



466 – Special Topics
Punishment and Society
Tue/Thurs 2:30 – 3:50pm

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 4-5pm, Thursdays 1-2pm, no appointment needed

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Office: Center for Law and Justice, Room 559

Office Hours: by appointment

Contacting me

Student office hours are Tuesday 4pm – 5pm or Thursdays 1:00 – 2:00pm. No need to make an appointment, just come by my office. If those times do not work, we can schedule a different time to meet in person or via Zoom. You can always email me if you have a question. In general, please allow 48 business hours for a reply. If you do not hear from me after that time, you may email me again. You may also contact the TA, Chloé Sudduth, with any course related questions. However, if it is personal in nature (such as if you have a family emergency), please email me.

Course Overview

This course will focus on punishment primarily in the context of the United States. We will explore all forms of punishments for many types of offenses and behaviors. The course begins by tracing the history and purpose of punishment. Then we will move into the different modes of punishment and how the U.S. handles punishment. We will critically assess if the punishment utilized is effective. Much like mass incarceration, we must grapple with mass punishment. Finally, this course will identify reforms to address and improve how punishment is handled in the U.S.

Course Objectives

1. Trace the history of punishment
2. Outline the different purposes of punishment
3. Describe forms of punishment for various offenses and behaviors
4. Critically assess how punishment is used in the United States
5. Compare forms of punishment with other countries

6. Identify reform mechanism to improve current systems of punishment

Teaching Philosophy

This course uses a mixture of teaching methods. I will use lectures, video presentations, podcasts, and small and large group discussions.

Active learning is a key foundation of this course. That means, I expect you to be actively engaged by doing the assigned reading before class, participating in the discussions and other class activities, and taking notes during the lectures.

Class Participation

Please create and maintain an active, respectful, and welcoming environment. To aid in this you should come to every class. Attendance is critical. You should be fully present in class. Thus, please put your cell phone on silent and limit outside distractions. You may use laptops, electronic notebooks, etc. for note taking purposes. Classes may not be audio or video recorded without the written consent of the professor and potentially your fellow classmates. If you miss class, please contact a fellow classmate to get the notes. I will not be able to provide notes for what you missed.

We will discuss a variety of topics, some that may cause a little discomfort or could be personally triggering for you. Self-care is important so if you need to step out or take a break, please do so. You and your fellow classmates may not always agree on topics; that's okay. Constructive debates are welcomed. However, personal attacks or threatening language will not be tolerated.

Course Readings

You will not need to purchase any books for this course. Most weeks one to two articles are assigned. You can access these articles through the links provided in this syllabus and/or directly through Rutgers Library. Links for most articles will be available on Canvas.

Assignments

Newspaper summary (20 pts)

Find a recent (2020 or later) article in the local or national news that discusses a crime and the punishment received for the crime. Briefly summarize the article by answering the following questions: 1) what was the crime or alleged crime committed? 2) Who were the victims? 3) What was the punishment issued? 4) How did the news article or video talk about the crime? Did you notice any bias? 5) What do you think the punishment goals were or what goals was the punishment trying to achieve? 6) What do you make of the punishment? Was it fair in your critical, educated opinion? What are your critical reflections after reading the article or watching the news clip?

Include an electronic link of your article in your submission. Type the responses to your questions. Your response should be between 1.5 and 2 pages, double space, 12-point font. Make sure you address all the above questions. The completed assignment should be posted to Canvas under the assignments tab. No hard copies will be accepted. The due date is September 26th by 11:59pm.

Infographic/Research Brief (30 pts)

Pick one country outside of the United States and review how they respond to crime by comparing it to the response in the United States. To make it manageable, pick a specific offense (i.e., domestic assault) or classification of offenses (i.e., misdemeanors) to focus on. Some questions to consider: 1) What is the country's response to this crime? 2) How prevalent is this crime in the country? 3) What type(s) of punishment can individuals receive for this crime in the country? 4) How does this crime/punishment compare or contrast to what is seen in the United States?

You should summarize your findings through an infographic or research brief. These are one-to-two-page documents that summarize responses through use of graphics or bullet points. This should not be a long paper. The objective is to create something that can be easily consumed by readers. Examples and more information will be shared in class.

