



GESM 120 35394R/Crime & Punishment in L.A.

Units: 4

Term—Day—Time: Spring 2018; T & Th; 3:30-4:50

Location: Von Klein Smid Center (VKC) 254

Instructor: Professor Melissa Daniels-Rauterkus

Office: THH 439

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2-3 pm and by appointment

Contact Info: rauterku@usc.edu; (213) 740-2808; Skype:

m.rauterkus718@gmail.com; Timeline for replying to emails/calls: I

generally answer emails/phone calls during business hours, i.e. Mon-Fri.,

from 9 am-5pm. I will reply to all messages within 48 hours.

Teaching Assistant: NA

Office:

Office Hours:

Contact Info: Email, phone number (office, cell), Skype, etc.

IT Help: USC Information Technology Services

Hours of Service: Telephone support available 24 hrs./per day, 7 days/wk. Email support available Mon.-Fri. from 8am-6pm.

Contact Info: consult@usc.edu; (213) 740-5555; see also Dornsife

Technology Services at dornsife.usc.edu/contact-cts/

Course Description

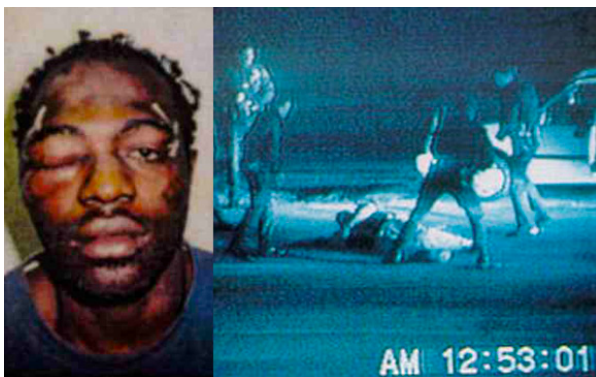
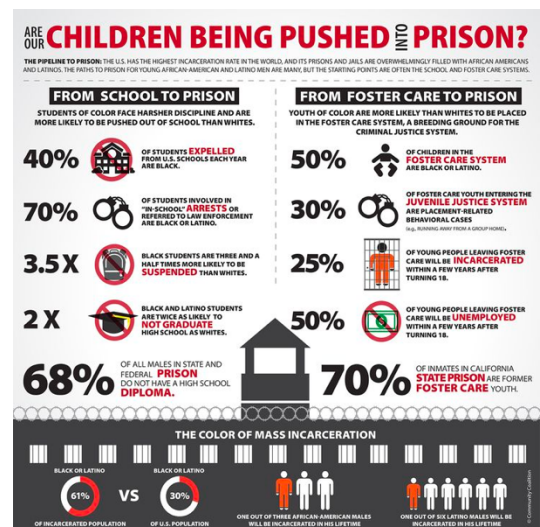
Nowhere in L.A. is the gap between the rich and the poor wider than it is in the criminal justice system. The rich and the famous often go unpunished, while the poor go to prison. Race and gender compound this inequality, as men and women of color are disproportionately stopped by the police, charged with criminal offenses, and given harsher sentences than whites.

In this seminar, we will examine crime and punishment in L.A. by considering a wide range of narratives taken from law, literary journalism, documentary film, and popular culture. The central question at the

heart of this course is: What does justice look like in the "city of Angels"?

In our critical analysis of the Rodney King verdict and the O.J. Simpson trial, students will be taught how to think and write about legal narratives and popular culture. In our reading of non-fictional works like Jill Leovy's *Ghettoside* and Edward Humes's *No Matter How Loud I Shout*, students will contemplate questions of authorship, representation, and racial bias in reporting. Students will also learn how to apply concepts

from theoretical work like Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* and Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow* to add context and depth to our conversations about crime, inequality, and social justice.



Learning Objectives

- Understand human experience as narrative
- Engage with ideas and values at the core of Western civilization, such as justice, ethics, and democracy
- Learn how to read, think, and write critically about complex issues
- Reflect on how race, class, and gender affect our narratives of human experience, especially within the criminal justice system
- Learn how to assess legal narratives from multiple vantage points and how to develop informed opinions about contemporary socio-political crises.



