

Punishment and Corrections: CRIM 402, Spring 2024

COURSE INFORMATION

January 15 - May 10
Monday and Wednesday 10:30 am - 11:45 am

This is an online class. Monday's class will feature guest speakers and lectures on the material. During Wednesday's class, we will discuss the videos and readings. Students are required to participate weekly and complete assignments by the deadlines listed in the syllabus. A computer with an Internet connection is required.

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Heather Toronjo (Roberts), M.A., MPP
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Office hours: By appointment on Zoom
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to Punishment & Corrections! This course covers theories on forms of punishment systems; punishment and corrections as a product of historical, cultural, and political changes; differences by race and gender in punishment and corrections; problems of social control and violence in prisons; alternative rehabilitation; and community prevention strategies.

Most broadly, this course serves as an in-depth examination of how and why the U.S. criminal justice system punishes. We will consider the theoretical underpinnings of various forms of punishment and corrections, and we will evaluate the historical, social, and political conditions that shape who is punished and how. We will cover a wide range of topics and debates related to punishment and corrections but there are many still we will not have time to cover (e.g., the child welfare system, immigration, and juvenile justice). I hope that this course spurs in you a curiosity about all the ways we attempt to punish and correct behavior, as well as *what, why, how, and who* we've chosen to punish and correct.

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

1. Describe how the socio-political landscape affects whom, why, and how we punish. In other words, students should have developed a sociological understanding of punishment and corrections in the United States.
2. Assess critically specific punishment and corrections policies (e.g.—police patrols, laws, judges' decisions, sentencing policies, incarceration, solitary confinement, etc.) by referring to social science research on the ethics and effectiveness of these policies.
3. Understand the structure and subculture of correctional facilities in the United States.
4. Grasp how the punishment and correctional systems in the U.S. reflect and perpetuate social inequalities based on race, class, and gender.

REQUIRED VIDEOS AND READINGS

There is no required textbook for this course; all videos and readings are available on Blackboard. I also note on Blackboard where you might skim certain articles or which parts of various articles to pay particular attention to,

so be sure and check those instructions before reading. It is important that you complete the videos and readings before class on Wednesday. You can find on Blackboard discussion questions that will help guide your watching/reading. We will discuss some of these questions during our class time and you will reflect on some of these questions for your Flip videos. Success in this class requires being engaged and demonstrating critical thinking.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Attendance and Class Participation (15% due weekly): Participation is required for this class. If you miss class, this will reflect in your final grade. **Please be prepared to have your camera on during class and clear your calendar for class time. Do not schedule appointments or work during class time.** Class discussion is crucial to deepening our grasp of the concepts. Participation requires that you attend class prepared to engage in an in-class activity and arrive on time. If you are unable to attend a class session, please email me before class. Excuses such as doctor's appointments, trips to see family, or other such reasons do not count as "excused" because they are within your control and thus the absence is likely avoidable. Should your course grade be borderline at the end of the semester, your active, appropriate, and consistent participation in class discussions will push your grade toward a higher mark. You will be given points each week based on the rubric below. And remember that simply talking is not necessarily participation. If it is clear that you have not read the material you will not receive credit.

Missing four (4) or more class sessions = 0%; regularly present but inactive = 5%; regularly present and sporadically active = 10%; present and highly active = 15%.

Quizzes (20% due weekly before class on Wednesday): To encourage you to keep up with the course materials and come to class prepared to discuss them, you will have a quiz due most weeks. The quizzes will be short. The questions are not meant to be tricky; they will focus on the main points, not the minute details. Nothing marked "Skim" will be included on the quizzes. I will drop your lowest quiz grade.

Weekly Flip Videos (20% due weekly before class on Wednesday): Before class on Wednesday week, you will submit one short (2 minutes min - 10 minutes max.) video on Flip [Here](#) in which you reflect on the reading/listening assignments for that week and you will comment on one classmate's video with a question that their video promoted you to think about. Videos submitted after 11:59 pm on Sunday will not be accepted. These videos will be graded as follows:

- 6 pts: you submitted your video and responded to one of your class members' videos.
- 3 pts: you submitted your video and did not respond to a classmate.
- 0 pts: you did not submit any videos that week or did not submit them before the deadline.

