**Social Inequality, Crime, and Justice: Fall 2018**

George Mason University

CRIM 307.001, East Building #122

Mondays, 9:00 am to 10:15 am

Online/classroom hybrid

Instructor: Dr. Andrew Novak

**Objectives of the Course**

This course will explore the significance of social inequality (especially race and gender inequality) for several crime and criminal justice issues. We will also examine variations in criminal offending and victimization, and explores disparities in criminal justice processing. We will ask two questions: (1) to what extent does our criminal justice system preserve a certain racial hierarchy; and (2) to what extent does our criminal justice system police certain sexual stereotypes, roles, and behaviors? We will analyze both international and domestic case studies in exploring the link between criminal justice, race, and sex. Issues such as policing, mass incarceration, sex offender registries, immigration detention, privatization, and the death penalty will be explored in class in greater detail.

At the conclusion of the course, students should be able to draw on social science theory to describe public perceptions of criminal justice, explain how social inequality leads to different rates of offending and victimization, discuss specific ways the justice system promotes inequality, and identify and critically consider specific ways that race and sex influence the administration of justice.

**About the Instructor**

I am a term assistant professor of criminology, law, and society at George Mason University. I have also taught African law at American University, Washington College of Law, and written several books on the death penalty, clemency, and international criminal justice. I have a Master of Science in African Politics from the London School of Oriental and African Studies, a Juris Doctor from Boston University, and a Ph.D. in law from Middlesex University in London. I am licensed to practice law in New York and Washington, DC.

Email: anovak2@gmu.edu

**Office Hours**

I am available Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:00 pm to 1:00 pm. Check with me about other times. Office: Enterprise Hall, Room 345

**Required Materials**

Three books are required for this course:

* Devon Johnson, Patricia Y. Warren & Amy Farrell, *Deadly Injustice: Trayvon Martin, Race, and the Criminal Justice System* (New York University Press, 2015).
* David M. Halperin & Trevor Hoppe, *The War on Sex* (Duke University Press, 2017).
* Keramet A. Reiter, *Mass Incarceration* (Oxford University Press, 2017).

Other readings will be assigned throughout the semester. In general, I will post these on Blackboard and distribute them in class the week before.

**Grading Criteria**

Your grade is based on the following components:

**50% Weekly online quizzes**

12 quizzes in total, but I will drop the lowest grade for everyone. In addition, I will also drop the *second­*-lowest quiz grade if a student has attended three-fourths of the classes.

**50% Assignments**

15% issue/position paper (prompt to be distributed in class)

15% narrative statement for final project

20% pecha kucha video

This course does not have a final exam. Instead, it will have a final project submitted on Blackboard.

Below is the grading scale used for the course. 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.

**Minimum Attendance Policy**

This course has a minimum attendance policy. There are twelve classes in addition to the introductory class. You must attend **SIX** of them, not including the introductory class, or your grade will be reduced by a flat five points (e.g., a 90 is reduced to an 85).

If one of our classes is conducted by Webinar, online attendance (or dialing in to a conference call) is treated the same as a classroom attendance.

If you attend **NINE** classes (in addition to the introductory class), I will drop your lowest quiz grade in calculating your final grade.

I consider this to be a lenient policy. Therefore, **I ONLY COUNT ATTENDANCES, NOT ABSENCES. THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS AN “EXCUSED ABSENCE.”** No attendance credit is given for doctor’s notes or other emergencies, no matter how serious. However, I may waive a *late paper penalty* with appropriate documentation.

**Discussion Board**

Students are advised that this course has a discussion board. Every class, I will start by looking at recent news topics from the previous week. I will have a “news roundup” on Blackboard each week. If you share an article on the discussion board and introduce your article at the beginning of class, you will receive ONE FREE ATTENDANCE. This is intended to be a kind of participation credit.

**Late Paper Policy**

A course incomplete may be given to students who have not completed the writing assignments for this course in time for final grades, with excused absences. Late papers will be subject to a grade reduction without an appropriate excuse.

**Make-up Quiz Policy**

Students will have to take a quiz every week on Blackboard. The quizzes are *not timed* and *do not need to be completed at one time*. You will be able to see all questions at the same time. Therefore, **ordinarily no extensions will be given**.

Students who are unable to take a quiz for a good reason should alert me before I reveal the answers in class. Typically, answers are released about three days after the quiz ends, so let me know within that time period. In extraordinary circumstances, I can allow a student to take a quiz late *so long as I have not released the answers to the class*.

