



GESM 120 35376R/Crime & Punishment in L.A.

Units: 4

Term—Day—Time: Spring 2019; T & Th; 2:00-3:20 pm

Location: Grace Ford Salvatori (GFS) 229

Instructor: Professor Melissa Daniels-Rauterkus

Office: THH 439

Office Hours: Wednesdays from 10 a.m.-3:00 p.m. and by appointment

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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 and O.J. Simpson trials, students will be taught how to think and write about legal narratives in a larger cultural context. In our reading of non-fictional works like Jill Leovy's *Ghettoside* (2015), students will examine the complex forces that contribute to crime in underserved and disadvantaged communities while contemplating thorny questions of authorship and racial bias in policing and reporting. Students will also learn how to apply concepts from contemporary sociological works such as James Forman Jr.'s *Locking Up Our*



Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America (2017) and Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow* (2012) 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, supplemental readings and links to digital content on our Blackboard page. 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*

James Forman Jr., *Locking Up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America*

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

**Additional readings will appear on Blackboard*

Description and Assessment of Assignments

1. Journal Entries (250-350 words)—For each reading/viewing assignment you complete, you will need to draft an informal response to it. Privileging your own voice and perspective, tell me what you think the author/filmmaker was trying to say, achieve, or reveal. What is your personal position in relationship to the author's/filmmaker's? How does the work affirm or challenge your own experience or viewpoint? How did the work affect you? The purpose of this activity is to establish a personal connection with the text/film and to help you contribute to in-class discussions. This is a more subjective exercise. Do not provide a formal, academic appraisal of the work. Focus on what you feel and what you have to say about what you read. I will from time to time call on you to share your writings with the class. At the end of the semester, you will be asked to submit your top 3 entries to be assessed and included in your final grade.

2. Midterm Assignment: 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? If you choose to write about a film, provide a critical appraisal of it. Focus on both the formal (process) and thematic concerns (content) of the film. You may also choose to discuss 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?

3. Oral Presentation (20 min.)—During the second week of class, you will select a day to deliver a 20 minute presentation on some aspect of the reading. Your objective is to teach us the material. You may choose to explain a concept, discuss a relevant current event, create and present an artistic expression of a concept or event (e.g. a poem, a drawing, or a short film), or draft and deliver an op-ed style essay about a topic pertaining to the day’s reading. Your presentation should have an identifiable structure: i.e. an introduction, “a body,” and a conclusion. The purpose of this assignment is to develop your ability to conduct original research, form your own opinion about a complex topic, and strengthen your public speaking skills. A more detailed assignment sheet will be distributed in class.

4. Final Project: Digital Exhibit: The Independent Commission on the LAPD/Rodney King Incident— This course culminates in a digital exhibit assignment. A digital exhibit is an online gallery that showcases and contextualizes important or interesting material for public viewing and educational purposes. Archival organizations, libraries, museums, and universities often rely on digital exhibits to highlight their collections and research strengths, allowing them to promote their holdings/services and reach a wider audience. Using Scalar, you will create an online exhibition, just as if you were a museum curator or archivist at a library. Working in pairs, which I will assign, you will select 3-4 documents to include in your exhibit. You will need to provide background information about your topic, a table of contents/guide, an explanation of each document (about 100-200 words), and properly formatted citations. A more detailed assignment sheet will be distributed in class. You will also receive an introduction to Special Collections at the Doheny Memorial Library and to Scalar.

Grading Breakdown

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
Participation	100	10
Journal Entries	100	20
Midterm	100	25
Oral Presentation	100	20
Final Project	100	25
TOTAL	500	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. Please do not come to class late or leave early, as this is 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 will rely on your journal entries, small group activities, media content, and visual aids to both enhance our understanding of the material as well as to structure our time in class. Always bring your reading and writing materials to class. Class will generally begin with a 20 minute warm up activity—e.g. we might discuss a provocative or pithy quote, screen a clip from a relevant video and follow up with discussion, perform a close reading on a passage or image, or engage in a freewriting activity and talk about it. After this, I will present important information or lead a discussion of the assigned reading for about 30 minutes to complement your outside reading and strengthen your understanding of the material. Finally, we will use the remaining 30 minutes for student presentations or small group activities or exercises that encourage us to adopt a more applied approach to the content.