Annotated Bibliography (40% due March 10th and April 28th): You will make an annotated bibliography from the course readings. You will turn in one at mid-term and one at the end of the semester. An annotated bibliography is a list of sources (books, articles, websites, etc.) with a short paragraph about each source. Each source in the annotated bibliography has a citation - the information a reader needs to find the original source, in a consistent format to make that easier. These consistent formats are called citation styles. You should use APA (American Psychological Association) style for social sciences.

Annotations versus Abstracts. Many scholarly articles start with an abstract, which is the author's summary of the article to help you decide whether you should read the entire article. This abstract is not the same thing as an annotation. The annotation needs to be in your own words, to explain the relevance of the source to your particular

assignment or research question. We will discuss more in class. (Source: <https://libguides.csun.edu/research-strategies/annotated-bibliography>).

Annotations should address the following questions:

1. What is the focus or purpose of the work? (e.g., what is the research question? why did the author(s) write this?)
2. What conclusions or observations did the author(s) reach? (e.g., what did they conclude? what are the key details?)
3. What are your conclusions or observations? (e.g., do you agree with the author's conclusion? Why or why not? You will be graded on your insights)
4. How does the paper relate to other papers across weeks (and outside of class)? You should make a minimum of three connections with readings/podcasts/videos from OTHER weeks and explain how they connect.

Concept Map (5%, due May 2nd). Concept maps are a graphic representation of your understanding of how concepts fit together. Concept maps include *concepts*, usually enclosed in circles or boxes, and *relationships* between concepts, indicated by a connecting line. Words on the line are *linking words* and specify the relationship between concepts. You will create a concept map answering the question: **What does punishment and corrections look like? What could should it be?** We will talk more about this in class.

Assignment	Points Possible	Grade Breakdown
Attendance	30	15%
Weekly Quizzes (10 total)	40	20%
Weekly Flipgrid (10 total)	40	20%
Annotated Bibliographies	80	40%
Concept Map	10	5%
Total	200	100%

LATE WORK POLICY

“Life Happens Pass” each of you has an automatic 72-hour extension on a (major) assignment once per semester, no questions asked, as long as you inform me in writing before the assignment is due. No late work from the first half of the semester will be accepted after spring break.

GRADING SCALE

The course components (attendance/participation; annotations; weekly quizzes, and flips) will be weighted as described above to determine your final grade, which will be assigned according to the following scale:

A+ 97-100%		C+ 77-79%	
A 94-96%	<i>outstanding</i>	C 73-76%	<i>average</i>
A- 90-93%		C- 70-72%	
B+ 87-89%		D 60-69%	<i>marginal</i>
B 83-86%	<i>good</i>	F <60%	<i>failing</i>
B- 80-82%			

CLASS AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Contacting Me

The easiest way to contact me is via email. Please feel free to send me an email at any time during the semester if you have any questions, comments, or concerns. Please use your GMU email account and be sure to include your name in all emails and indicate the course number in the subject line so they do not get confused for spam. In addition to general questions, you should always feel free to email me at any time to set up a virtual meeting.

Note: In general, I will respond to emails within 24-48 hours on Monday-Friday. If you email me on a Friday or over the weekend, you may not hear back until Monday. Please do not send a follow-up before allowing this time to pass. If you have not heard back from me after this period, feel free to send a gentle reminder email. Please do not reach out to me via Blackboard Messenger. All course communications must be through GMU email.

Make-up Policy

If you have a legitimate, excused reason for missing an assignment, please let me know as soon as possible so we can make alternative arrangements. Each of you has a “Life Happens Pass,” which is an automatic 72-hour extension on a (major) assignment once per semester, no questions asked, as long as you inform me in writing before the assignment is due.

Etiquette

We will be discussing many issues in this class that may be controversial and emotional. I encourage students to discuss, disagree, and debate one another. However, rudeness and hostility will not be tolerated. I want you all to be critical of arguments, not the individuals making those arguments. We can and will discuss opposing viewpoints and perspectives respectfully.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

George Mason University’s 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 (<https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/>). Familiarize yourself with this policy and remember your legal fundamentals: Ignorance of the rules is not a valid defense!

