

San José State University
Justice Studies Department
JS-208 Seminar: Punishment & Society
Spring 2021

Instructor: Alessandro De Giorgi

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Office Hours: Tuesdays: 9am–11am
Thursdays: 9am–11am

Class Days/Time: Tuesdays: 4.30pm – 7.15pm

Classroom: Zoom Link: <https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/82944595485>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This advanced seminar offers a structural critique of the punitive turn that has swept U.S. society in the aftermath of the civil rights revolution of the 1960s. In particular, we will examine the growing convergence of the penal and welfare systems toward a paradigm of punitive governance of racialized poverty since the mid-1970s. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach that combines scholarship on political economy, welfare, critical geography, and penal politics the course will analyze the emergence of a neoliberal model of punitive social regulation built along three distinct coordinates: (1) The restructuring of *class power* in the era of postindustrial capitalism; (2) The reconfiguring of *racial control* in the age of colorblindness; (3) The remaking of *state sovereignty* in the age of globalization. Through the semester, seminar participants will read, analyze, and discuss different theoretical and empirical perspectives on these issues.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

SLO#1: Engage in theoretically grounded scholarly critiques of specific policy developments
[RELEVANT ASSIGNMENT: IN-CLASS TESTS/RESEARCH PAPER]

SLO #2: Critically assess legislative measures dealing with punishment
[RELEVANT ASSIGNMENT: IN-CLASS TESTS/RESEARCH PAPER]

SLO#3: Understand and competently discuss institutional changes in the field of American penal politics
[RELEVANT ASSIGNMENT: IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS]

CLASSROOM PROTOCOL

Attendance. According to University policy F69-24 “Students should attend all meetings of their classes, not only because they are responsible for material discussed therein, but because active participation is frequently essential to insure maximum benefit for all members of the class. Attendance per se shall not be used as a criterion for grading”. Attendance is taken at each class meeting using sign-in sheets.

DROPPING AND ADDING

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc. Information on add/drops is available at the following link: <https://www.sjsu.edu/advising/faq/index.html> - [Adding, dropping, registering for classes](#). Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for adding and dropping classes.

REQUIRED READINGS:

ALEXANDER, M. 2010. *The New Jim Crow. Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: The New Press.

GOTTSCHALK, M. 2014. *Caught: The Prison State and the Lockdown of American Politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

STORY, B. 2019. *Prison Land. Mapping Carceral Power across Neoliberal America*. Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota University Press.

WACQUANT, L. 2009. *Punishing the Poor. The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity*. Durham NC: Duke University Press.

SUGGESTED RESEARCH AREAS FOR THE "RESEARCH PAPER" ASSIGNMENT

PLEASE NOTE: *What follows is not a list of titles for your research paper, but only a sample of possible areas on which research papers can be focused. The specification of a particular subject for your paper—as well as its theoretical perspective, methodological approach, historical and/or geographical context—should be part of the research process itself.*

- 1) THE PRISON CRISIS IN THE US / CALIFORNIA
- 2) THE COVID-19 CRISIS IN US PRISONS
- 3) PRISONER REENTRY
- 4) DRUG COURTS AND OTHER SPECIALIZED COURTS
- 5) TRANSFORMATIONS OF PAROLE/PROBATION
- 6) RESTORATIVE JUSTICE
- 7) PRISON ABOLITIONISM
- 8) WELFARE AND POVERTY IN THE US
- 9) TRUTH IN SENTENCING/MANDATORY MINIMUMS
- 10) THE AMERICAN DEATH PENALTY
- 11) FELON DISENFRANCHISEMENT LAWS
- 12) WOMEN AND IMPRISONMENT
- 13) THE "WAR ON DRUGS" IN THE US
- 14) HEALTH CARE PRISONS
- 15) THE POLICING CRISIS IN THE US
- 16) PRISON GANGS
- 17) MASS INCARCERATION AND NEOLIBERALISM
- 18) GUN CONTROL IN THE US
- 19) PRISON TOWNS AND THE CARCERAL ECONOMY
- 20) PUNISHMENT IN US HISTORY

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING POLICY

1) IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS	<i>Ongoing</i>	20%
2) IN-CLASS TEST I (2 questions)	3/9/2021	20%
3) IN-CLASS TEST II (2 questions)	4/6/2021	20%
4) In-Class Test III (2 questions)	5/11/2021	20%
5) RESEARCH PAPER	5/4/2021	20%

SPECIFICATIONS ON COURSEWORK

1) IN CLASS PRESENTATIONS/DEBATE (max 20 points / 20% of total grade)

Each week, participants will offer an in-class presentation based on the readings assigned for that week. Depending on the total number of participants, presentations will be given *individually* or *in couples* (the calendar of presentations will be available by the second week of class). In their presentations students should not simply summarize the reading, but elaborate some meaningful critique of its arguments, and raise some issues/questions to be debated in class. At the end of each presentation there will be a debate, moderated by the instructor.

2-3) IN-CLASS TESTS 1-2-3 (max 60 points / 60% of total grade)

These tests will be done in class, and will consist of 2 short-answer questions about any of the topics/readings discussed in class. Each question will receive a grade ranging between 0 and 10 (for a maximum of 60 points).

PLEASE NOTE: These assignments are due on **3/9/21**, **4/6/21**, and **5/11/21**, respectively, and should be submitted through CANVAS.

4) RESEARCH PAPER (max 20 points / 20% of total grade)

Students are required to write an 8 to 10 pages long (computer typed, double spaced, APA-formatted) research paper on a subject of their choice among the topics listed under the “Research Paper Topics” section (see above). Students are expected to discuss their choice of research topic in class on **4/6/2021**.

