

Sociology 421
The Sociology of Punishment
Section B1 Winter 2009

Tagoona was first of his people to be ordained as a priest.
The missionary said: "Now Tagoona, you can help me with the problems of your people."
Tagoona asked, "What is a problem?"
The missionary replied:
"Tagoona, if I held you by your heels on a third-story window you would have a problem."
Tagoona considered this long and carefully.
At length, he said:
"I do not think so. If you saved me, all would be well.
If you dropped me, nothing would matter. It is you who would have the problem."
-Anonymous

Lectures: MW 3:00-4:20 HC 2-29
Instructor: Jana Grekul
Office: Tory 6-21
Phone: 492-0477
email: jgrekul@ualberta.ca
Office hours: Monday/Wednesday 2:00-2:50 or by appointment

Required Texts:

Comack, Elizabeth. 2008. *Out There In Here: Masculinity, Violence and Prisoning*. Fernwood Publishing. Halifax and Winnipeg.

Hudson, Barbara A. 2003. *Understanding justice: An introduction to ideas, perspectives and controversies in modern penal theory*. Second Edition. Open University Press. Buckingham.

*You will also be required to read selected readings, available from the university library (e-journals) and readings available on the internet.

Optional Text

Garland, David. 1990. *Punishment and Modern Society: A Study in Social Theory*. Clarendon Press. Oxford.

Calendar Course Description: Historical and contemporary social underpinnings of punishment in the criminal justice apparatus.

Prerequisite: The prerequisites for this course are Sociology 225 and Sociology 327. The department strictly enforces this requirement. No exceptions will be made.

Course Objectives: This course aims to familiarize students with the social meaning and functioning of legal punishment in modern societies, specifically in Canada. More importantly, it aims to develop a critical understanding as well as a systematic questioning of some of the most current and long-standing practical challenges and moral dilemmas of penal policies and practices. In this regard, several common sense “realities”, as well as “hidden” realities of imprisonment will be deconstructed and critiqued. The purpose of this course is to offer students an opportunity to reflect on the use of punishment in modernity and on its viability in a “post-modern” era.

My objective for the course is to introduce students to a selection of the ‘sociology of punishment’ literature and theory. However, in addition to this goal is my objective to introduce students to the applied aspects of punishment that are equally important to theory. To this end, I endeavour to invite to class guest lecturers who have experience with some aspect of punishment (either as ‘punishers’ or the ‘punished’, or people who work with either category), and try to arrange tours of local institutions whose purpose is to ‘punish’.

In keeping with this applied objective of the course, this term, for the first time, an optional Community Service Learning (CSL) component is available to interested students. CSL is an approach to learning that integrates community engagement into academic courses (see the CSL Guidebook and other information which can be found at www.arts.ualberta.ca/csl). Students who choose this option are required to volunteer a minimum of 20 hours with their chosen organization. Working with a community organization related directly or indirectly to the topic of punishment should be seen as an opportunity for learning and critical reflection for students who choose this option, but also indirectly (through class discussions, presentations) for those who do not choose the CSL component.

Student Evaluation: Your mark for the course is divided according to the following format:

1. Presentation (15%):	once during the term
2. Meaningful Participation (15%):	throughout the term
3. Reflection (3 @5% each = 15%):	Feb. 9; March 9; March 30
4. Critical Reading Response (15%):	once during the term
5. Research Paper Abstract (10%):	Feb. 23
6. Term Paper (30%):	April 8

- 1. Presentation: 15%** Students are required to sign up for a presentation date (this will be completed by the second week of class). Presentation subjects are predetermined. Presentations should be between 15-20 minutes in length and should provide a brief background/overview of the topic, provide the context for the issue, relate the topic to material covered in class, and should focus on some ‘hidden aspect’ or ‘taken-for-granted’ reality/aspect of the topic, illustrating its relevance and providing insight into

the sociology of punishment. Presenters are also required to stimulate class discussion following their presentation.