This assignment should be posted to Canvas. No hard copies will be accepted. The due date is November 21st by 11:59pm.

In Class Activities (20 pts)

Random weekly in class assignments may be assigned. Examples of these activities could include: one-page reflection papers, pop quizzes, or complete film, reading, or other type of worksheets. Random points may be given just for attending class that day. These will be between 2 to 5 points depending on the assignment. These assignments are done in class and worth a small number of points, and thus no make ups will be given if you miss class that day unless you have a documented serious personal or family emergency or approval through the Office of Disability Services.

Exams (100 pts)

There will be two exams in this course: exam one and exam two. Exam one will cover the first half of the course whereas exam 2 will cover the second half of the course. Each exam is worth 50 points; it will consist of some multiple choice but mostly short answer questions.

Exam one will be given in class on October 20th. You must be present to take the exam. Exam two will be a take home exam and will be due December 19th by 11:59pm.

Group Project (50 pts)

In a group, you will address one area of punishment by proposing a new law, departmental policy, or some other type of specific reform. As a group, you will pick a topic we discuss in class and develop a solution (examples of topics will be shared in class). For reforms to be effective you must meet the concerns of the different constituents/stakeholders. Thus, each group member will take on the role or act from the point of view of a different stakeholder (i.e., law enforcement, judge, victim, public/community member, advocacy group, etc.). You will craft your argument or pitch from the point of view of the stakeholder you are assigned in your group. The point of this assignment, though, is that as a group you will come up with a reform that you can agree or mostly agree on together.

You will discuss/address any concerns from this perspective. Then as a group discuss/problem solve how these concerns will be mitigated with the reform. Discuss why you support the reform from the perspective of your role. If you do not support it, why and what would make you support it. Finally, as a group explain how and why this new proposed reform would solve (or reduce) the punishment problem you identified.

You will present your reform to the class, as a group presenting all stakeholder sides and answering the questions above. You have freedom to choose how you want to present. You could do it podcast style, a panel presentation, a community forum, a bill or senate style hearing, or an academic style presentation. We will discuss these different formats in class. More information on this assignment, including a grading rubric will be presented and shared in class as well as on Canvas.

Presentations will occur during week 14.

Submitting Assignments and Grading

All assignments and exam two are due at their due dates. Exam one will be taken in class and must be taken during the class time. No extensions will be granted on exams or in class activities unless you have a documented serious personal or family emergency or approval through the Office of Disability Services.

The newspaper assignment and the research brief can be turned in up to 72 hours after the due date but will be deducted an automatic 3 points for each day it is late. So, if you submit it 3 days late, an automatic 9 points will be deducted unless you have a documented serious personal or family emergency or approval through the Office of Disability Services.

There are a total of 220 points for this course (see above for the points for exams and assignments). The grading scale is:

- A 90–100%
- B+ 87-89%
- B 80-86%
- C+ 77-79%
- C 70-76%
- D 60-69%
- F <60%

Course Schedule

Week One 9/6 Class introductions & course overview 9/8 History of punishment
Week Two 9/13 Purpose and theories of punishment 9/15 Are we all criminals? <ul style="list-style-type: none">● https://www.weareallcriminals.org/● Guest speaker
Week Three 9/20 The politics of punishment - What do victims want? <ul style="list-style-type: none">● https://www.vera.org/downloads/publications/accounting-for-violence.pdf 9/22 The politics of punishment - War on Drugs, War on Poverty https://www.vox.com/2016/5/8/18089368/war-on-drugs-marijuana-cocaine-heroin-meth
Week Four ** Newspaper summary due on 9/26 by 11:59pm 9/27 Pretrial/diversion punishment – punishment without a conviction <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Kohler-Hausmann, I. (2013). Misdemeanor Justice: Control without Conviction. <i>American Journal of Sociology</i>, 119(2), 351–393. https://doi.org/10.1086/674743● Lageson, S., Sandoval, J., & Webster, E. (2021). How the criminal justice system deploys mass surveillance on innocent people. Vice News. https://www.vice.com/en/article/xgze7z/how-the-criminal-justice-system-deploys-mass-surveillance-ons-innocent-people 9/29 Misdemeanor punishment – community service/monetary sanctions
Week Five 10/4 Community corrections-based punishments– probation <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Phelps, M. S. (2018). Ending Mass Probation: Sentencing, Supervision, and Revocation. <i>The Future of Children</i>, 28(1), 125–146. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26641550 10/6 Community corrections-based punishments – parole
Week Six 10/11 Institutional punishment – Lifers and solitary confinement <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Nellis, A. (2021). No end in sight: America’s enduring reliance on life imprisonment. Sentencing Project https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/no-end-in-sight-americas-enduring-reliance-on-life-imprisonment/● Ear Hustle – Season 1, episode 4 The Shu https://www.earhustlesq.com/episodes/2017/7/26/the-shu?rq=solitary%20 10/13 Capital punishment <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Ear Hustle, Season 2, episode 17 The Row https://www.earhustlesq.com/episodes/2018/5/23/the-row
Week Seven 10/18 **No class** Group project prep day – meet with your groups 10/20 **Exam 1 during class time
Week Eight 10/25 Race & punishment

