

CRIM 490: GENDER & CRIME

COURSE INFORMATION

This is a fully online and asynchronous course. This means that students do not have to be available at the same time each week for class meetings. Instead, students are required to participate weekly and complete assignments by the deadlines listed in the syllabus. A computer with an Internet connection is required.

Prerequisite: CRIM 100

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Janani Umamaheswar
Office location: Enterprise Hall 303
Office hours: On Zoom by appointment
Email address: jumamahe@gmu.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

Most broadly, the purpose of this course is to provide students with an in-depth understanding of the role of gender in offending patterns, victimization, and punishment. We will begin the course with a brief review of the sociology of gender and intersectionality. Framing gender as socially constructed, multidimensional, and situational, we will then turn to the role of gender in criminology and criminal justice. Here, we will seek to understand the major theoretical developments in the sub-field of gender and crime, including the development of feminist criminology. Next, we will study how cultural assumptions about gender underlie society's understanding of, and response to, law-breaking behavior and victimization. To accomplish this goal, we will be studying specific topics such as the criminalization of women's bodies (through discussions of reproductive autonomy, sex work, mothering, etc.), sexual and domestic abuse, and so on. Finally, we will study the gendered nature of punishment in the United States, focusing especially on gender differences in prison subcultures.

By the end of this course, you should:

1. Have a strong grasp on how theoretical approaches to understanding gender and crime have evolved over time.
2. Recognize the empirical and theoretical contributions of feminist criminology.
3. Have a *critical* perspective on how the criminal justice reflects and perpetuates gender inequality.
4. Understand how gender inequality is shaped by—and in turn shapes—other forms of inequality (based on race, class, immigration status, etc.) in the context of crime and victimization.

REQUIRED READINGS

There is no required textbook for this course; all readings are available on Blackboard.

ASSESSMENT

Weekly Flipgrid videos: 50%

- 1) By 11:59 p.m. on Thursday each week, you will submit short (10 minutes max.) videos on Flipgrid in which you informally reflect on the readings for that week.
- 2) By 11:59 p.m. on Sunday each week, you should also submit video responses to two of classmates' videos.

These videos will be graded as follows:

100 if you submitted your video and responded to two of your group members' videos.

75 if you submitted your video and responded to only one of your group members' videos.

50 if you submitted only your own video.

0 if you did not submit any videos that week.

Quizzes: 30% (10% each)

You will complete 3 online, open-book, multiple-choice quizzes (10% each) throughout the semester. The quizzes will be structured as described below:

Quiz 1 will cover all the readings and media from week 2 to week 5 inclusive.

Quiz 2 will cover all the readings and media from week 6 to week 10 inclusive.

Quiz 3 will cover all the readings and media from week 11 to week 14 inclusive.

Infographic assignment: 20%

Infographics are a great way to disseminate research findings to the broader public. In this assignment, students will develop policy recommendations on a topic related to punishment and corrections in a visually appealing way. Students will:

- 1) Review the academic research related to the topic they choose.
- 2) Create an infographic summarizing the main findings on their topic and providing policy recommendations.

Students must rely on at least 5 academic sources in this assignment, which is due on Friday, May 6th at 11:59 p.m. We will cover more details on the assignment during the semester.

GRADING SCALE

Students will be graded on the following scale:

A: 93-100
A-: 90-92
B+: 87-89
B: 83-86
B-: 80-82
C+: 77-79
C: 73-76
C-: 70-72
D: 60-69
F: <60

LEARNING DURING A PANDEMIC

We are living through a period of immense disruption, anxiety, and stress. Expecting normalcy in the classroom during a time of crisis is not reasonable, and as we learn together during the pandemic, please feel free to approach me with suggestions about how to support you if you are struggling with the unique difficulties that the pandemic has generated—whether these involve extra care burdens, financial issues, mental health challenges or anything else. While I may be unable to offer direct assistance with some of these issues, I am happy to support your learning in my class however I can, and to connect you with resources that may help with issues beyond the classroom.

SUCCEEDING IN AN ONLINE COURSE

- Please email me at jumamahe@gmu.edu with any questions/concerns and/or if you wish to meet with me online. I will do my best to respond to emails within 24-48 hours, except for weekends and holidays.
- Please note that the schedule is tentative and it is your responsibility to ensure that you are receiving and reading ALL emails from me. This is especially important in an online course.
- All assignments should be submitted on Blackboard.
- The rules that apply to a regular classroom apply to the online classroom as well. I encourage debate in my classroom (whether online or face-to-face), but I also work hard to create a space where students do not feel attacked or uncomfortable.

Please give other students' opinions the respect you think your own opinion deserves.

- Your “weighted total” on Blackboard reflects your most up-to-date, accurate grade in the class.

RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY

It is my intent that students with diverse backgrounds and perspectives will be well-served and well-respected in my classroom. I want students' diversity to be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit in this course. I encourage students to approach me with questions, comments, and suggestions related to respecting *every* form of diversity.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to upholding the letter and spirit of the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. Under the administration of University Life, Disability Services implements and coordinates reasonable accommodations and disability-related services that afford equal access to university programs and activities. Students can begin the registration process with Disability Services at any time during their enrollment at George Mason University. If you are seeking accommodations, please visit <http://ds.gmu.edu/> for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: ods@gmu.edu | Phone: (703) 993-2474

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All submitted course work should be your own. When using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations. When in doubt, cite! You are bound by the George Mason University Honor Code. Violations will be referred to the University Honor Committee.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT, SEXUAL HARASSMENT, AND INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Non-Confidential Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, stalking, sexual exploitation, complicity, and retaliation to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-993-3686 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance or support measures from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE*

*Schedule is tentative and subject to change as the semester progresses.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Assignments</u>	<u>Media</u>
Week 1	Welcome	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce yourselves on Flipgrid (Flipgrid video 1) 	None
Week 2	Why punish?	Fraser	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flipgrid video set 2 	Matthews TED talk
Week 3	Racial disparities in punishment	Alexander; Coates (Atlantic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flipgrid video set 3 	Stevenson TED talk
Week 4	Men's prisons	Umamaheswar; Diorio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flipgrid video set 4 	Wyatt TED talk
Week 5	Women's prisons	Ystanes and Ugelvik; Acoose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flipgrid video set 5 Quiz 1 	Prison nursery video
Week 6	Torture of terror suspects	Hickey excerpt; Guardian article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flipgrid video set 6 	Ghosts of Abu Ghraib
Week 7	Scandinavian prisons	Pakes; Benko (NY Times)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flipgrid video set 7 	Nordic prison documentary
Week 8	Spring Break	None	None	None
Week 9	Juvenile punishment	Comfort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flipgrid video set 8 	Wallace TED talk
Week 10	Aging prisoners	Smoyer et al.; Niles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flipgrid video set 9 Quiz 2 	Fault Lines documentary
Week 11	Prisons and health	Suhomlinova et al	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flipgrid video set 10 	Vice video
Week 12	Death penalty	Hickey excerpt; Westervelt and Cook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flipgrid video set 11 	Vice video
Week 13	Privatization of prisons	Atlantic article; Prison Town comic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flipgrid video set 12 	CNBC documentary
Week 14	Solitary confinement	Western et al; White	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flipgrid video set 13 Quiz 3 	Solitary Nation

Week 15	Wrap-up and review	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flipgrid course reflection (video 14)• Infographic assignment	None
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