Race, Crime and Criminal Justice – (CCJS 670)  
Mondays 4 to 6:45 pm, LEF 2165E  
Fall 2019

Instructor: Dr. María B. Vélez  
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Email: velezmb@umd.edu  
Office Hours: Wednesdays 11 am to 12:30 pm; Fridays 2 to 3 pm; and by appointment

Course Objectives:
The connection between race/ethnicity and crime/criminal justice outcomes is of longstanding concern. We begin with a discussion of how race/ethnicity is perceived to be criminogenic and how this shapes perceptions, demographic shifts and employment patterns. We then investigate the empirical association of race/ethnicity and crime/justice outcomes by understanding the theoretical and empirical foundations that link race/ethnicity and criminal offending at the macro and micro levels. Here we will draw heavily on anomie/strain, cultural deviance, and racial invariance arguments. We then will examine the nature and scope of ethno-racial inequality in the criminal justice system. We will also spotlight the consequences of ethno-racial inequality in criminal justice outcomes for the wellbeing of racial/ethnic minority groups and their communities. Students will also be required to conduct original research on a relevant topic.

Required Texts:

There are weekly readings on ELMS that are required.

Requirements:
Along with attending class and reading all of the required material, the following constitute course requirements:

1. Leading class discussion (10% of your final grade). Students will prepare and lead discussion of course readings. To encourage you to develop active (versus passive) learning skills, each of you is required to lead class discussions (number depends on class size) on a week’s readings. Discussion leaders should prepare a brief introduction to the week’s readings (no more than 10 minutes), and a number of questions to help guide discussion. Please provide hard copies of your questions for the class. The quality of your questions and your ability to facilitate discussion will determine your grade.

2. Precis (10% total; 5 % each). Each student will put together 2 precis. Each precis will introduce and connect the readings within an area (i.e., each week). The precis is a 2-4 page single-spaced summary of the theory, data, methods, and argument of the readings that are essential to the area. Based on the readings, the precis should identify the core concepts, assumptions, and ideas of the tradition, and provide a sense of its current empirical status
(i.e., to what degree is it supported with evidence) and policy implications. One is due before the midterm and the second is due before the final.

3. **In-class Midterm Exam** (30 % of your grade). A midterm exam will test your knowledge of the material covered in the first half of the semester. You should be able to demonstrate a solid understanding of the various theoretical frameworks covered, empirical status of the various traditions, and to exhibit your ability to think critically and to synthesize material.

4. **Original Research Paper** (50 percent of your grade). More information on this requirement at the end of the syllabus.

**Expectations for a graduate level course:**

1) Read, Read, and Then Read Some More– This is a graduate-level course and this course demands significant reading. While I have done my best to keep the readings to a manageable length, it is imperative, not only for your grade, but for the quality of the discussion, that you read them carefully and actively. To elevate the level of the discussion, everyone is expected to engage deeply with the texts. Please come to class prepared.

2) Offer Arguments, not Opinions – While the notion that “everyone is entitled to their opinion” is the trend now, this does not apply to academic discussions. In this class, you ARE NOT entitled to your opinions; you are only entitled to what you can argue for in thoughtful way based on reading materials. Remember the purpose of theory is not to reach definitive answers, but to keep the conversation going.

**Academic Integrity:**

Be certain to properly cite the work of other scholars when producing output for this course especially when thinking of your research paper. Failure to properly credit other works is akin to plagiarism and will be dealt with in accordance to official policy at the University of Maryland.

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<th>WEEK 1 (8/26-8/30) Monday</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Topic:</strong> Introduction to the Course; hand out syllabus; discuss readings</td>
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<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
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<th>WEEK 2 (9/2-9/6)</th>
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WEEK 3 (9/9-9/13)

Readings:

**Topic: The Role of Race/ethnicity in Shaping Perceptions, Demographic Shifts and Employment**


Paragraph detailing discussion of research topic for original research project which includes a specific research question; data plan; and one contribution

WEEK 4 (9/16-9/20)

**Topic: Early foundations: Structural and Cultural Explanations**

Readings:


### WEEK 5 (9/23-9/27)

**Topic:** Methodological Issues

**Readings:**


*Vera Institute. “Challenges surrounding the collection of jail data about race and ethnicity.”

