

SOCIAL INEQUALITY, CRIME AND JUSTICE

CRIM 307, Section 001

Spring 2017

INSTRUCTOR

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 3-4pm or by appt (email to confirm)

LECTURE

Tues and Thurs, 1:30pm-2:45pm

Planetary Hall 206

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the relationship between social inequality, criminal offending, and criminal victimization. It also examines how racial/ethnic, gender, and socioeconomic inequality influence (and are influenced by) criminal justice policymaking, processes, and outcomes. Contemporary issues in policing, courts, sentencing, and punishment will be addressed to explore the complex interaction between social disadvantage (particularly related to race and ethnicity), the criminal justice system, and broader social relations.

At the conclusion of the course students will be able to draw on social science research and theory to: 1) describe public (mis)perceptions of crime, criminals, and the justice system; 2) explain how social inequality leads to different rates of offending and victimization; 3) discuss specific ways that the criminal justice system promotes inequality; and 4) identify and critically consider specific ways that race and ethnicity influence the administration of justice in U.S. society.

COURSE FORMAT AND EXPECTATIONS

Class meetings will include lecture, interactive questions and discussion, activities, and videos. Class lectures will not merely re-cap the reading material, but expand upon it. Regular class attendance and student participation is essential to the success of this class overall.

We will cover sensitive and controversial issues in this course. Your fellow students may have different perspectives and experiences related to these topics than you (or the instructor), and views may be strongly held. Consistent with Mason's emphasis on diversity and inclusion, I expect everyone in the course to be respectful of others and to be open to learning. I encourage you to speak thoughtfully, listen carefully, and be self-reflective. Class will be a place where we can respectfully discuss opposing viewpoints and offer differing perspectives while focusing on the social scientific evidence.

To avoid disrupting your peers and/or the instructor, please turn off the ringers to all cell phones and do not access the Internet during class on your laptop or smartphone unless approved by the instructor. Laptops or smartphones should only be used to take notes or access course-related materials; please do not use electronic devices to email, chat, text, game, shop, etc.

REQUIRED READING

- 1) Textbook: Walker, S., Spohn, C., & DeLone, M. (2018). *The Color of Justice: Race, Ethnicity, and Crime in America*, 6th edition. Cengage Learning. ISBN-10: 1-337-09186-3
 - The textbook is available at the Mason bookstore or on the CRIM 307 page on the publisher's website: <http://www.cengagebrain.com/course/1954217>
- 2) Reader: Johnson, D., Warren, P. & Farrell, A. (2015). *Deadly Injustice: Trayvon Martin, Race, and the Criminal Justice System*. New York: New York University Press. ISBN-13: 978-1479894291
 - A copy of the volume will be available on reserve at the Mason Library.
- 3) Additional Readings: Available on Blackboard

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND STUDENT EVALUATION

- 1) Class Participation (10% of final grade or 20 points): Beginning February 2, class participation will be earned by attendance, participating in class discussions, and completing in-class exercises. In-class activities will be varied and may be individual or group exercises. Arriving late, leaving early, or using unapproved technology is disruptive to the instructor and your peers and may affect your participation grade. Students may miss two class sessions without any impact on their participation grade; no excuse is required.
- 2) Quizzes (15% of final grade or 30 points): Seven in-class quizzes will be scheduled randomly throughout the semester. Quizzes may include multiple choice, fill in the blank, and short answer questions and will cover material from recently assigned readings and class sessions. The lowest two quiz scores will be dropped and no make-up quizzes will be given.
- 3) Homework Assignments (15% of final grade or 30 points): Seven homework assignments will be due over the course of the semester via Blackboard. Homework may include internet exercises as well as multiple choice, fill in the blank, and short answer or short essay questions. Late or e-mailed assignments will only be accepted in extraordinary circumstances, at the discretion of the instructor, and with appropriate documentation. Late assignments may receive a grading penalty. The lowest two homework scores will be dropped.
- 4) Examinations (60% of final grade or 120 points): Three exams will be given over the course of the semester (worth 20% or 40 points each). Exams may include multiple choice, fill in the blank, and short answer questions. Each exam will cover the assigned readings, lectures, exercises, and videos since the prior exam. Makeup examinations will only be allowed in extraordinary circumstances, at the discretion of the instructor, and with appropriate documentation. Makeup exams may be in a different format than the original exam.

Students should contact the instructor ahead of time if they cannot complete an assignment by the due date or will miss an exam (in the case of an emergency, contact the instructor as soon as you are able). If your final course grade is borderline, consistent class participation and completion of all the homework assignments may help bump you up to the next grade.

Final grades in the course will be based on the following breakdown:

Points	Percentage	Grade
186-200	93-100%	A
180-185	90-92.5%	A-
174-179	87-89.5%	B+
166-173	83-86.5%	B
160-165	80-82.5%	B-
154-159	77-79.5%	C+
146-153	73-76.5%	C
140-146	70-72.5%	C-
130-139	65-69.5%	D
0-129	0-64.5%	F

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact Disability Services at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. See <http://ds.gmu.edu/> for more information.