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. 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	<p>Introduction</p> <p>1/08: Course Overview/Syllabus</p> <p>1/10: Lory and mass incarceration</p>	<p>Glenn C. Lory, “Crime, inequality, & social justice” (due on 1/10)</p> <p>Mike Davis, Ch. 1 “Sunshine or Noir,” excerpt from <i>City of Quartz</i> (due 1/15)</p>	
Week 2	<p>Los Angeles and the Cultural Imaginary: A Tale of Two Cities</p> <p>1/15: Davis and the L.A. dichotomy</p> <p>1/17: Sides, white flight, and urban decay</p>	<p>Josh Sides, “Straight into Compton” (due 1/17)</p> <p>S. Gregory Lipton, “L.A. in Transition” (due 1/22)</p>	
Week 3	<p>Brewing Tensions: the Browning of L.A. and the Question of Municipal Identity, 1945-1992</p> <p>1/22: Lipton and the changing demographics of L.A.; start John Ridley’s <i>Let It Fall</i> (documentary)</p>	<p>Michelle Alexander, “Introduction,” <i>The New Jim Crow</i> (due 1/24)</p>	

	1/24: Alexander and the New Jim Crow; finish <i>Let It Fall</i>	Alexander, "The Lockdown," <i>The New Jim Crow</i> (due 1/29)	
Week 4	Rodney King and the L.A. Uprising 1/29: Alexander and the War on Drugs; Who was Rodney King and what happened on March 3, 1991? 1/31: Matthews, the verdict, and the aftermath	Tom Matthews et. al. "The Siege of L.A." (due 1/31) João Vargas, "The L.A. Times Coverage of the 1992 Rebellion"; Steven B. Sample, "USC and the Rebuilding of L.A." (due 2/05)	
Week 5	Latasha Harlins 2/05: Vargas and Sample; Harlins and Soon Ja Du 2/07: Stevenson and Harlins con't.	Brenda E. Stevenson, "Latasha Harlins, Soon Ja Du, and Joyce Karlin" (due 2/07) L. Johnson and D. Roediger, "'Hertz, Don't It?': Becoming Colorless and Staying Black in the Crossover of O.J. Simpson" (due 2/12)	
Week 6	Wealth, Race, and Justice: The O.J. Simpson Case 2/12: Johnson and Roediger; "The Story of OJ: 'I'm Not Black . . . I'm O.J.'"; Ezra Edelman, <i>OJ: Made in America</i> , excerpts from part 1 2/14: duCille, race, sex, and spectacle; Ezra Edelman, <i>OJ: Made in America</i> , excerpts from part 2	Ann duCille, "The Unbearable Darkness of Being" (due 2/14) Jeffrey Toobin, "An Incendiary Defense" (due 2/19)	
Week 7	Wealth, Race, and Justice: The O.J. Simpson Case 2/19: Toobin and the race card 2/21: the verdict and the aftermath; Ezra Edelman, <i>OJ: Made in America</i> , excerpts from part 3; Coates on O.J.	Ta-Nehisi Coates, "What O.J. Simpson Means to Me" (due 2/21) Sanyika Shakur, excerpt from <i>Monster: The Autobiography of an L.A. Gang Member</i> (due 2/26)	Midterm Essay Due 2/21

Week 8	<i>Ghettoside</i> 2/26: Introduction to Jill Leovy and <i>Ghettoside</i> 2/28: p. 3-43	<i>Ghettoside</i> p. 3-43 (due 2/28) <i>Ghettoside</i> p. 44-96 (due 3/05)	
Week 9	3/05: p. 44-96 3/07: p. 97-161	<i>Ghettoside</i> p. 97-161 (due 3/07) <i>Ghettoside</i> p. 162-188 (due 3/19)	
	Spring Break		
Week 10	3/19: p. 161-188 3/21: p. 189-272	<i>Ghettoside</i> p. 189-272 (due 3/21) <i>Ghettoside</i> p. 273-319 (due 3/26)	
Week 11	3/26: p. 273-319 3/28: Alexander and racial disparities in the criminal justice system	Michelle Alexander, "The Color of Justice," <i>The New Jim Crow</i> (due 3/28) Foreword and Summary, <i>Report of the Independent Commission</i>	
Week 12	Research/Digital Exhibit Project 4/02: Introduction to Special Collections and Scalar 4/04: digital exhibit assignment; Ch. 1	Ch. 1, <i>Report of the Independent Commission</i> (due 4/04) Ch. 3, <i>Report of the Independent Commission</i> (due 4/09)	
Week 13	4/09: Ch. 3, excessive force today (local and national) 4/11: Ch. 4, racism and bias in policing today	Ch. 4, <i>Report of the Independent Commission</i> (due 4/11) Ch. 5, <i>Report of the Independent Commission</i> (due 4/16)	
Week 14	Locking Up Our Own 4/16: Ch. 5 and community policing; Introduction to James Forman and <i>Locking Up Our Own</i> 4/18: Ch. 4, the school to prison pipeline; <i>Prison Kids</i> (documentary)	Forman, Ch. 4, <i>Locking Up Our Own</i> (due 4/18) Forman, Ch. 6 and epilogue, <i>Locking Up Our Own</i> (due 4/23)	

Week 15	Conclusion and Course Wrap-Up 4/23: Ch. 6 and epilogue; the movement for reform: decriminalization and restorative justice 4/25: course evals; Adam Voss: a prosecutor's vision for a better criminal justice system (Ted Talk)	Jeremy B. White, "California Ended Cash Bail. Why Are So Many Reformers Unhappy About It?" (due 4/25)	
FINAL	No Final Exam		Final Project (due 5/01)

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