In the paper, students are asked to explore a specific issue making use of at least 8 scholarly sources (i.e., articles from peer reviewed journals or academic books, including the textbooks for this course).

Papers must be written in APA style.

The evaluation and grading of the research papers will be based on the following:

Originality (relating ideas to issues; reflexivity and critique, etc.)

Comprehension (use of concepts; knowledge of theoretical perspectives, etc.)

Structure (presentation of ideas, appropriate use of sources; internal consistency, etc.)

Clarity (proof-reading; correct use of APA format, etc.)

PLEASE NOTE: The research paper is due on **5/4/2021**, and should be submitted through CANVAS.

GRADING SYSTEM

<i>Grading System</i>	<i>Grade</i>
98-100	A+
94-97	A
91-93	A-
88-90	B+
84-87	B
81-83	B-
78-80	C+
74-77	C
71-73	C-
68-70	D+
64-67	D
61-63	D-
<60	F

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students should know that the University's Academic Integrity Policy is available at: <https://catalog.sjsu.edu/content.php?catoid=2&navoid=94>.

Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University's integrity policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The website for Student Conduct and Ethical Development is available at: <http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/>. Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person's ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU's Academic Policy F06-1 requires approval of instructors.

CAMPUS POLICY IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE AMERICAN DISABILITIES ACT

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the DRC (Disability Resource Center) to establish a record of their disability.

STUDENT TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include digital and VHS camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm, slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

SJSU PEER CONNECTIONS

The SJSU Peer Connections service is located in Room 600 in the Student Services Center. It is designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to motivate them to become self-directed learners. The center provides support services, such as skills assessment, individual or group tutorials, subject advising, learning assistance, summer academic preparation and basic skills development. The SJSU Peer Connections website is located at: <https://www.sjsu.edu/peerconnections/index.php>.

SJSU WRITING CENTER

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. The SJSU writing Center's website is located at: <https://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/>.

PEER MENTOR CENTER

The Peer Mentor Center is located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall in the Academic Success Center. The Peer Mentor Center is staffed with Peer Mentors who excel in helping students manage university life, tackling problems that range from academic challenges to interpersonal struggles. On the road to graduation, Peer Mentors are navigators, offering “roadside assistance” to peers who feel a bit lost or simply need help mapping out the locations of campus resources. Peer Mentor services are free and available on a drop-in basis, no reservation required. [Website of Peer Mentor Center is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/muse/peermentor/](http://www.sjsu.edu/muse/peermentor/)

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TUESDAYS: 4.30pm – 7.15 pm

Zoom Link: <https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/82944595485>

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK	DATE	TOPICS/READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS/DEADLINES
1	Tuesday 2/2/21	INTRODUCTION <u>Readings:</u> Wacquant, <i>Prologue</i> ; Alexander, <i>Introduction</i> ; Story, <i>Introduction</i>
2	Tuesday 2/9/21	THE AMERICAN PENAL STATE (1) <u>Readings:</u> Gottschalk, <i>Caught</i> , Chapters 1 - 2 - 3
3	Tuesday 2/16/21	THE AMERICAN PENAL STATE (2) <u>Readings:</u> Gottschalk, <i>Caught</i> , Chapters 4 - 5 - 6
4	Tuesday 2/23/21	THE AMERICAN PENAL STATE (3) <u>Readings:</u> Gottschalk, <i>Caught</i> , Chapters 7 - 8 - 9
5	Tuesday 3/2/21	THE AMERICAN PENAL STATE (4) <u>Readings:</u> Gottschalk, <i>Caught</i> , Chapters 10 - 11 - 12
6	Tuesday 3/9/21	<u>IN-CLASS TEST 1 DUE:</u> <u>TWO SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS (20% OF TOTAL GRADE)</u>
7	Tuesday 3/16/21	PUNISHMENT AS RACIAL CONTROL (1) <u>Readings:</u> Alexander, <i>The New Jim Crow</i> , Chapters 1 - 2 - 3
8	Tuesday 3/23/21	PUNISHMENT AS RACIAL CONTROL (2) <u>Readings:</u> Alexander, <i>The New Jim Crow</i> , Chapters 4 - 5 - 6
9	Tuesday 3/30/21	<u>NO CLASS: SPRING RECESS</u>

WEEK	DATE	TOPICS/READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS/DEADLINES
10	Tuesday 4/6/21	<u>DISCUSSION & APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PAPER TOPICS</u> <u>IN-CLASS TEST 2 DUE:</u> <u>TWO SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS (20% OF TOTAL GRADE)</u>
11	Tuesday 4/13/21	PUNISHMENT AND NEOLIBERALISM (1) <u>Readings:</u> Wacquant, <i>Punishing the Poor</i> , Chapters 1 - 2 - 3
12	Tuesday 4/20/21	PUNISHMENT AND NEOLIBERALISM (2) <u>Readings:</u> Wacquant, <i>Punishing the Poor</i> , Chapters 5 - 6 - 10
13	Tuesday 4/27/21	GEOGRAPHIES OF CARCERAL POWER (1) <u>Readings:</u> Story, <i>Prison Land</i> , Chapters 1 - 2 - 3
14	Tuesday 5/4/21	GEOGRAPHIES OF CARCERAL POWER (2) <u>Readings:</u> Story, <i>Prison Land</i> , Chapters 4 - 5 - Conclusion <u>RESEARCH PAPER DUE (20% OF TOTAL GRADE)</u>
15	Tuesday 5/11/21	<u>IN-CLASS TEST 3 DUE:</u> <u>TWO SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS (20% OF TOTAL GRADE)</u>