Note: 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. Instructors are required to report all violations of the Honor Code to the Mason Honor Committee. 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. We have multiple writing assignments in this class. Because the act of composing a response in your own words increases your learning, it is important that you complete the task yourself, rather than rely on an artificial intelligence (AI) tool. Completing these writing assignments yourself will help strengthen your performance in this class on later assignments and activities, as well as help you develop professionally and succeed in your career goals. You should also be aware that AI text generation tools may present incorrect information, biased responses, and incomplete analyses; thus, they are not yet prepared to produce text that meets the standards of this course. If you do choose to experiment with AI text generation, you are expected to indicate your usage of it and give credit for text that AI has generated. The use of AI-generated text without proper attribution is a violation of academic integrity. **AI statement language from the Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning*

Accommodations for Special Needs

If you need academic accommodations, please inform the instructor and contact the Office of Disability Services (703-993-4306; <https://ds.gmu.edu>). All academic accommodations must be made through that office.

Sexual Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, and Interpersonal Violence

George Mason University is committed to providing an environment that is free from discrimination, sexual misconduct, and other acts of interpersonal violence to promote community well-being and student success. We encourage students who believe that they have been sexually harassed, assaulted, or subjected to sexual misconduct to seek assistance and support. University Policy 1202: Sexual Harassment and Misconduct speaks to the specifics of Mason's process, the resources, and the options available to students (<https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/sexual-harassment-policy/>).

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. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact the Student Support and Advocacy Center (703-380-1434) or Counseling and Psychological Services (703-993-2380). You may also seek assistance from Mason's Title IX Coordinator (703-993-8730; titleix@gmu.edu).

Counseling and Psychological Services

If you are facing significant life stressors and feeling overwhelmed, there are resources available to help you. These include Counseling and Psychological Services (703) 993-2380, which provides confidential psychological services, including 24/7 crisis intervention. There is also Student Support (703) 993-5376, which helps students negotiate life situations by connecting them with appropriate resources. Student Support also has an online referral system (for non-emergencies only): <https://ssac.gmu.edu/>. The non-emergency number for the GMU police is (703) 993-2810. See <https://ulife.gmu.edu/about-us/offices-of-university-life/> for a full listing of service areas and contact information.

The Writing Center and Mason Library

The Writing Center at Mason (<https://writingcenter.gmu.edu>) is a fantastic and free resource providing information and one-on-one tutoring for all your writing needs. The Writing Center is available throughout your Mason career should you need assistance before submitting any assignments. They can help with any part of the writing process, from planning and organizing your paper to proofreading and revising. Their website also has guides on best practices for reading, note-taking, and citing sources. Mason Library also has excellent tutorials on writing, reading, note-taking, giving presentations, time management, and academic integrity. See <https://library.gmu.edu/tutorials> for a full list.

Purdue OWL

As a general resource for any college student, Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL) is a great resource for tips on writing and citations. In particular, if you are unsure of how to cite materials in your work, be sure to check their website, which is available at <https://owl.purdue.edu/>.

SCHEDULE

Week	Turn in before Wed. class	Class Date	Topic	Watch/Listen (minutes)	Read [pages]
1	Flip Quiz 1	17 Jan.	Introductions and the state of things		Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2023 [31] Punishment Beyond Prisons 2023 [18] Language Around Incarceration [1]
2	Flip Quiz 2	22/24 Jan.	Why punish?	Erin Kelly TED Talk: Who Belongs in Prison (14) Brandon Matthews TED Talk: The surprising reason our correctional system doesn't work (15)	Mackenzie (2016) "From Theory to Policy: Evidence-Based Corrections" [22] Miller (1989) "The Debate on Rehabilitating Criminals: Is It True that Nothing Works?" [5]
3	Flip Quiz 3	29/31 Jan.	What we do (and do not) punish	NPR: After 50 years of the War on Drugs, 'What Good is it Doing for Us?' (7.5) Anand Giridharadas: How super-rich companies harm us all - and try to cover it up (4) Why the U.S. Government Bought 'Troubled Assets' PBS Newshour (8)	Kohler-Hausmann (2018) "Procedural Hassel" [33] Western (2018) "Lifetimes of Violence" [21] <i>SKIM: Hillyard & Holms (2007) "From 'crime' to social harm?"</i>
4	Flip Quiz 4	5/7 Feb.	Who we punish	Michele Goodwin TED Talk: Women and Mass Incarceration (17) Mass Incarceration, Visualized (2.5)	Irwin (2013) "Who is arrested?" [22] Oppel and Patel (2019) "One Lawyer, 194 Felony Cases, and No Time" [5] PPI (2015) "Prisons of Poverty: Uncovering the pre-incarceration incomes of the imprisoned" [2]
5	Flip Quiz 5	12/14 Feb.	Police: The tip of the spear	The Police Tapes trailer and excerpts (8) Ear Hustle: Tell Christy I Love Her (47)	Baldwin (1966) "A report from occupied territory" [6] Ramsey (2014) "The Challenge of Policing a Democratic Society" [16] Irwin (2013) "Rabble, Crime, and the Jail" [16]
6	Flip Quiz 6	19/21 Feb.	Jails: A Band-Aid on a bullet wound	Institutionalized: Mental Health Behind Bars (23)	Littman (2021) "Jail, Sheriffs, and Carceral Policymakers" [91]
7	Flip Quiz 7	26/28 Feb.	Legislatures, Prosecutors, Judges: The color of law	When a 16-Year-Old Is Locked Up in a Supermax Prison Stickup Kid FRONTLINE (28) Hearne, Texas: Scenes from the Drug War (23)	Becker (2001) "As Ex-Theorist on Young 'Superpredators,' Bush Aide Has Regrets" [4] Clair & Winter (2016) "How Judges Think about Racial Disparities" [28] Blumstein & Piquero (2007) "Restore rationality to sentencing policy" [7] <i>SKIM: Campbell, M. C. (2012) "Ornery alligators and soap on a rope: Texas prosecutors and punishment reform in the Lone Star State"</i>
8	A. Bib wks 1 -7 due Mar 3rd	4 Mar.	Spring break		