Prerequisite(s): NA

Co-Requisite(s): NA

Concurrent Enrollment: NA

Recommended Preparation: NA

Course Notes

Grading Type: Letter

This is a web-enhanced course that utilizes Blackboard. I will post assignments, lecture notes (occasionally), and supplemental readings and digital content. Please check Blackboard for important announcements, course materials, and informal writing assignment threads. This course also utilizes visual media. Because these files are too large to upload onto Blackboard, they will be available through course reserve, YouTube or other instant streaming services.

Technological Proficiency and Hardware/Software Required

Beginner; access to Blackboard and the ability to view digital content.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*

Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*

Edward Humes, *No Matter How Loud I Shout: A Year in the Life of Juvenile Court*

Jill Leovy, *Ghettoside: A True Story of Murder in America*

**Additional readings will appear on Blackboard*

Description and Assessment of Assignments

The assignments for this class will consist of preparatory reading or viewing films for class, several short to moderate length essays, and a final seminar paper of 5-7 pages. See below for descriptions and guidelines:

1. Definition Assignment (1 page)—When you think about crime and punishment in L.A. what comes to mind? Pick a single word. Define it using your own language and include relevant examples from your own experience, your community, or from current events. Why is this word significant? How is it essential to the concerns of this class?
2. Response Essay (2-3 pages)—Select one of the readings we have discussed in class. Privileging your own voice and perspective, tell me what you think the author was trying to say, achieve, or reveal. What is your personal position in relationship to the author's? How does the work affirm or challenge your own experience or viewpoint? How did the work affect you? The purpose of the response essay is to establish a personal connection with a cultural artifact or object of analysis.

This is a more subjective exercise. Do not provide a summary of the work. Do not provide a formal academic appraisal. Focus on what you feel and what you have to say about what you read.

3. **Critical Thinking Essay (3-4 pages)**—Select a topic or a work that we have discussed and create an original argument about it. Your thesis should be complex—neither easily provable or disprovable. Using relevant examples and evidentiary material, support your argument across several paragraphs. You should include at least 3 sources. Your essay should have a highly organized structure. You need to draft an introduction that grabs the reader’s attention, introduces your topic, provides brief background information and context, and states your thesis. Include body paragraphs that advance your argument using topic sentences, concrete details (examples), and commentary (presentation and interpretation of evidence). Draft a conclusion that sums up the value of your argument in a larger context. What are the stakes? Why does it matter?
4. **Film Analysis Essay (4-5 pages)**—Select one of the documentaries we have viewed and discussed in class. Write a critical essay that provides an appraisal of the film. Focus on both the formal (process) and thematic concerns (content) of the film. You may choose to write about a single scene, a film technique and how it affects the narrative, or issues concerning production and reception. As a medium, how is film different from written narratives? What is the cultural power of cinema?
5. **Seminar Paper (5-7 pages)**—This course culminates in a seminar paper. This essay should reflect your mastery of the content we studied over the course of the semester. Towards this end, it should be your best and most sophisticated work. In terms of structure, it resembles the critical thinking essay, but it should make broader claims, engage with more scholarly and cultural sources, and spell out the implications of its argument in the context of the current political moment. Why does this matter outside of this class? Why does this matter now?

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Participation	100	10
Definition Essay	100	15
Response Essay	100	15
Critical Thinking Essay	100	15
Film Analysis Essay	100	15
Seminar Paper	100	30
TOTAL	600	100

Grading Scale

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

A	95-100	C	73-76
A-	90-94	C-	70-72
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	83-86	D	63-66
B-	80-82	D-	60-62
C+	77-79	F	59 and below

Assignment Rubric

A-range (90-100): Essay provides a sophisticated analysis of the topic or work in question; contains an identifiable argument and engages with the material in a complex way to illuminate cultural, historical or political issues relevant to its discussion. The essay is well-written and highly polished. The essay is formatted according to APA, MLA, or Chicago citation guidelines. (Use the style you are most familiar with or the style of your intended major, provided you have one. If in doubt, please contact me for instruction.)