If a student is unable to take a quiz for a very good reason and I have already released the answers to the class, I may allow a student to complete a portion of the quiz for partial credit (typically, the short answer portion of the quiz only). This is entirely within my discretion.

**A Note on Respect**

So long as a student’s answer is genuine, respectful, and relevant, it is worthy of respect by classmates and myself. We may have different perspectives and experiences, and I hope and expect that all students will express these disagreements openly and honestly. Listening is just as important as speaking. However, harassment of any kind or efforts to make other students uncomfortable is strictly prohibited. The topics we discuss in class are potentially controversial. We should be able to discuss opposing viewpoints within the context of social science evidence. At the same time, I will (and I hope everyone will) avoid deliberately provoking classmates.

In this class, we may also discuss a host of topics that relate explicitly to sex. Students who are uncomfortable talking about such topics do not have to participate in the discussion. I expect that students will avoid revealing information about themselves or other students that is personal, and we should also avoid inquiring into other peoples’ personal lives. We will talk about these issues in a hypothetical and abstract way in class to avoid distraction and potential embarrassment.

**Reading Assignments and Schedule of Classes**

**Monday, August 27**

*Topic*: Introduction to the course and the topic

*Workshops* (**in class**): Introductory survey, “Thanksgiving dinner” discussion, Multiculturalism scenario

**Monday, September 3**

**CLASS CANCELLED: LABOR DAY**

**[September 9: Add-Drop (No Penalty) Deadline]**

**[September 10 – 30: Web Withdrawal Period: Full Tuition Liability]**

**Monday, September 10**

*Topic*: The racial and sexual origins of our criminal justice system

*Readings* (to be completed **before** class): **Halperin/Hoppe**, pages 229-241 (on anti-gay origins of sexual psychopathy laws); **Halperin/Hoppe**, pages 323-337 (on anti-sex origins of California’s “anti-human trafficking” law)

*Online videos* (to be completed **before** class): (1) Introduction to critical criminology, (2) Social construction of race and gender

*Online quiz* (to be completed **before** class): On the readings and videos

*In-class workshops* (to be completed **in class**): Lusotropicalism, Native Hawaiian discussion, Careers/internships in criminal justice reform, Nazi Germany discussion

**Monday, September 17**

*Topic*: The myth of “colorblindness”

*Readings* (to be completed **before** class): **Johnson/Warren/Farrell**, pages 115-137 (on racial bias in Florida’s “Stand Your Ground” law); **Johnson/Warren/Farrell**, pages 23-47 (on racial perceptions of crime)

*Online videos* (to be completed **before** class): (1) Myth of colorblindness, (2) Introduction to harm reduction

*Online quiz* (to be completed **before** class): On the videos and readings

*In-class workshops* (to be completed **in class**): Affirmative action/university admissions scenarios, Parable on discretion, Workshop on crime rates and lead poisoning

**Monday, September 24**

*Topic*: Choosing what to criminalize

*Readings* (to be completed **before** class): **Halperin/Hoppe**, pages 347-351 (on HIV criminalization); **Halperin/Hoppe**, pages 126-164 (on sex offender laws)

*Online videos* (to be completed **before** class): (1) Overcriminalization, and (2) HIV criminalization

*Online quiz* (to be completed **before** class): On the videos and readings

*In-class workshops* (to be completed **in class**): HIV criminalization workshop, Schoolteacher scenario, Writing workshop

**Monday, October 1**

*Topic*: Inequality in policing

*Readings* (to be completed **before** class): **Johnson/Warren/Farrell**, pages 59-78 (on policing youth in Oakland, California)**, Johnson/Warren/Farrell**, pages 81-105 (on racial inequality and media coverage)

*Online videos* (to be completed **before** class): (1) Policing, (2) Media coverage and crime

*Online quiz* (to be completed **before** class): On the videos and readings

*In-class workshops* (to be completed **in class**): Policing scenarios, Gun control workshop, Video clip on bail bonds

**Monday, October 8**

**CLASS CANCELLED: COLUMBUS DAY**

**Monday, October 15**

*Topic*: Unequal prosecution

*Readings* (to be completed **before** class): **Johnson/Warren/Farrell**, pages 215-233 (on race and perceptions of prosecution); **Halperin/Hoppe**, pages 429-447 (on Louisiana’s “Crimes Against Nature” law)

*Online videos* (to be completed **before** class): (1) Prosecution, (2) Hate crimes

