



Course Information

Course Title: Corrections

Course Number: CCJS342 0301

Course Location: Van Munching Hall 1203

Course Times: Mon/Weds 2:00-3:15 pm

Term: Fall 2026

Credits: 3

Course Dates: August 31-December 11

Professor: Dr. Ellis

Pronouns: she/her

Email: ellisr@umd.edu

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 3:30-5:30 pm

Location: LeFrak 2165B or Zoom

Teaching Assistant: Danielle Ridgeway

Pronouns: she/her

Email: danirid@umd.edu

Office Hours: Thursdays, 1:30-3:30 pm

Location: LeFrak 2158 or Zoom

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 its history and origins, 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 and fees, family relationships, and social stigma. We will explore the perspectives of the punished alongside those of correctional staff to analyze 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 practices and 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 (published 2019-2022). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

You may also buy or rent the eBook [through this link to the publisher's website](#).

Cost estimate: \$40-150, depending on format. You are welcome to purchase a used copy or earlier edition for a lower cost.

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

Assignments and Assessments

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. More instructions will be provided for all assignments and assessments.

1. *In-class participation (10 points)*

Student engagement is at the heart of this course. Thoughtful, respectful participation includes speaking in discussions, listening to others, completing in-class assignments, engaging with fellow students in small-group activities, and asking questions.

2. *Personal statement (5 points)*

Students will write a 1-2 page (single-spaced) essay in the style of a personal statement describing past experiences that led to their interest in criminology and criminal justice.

3. *Media v. reality: correctional goals (10 points)*

Students are asked to select a high-profile criminal case in the media. They will analyze the sentence from the lens of the correctional goals learned in class.

4. *In-class midterm exam (30 points)*

One in-class midterm exam will assess progress in this course.

5. *Field assignment (15 points)*

Students will conduct in-person research on contemporary corrections.

6. *Final exam (30 points)*

A cumulative final exam will assess progress in this course.

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%). Assigned grades are **non-negotiable**.

Read more about [UMD course-related policies here](#).

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: Readings must be completed in advance of the class session for which they are assigned. You may find it helpful to read in the order listed. All topics, readings, and assignments are subject to change.

Date	Readings	Assignments
Week 1: Welcome to Corrections		
Monday, August 31	None	
Wednesday, September 2	None	Brainstorm before class: 2-3 areas of criminal justice you are passionate about and 2-3 of your personal strengths
Week 2: Goals of Corrections		
Monday, September 7	No class – Labor Day	
Wednesday, September 9	1. <i>American Corrections</i> Chapter 4 “Contemporary Punishment” 2. Alberge, Darya. 2025. https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2025/aug/22/lies-private-jets-missing-86m-inigo-philbrick-art-world-swindle	Personal statement due today in ELMS
Week 3: Corrections Then, Corrections Now		
Monday, September 14	1. <i>American Corrections</i> Chapter 3 “The History of Corrections in America”	Media v. reality: correctional goals due today in ELMS
Wednesday, September 16	1. <i>American Corrections</i> Chapter 2 “The Early History of Correctional Thought and Practice”	
Week 4: Race, Demographics, & the Correctional Client		
Monday, September 21	1. Delaney, Ruth, et al. 2018. “American History, Race, and Prisons.” <i>Vera Institute</i> https://www.vera.org/reimagining-prison-web-report/american-history-race-and-prison 2. <i>American Corrections</i> Chapter 19 “Race, Ethnicity, and Corrections”	Watch documentary and post response in ELMS Discussion Board
Wednesday, September 23	1. <i>American Corrections</i> Chapter 6 “The Correctional Client” 2. CBS New York. 2017. “Seniors Caught Pushing Pills Are The ‘New Face of Drug Dealing’; Experts Say.” https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/senior-citizen-drug-dealers/	

Week 5: Jail and Bail		
Monday, September 28	1. <i>American Corrections</i> Chapter 7 “Jails: Detention and Short-Term Incarceration” 2. Irwin, John. 1986. <i>The Jail: Managing the Underclass in American Society</i>. Selection: <u>Chapter 1</u> “Managing Rabble” (pp. 1-17) and <u>Chapter 2</u> “Who is Arrested” (pp. 18-41).	
Wednesday, September 30	1. Cannon, Ryan T. 2020. “Sick Deal: Injustice and Plea Bargaining During Covid-19.” <i>Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology</i> 110:91-105. 2. Lartey, Jamiles. 2020. “New York Tried to Get Rid of Bail. Then the Backlash Came.” <i>Politico</i> https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2020/04/23/bail-reform-coronavirus-new-york-backlash-148299	
Week 6: Probation		
Monday, October 5	1. <i>American Corrections</i> Chapter 8 “Probation” 2. Phelps, Michelle S. 2018. “Ending Mass Probation.” <i>The Future of Children</i> 28(1):125-146.	
Wednesday, October 7	1. Human Rights Watch. 2020. “Revoked: How Probation and Parole Feed Mass Incarceration in the United States.” <i>HRW</i> July 31, 2020. https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/07/31/revoked/how-probation-and-parole-feed-mass-incarceration-united-states	
Week 7: Fines and Fees		
Monday, October 12	No class – Fall Break	
Wednesday, October 14	1. Harris, Alexes. 2018. “Justice Shouldn’t Come with a \$250 Fine.” <i>New York Times</i> https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/03/opinion/alternative-justice-fines-prosecutors.html	
Week 8: Intermediate Sanctions & Midterm Exam		
Monday, October 19	1. <i>American Corrections</i> Chapter 9 “Intermediate Sanctions and Community Corrections”	
Wednesday, October 21	*Midterm Exam today*	
Week 9: Introduction to Prisons		
Monday, October 26	1. Fernandes, April D., Brittany Friedman, and Gabriela Kirk. 2022. “Forcing People to Pay for Being Locked Up Remains Common.” <i>Washington Post</i> May 2, 2022. https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2022/05/02/forcing-people-pay-being-locked-up-remains-common/	