B-range (80-89): Essay provides a solid analysis of the topic or work in question and attempts to engage with the material in a complex and thorough manner, but it does not fully address all of the relevant issues or does not provide a thorough accounting of the cultural, historical, or political factors involved. The essay may have a few compositional, structural, or grammatical errors. The essay may contain minor citation errors.

C-range (70-79): Essay does not provide a compelling analysis of the topic or work in question and does not earnestly attempt to address the cultural, historical, or political realms in a complex way. The argument is underdeveloped. The essay may have several compositional, structural, or grammatical errors. The essay may have multiple citation errors or may not properly cite sources or include a bibliography.

D-range (60-69): Essay lacks an argument and does not do the work of analysis. The essay does not engage with the relevant material and does not address cultural, historical, or political issues. The essay may be rife with compositional, structural, or grammatical errors. The essay may not reflect the use of a citation method.

F (59 and below): The essay does not demonstrate appropriate scholarly effort/engagement or the student failed to submit the assignment.

Assignment Submission Policy

Assignments are due on the day listed on the syllabus. Please submit all work typed and double-spaced in hard copy format. Please do not email me electronic versions of your work, unless you have received permission in advance.

Grading Timeline

Assignments will be graded and returned within one to two weeks of submission.

Additional Policies

1. **Attendance and Participation:** Consistent attendance and participation is absolutely critical to your success in this class. Try to come to class with 2-3 comments/questions prepared in advance. Please do not come to class late or leave early, as this is rude and disruptive to me and your fellow classmates. If you need to arrive late or leave early on a specific day, let me know as soon as possible.
2. **Late/Missing Work:** In order to receive full credit, all assignments must be submitted by or on their respective due dates. Late assignments will be docked by 5% for each week that they are late. Any outstanding work that you want included in the final grade must be submitted before the last week of class.
3. **Course Format/Meeting Structure:**
The format of this course is a hybrid of lecture and discussion. I may rely on Blackboard posts, small group activities (if attendance permits), or visual aids to structure our discussion time. Always bring the reading material to class.
4. **In-class Behavior:** You are expected to demonstrate proper academic etiquette at all times. Please do not check and/or send emails while in class, text-message, or complete assignments for other

classes. You are welcome to bring beverages to class, but please do not eat in class, as it can be distracting. Please refrain from voicing opinions that may be perceived as being offensive or insensitive.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

	Topics/Daily Activities	Readings and Homework	Deliverable
Week 1	Introduction 1/09: Course Overview/Syllabus 1/11: Loury and mass incarceration—the new civil right’s issue of our generation	Glenn C. Loury, “Crime, inequality, & social justice” (BB; due 1/11) Michelle Alexander, <i>The New Jim Crow</i> (Introduction; due 1/16)	
Week 2	The Color of Justice: Racial & Economic Disparity in the Legal System 1/16: the New Jim Crow & the construction of the carceral state in California 1/18: Gibeaut and the celebrity effect	John Gibeaut, “Celebrity Justice: The Rich and Famous Get Star Treatment, Creating the Appearance of a Two-Tiered Court System” (BB; due 1/18) Sikivu Hutchison, “From Eulia Love to Redel Jones, LAPD’s Murderous Reign” (BB; due 1/23)	Definition Essay (due 1/16)
Week 3	Historical Considerations: Race and Policing in LA 1982-1992 1/23: view John Ridley’s <i>Let It Fall</i> (documentary) 1/25: finish <i>Let It Fall</i>	Work on response essay Work on response essay	
Week 4	The Rodney King Saga & the LA Rebellion 1/30: Who was Rodney King? And what happened on March 3, 1991? 2/01: the report’s findings @ Special Collections/Doheny Library	The Christopher Commission Report (chapter 1 & summary of the report; BB; due 2/01) James R. Lasley & Michael Hooper, “On Racism & the LAPD: Was the Christopher Commission Wrong?” (BB; due 2/06)	Response Essay (due 1/30)