### WEEK 6 (9/30-10/4)

**Topic:** Contemporary Macro Approaches Part 1

**Readings:**


**WEEK 7 (10/7-10/11)**

**Topic: Contemporary Macro Approaches Part 2**


**WEEK 8 (10/14-10/18)**

**IN-CLASS MIDTERM EXAM**
WEEK 9 (10/21-10/25)

**Topic: Contemporary Micro Approaches**


3 page Proposal due

WEEK 10 (10/28-11/1)

**Theme: Ethnicity and Latinos**


WEEK 11 (11/4-11/8)

**Topic: Immigration**


WEEK 12 (11/11-11/15)

**Topic: Race and Justice Part 1**


Black, Donald and Albert J. Reiss. Police Control of Juveniles.

Garland, David. excerpts


**WEEK 13 (11/18-11/22)**

**Topic: Race and Justice Part 2**


**WEEK 14 (11/25-11/29)**

**CLASS REPLACED WITH 30 MINUTE INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS: TBD**
### WEEK 15 (12/2-12/6)

**Topic: Presentations and New Directions**


The Criminoologist. A Call for Black Criminology


### WEEK 16 (12/9)

**Topic: Presentations**

**Original research papers due by 12/16/19 by 5 pm by hand or email.**
More Information on Original Research Paper

Developing solid research skills is typically a (perhaps the) key skill that graduate students need to develop. To help in this process, all students will undertake empirical research. This will involve (1) developing in consultation with Dr. Vélez and fellow classmates a research question appropriate for a criminology audience, (2) collecting original data (e.g., interviewing five people or conducting field observations) or using secondary data (e.g., survey data available on ICPSR), (3) analyzing data, (4) writing an abbreviated research-style paper, and (5) presenting the research to the class using PowerPoint technology (or something similar). The presentation is meant to mimic presenting at a professional conference. All students must be prepared to discuss their research coherently during weeks 3 and 9, present their research to the class during weeks 15 or 16, and submit the final paper to Dr. Vélez by Monday, December 16th by 5 pm. Late papers will be accepted but will receive a 5% reduction for every 24 hours the paper is late.

What is an abbreviated research-style paper? An abridged research paper means that you will write a short journal-style research paper. If your assignment was to write an article for a typical journal (which it is not), it would be somewhere between 25-30 pages of text with a roughly 3-page introduction, 8-12 page literature review/argument section, 5-8 page data and methods section, 4-7 page finding section, and a 3-6 page discussion/conclusion.

Our abridged version will follow the below structure:

2-3 page introduction. This section should come closest to a "real" research paper. In most cases, the section should include a statement indicating what is the topic of the research, a brief review of what we know about the topic, a statement about what we do not know about the topic, a section on how your research will address the empirical/theoretical limitation in the literature, and a statement about the contributions of the research enterprise.

4-6 page conceptual arguments section. I expect that this section will be somewhat light and probably stray the furthest from what is expected from a publishable paper. I understand that you have not had enough time to become an expert in the relevant literature(s) and construct an elaborate theoretically motivated argument. Ideally, you will have identified/read some research that is relevant to your study and reviewed what the authors did, found, and you’ll make clear how the studies are relevant to your work. I find it helpful to think of this section as an elaboration of issues discussed in the introduction.

4-5 page data section. For quantitative work, this typically means discussing (in order) sample, dependent variable, independent variable(s), control variables, and statistical method/modeling strategy. Qualitative papers vary depending on the type of qualitative project, but typically for an interview-based study (the most common type of qualitative study) attention is devoted to sampling strategy (how did people get chosen for the study), how did you gain access/trust with the people interviewed, and what was the strategy for asking questions and issues related to the interview. This latter category includes issues like was the interview semi-structured and if so what where the key questions asked to everyone, how long were the interviews, where were people interviewed, were the interviews recorded and transcribed, what was your strategy for understanding what people said, how did you go about identifying themes in the interviews, general characteristics of people in the sample, who the sample is or is not likely generalizable to, and perhaps "positionality" issues -- how did who you are affect what people talked about.
3-4 page findings -- I anticipate that this section will again be light compared to a publishable research paper and for some (e.g., those collecting original data) the findings will be more preliminary in nature.

3-page discussion/conclusion – sometimes this section is combined and sometimes there are two separate sections (i.e., a discussion section followed by a conclusion section). Typically, in a conclusion you would review what you did in the paper (e.g., research question, data – basically a mini re-statement of key aspects of the introduction), what were your central findings, data limitations, and perhaps something about future research. You could also include a discussion of issues not central to your paper but issues your study comments on (this is what I think a "discussion" section should be).

1-3 pages of works cited. Refer to the ASA Style Guide (6th ed., 2019) for examples on how to cite properly.

Altogether, the paper (text) should be between 16-20 pages.