



Course Information

Course Title: Corrections
Course Number: CCJS342
Term: Fall 2021
Credits: 3
Course Dates: Aug 30-Dec 21, 2021
Course Times: MW 2:00 – 3:15 pm
Meeting Location: SQH 1119

Professor: Dr. Ellis
Pronouns: she/her
Email: ellisr@umd.edu
Office Hours: Mondays, 12-2 pm
Office Hour Location: LeFrak 2165B

Teaching Assistant: Ziyue (Siya) Gu
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TA Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2-4 pm
Office Hour Location: LeFrak 2160

Course Description

What does punishment look like in America today? This course examines the philosophies and practices of contemporary corrections in the U.S. We will trace the origins of corrections, then cover prevalent punishment practices from jail and bail to probation and house arrest, from prison and solitary confinement to the sex offender registry and the death penalty. We will engage with debates on prison labor, gender and rehabilitation, and criminal justice reform. Along the way, we will examine the collateral consequences of corrections, including fines, strained family relationships, social stigma, and the impacts of Covid-19. We will explore the perspectives of the punished alongside those of correctional professionals to better understand the goals and consequences of corrections in their broader social context.

Course Objectives

By engaging with scholarship, news articles, podcasts, videos, and contemporary court cases, students will emerge with strengthened critical reading and writing skills and a firm grasp on the range of correctional alternatives. Throughout the semester, students will learn to:

1. Identify underlying correctional philosophies in the U.S.
2. Evaluate contemporary correctional practices
3. Connect news and current events to correctional goals and methods

Required Readings

Textbook: Clear, Todd R., Michael D. Reisig, and George F. Cole. *American Corrections*, 11th, 12th, or 13th edition (2019, 2020, or 2021). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

You **may** purchase an earlier edition, as long as you look at the table of contents to ensure each of the chapters in our reading list are available. You may also buy or rent the eBook [through this link on the Cengage website](#).

Additional assigned articles and book chapters available on ELMS-Canvas.

Assignments

Class will consist of lecture, discussion, and small group activities. This course is learner-driven – prepare in advance and attend class ready to participate. Learning styles differ; assignments are designed to give students the opportunity to showcase their learning through a variety of formats. Assignments total 100 points.

1. **Participation and in-class activities (25 points)**

Student engagement is at the heart of this course. Thoughtful, respectful participation in class discussion will improve your experience of this course. Participation includes speaking in discussions, completing in-class assignments, engaging with fellow students in small-group activities, active listening, and asking questions.

2. **“Educational autobiography” memo (5 points)**

Early in the semester, students will be asked to write a 1-2 page (double-spaced) educational autobiography describing past experiences that led to taking this course and future goals. Further instructions will be provided.

3. **Midterm exam (25 points)**

An in-class midterm exam will assess progress in this course. This will include multiple choice, short answer, and/or long answer format.

4. **Infographic assignment (10 points)**

Students will be asked to create an infographic about a topic they have learned in this course. Further instructions will be provided.

5. **“Corrections reflections” essay (10 points)**

Towards the end of the semester, students will be asked to write a 2-3 page (double-spaced) essay applying perspectives learned in this course to a correctional topic of their choosing. Further instructions will be provided.

6. **Final exam (25 points)**

A cumulative, open-note take-home final exam will assess progress in this course, to be submitted through ELMS-Canvas.

Assignment	Percentage
Participation and in-class activities	25%
Educational autobiography memo	5%
Midterm Exam (In-class)	25%
Infographic	10%
Corrections reflections essay	10%
Final Exam (Take-home)	25%
Total	100%

Lateness policy

Late work will be accepted without contacting the TA or professor. An automatic 5% per day is deducted for late work. (e.g. 1 day late, highest possible grade is 95%; 2 days late, highest possible grade is 90%). All assigned grades are non-negotiable.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: Readings will be discussed during class, and must be done in advance of the class session. You may find it helpful to read in the order listed. All topics and readings are subject to change.