*Online quiz* (to be completed **before** class): On the videos and readings

*In-class workshops* (to be completed **in class**): Blue lives matter laws, Prosecutor scenarios, Should we elect prosecutors?, Merger doctrine workshop

***Assignment Due*** (either in class or on Blackboard by 9:00 am): First writing assignment instructions will be distributed in class

**Monday, October 22**

*Topic*: Inequalities in the courtroom

*Readings* (to be completed **before** class): **Johnson/Warren/Farrell**, pages 165-181 (on race and jury verdicts), **Halperin/Hoppe**, pages 297-314 (on feminism and stereotypes of sex workers)

*Online videos* (to be completed **before** class): (1) In the courtroom, (2) Jury selection

*Online quiz* (to be completed **before** class): On the videos and readings

*In-class workshops* (to be completed **in class**): Sexual orientation in the courtroom, Sexual orientation in jury selection

**Monday, October 29**

*Topic*: Inequality in sentencing

*Readings* (to be completed **before** class): **Reiter**, Chapter 1, pages 1-27 (on prisoner litigation)

*Online videos* (to be completed **before** class): (1) Sentencing disparities, (2) Parole

*Online quiz* (to be completed **before** class): On the videos and readings

*In-class workshops* (to be completed **in class**): Shame/ostracism scenarios, prison phone call discussion

**Monday, November 5**

*Topic*: Mass incarceration

*Readings* (to be completed **before** class): **Halperin/Hoppe**, pages 191-206 (on prohibition of sexual conduct in prison); ***The New Jim Crow*** essay by Michelle Alexander, to be distributed in class (4 pages); **Reiter**, Chapter 2, pages 28-56 (on mental disability and imprisonment)

*Online videos* (to be completed **before** class): (1) Mass incarceration, (2) Prison conditions

*Online quiz* (to be completed **before** class): On the videos and readings

*In-class workshops* (to be completed **in class**): Video on Angola Prison (Louisiana)

**Monday, November 12**

*Topic*: Collateral consequences

*Readings* (to be completed **before** class): **Halperin/Hoppe**, pages 65-93 (on legal disabilities for sex offenders), **Reiter**, Chapter 3, pages 57-86 (on collateral consequences of conviction)

*Online videos* (to be completed **before** class): (1) Collateral consequences, (2) Civil asset forfeiture

*Online quiz* (to be completed **before** class): On the videos and readings

*In-class workshops* (to be completed **in class**): Video on civil asset forfeiture, Video on Utah’s white collar crime registry, Article on Bernie Madoff and case for civil asset forfeiture

**Monday, November 19**

*Topic*: Crimmigration/Migration and crime

*Readings* (to be completed **before** class): **Reiter**, Chapter 4, pages 87-104 (on prisoner disenfranchisement)**; Additional reading** to be distributed in class (on immigration detention)

*Online videos* (to be completed **before** class): (1) Introduction to U.S. immigration law, (2) Undocumented immigration, (3) Immigration enforcement, (4) Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)

*Online quiz* (to be completed **before class**): On the videos and readings

*In-class workshops* (to be completed **in class**): Police and immigration enforcement scenarios, Multiculturalism scenarios

**Monday, November 26**

*Topic*: Going Global/Juvenile justice

*Readings* (to be completed **before** class): **Halperin/Hoppe**, pages 409-428 (on anti-LGBT sentiment in Jamaica); **Reiter**, Chapter 5, pages 105-134 (on prison privatization)

*Online videos* (to be completed **before** class): (1) Going Global, (2) Juvenile justice

*Online quiz* (to be completed **before** class): On the videos and readings

*In-class workshops* (to be completed **in class**): Handout on private prisons in New Zealand

**Monday, December 3**

*Topic*: Wrongful convictions and the death penalty

*Readings* (to be completed **before** class): **Study on race and wrongful convictions** (to be distributed in class), **Reiter**, Conclusion, pages 135-142

*Online videos* (to be completed **before** class): (1) Wrongful convictions, (2) Death penalty

*Online quiz* (to be completed **before** class): On the videos and readings

*In-class workshops* (to be completed **in class**): Death penalty scenarios, Videos on wrongful executions and discussion

**Monday, December 10**

FINAL NARRATIVE STATEMENTS AND PECHA KUCHA VIDEOS DUE at 11:59 pm, uploaded on Blackboard.

