

Spring 2024

Social Inequality, Crime & Justice - CRIM 307 DL 1 and DL 2

Asynchronous online course

Dr. Andrew Novak

Student hours: By appointment on Zoom or Blackboard Collaborate

About the Instructor

I am Instructional Associate Professor of Criminology, Law and Society at George Mason University. My research is primarily on the death penalty, human rights, and comparative law. I have an M.Sc. in African Politics (London), a J.D. (Boston), and a Ph.D. in law (Middlesex). I am licensed to practice law in New York and Washington, DC.

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Grading Scale

I will not use the grades “D+” or “D-.”

98-100 A+ / 93-97 A / 90-92 A- / 88-89 B+ / 83-87 B / 80-82 B- / 78-79 C+ / 73-77 C / 70-72 C- / 60-69 D / <60 F

In addition, in the event that I must calculate grade fractions, I will always round up to the next highest point if you have a 0.45 or higher.

Grading Rubric

Your grade in this class is based on a cumulative point total.

12 Weekly Quizzes (23 points each): 276 points

24 Weekly Workshops (1 point each): 24 points

1 Final Quiz: 25 points

Total: 325 points

Course Materials

This course has one required textbook: Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* Seven Stories Press, 2003. However, this book is available on the internet for free and I have shared the link. All other readings will be posted on Blackboard.

These are the other readings (scanned readings are searchable and compliant with an optical reader):

Tressie McMillan Cottom, "Dying to Be Competent," from *Thick: And Other Essays* (New Press, 2019), pages 73-97.

Jacinta Gau and Kareem Jordan, "Profiling Trayvon: Young Black Males, Suspicion, and Surveillance," in *Deadly Injustice: Trayvon Martin, Race, and the Criminal Justice System* (eds. Devon Johnson, Patricia Warren & Amy Farrell) (NYU Press, 2015), pages 7-22.

Maya Schenwar & Victoria Law, "Chapter 1: Your Home Is Your Prison," in *Prison by Any Other Name: The Harmful Consequences of Popular Reforms* (New Press, 2020), pages 25-49.

Laura Mansnerus, "For What They Might Do: A Sex Offender Exception to the Constitution," in *The War on Sex* (eds. David Halperin and Trevor Hoppe) (Duke University Press, 2017), pages 268-288.

Cesar Cuauhtemoc Garcia Hernandez, "Chapter 6: The Money," in *Migrating to Prison: America's Obsession with Locking Up Immigrants* (New Press, 2019), pages 119-135.

Maurice Tomlinson, "The New War on Sex: A Report from the Global Front Lines," in *The War on Sex* (eds. David Halperin and Trevor Hoppe) (Duke University Press, 2017), pages 409-428.

Late Policy

Requesting Extensions: You must take 12 weekly quizzes and 24 workshops this semester, plus a final quiz worth 25 points. These are not timed and do not need to be completed in one sitting. If you are unable to complete a quiz by the deadline, you must notify me within 48 hours. Requests after 48 hours are at my discretion, so please do ask anyway. The sooner you ask, the more time you'll have to do the assignment.

Final Deadline: At the end of the semester, I will provide a final deadline by which all late work must be turned in, including the weekly workshops. Typically, this will be right when I am about to calculate and upload grades. I cannot change a grade once it has been turned in, so it is essential all late work be turned in by the drop-dead deadline.

Incompletes: Because this course does not end in a final paper or project, it is not possible for me to give incompletes for missing work.

Late Penalty: Students who request extensions 6 times or more during the course (or who request to make up 6 weeks or more before the final deadline) will have a grade penalty of -5 points.

Course Schedule

Lectures, readings, online assignments, quizzes, and workshops each week are available on Blackboard.

Week 1: Wednesday, January 24, 2024: Introduction to Critical Criminology (Assignments due at 11:59 pm)

- Reading: Cottom, "Dying to Be Competent"
- Lectures: Introduction to Critical Criminology, Ethical Policymaking
- Workshops: Introductory Workshop, Graffiti Workshop

Week 2: Wednesday, January 31, 2024: Myth of Colorblindness (Assignments due at 11:59 pm)

- Reading: Davis, Ch. 1
- Lectures: Colorblind Legal System, Perceptions of Offenders
- Workshops: Correcting Historical Injustices, Sports and Crime

Week 3: Wednesday, February 7, 2024: Overcriminalization (Assignments due at 11:59 pm)