WEEK 1

Welcome & The Four Goals of Corrections

Monday, August 30

NO READINGS

Wednesday, September 1

READINGS

- *American Corrections* Chapter 4 “The Punishment of Offenders”
- Koren, Marina. 2016. “Why the Stanford Judge Gave Brock Turner Six Months.” *The Atlantic* (<https://www.theatlantic.com/news/archive/2016/06/stanford-rape-case-judge/487415/>)
 - **Recommended (optional, with content warning for sexual assault):** Baker, Katie J.M. 2016. “Here’s the Powerful Letter the Stanford Victim Read Aloud to her Attacker.” *Buzzfeed News* (https://www.buzzfeed.com/katieimbaker/heres-the-powerful-letter-the-stanford-victim-read-to-her-ra?utm_term=.maxq8nL5M#.etV7Zrxze)

WEEK 2

It Starts with a Trial?

Monday, September 6

LABOR DAY: NO CLASS

Wednesday, September 8

READINGS

- Weiser, Benjamin. 2016. “Trial by Jury, a Hallowed American Right, is Vanishing.” *New York Times* (<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/08/nyregion/jury-trials-vanish-and-justice-is-served-behind-closed-doors.html>)

WEEK 3

Corrections Then, Corrections Now

Monday, September 13

READINGS

- *American Corrections* Chapter 2 “The Early History of Correctional Thought and Practice”

ASSIGNMENT

- “Educational Autobiography” memo due: submit in ELMS-Canvas

Wednesday, September 15

READINGS

- *American Corrections* Chapter 3 “The History of Corrections in America”

WEEK 4**The Demographics of Punishment**

Monday, September 20

READINGS

- *American Corrections* Chapter 6 “The Correctional Client”
- Roberts, Joel. 2005. “Elderly Turn to Drug Dealing.” *CBS News*
<http://www.cbsnews.com/news/elderly-turn-to-drug-dealing/>
- **Recommended (Content warning: death by suicide)** Seelye, Katharine Q. and Jess Bidgood. 2017. “Guilty Verdict for Young Woman Who Urged Friend to Kill Himself.”
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/16/us/suicide-texting-trial-michelle-carter-conrad-roy.html>

Wednesday, September 22

READINGS

- *American Corrections* Chapter 19 “Race, Ethnicity, and Corrections”
- Alexander, Michelle. 2012. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: New Press. Selection: Chapter 2 “The Lockdown” (pp. 59-96)

WEEK 5**Jail and Bail**

Monday, September 27

READINGS

- *American Corrections* Chapter 7 “Jails: Detention and Short-Term Incarceration”
- Irwin, John. 1986. *The Jail: Managing the Underclass in American Society*. Selection: Chapter 1 “Managing Rabble” (pp. 1-17) and Chapter 2 “Who is Arrested” (pp. 18-41).

Wednesday, September 29

READINGS

- Pinto, Nick. 2015. “The Bail Trap.” *New York Times*
(<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/16/magazine/the-bail-trap.html>)

WEEK 6**Probation & Intermediate Sanctions**

Monday, October 4

READINGS

- *American Corrections* Chapter 8 “Probation”

Wednesday, October 6

READINGS

- Harris, Alexes. 2018. “Justice Shouldn’t Come with a \$250 Fine.” *New York Times*
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/03/opinion/alternative-justice-fines-prosecutors.html>
- *American Corrections* Chapter 9 “Intermediate Sanctions and Community Corrections”

WEEK 7**Midterm Exam**

Monday, October 11**Midterm Review**

ASSIGNMENT

- Bring your questions to class as you begin studying for the midterm exam

Wednesday, October 13**Midterm Exam**

ASSIGNMENT

- Study for in-class midterm exam

WEEK 8**Prisons**

Monday, October 18

READINGS

- *American Corrections* Chapter 10 “Incarceration”
- Metcalf, Jerry. 2018. “A Day in the Life of a Prisoner.” *The Marshall Project*
<https://www.themarshallproject.org/2018/07/12/a-day-in-the-life-of-a-prisoner>

Wednesday, October 20

READINGS

- Pilon, Mary. 2015. “Silicon Valley’s Plan to Turn Inmates into Coders.” *VICE*
https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/8gkde4/prison-programming-0000768-v22n10
- Charles, Dan. 2017. “What’s it Really Like to Work in a Prison Goat Milk Farm? We Asked Inmates.” *National Public Radio*
<https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2017/07/20/538062911/whats-it-really-like-to-work-in-a-prison-goat-milk-farm-we-asked-inmates>