2. **Meaningful Participation: 15%** Students are expected to attend class and to participate fully in all aspects of the course and will be evaluated on this throughout the term. It is expected that students will have readings completed prior to class, will have one discussion question based on the readings prepared, and will thoughtfully contribute to class discussions. For students who choose the CSL option, a portion of your meaningful participation mark (5%) also includes completion of forms related to CSL, meeting deadlines related to this component, and regular communication with your community mentor. Evaluation of participation will be based on a combination of factors, including attendance, instructor observation, feedback from community mentors (for students choosing the CSL option), and your log of CSL hours and activities completed (for students choosing the CSL option).
3. **Reflection Assignments (3 @ 5% each): 15% - Due dates are (approximately – there is some flexibility here): Feb. 9; March 9; March 30**
You are required to submit three 1-2 page critical reflection assignments. These short assignments are to be based on your experience of the more “applied” components of the course. You are to comment, interpret, link class material, and contemplate either a tour experience or a guest lecture visit. The goal is to make linkages between theory and practice, theorized and lived experiences. Reflections should be written in the first person. For students who choose the CSL component, you are to use these reflection assignments to critically reflect on your experiences with your community partner organization linking those experiences to class material.
4. **Critical Reading Response: 15% (once during term)**
Once during the term, you will be asked to briefly present your response to one of the assigned readings. Your reading response should be a 400-500 word (about 1.5-2 pages, not including title page and bibliography) paper in which you 1) briefly summarize the reading; 2) identify and explore one critique of the author’s arguments; 3) outline at least one question that prompts critical class discussion/analysis. You are encouraged to be creative in your response: draw on applied aspects of the course if applicable, including CSL experiences, make linkages to other readings/discussions, explore gaps in the author’s argument, and/or use the reading to critique/challenge other readings covered in class. You have a maximum of 10 minutes to present your response in class. Assume that your classmates have completed the reading. Following your presentation you will be asked to hand in a hard copy of your critical reading response.
5. **Paper Abstract: 10% - Due February 23 by 4:30 in the Sociology Main Office (Tory 5-21)**
You are required to define, research and provide a sociological analysis of a topic related to punishment. You may explore in more depth a topic discussed in class or in our readings, or you may select a topic or issue not covered in class. It must also demonstrate your ability to critically integrate class material. Policies, practices, or

“realities” ought not to be taken at face value, but should be questioned to bring to light their ideological and sociopolitical components. If you are doing research as part of your CSL work, you may choose to write your paper on this topic. I encourage you to speak with me as you think about a possible topic.

Once you have chosen your topic and conducted preliminary research on it, you are required to write a **500 word** abstract of your research paper. The abstract will define the topic, the objective of the paper, theoretical perspectives employed, the central argument of your sociological analysis, and a description of the manner in which you will proceed with your analysis. Attach a bibliography (including at least 8 academic sources).

6. Paper: 30% - Due April 8th by 4:30 in the Sociology Main Office (Tory 5-21)

Drawing on the feedback on your abstract, you should continue to develop your arguments and build on your research.

- The paper must be 10-12 full pages of text, double-spaced (lengthy, indented quotes, single spaced), no spaces between paragraphs, 12 point font.
- Type: critical, analytical
- Reference Style: APA or MLA with bibliography
- Sources: use course materials, sociological theory and at least 10 other academic sources (books and/or articles). Materials from the web or elsewhere (newspaper articles) can be used in addition to these 10 academic sources.

Instructions for all written assignments:

- Papers should be typed in double space and printed on one side of a page.
- Papers should use a maximum font equivalent to 12 Times Roman.
- Papers should use standard social science citations in the text (e.g. Garland, 1993: 134).
- Papers should be in APA or MLA academic format (e.g. with headings and paragraphs).
- You are strongly encouraged to use extensive direct quotes from authors as **little as possible** as they provide little access to your own understanding of the issues discussed. Paraphrasing (i.e. using your own words to describe someone else’s ideas or words) and referencing the source is recommended.
- Papers should not be slipped under my door. They should be submitted either in class or in the main Sociology office (Tory 5-21) to be stamped with the date, and no later than 4:30 p.m.
- Papers shall not be submitted through electronic means (e.g. email).
- You are expected to carefully proofread papers for spelling and grammar. Marks will be deducted in cases where due diligence is not exhibited.
- Permission to submit papers after the due date must be obtained from me before the due date, not after the fact.