BLACKBOARD AND COURSE COMMUNICATION

The course syllabus, lecture notes, homework assignments, additional reading assignments, and important announcements will be posted on Blackboard. Homework assignments will be submitted via Blackboard. To access Blackboard, log in at: <http://mymason.gmu.edu>, click on the Courses tab, and locate the link to CRIM 307 in your course list. For technical assistance, go to: <http://course support.gmu.edu/Students/>.

Changes to the course schedule, reading assignments, and other important information will be announced during class, sent to your MasonLive email address, and/or posted on Blackboard. Be sure to check your email account regularly for updated information (if you choose to forward your MasonLive email to another email account, make sure that the forwarding is set up correctly). If you have questions or concerns about the course, you are encouraged to stop by my office hours or contact me via email to set up an appointment. I will do my best to reply to emails within two business days (but usually sooner).

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND THE GMU HONOR CODE

The George Mason University Honor Code requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Students are expected to abide by the Mason Honor Code, which prohibits lying, cheating, stealing, and plagiarizing. See <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/> for detailed information. **All quizzes, homework assignments, and exams in this course must be completed *independently*.** Instructors are required to report all violations of the Honor Code to the Mason Honor Committee. Suspected cases of plagiarism may be evaluated using anti-plagiarism software. Please be sure that the work you submit in this class is your own, and that you provide proper citations when referencing another person's words or ideas. Violations of the Honor Code may result in a failing grade for the assignment or exam, a failing grade for the course, or any additional penalties determined by the committee, including dismissal from the university.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

This course schedule is tentative, and subject to change depending on how the class proceeds, student interest in particular topics, university closings due to weather, etc. Changes to the schedule or assignments will be announced in class, sent via email, and/or posted on Blackboard. Additional readings will be assigned as the course proceeds. *Readings and assignments should be completed before class on the date they are listed.*

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Reading Due</i>	<i>Assignments Due</i>
<i>Week 1</i>			
Tue, Jan 24	Course Introduction		
Thu, Jan 26	Key Concepts: Inequality, Crime & Justice	Textbook: Chapter 1	
<i>Week 2</i>			
Tue, Jan 31	Key Concepts: Inequality, Crime & Justice	Textbook: Chapter 1	
Thu, Feb 2	Key Concepts: Inequality, Crime & Justice <i>Participation Credit Begins</i>	Reader: Chapters 1-2	Homework #1 Due
<i>Week 3</i>			
Tue, Feb 7	Victims and Offenders	Textbook: Chapter 2	
Thu, Feb 9	Victims and Offenders	Reader: Chapter 4	
<i>Week 4</i>			
Tue, Feb 14	Social Structure and Crime	Textbook: Chapter 3	Homework #2 Due
Thu, Feb 16	Social Structure and Crime	Textbook: Chapter 3	
<i>Week 5</i>			
Tue, Feb 21	TBA	Readings: TBA	Homework #3 Due
Thu, Feb 23	Review Session		
<i>Week 6</i>			
Tue, Feb 28	EXAM #1		
Thu, Mar 2	Contemporary Issues in Policing	Textbook: Chapter 4	
<i>Week 7</i>			
Tue, Mar 7	Contemporary Issues in Policing	Textbook: Chapter 4	
Thu, Mar 9	Contemporary Issues in Policing	Textbook: Chapter 4	Homework #4 Due

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Reading Due</i>	<i>Assignments Due</i>
Week 8			
Mar 14-16	No Class - Spring Break		
Week 9			
Tue, Mar 21	Pretrial and Court Processes	Textbook: Chapter 5	
Thu, Mar 23	Pretrial and Court Processes	Textbook: Chapter 5	
Week 10			
Tue, Mar 28	Pretrial and Court Processes	Textbook: Chapter 6	Homework #5 Due
Thu, Mar 30	TBA		
Week 11			
Tue, Apr 4	Review Session		
Thu, Apr 6	EXAM #2		
Week 12			
Tue, Apr 11	No Class Today		
Thu, Apr 13	Politics of Punishment	Reading: TBA	
Week 13			
Tue, Apr 18	Sentencing and Punishment	Textbook: Chapter 7	
Thu, Apr 20	Sentencing and Punishment	Textbook: Chapter 7	Homework #6 Due
Week 14			
Tue, Apr 25	Mass Incarceration	Textbook: Chapter 9	
Thu, Apr 27	Mass Incarceration	Textbook: Chapter 9	Homework #7 Due
Week 15			
Tue, May 2	Collateral Consequences and Inequality	Reading: TBA	
Thu, May 4	Wrap Up and Review	Textbook: Chapter 11	
Finals Week			
Tue, May 16	EXAM #3 (1:30pm-4:15pm)		