WEEK 9**The Prison Experience**

Monday, October 25

READINGS

- *American Corrections* Chapter 11 “The Prison Experience”
- Listen to Episode 218 titled “Act V” of the podcast *This American Life* (53 minutes) Available for free on iTunes, Stitcher Radio, or online on this website:
<https://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/218/act-v>

Wednesday, October 27

READINGS

- Reiter, Keramet. 2016. *23/7: Pelican Bay Prison and the Rise of Long-Term Solitary Confinement*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Selection: Chapter 1 “A Supermax Life” (pp. 10 – 33)

- **Recommended:** Listen to the episode titled “The SHU” of the podcast *Ear Hustle* – July 26, 2017 (Available for free on iTunes, Stitcher Radio, or online on this website: <https://www.earhustlesq.com/listen/2017/7/26/episode-four-the-shu>)

WEEK 10

Gender and Prisons

Monday, November 1

READINGS

- Comfort, Megan L. 2003. “In the Tube at San Quentin: The ‘Secondary Prisonization’ of Women Visiting Inmates.” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 32(1):77-107.

Wednesday, November 3

READINGS

- *American Corrections* Chapter 12 “Incarceration of Women”
- Mathias, Christopher. 2015. “Woman Who Spent 2 Months in Solitary Confinement for Being Transgender Scores Legal Victory.” *Huffington Post*
https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/sandy-brown-transgender-inmate-legal-victory_us_5603160be4b0fde8b0d12518

WEEK 11

Covid-19 and Prisoner Reentry

Monday, November 8

READINGS

- Randall, Clark and Luce Curtis. 2021. “At the St. Louis City Jail, Inmates Have Been Pushed to the Bring.” *The Nation* <https://www.thenation.com/article/society/st-louis-jail-workhouse/>
- Lewis, Nicole. 2021. “How We Survived Covid-19 in Prison.” *The Marshall Project*
<https://www.themarshallproject.org/2021/04/23/how-we-survived-covid-19-in-prison>

Wednesday, November 10

READINGS

- Mooallem, Jon. 2015. “You Just Got Out of Prison. Now What?” *New York Times*
(<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/19/magazine/you-just-got-out-of-prison-now-what.html#whats-next>)
- Satija, Neena and Justin Wm. Moyer. 2021. “A Grandmother Didn’t Answer her Phone During a Class in Baltimore. She was Sent Back to Prison.” *The Baltimore Sun*
<https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/crime/bs-wp-md-cr-federal-prisoners-home-confinement-20210701-hoqdc5y7pna6jkrevr6pvak2vq-story.html>

WEEK 12**Sex Offender Reentry**

Monday, November 15

READINGS

- Listen to the episode titled "Sex Offenders" of the podcast *You're Wrong About* – August 2019 (Available for free on iTunes, Stitcher Radio, or online on this website: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/sex-offenders/id1380008439?i=1000465289962>)

Wednesday, November 17 AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CRIMINOLOGY CONFERENCE: NO CLASS

ASSIGNMENT

- Infographic due: submit in ELMS-Canvas

WEEK 13**Sex Offender Registry**

Monday, November 22

READINGS

- Tewksbury, R. and M. Lees. 2006. "Perceptions of Sex Offender Registration: Collateral Consequences and Community Experiences." *Sociological Spectrum* 26(3):309-34.

Wednesday, November 24 THANKSGIVING BREAK: NO CLASS**WEEK 14****The Death Penalty**

Monday, November 29

READINGS

- *American Corrections* Chapter 20 "The Death Penalty"
- Listen to this podcast: *More Perfect* (Presented by Radiolab), "Cruel and Unusual." (Season 1, 2016, 40 minutes) Listen for free on iTunes, Stitcher, or here: <https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/radiolabmoreperfect/episodes/cruel-and-unusual>

Wednesday, December 1

READINGS

- Andone, Dakin. 2021. "Why Virginia's Abolition of the Death Penalty is a Big Deal for the State and the US." *CNN* <https://www.cnn.com/2021/03/29/us/virginia-death-penalty-abolition-significance/index.html>
- Sanchez, Chelsey. 2020. "After Brandon Bernard's Execution, Sister Helen Prejean Calls Out the Death Penalty's Cruelty." *Harper's Bazaar* <https://www.harpersbazaar.com/culture/politics/a34946554/sister-helen-prejean-brandon-bernard-death-penalty-interview/>

WEEK 15

The Great Corrections Debate: Reform or Abolition?