- Late papers (including the synopsis) will incur a reduction of 10% of the total mark per day including weekend days (if permission to submit after the due date was not obtained). No exceptions.

CSL Deadlines (worth 5% of your participation mark)

- ✓ **Contact Community Agency: By January 13.** After listening to community partners explain their projects in class on January 7 choose a community partner and contact your top choice by email or phone by January 13. It may not be possible to accommodate everyone's first choice, so please make sure you have a second choice as well. Please let me know (via email: jgrekul@ualberta.ca) once you have made contact with a community partner.
- ✓ **Complete Security Check Forms: Must be completed by January 20. Forms will not be accepted past this date.**
- ✓ **Read, complete and sign the CSL Student Agreement with your community supervisor: January 20.**
- ✓ Submit your **CSL Student Agreement** to me no later than **January 23.**
- ✓ **Log of CSL hours** and list of activities completed: Email to me (cc.'d to your community mentor) **March 25.**

Grading: Grades will be assigned following the distribution below. Numbers represent the percentage of students in the class who will receive the listed grade.

A+: 8	C+: 7
A : 12	C : 5
A-: 17	C-: 3
B+: 16	D+: 2
B : 16	D : 1
B-: 12	F : 1

Important General Information

- Re-writing papers, submitting extra work or any other option to increase grades will not be considered under any circumstances.
- Pleas for higher marks to get into quota University programs will not be heard under any circumstances.
- This will be a classroom in which we all feel free to express our opinions and points of view. When you have the floor, it is expected that you will express your views politely. The classroom atmosphere at the same time will allow us all to question each other and the world around us in a respectful manner. Students who monopolize class discussions are also disruptive to the discussion process. Students who do this will be penalized for this behaviour.
- The official class list is produced by the third week of term. Instructors are forbidden to add student names to grade sheets. Students not on grade sheets are not deemed to be properly registered and may not submit exams or assignments. It is your responsibility to check with the instructor to ensure your name is on this list.

- Plagiarism and cheating are **very serious** academic offences and are dealt with very severely by the University. They can result in a mark of zero and a report to the proper authorities at the University. Moreover, these activities are counterproductive to learning. Please refer to the attached Code of Student Behaviour in the University Calendar (Section 30.3.2 and Section 30.4.2 or see www.ualberta.ca/~unisecr/appeals.htm) for more details.
- Students requiring assistance for a variety of needs are encouraged to refer to the following website: www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/studentsservices which lists support services available to undergraduate students. For example, for concerns regarding exam anxiety and concerns of an academic nature, the Academic Support Centre is available for assistance (492-2682); Student Counseling Services (492-5205) provides support of a more personal nature.

TENTATIVE LIST OF CLASSES – SOCIOLOGY 421 WINTER 2009

(*There will be a critical reading response for every reading, beginning January 14)

January

Theme One: Introduction and Overview: The Cultural Context of Imprisonment

- 5 General Introduction, Syllabus; What is the Sociology of Punishment?
Hudson text: Chapter 1 – “Perspectives on punishment”
- 7 Introduction to CSL; Community Partner Presentations
- 12 Power of Semiotics

JANUARY 13: CSL STUDENTS: DEADLINE TO CONTACT COMMUNITY AGENCIES

- 14 Media, Culture, and Punishment – *Presentation: Media and Punishment in Canada*

Sean O’Sullivan. 2001. “Representations of Prison in Nineties Hollywood Cinema: From Con Air to The Shawshank Redemption.” *The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, 40 (4): 317-334. (Available online through the library).