- Reading: Davis, Ch. 2
- Lectures: Choosing What to Criminalize, HIV Criminalization
- Workshops: Discretion, Environmental Justice

Week 4: Wednesday, February 14, 2024: Policing (Assignments due at 11:59 pm)

- Reading: Gau and Jordan, "Profiling Trayvon"
- Lectures: Policing and Inequality, Policing (Part 2), Media Perceptions of Crime
- Workshops: Blue Lives Matter Laws, Gun Control Hypothetical

Week 5: Wednesday, February 21, 2024: Prosecution (Assignments due at 11:59 pm)

- Reading: Davis, Ch. 3
- Lectures: Unequal Prosecution, Hate Crimes
- Workshops: Criminology Theory, Merger Doctrine

Week 6: Wednesday, February 28, 2024: In the Courtroom (Assignments due at 11:59 pm)

- Reading: Davis, Ch. 4
- Lectures: In the Courtroom, Jury Selection
- Workshops: Pro Se Prisoner Petitions, Drug Courts

*March 6, 2024, is **SPRING BREAK**. No work is due.*

Week 7: Wednesday, March 13, 2024: Sentencing (Assignments due at 11:59 pm)

- Reading: Davis, Ch. 5
- Lectures: Sentencing Disparities, Parole
- Workshops: LGBT Courtroom Issues, Community Confinement

Week 8: Wednesday, March 20, 2024: Mass Incarceration (Assignments due at 11:59 pm)

- Reading: Davis, Ch. 6
- Lectures: Mass Incarceration, Prison Conditions
- Workshops: Angola Prison Louisiana, Solitary Confinement

Week 9: Wednesday, March 27, 2024: Collateral Consequences (Assignments due at 11:59 pm)

- Reading: Schenwar and Law, "Your Home Is Your Prison"
- Lectures: Collateral Consequences, Civil Asset Forfeiture
- Workshops: Collateral Consequences, Parenting & Prison

Week 10: Wednesday, April 3, 2024: Death Penalty and Wrongful Convictions (Assignments due at 11:59 pm)

- Reading: Mansnerus, "For What They Might Do"
- Lectures: Death Penalty, Wrongful Convictions
- Workshops: Wrongful Convictions, Pardons

Week 11: Wednesday, April 10, 2024: Immigration Enforcement and Detention (Assignments due at 11:59 pm)

- Reading: Garcia Hernandez, "The Money"
- Lectures: Intro to U.S. Immigration Law, Immigration Enforcement, Undocumented Immigration, Immigration Update
- Workshops: Immigration Enforcement, Immigration Pardons

Week 12: Wednesday, April 17, 2024: Going Global / Juvenile Justice (Assignments due at 11:59 pm)

- Reading: Tomlinson, "The New War on Sex"
- Lectures: Going Global, Juvenile Justice
- Workshops: Gang Violence in Central America, Migration of Ideas

Final Quiz: Due Wednesday, April 24, 2024, at 11:59 pm

Honor Code

Sharing of instructor-created materials, particularly materials relevant to assignments or exams, to public online “study” sites is considered a violation of Mason’s Honor Code. For more information, see the Office of Academic Integrity’s summary of information about online study sites.

<https://oai.gmu.edu/faculty-resource-center/preventative-resources/>

The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. Mason has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification.

For the full Honor Code, see academicintegrity.gmu.edu.

Disability Accommodation

If you have a documented learning disability or other condition that may affect academic performance you should (1) make sure this documentation is on file with Office for Disability Services (SUB I, Rm. 4205; 993-2474; <http://ods.gmu.edu>) to determine the accommodations you need; and (2) talk with me to discuss your accommodation needs. I want to be helpful.

Diversity and Inclusion

As a faculty member and designated “Responsible Employee,” I am required to report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per university policy 1412. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact the Student Support and

Advocacy Center (703-380-1434, <http://ssac.gmu.edu/>) or Counseling and Psychological Services (703-993-2380, <https://caps.gmu.edu/>). You may also seek assistance from Mason's Title IX Coordinator (703-993-8730; titleix@gmu.edu, <https://diversity.gmu.edu/sexual-misconduct>).

This course seeks to create a learning environment that fosters respect for people across identities. We welcome and value individuals and their differences, including gender expression and identity, race, economic status, sex, sexuality, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age and ability. We encourage all members of the learning environment to engage with the material personally, but to also be open to exploring and learning from experiences different than their own.

If you wish, you are welcome to share your preferred name and pronouns with me.