Monday, December 6

READINGS

- Washington, John. 2018. "What Is Prison Abolition?" *The Nation*
<https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/what-is-prison-abolition/>

ASSIGNMENT

- "Corrections Reflections" essay due: submit in ELMS-Canvas

Wednesday, December 8

READINGS

- Dolinar, Brian. 2020. "We Can't 'Fix' Policing or Prison – But We Can Decide How to Create Actual Safety." *Waging Nonviolence*
<https://wagingnonviolence.org/2020/08/prison-by-any-other-name-authors-maya-schenwar-victoria-law-abolition-conversation/>

WEEK 16

"Final" Thoughts

Monday, December 13

LAST DAY OF CLASS

ASSIGNMENT

- Bring any questions to class as you prepare for the final exam AND/OR
- Bring any topics to class on current events related to the correctional system

***Take-home final exam is due by Saturday, December 18th at 3:30 pm EST
Submit in ELMS-Canvas***

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Campus Policies

It is our shared responsibility to know and abide by the University of Maryland's policies that relate to all courses, which include topics like:

- Academic integrity
- Student and instructor conduct
- Accessibility and accommodations
- Attendance and excused absences
- Grades and appeals
- Copyright and intellectual property

Please visit www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html for the Office of Undergraduate Studies' full list of campus-wide policies and follow up with me if you have questions.

According to the University's COVID-19 compliance guidelines, any student with an approved COVID-19 vaccination exemption must wear a mask at all times while indoors and outdoors when around others. These students must also be tested twice each week for COVID-19 and must sign the University Health Center's Memorandum to Unvaccinated Individuals.

Additionally, current County and University guidelines require all individuals to wear a mask indoors. Any student not abiding by these expectations may be in violation of the Code of Student Conduct, Part 10(e)(3): *Failure to comply with a directive of University officials.*

Face coverings over the nose and mouth are required while you are indoors at all times. There are no exceptions. Students not wearing a mask will be given a warning and asked to wear one, or will be asked to leave the classroom immediately. Students who have additional issues with the mask expectation after a first warning will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for failure to comply with a directive of University officials.

Course-Specific Policies

Names/Pronouns and Self-Identifications

The University of Maryland recognizes the importance of a diverse student body, and we are committed to fostering inclusive and equitable classroom environments. I invite you, if you wish, to tell us how you want to be referred to both in terms of your name and your pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.). The pronouns someone indicates are not necessarily indicative of their gender identity. Visit trans.umd.edu to learn more.

Additionally, how you identify in terms of your gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, and dis/ability, among all aspects of your identity, is your choice whether to disclose (e.g., should it come up in classroom conversation about our experiences and perspectives) and should be self-identified, not presumed or imposed. I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly, and I ask you to do the same for all of your fellow Terps.

Communication with Peers

With a diversity of perspectives and experience, we may find ourselves in disagreement and/or debate with one another. As such, it is important that we agree to conduct ourselves in a professional manner and that we work together to foster and preserve a virtual classroom environment in which we can respectfully discuss and deliberate controversial questions.

I encourage you to confidently exercise your right to free speech—bearing in mind, of course, that you will be expected to craft and defend arguments that support your position. Keep in mind, that free speech has its limit and this course is NOT the space for hate speech, harassment, and derogatory language. I will make every reasonable attempt to create an atmosphere in which each student feels comfortable voicing their argument without fear of being personally attacked, mocked, demeaned, or devalued.

Any behavior (including harassment, sexual harassment, and racially and/or culturally derogatory language) that threatens this atmosphere will not be tolerated. Please alert me immediately if you feel threatened, dismissed, or silenced at any point during our semester together and/or if your engagement in discussion has been in some way hindered by the learning environment.

Communication with Instructor

Email: If you need to reach out and communicate with me, please email me at ellisr@umd.edu. Please DO NOT email me with questions that are easily found in the syllabus or on ELMS (i.e. When is this assignment due? How much is it worth? etc.) but please DO reach out about personal, academic, and intellectual concerns/questions.

While I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours on weekdays, you will more likely receive email responses from me on Mondays-Fridays from 9:00 am – 6:00 pm EST.