Wednesday, October 28	1. <i>American Corrections</i> Chapter 10 “Incarceration” 2. Metcalf, Jerry. 2018. “A Day in the Life of a Prisoner.” <i>The Marshall Project</i> https://www.themarshallproject.org/2018/07/12/a-day-in-the-life-of-a-prisoner	
Week 10: The Prison Experience: Prison Labor & Solitary Confinement		
Monday, November 2	1. Charles, Dan. 2017. “What’s it Really Like to Work in a Prison Goat Milk Farm? We Asked Inmates.” <i>National Public Radio</i> 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 2. Tardiff, Sara. 2021. “The Last Wildfire-Fighting Camp for Incarcerated Teens in California.” <i>Teen Vogue</i> November 19, 2021. https://www.teenvogue.com/story/wildfire-camp-incarcerated-teens	
Wednesday, November 4	1. <i>Required</i>: Reiter, Keramet. 2016. <i>23/7: Pelican Bay Prison and the Rise of Long-Term Solitary Confinement</i>. New Haven: Yale University Press. <u>Selection</u>: Chapter 1 “A Supermax Life” (pp. 10 – 33) 2. <i>Recommended</i>: Listen to the episode titled “The SHU” of the podcast <i>Ear Hustle</i> – 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 11: Gender and LGBTQ+ Populations in Prisons		
Monday, November 9	1. Comfort, Megan L. 2003. “In the Tube at San Quentin: The ‘Secondary Prisonization’ of Women Visiting Inmates.” <i>Journal of Contemporary Ethnography</i> 32(1):77-107. 2. <i>American Corrections</i> Chapter 12 “Incarceration of Women”	
Wednesday, November 11	1. Buist, Carrie and Emily Lenning. 2016. Chapter 5: “Queer Criminology and Corrections.” Pp. 91-111 in <i>Queer Criminology</i>. New York: Routledge.	
Week 12: Reentry		
Monday, November 16	1. Mooallem, Jon. 2015. “You Just Got Out of Prison. Now What?” <i>New York Times</i> (http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/19/magazine/you-just-got-out-of-prison-now-what.html#whats-next)	
Wednesday, November 18	No class - American Society of Criminology conference	Discussion board post in ELMS: Real world cases
Week 13: Sex Offender Registry		
Monday, November 23	1. Listen to the episode titled “Sex Offenders” of the podcast <i>You’re Wrong About</i> – August 2019. Available for free on iTunes, Pocket Casts, anywhere you listen to podcasts, or online on this website: https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/sex-offenders/id1380008439?i=1000465289962	*Alternate assignment available for those

		who choose to skip lecture*
Wednesday, November 25	No class - Thanksgiving Break	
Week 14: The Death Penalty and the Question of Abolition		
Monday, November 30	1. <i>American Corrections</i> Chapter 20 "The Death Penalty" 2. Albert Camus, Albert. 1957. "Reflections on the Guillotine."	Field assignment due
Wednesday, December 2	1. Andone, Dakin. 2021. "Why Virginia's Abolition of the Death Penalty is a Big Deal for the State and the US." <i>CNN</i> https://www.cnn.com/2021/03/29/us/virginia-death-penalty-abolition-significance/index.html 2. Dolinar, Brian. 2020. "We Can't 'Fix' Policing or Prison – But We Can Decide How to Create Actual Safety." <i>Waging Nonviolence</i> https://wagingnonviolence.org/2020/08/prison-by-any-other-name-authors-maya-schenwar-victoria-law-abolition-conversation/	
Week 15: The Great Corrections Debate: Reform or Abolition?		
Monday, December 7	1. Washington, John. 2018. "What Is Prison Abolition?" <i>The Nation</i> https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/what-is-prison-abolition/	
Wednesday, December 9	Last Day of Class	

In-Person Final Exam Thursday, December 17th, 4-6 pm

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION: Policies and Resources for Undergraduate Courses

Course Guidelines

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 in this class, both in terms of your name and your pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.). Keep in mind that the pronouns someone uses are not necessarily indicative of their gender identity. For more information about names and gender markers, visit the LGBTQ+ Equity Center.

Additionally, it is your choice whether to disclose how you identify in terms of your gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, and dis/ability, among all aspects of your identity (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 your fellow Terps.