Theme Two: Structure and Administration of correctional institutions

- 19 Structure of Canadian correctional institutions

David Garland. 2006. “Concepts of culture in the sociology of punishment” *Theoretical Criminology*. Vol. 10 (4): 419-447 (Available online through the library).

JANUARY 20: CSL DEADLINE FOR POLICE SECURITY CHECKS AND YOUTH INTERVENTION CHECKS; DEADLINE FOR SIGNING CSL STUDENT AGREEMENT

- 21 Structure of Canadian correctional institutions

JANUARY 23: CSL DEADLINE TO SUBMIT YOUR SIGNED STUDENT AGREEMENT TO ME

26 Administration of Canadian correctional institutions

Hudson text : Chapter 6 – “Punishment and modernity: the sociological perspective”

Correctional Investigator’s Annual Report, 2008. (Available online at www.oci-bec.gc.ca/rpt/rpp/rpp20072008-eng.aspx)

28 Administration of Canadian correctional institutions– *Presentation: Punishment in a Multicultural Society*

February:

2 Administration of Canadian correctional institutions

Hudson text: Chapter 8 – “The disciplined society: Foucault and the analysis of penalty”.

4 New Penology *Presentation: Community Supervision*

9 Catch up Day ***DUE: CRITICAL REFLECTION 1***

11 *Presentation: The Politics of Capital Punishment*

16 **Reading Week**

18 **Reading Week**

Theme Three: Class, Race, and Masculinity

23 Life in prison (health)

DUE: ABSTRACT

25 Life in prison (health)

Hudson: Chapter 7 – “The political economy of punishment: Marxist approaches”

Comack text: Chapters 1-3

March

2 Life in prison (work conditions)

Loïc Wacquant. “Deadly symbiosis: When ghetto and prison meet and mesh.” (handout)

- 4 Life in prison
Smith, Philip. 2003. "Narrating the Guillotine". *Theory, Culture & Society*. Vol. 20 (5): 27-51. (Available online through the library).
- 9 Incarceration of Women *DUE: CRITICAL REFLECTION 2*
Hudson: Chapter 10

Theme Four: Women and Prison

- 11 Incarceration of women – *Presentation: Women's Incarceration*
Additional article. TBA
- 16 Incarceration of women – *Presentation: Mental Illness Among Inmates*
Hannah-Moffat, Kelly. 2004. "Gendering Risk at What Cost: Negotiations of Gender and Risk in Canadian Women's Prisons." *Feminism & Psychology*. Vol. 14(2): 243-249. [Creating Choices (optional) Available online at: www.csc-scc.gc.ca/text/prgrm/fsw/choices/toce-eng.shtml]
- 18 Catch Up Day/Guest speaker

Theme Five: The Keepers and the Kept

- 23 Current problems related to incarceration
Grekul and LaBoucane-Benson. 2008. "Aboriginal Gangs and their (Dis)placement: Contextualizing Recruitment, Membership, and Status." *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice* Vol. 50, No. 1: 59-82. (Available online through the library).
- Comack text: Chapter 4-6, Afterword**

MARCH 25: CSL DEADLINE TO SUBMIT HOUR LOGS TO COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND TO ME

- 25 Current problems related to incarceration
Presentation: Public Notification and Supervision After Warrant Expiry

Theme Six: Communities, Families, Restorative Justice

- 30 Plight of prisoners' families *Presentation: The Role of the Family in Punishment*
DUE: CRITICAL REFLECTION 3
- Hudson text: Chapter 5 – "Restorative justice: diversion, compromise or replacement discourse"**

Karstedt, Susanne. 2007. "Explorations into the sociology of criminal justice and punishment: leaving the modernist project behind." *History of the Human Sciences*. Vo. 20 (2): 51-70. (Available online through the library).

April

1 *Presentation Day for Students who chose the CSL option*

6 **Evaluation and Course Summary**

8 *DUE: PAPER*

"If you take a tomato and put it in a box, it comes out rotten."

- Inmate in provincial institution, cited in Shephard, 1997