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ghandnoosh, N. (2015) Black lives matter: Eliminating racial inequity in the criminal justice system. Sentencing Project. *Read only pgs. 1-5 and 12-21 https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/black-lives-matter-eliminating-racial-inequity-in-the-criminal-justice-system/ <p>10/27 Gender & punishment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gurusami S, Kurwa R. From Broken Windows to Broken Homes: Homebreaking as Racialized and Gendered Poverty Governance. <i>Feminist formations</i>. 2021;33(1):1-32. doi:10.1353/ff.2021.0001 ● Mogul JL, Ritchie AJ, Whitlock K. Queer (in)justice : the Criminalization of LGBT People in the United States. Beacon Press; 2011. *Read pages 1-11
<p>Week Nine</p> <p>11/01 Juvenile punishment</p> <p>11/03 Disability & mental health & punishment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Isolation of Being Deaf in Prison by Jeremy Woody, as told to Christie Thompson in Wong. (2020). <i>Disability Visibility: First-Person Stories from the Twenty-First Century</i>. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group.
<p>Week Ten</p> <p>11/08 Constitutional, individual rights/liberty and punishment</p> <p>11/10 Public health and punishment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading to be assigned ● https://communityresourcehub.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Unmasked_Update.pdf
<p>Week Eleven</p> <p>11/15 Punishment for police/prosecutor/professional misconduct</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reading to be assigned <p>11/17 No class – work on your infographic/research brief</p>
<p>Week Twelve</p> <p>11/22 International comparisons of punishment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Taxman FS, Rhine EE. American Exceptionalism in Community Supervision. In: <i>American Exceptionalism in Crime and Punishment</i>. Oxford University Press; 2017. doi:10.1093/oso/9780190203542.003.0010 ● Lappi-Seppälä T. American Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective. In: <i>American Exceptionalism in Crime and Punishment</i>. Oxford University Press; 2017. doi:10.1093/oso/9780190203542.003.0006 <p>11/24 No class</p> <p>**Infographic/research brief due on 11/21 by 11:59pm</p>
<p>Week Thirteen</p> <p>11/29 Collateral consequence of punishment on families, communities, and society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Miller RJ, Stuart F. Carceral Citizenship: Race, Rights and Responsibility in the Age of Mass Supervision. <i>Theoretical criminology</i>. 2017;21(4):532-548. doi:10.1177/1362480617731203 ● https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ry5jTjBhZpA&ab_channel=Vox <p>12/01 Decriminalization and abolishment of punishment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Betts, R.D. (Oct. 2020). Kamala Harris, mass incarceration, and me. New York Times, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/20/magazine/kamala-harris-crime-prison.html ● https://issuu.com/projectnia/docs/rjconversationtoolkit_printable-2

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZuJ55iGI14&ab_channel=BarnardCenterforResearchonWomen ● https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/marc-mariame-kaba-discuss-mariames-book-we-do-this/id1522592619?i=1000513043821 ● https://m4bl.org/policy-platforms/invest-divest/
<p>Week Fourteen 12/06, 12/08 **Group presentations</p>
<p>Week Fifteen 12/13/2022 Course wrap up</p>

**Please note this syllabus may change at any time at the discretion of the professor. All changes will be announced in class and if there are major alterations an email announcement will also be made.