Video or Audio Recording:

Recordings are prohibited in this class. It is important that class participants can speak freely as they learn and grapple with the material. Please respect the privacy of your peers and the instructor. Notwithstanding the foregoing general prohibition on recording, students are advised that the class may nonetheless be recorded for academic reasons by the faculty member (for example, as a teaching improvement technique) or students with special permission to do so (for example, as part of an approved accommodation plan). If a student has been granted permission to record, any recordings are for the student's individual and personal academic use only, pursuant to the terms of the specific approval granted to the student. The contents of any recordings may not be shared, distributed, published, uploaded, or otherwise transmitted or copied to any user, site, server, etc., in which it is reasonably foreseeable that the contents, in whole or in part, will be available to others. Students who record a class without permission may be subject to discipline as a student conduct violation and potentially charged with theft; failure to comply with university directives; or violation of published university regulations. Students who knowingly share a recording, or parts of a recording, with a third party, without permission, may be committing an additional conduct offense.

Communication with Instructor and TA:

Email: If you need to reach out and communicate, please email myself or the teaching assistant (TA). Please DO NOT email us with questions that are easily found in the syllabus or on ELMS, but please DO reach out about personal, academic, and intellectual concerns/questions.

We will do our best to respond to emails within 24 hours during normal business operation (M-F 9am-5pm).

ELMS: I will send IMPORTANT announcements via ELMS messaging. Make sure that your email & announcement notifications (including changes in assignments and/or due dates) are enabled in ELMS so you do not miss any messages. You are responsible for checking your email and ELMS inbox regularly.

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.

Academic Integrity

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*.

The University's Code of Academic Integrity is designed to ensure that the principles of academic honesty and integrity are upheld. In accordance with this code, the University of Maryland does not tolerate academic dishonesty. Please ensure that you fully understand this code and its implications because all acts of academic dishonesty will be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of this code. All students are expected to adhere to this Code. It is your responsibility to read it and know what it says, so you can start your professional life on the right path. As future professionals, your commitment to high ethical standards and honesty begins with your time at the University of Maryland.

It is important to note that course assistance websites, such as CourseHero, are **not permitted** sources unless the instructor explicitly gives permission. Material taken or copied from these sites can be deemed unauthorized material and a violation of academic integrity. These sites offer information that might be inaccurate, and most importantly, relying on restricted sources will hamper your learning process, particularly the critical thinking steps necessary for college-level assignments.

Additionally, students may naturally choose to use online forums for course-wide discussions (e.g., Group lists or chats) to discuss concepts in the course. However, collaboration on graded assignments is strictly prohibited unless otherwise stated. Examples of prohibited collaboration include: asking classmates for answers on quizzes or exams, asking for access codes to clicker polls, etc. Please visit the Office of Undergraduate Studies' full list of campus-wide policies and reach out if you have questions.

Finally, on each exam or assignment you must write out and sign the following pledge: "I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this exam/assignment." If you ever feel pressured to comply with someone else's academic integrity violation, please reach out to me immediately.

If you are ever unclear about acceptable levels of collaboration, please ask!

AI Policy

Use AI for brainstorming, but not final products

In this class, you may use AI tools (TerpAI, ChatGPT, Gemini, Grammarly, etc.) for brainstorming and research (getting suggestions for research topics, defining complex terms for your own understanding, finding articles, etc.). But you must complete your final assignments independently. If you have questions or suggestions for potential exceptions, please contact me, and I would be happy to talk more.

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 ($89.99 \neq 90.00$). 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.

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 sharpening 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.

Emergency Preparedness

Emergencies on campus can happen at any time. To prepare, visit prepare.umd.edu or use the emergency symbol in the UMD App to review information. Resources for persons with disabilities are available on the emergency preparedness page of the ADA Coordinator's website.

Veteran Resources

UMD provides some additional support to our student veterans. You can access those resources at the office of Veteran Student life and the Counseling Center. Veterans and active duty military personnel with special circumstances (e.g., upcoming deployments, drill requirements, disabilities) are welcome and encouraged to communicate these, in advance if possible, to the instructor.

Notice of Mandatory Reporting

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking: As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Responsible University Employee,” and I must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking to UMD’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy on Sexual Harassment and Other Sexual Misconduct.

If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of UMD’s confidential resources, such as CARE to Stop Violence (located on the Ground Floor of the Health Center) at 301-741-3442 or the Counseling Center (located at the Shoemaker Building) at 301-314-7651.

You may also seek assistance or supportive measures from UMD’s Title IX Coordinator, Angela Nastase, by calling 301-405-1142, or emailing titleIXcoordinator@umd.edu.

To view further information on the above, please visit the Office of Civil Rights and Sexual Misconduct.

Course Evaluation

Please submit a course evaluation through Student Feedback on Course Experiences in order to help faculty and administrators improve teaching and learning at Maryland. All information submitted to Course Experiences is confidential. Campus will notify you when Student Feedback on Course Experiences is open for you to complete your evaluations at the end of the semester. Please go directly to the Student Feedback on Course Experiences to complete your evaluations. You may access the evaluation reports for courses for which 70% or more students submitted their evaluations.

Copyright Notice

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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.