**Paper Guidance**

This course will have two writing assignments over the course of the semester. The instructions for these assignments will be circulated shortly. In general, it is best to think of these assignments as *writing tests* rather than solely opinion papers. Your grade is based on **how you write**, so **it is essential** to focus on grammar, presentation, conciseness, and clarity of writing. The papers are not long, but I will read every word, so every word should be selected carefully.

These papers ask for your opinion, but they are more than this. Both papers should cite a minimum of two sources, of which one should be scholarly. A paper based solely on unsupported assertions may receive a reduced grade. I will provide instructions and conduct a series of in-class writing workshops.

For papers submitted by hard copy, I will make comments directly on the page. For papers submitted on Blackboard, I will track changes on Microsoft Word and upload the paper back to Blackboard. While I can make comments on Adobe Acrobat Reader, I prefer papers submitted in Microsoft Word format rather than papers submitted in PDF form.

**Introduction to Pecha Kucha Presentations**

This course will require a Pecha Kucha Presentation, which is a style of presentation originally designed by young designers in Tokyo in 2003. The original parameters were to present with 20 slides that automatically advance every 20 seconds (for a total of 6 minutes and 40 seconds). This manner of presentation is intended to be concise and strictly require preparation.

In our version of the Pecha Kucha Presentation, students are required to present for 3 minutes. Presentations that exceed or fall under 3 minutes, give or take 15 seconds, will be subject to a markdown.

The topic of the presentation will be to present on an issue relating to social inequality and criminal justice. The presentation should (briefly) address the topic, provide some criminological data, and use visuals to help tell the story. Sample topics might include, for instance, race and the death penalty, sentencing disparities, policing, overcriminalization, and other topics.

Ideally, the presentation will be submitted as a PowerPoint file with embedded audio files that can be played automatically in slideshow mode, OR exported from Powerpoint as a video file (.mp4) and uploaded to Blackboard. Unfortunately, I cannot accept Keynote or Prezi presentations unless these have been converted to video files. (While it is possible to convert Keynote to PowerPoint, doing this strips out the audio files). Students who wish to upload the presentation to YouTube may do this instead, but this is public.

The grading rubric will include six criteria: (1) bibliography; (2) technical aspects, including length; (3) visual presentation; (4) audio presentation; (5) how well visuals work with audio; and (6) strength of criminological or legal data presented.

**Honor Code Policy**

Available on the web at academicintegrity.gmu.edu. Mason shares in the tradition of an honor system that has existed in Virginia since 1842. The code is an integral part of university life. On the application for admission, students sign a statement agreeing to conform to and uphold the Honor Code. Students are responsible, therefore, for understanding the code’s provisions. In the spirit of the code, a student’s word is a declaration of good faith acceptable as truth in all academic matters. Cheating and attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing of academic work and related materials constitute Honor Code violations. To maintain an academic community according to these standards, students and faculty members must report all alleged violations to the Honor Committee. Any student who has knowledge of, but does not report, a violation may be accused of lying under the Honor Code.

The complete Honor Code is as follows: To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

Cheating encompasses the following: 1. The willful giving or receiving of an unauthorized, unfair, dishonest, or unscrupulous advantage in academic work over other students. 2. The above may be accomplished by any means whatsoever, including but not limited to the following: fraud; duress; deception; theft; trick; talking; signs; gestures; copying from another student; and the unauthorized use of study aids, memoranda, books, data, or other information. 3. Attempted cheating.

Plagiarism encompasses the following: 1. Presenting as one's own the words, the work, or the opinions of someone else without proper acknowledgment. (This includes material appearing on the Internet). 2. Borrowing the sequence of ideas, the arrangement of material, or the pattern of thought of someone else without proper acknowledgment.

Lying encompasses the following: The willful and knowledgeable telling of an untruth, as well as any form of deceit, attempted deceit, or fraud in an oral or written statement relating to academic work. This includes but is not limited to: 1. Lying to administration and faculty members. 2. Falsifying any university document by mutilation, addition, or deletion. 3. Lying to Honor Committee members and counsels during investigation and hearing. This may constitute a second charge, with the committee members who acted as judges during that specific hearing acting as accusers.

Stealing encompasses the following: Taking or appropriating without the permission to do so, and with the intent to keep or to make use of wrongfully, property belonging to any member of the GMU community or any property located on the university campus. This includes misuse of university computer resources.

**ALL STUDENTS ARE ON NOTICE THAT I CONSIDER PAPER RECYCLING FROM ANOTHER COURSE TO BE A VIOLATION OF THE HONOR CODE.**

**Disability Accommodations**

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.