University and Department Policies

Covid policies

- Masking is extremely important and should be adhered to **by all** in accordance with state and university guidelines.
- If you are not feeling well, do not come to campus. If you are staying home due to illness, students: email me.
- Do not ask anyone their vaccination status. Community members (students, faculty, staff) have a right to maintain the privacy of their personal medical information and are not required to share it upon demand.
- Good personal hygiene continues to be recommended at all times including frequent handwashing, the use of hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available, and avoiding touching eyes, nose, and mouth.
- The Student Health Center will provide advice and support for *students*. They will maintain the confidentiality of the student's medical information.
- Use the [Newark COVID19 Needs Reporting Form](#) if you need special accommodation. This will put you in touch with the Newark CARE Team. These requests receive expedited attention.

For further information:

Please keep updated with all university COVID-19 related information at RU-N's Operating Status page located at <https://www.newark.rutgers.edu/covid-19-operating-status>. You can also access the University-wide COVID 19 page at <https://coronavirus.rutgers.edu/>.

Student support related to COVID 19 information can be found at <https://myrun.newark.rutgers.edu/>.

COVID 19 and health related questions can be sent to student-wellness@newark.rutgers.edu.

Academic Integrity

Consult the School catalog regarding University policies about academic dishonesty and plagiarism and see the professor for guidance if you are not sure that you understand these policies. Any case of academic dishonesty will result in an appropriate reduction in the course grade and in referral to the University Judicial System.

Accommodation and Support Statement

Rutgers University Newark (RU-N) is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students and the University as a whole. RU-N has identified the following resources to further the mission of access and support:

For Individuals with Disabilities: The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter barriers due to disability. Once a student has completed the ODS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and reasonable accommodations are determined to be necessary and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be provided. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at ods.rutgers.edu. Contact ODS at (973)353-5375 or via email at ods@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Individuals who are Pregnant: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy. Students may contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance at (973) 353-1906 or via email at TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Absence Verification: The Office of the Dean of Students can provide assistance for absences related to religious observance, emergency or unavoidable conflict (e.g., illness, personal or family emergency, etc.). Students should refer to [University Policy 10.2.7](#) for information about expectations and responsibilities. The Office of the Dean of Students can be contacted by calling (973) 353-5063 or emailing deanofstudents@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Individuals with temporary conditions/injuries: The Office of the Dean of Students can assist students who are experiencing a temporary condition or injury (e.g., broken or sprained limbs, concussions, or recovery from surgery). Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury should submit a request using the following link: <https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu>.

For English as a Second Language (ESL): The Program in American Language Studies (PALS) can support students experiencing difficulty in courses due to English as a Second Language (ESL) and can be reached by emailing PALS@newark.rutgers.edu to discuss potential supports.

For Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance can assist students who are experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking. Students can report an incident to the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance by calling (973) 353-1906 or emailing TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu. Incidents may also be reported by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm. For more information, students should refer to the University's Student Policy Prohibiting Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence, Relationship Violence, Stalking and Related Misconduct located at <http://compliance.rutgers.edu/title-ix/about-title-ix/title-ix-policies/>.

For support related to interpersonal violence: The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance can provide any student with confidential support. The office is a **confidential resource** and does *not* have an obligation to report information to the University's Title IX Coordinator. Students can contact the office by calling (973) 353-1918 or emailing run.vpva@rutgers.edu. There is also a confidential text-based line available to students; students can text (973) 339-0734 for support.

For Crisis and Concerns: The Campus Awareness Response and Education (CARE) Team works with students in crisis to develop a support plan to address personal situations that might impact their academic performance. Students, faculty, and staff may contact the CARE Team by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNCARE or emailing careteam@rutgers.edu.

For Stress, Worry, or Concerns about Well-being: The Counseling Center has confidential therapists available to support students. Students should reach out to the Counseling Center to schedule an appointment: counseling@newark.rutgers.edu or (973) 353-5805. If you are not quite ready to make an appointment with a therapist but are interested in self-help, check out *TAO at Rutgers-Newark* for an easy, web-based approach to self-care and support: <https://tinyurl.com/RUN-TAO>.

For emergencies, call 911 or contact Rutgers University Police Department (RUPD) by calling (973) 353-5111