td>SLO #1-4</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment #4 Group Presentation on Topic in Corrections</td>
<td>SLO #5</td>
<td>20%</td>
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**MID-TERM EXAM (30%)**: This course will measure knowledge of the outlined topic areas through the administration of a mid-term exam. The exam will be multiple-choice and will be based on a combination of course lectures and assigned readings.

**FINAL EXAM (30%)**: This course will also measure knowledge of the outlined topic areas through the administration of a final exam. The exam will be multiple-choice and will be based on a combination of course lectures and assigned readings. The final exam will not be cumulative.

**PARTICIPATION (20%)**: Students are expected to engage in a basic level of participation throughout this course. In order to formally assess and track participation, short, in-class writing assignments will be conducted throughout the semester. If three or more of these assignments are missed, your participation grade will be negatively impacted.

Additionally, if students are continually absent, habitually arrive late or leave early, or are otherwise disruptive (e.g., chatting during class, texting, using laptops or other electronic devices for non-academic purposes, being disrespectful to fellow students), their participation grade will be negatively impacted.

**GROUP PRESENTATION ON TOPIC IN CORRECTIONS (20%)**: Students will also interpret and critically analyze relevant research in the field of corrections. Groups will select a specific topic on pressing issues in corrections and a matching empirical journal article will be used in
a 15-minute presentation to the class. During each presentation, groups are expected to (a) provide a background to the topic by integrating course and outside materials, (b) summarize the chosen empirical article and its findings, and c) describe the article's practical applications to current correctional practices. Presentations are scheduled for December 7th and 12th.

The following grading scale will be used for this course:

- A 90–100%
- B+ 85-89%
- B 80-84%
- C+ 75-79%
- C 70-74%
- D 60-69%
- F <60%

IV. Course Policies

Classroom Rules:

It is the intent of the instructor to establish a class environment that is conducive to the exchange of ideas in a mutually respectful manner. Due to the nature of the material that will be discussed throughout this course, it is expected that there will be a variety of perspectives on the general issues of crime and crime control, which is both welcomed and encouraged. However, in the course of discussion, students are expected to be respectful of others’ opinions. Additionally, to ensure that topics for the day are adequately covered, if students wish to discuss an issue in greater detail than time constraints allow, an appointment should be made with the instructor.

Attendance:

Attendance will not formally be tracked for this course. However, students should be aware that throughout the semester, in addition to participation-based exercises, material will be presented in class not found in the book and students will be held responsible for this information on exams.

Late or Missing Assignment Policy:

Unless a student has a documented emergency (e.g., a medical emergency verified by a doctor’s note), make-up quizzes and exams will not be offered and missing a quiz or exam will result in a zero. Eligibility for make-up quizzes and exams will only be considered in extreme circumstances and at the instructor’s discretion. Late assignments will be penalized by one letter grade per day.

Academic Integrity:

As a member of the Rutgers University community you are not to engage in any academic dishonesty. You are responsible for adhering to basic academic standards of honesty and
integrity as outlined in the Rutgers University Policy on Academic Integrity for Undergraduate and Graduate Students http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity

Your academic work should be the result of your own individual effort, you should not allow other students to use your work, and you are required to recognize and reference any material that is not your own. Violations of the university’s policy will result in appropriate action.

**Academic Resources:**

**Students with Disabilities**
Rutgers University is committed to providing equal educational opportunity for persons with disabilities in accordance with the Nondiscrimination Policy of the University and in compliance with § 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. For additional information please visit the website https://ods.rutgers.edu/ or contact the representative for the Newark Campus.

Allen Sheffield  
Director of ADA Services and Academic Support  
Robeson Campus Center, Suite 352  
350 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard  
Newark, NJ 07102  
Phone: 973.353.5300  
Fax: 973.353.5666  
E-mail: kate.torres@rutgers.edu  
Website: https://ods.rutgers.edu/

**Psychological and Counseling Services**
If you experience psychological or other difficulties as a result of this course, or because of other issues that may interfere with your performance in the course, please contact the university’s psychological and counseling service center (http://www.counseling.newark.rutgers.edu; 973-353-5805), which is located in Blumenthal Hall, room 101. The center offers a variety of free, confidential services to part-time and full-time students who are enrolled at Rutgers.

If you are interested in finding out more about  
• Accelerated Master's Program (B.S. /M.A.)  
• Criminal Justice National Honor Society (Alpha Phi Sigma)  
Please refer to the School of Criminal Justice website http://rscj.newark.rutgers.edu/

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