Academic Integrity

The University's [Code of Academic Integrity](#) is designed to ensure that the principles of academic honesty and integrity are upheld.

It is important to note that course assistance websites, such as CourseHero, are not permitted sources, unless the instructor explicitly gives permission for you to use one of these sites. Material taken or copied from these sites can be deemed unauthorized material and a violation of academic integrity. These sites offer information that might not be accurate and that shortcut the learning process, particularly the critical thinking steps necessary for college-level assignments.

For this course, some of your assignments will be collected via Turnitin on our course ELMS page. I have chosen to use this tool because it can help you improve your scholarly writing and help me verify the integrity of student work. For information about Turnitin, how it works, and the feedback reports you may have access to, visit [Turnitin Originality Checker for Students](#).

Additionally, it is understandable that students may use a variety of online or virtual forums for course-wide discussion (e.g., GroupME or WeChat). Collaboration in this way regarding concepts discussed in this course is permissible. However, collaboration on graded assignments is strictly prohibited unless otherwise stated. Examples of prohibited collaboration include: asking classmates for answers or to work together on quizzes or exams.

Please visit the [Office of Undergraduate Studies' full list of campus-wide policies](#) and follow up with me if you have questions.

If you ever feel pressured to comply with someone else's academic integrity violation, please reach out to me straight away. Also, *if you are ever unclear* about acceptable levels of collaboration, *please ask!*

Grades

All assignment and assessment scores will be posted on the course ELMS page. If you would like to review any of your grades (including the exams), or have questions about how something was scored, please email me to schedule a time for us to meet and discuss.

Final letter grades are assigned based on the percentage of total assessment points earned. To be fair to everyone I have to establish clear standards and apply them consistently, so please understand that being close to a cutoff is not the same as making the cut (89.99 ≠ 90.00). It would be unethical to make exceptions for some and not others.

Final Grade Cutoffs									
+	97.00%	+	87.00%	+	77.00%	+	67.00%	+	
A	94.00%	B	84.00%	C	74.00%	D	64.00%	F	<60.0%
-	90.00%	-	80.00%	-	70.00%	-	60.00%	-	

Resources & Accommodations

Accessibility and Disability Services

The University of Maryland is committed to creating and maintaining a welcoming and inclusive educational, working, and living environment for people of all abilities. The University of Maryland is also committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of the services, programs, or activities of the University, or be subjected to discrimination. The [Accessibility & Disability Service \(ADS\)](#) provides reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals to provide equal access to services, programs and activities. ADS cannot assist retroactively, so it is generally best to request accommodations several weeks before the semester begins or as soon as a disability becomes known. Any student who needs accommodations should contact me as soon as possible so that I have sufficient time to make arrangements.

For assistance in obtaining an accommodation, contact Accessibility and Disability Service at 301-314-7682, or email them at adsfrontdesk@umd.edu. Information about [sharing your accommodations with instructors, note taking assistance](#) and more is available from the [Counseling Center](#).

Basic Needs Security

If you have difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or lack a safe and stable place to live, please visit [UMD's Division of Student Affairs website](#) for information about resources the campus offers you and let me know if I can help in any way.

Student Resources and Services

Taking personal responsibility for your own learning means acknowledging when your performance does not match your goals and doing something about it. I hope you will come talk to me so that I can help you find the right approach to success in this course, and I encourage you to visit [UMD's Student Academic Support Services website](#) to learn more about the wide range of campus resources available to you.

In particular, everyone can use some help sharpen their communication skills (and improving their grade) by visiting [UMD's Writing Center](#) and schedule an appointment with the campus Writing Center.

You should also know there are a wide range of resources to support you with whatever you might need ([UMD's Student Resources and Services website](#) may help). If you feel it would be helpful to have someone to talk to, visit [UMD's Counseling Center](#) or [one of the many other mental health resources on campus](#).

Mandatory Reporting

All UMD instructors (including both myself and your TA) are “responsible university employees,” meaning that if they become aware of any specific incidents of sexual assault or misconduct (including but not limited to: intimate partner violence, stalking, or sexual harassment) they must report these incidents to the campus Title IX Coordinator. Students seeking confidential resources should visit <https://umd.edu/raise-your-voice/> or ask me for information on additional resources.

Copyright Notice

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