9	Flip Quiz 8	11/13 Mar.	Race, Crime and Punishment	Mass Incarceration: Pathways to Prison (10)	<p>The State of America's Children 2023 Youth Justice [1]</p> <p>Spohn (2015) "Race, Crime, and Punishment in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries" [49]</p> <p>Shakur & Chesimard (1978) "Women in Prison: How we are" [8]</p>
10	Flip Quiz 9	18/20 Mar.	Living in prison	<p>Re-humanizing inmates Anthony Wyatt (8)</p> <p>Two episodes of Written Inside (~20)</p>	<p>Western, B. (2021) "Inside the box" [27]</p> <p>Listwan et al (2013) "The pains of imprisonment revisited: The impact of strain on inmate recidivism" [20]</p> <p><i>SKIM: The Prison Journalism Project website</i></p>
11	Flip Quiz 10	25/27 Mar.	Dying in prison	<p>Angola Prison Hospice: Opening the Door (22)</p> <p>The Last Days of Death Row Inmate Scott Dozier (14)</p>	<p>Nagin (2022) "Unraveling mass incarceration: Criminology's role in the process" [5]</p> <p>Nellis (2021) "No End in Sight" [42 pages]</p> <p><i>SKIM: Old Law Parole Letters (2015)</i></p>
12	Flip Quiz 11	1/3 Apr.	Working in corrections	<p>The Secret is Out (7)</p> <p>The man inside: Four months as a prison guard (54)</p> <p>Adult Probation Officer Recruitment Video (3.5)</p>	<p>Higgins, Smith, Swartz (2022) "We keep the nightmares in their cages" [26]</p>
13	Flip Quiz 12	8/10 Apr.	Collateral consequences	<p>When Mother's Day Means a Trip to Prison (8)</p> <p>Life on Parole (full documentary) FRONTLINE (53)</p>	<p>Western et al (2015) "Stress and hardship after prison" [36]</p> <p>Ostrander (2015) "What Poverty Does to the Young Brain" [2]</p>
14	Flip Quiz 13	15/17 Apr.	The science of corrections	<p>PBS Transforming Corrections (47)</p>	<p>Harding, Western, Sandelson (2022) "From Supervision to Opportunity: Reimagining Probation and Parole" [28]</p> <p>Blomberg, Copp & Turanovic (2023) "Challenges and Prospects for evidence-informed policy in criminology" [20]</p> <p><i>SKIM: Petrich et al (2021) Custodial Sanctions and Reoffending: A Meta-Analytic Review</i></p>
15	Flip Quiz 14	22/24 Apr.	Restorative Justice	<p>Until We Reckon (18 mins)</p>	<p>Braithwaite (1998) "A Future where Punishment is marginalized: Realistic or Utopian?" [25]</p> <p>Van Ness & Strong (2015) "Restorative Justice Justice That Promotes Healing" [29]</p>
16	A. Bib wks 9-14 Due April 28th	29 Apr.	Wrap Up and Class Reflection	None	Concept Map Due May 1st