Week 5	Latasha Harlins: Race, Gender, & Media Representation of the Riots 2/06: Latasha Harlins/riots 2/08: Latasha Harlins/riots	Brenda E. Stevenson, "Latasha Harlins, Soon Ja Du, and Joyce Karlin" (BB; due 2/08) João H. Costa Vargas, "The Los Angeles Times' Coverage of the 1992 rebellion: Still burning matters of race and justice" (BB; due 2/13)	
Week 6	OJ Simpson: Race, Celebrity, and Public Spectacle 2/13: "The Story of OJ: I'm Not Black, I'm O.J." 2/15: Ezra Edelman's O.J.: Made in America (documentary); part 3	*Leola Johnson & David Roediger, "'Hertz, Don't It?' Becoming Colorless and Staying Black in the Crossover of O.J. Simpson" (BB; due 2/15) Jeffrey Toobin, "An Incendiary Defense" (BB; due 2/20)	
Week 7	2/20: Toobin; the race card, and the LAPD 2/22: Ezra Edelman's O.J.: Made in America (documentary); part 5	Work on Critical Thinking Essay Ta-Nehisi Coates, "What O.J. Simpson Means to Me?" (BB; due 2/27)	Critical Thinking Essay (due 2/22)
Week 8	2/27: Coates on O.J. 3/01: Why the O.J. Simpson trial still resonates with us today and what it reveals about America and its justice system.	Carl E. Enomoto, "Public Sympathy for O.J. Simpson: The Roles of Race, Age, Gender, Income, and Education" (BB; due 3/01) Joe Domanick, Op-Ed: "Why L.A.'s crime rise is no surprise" (BB; due 3/06)	
Week 9	Ghettoside 3/06: Introduction 3/08: discuss p. 3-43	<i>Ghettoside</i> p. 3-43 (due 3/08) <i>Ghettoside</i> p. 44-96 (due 3/27)	
Week 10	Spring Break	Work on Film Analysis Essay	

Week 11	3/27: discuss p.44-96 3/29: discuss p. 97-161	<i>Ghettoside</i> p. 97-161 (due 3/29) <i>Ghettoside</i> p. 162-188 (due 4/03)	Film Analysis Essay (due 3/27)
Week 12	4/03: discuss p. 162-188 4/05: discuss p. 189-272	<i>Ghettoside</i> p. 189-272 (due 4/05) <i>Ghettoside</i> p. 273-319 (due 4/10)	Seminar Paper Abstract (due 4/05)
Week 13	No Matter How Loud I Shout 4/10: discuss p. 273-319 4/12: Alexander; mandatory sentencing in California & the 3 strikes law	Michelle Alexander, <i>The New Jim Crow</i> (ch. 2 “The Lockdown”; (due 4/12) Diane Lefer, “Disrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline”; Edward Humes, <i>No Matter How Loud I Shout</i> (“Homegirl” p.22-35; “Raised by the State” p. 84-96) (BB; due 4/17)	
Week 14	4/17: juvenile justice 4/19: Humes & Foucault	Humes, <i>No Matter How Loud I Shout</i> (“Judge Dorn” p. 50-63); Foucault, <i>Discipline & Punish</i> (“Generalized punishment” p. 73-103) (due 4/19) Humes, <i>No Matter How Loud I Shout</i> (“Judge Dorn’s Solution” p. 200-228); Foucault, <i>Discipline & Punish</i> (“The carceral” p. 293-308) (due 4/24)	
Week 15	Conclusion 4/24: Humes & Foucault 4/26: Rappaport; Maxine Waters on mandatory minimum criminal sentencing	Aaron J. Rappaport, “Realigning California Corrections” (BB; due 4/26)	
FINAL	No Final Exam		Seminar Paper (due 5/03)

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Support Systems:

Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: sarc.usc.edu

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. equity.usc.edu

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.

Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu