Special Criminological Problems; Punishment and Inequality (CCJS 699Q)

Term: Spring 2018
Time and Place: Tydings Hall 2102, Wed 4:00pm to 6:45pm
Instructor Wade C. Jacobsen
Email wcj@umd.edu
Phone (301) 405-4730
Office 2220H LeFrak Hall
Mailbox 2220 LeFrak Hall
Office Hours Thur 10:00am to 12:00pm, or by appointment

Course Description
The purpose of this class is guided, careful study of the role of formal punishment in fostering or curbing social and economic inequality in the United States. We will focus primarily on incarceration but will also consider other sanctions related to the criminal justice system that receive less attention. We will draw heavily from recent and forthcoming work, but we will not dig deeply into areas covered in other courses (for example, research on sentencing disparities or policing). Course content will be organized as follows:

- **Week 1**: Define key concepts related to inequality. Examine trends in inequalities by race, class, and gender. Examine the growth and distribution of incarceration.
- **Weeks 2 to 4**: Study causes of the growth of incarceration and its unequal distribution in the population. Causes include crime and other social, economic, and political factors.
- **Week 5**: Evaluate selected theories of crime causation and other perspectives related to punishment. Apply theses perspectives to explanations of social inequality.
- **Weeks 6 to 10**: Examine research on positive and negative outcomes of incarceration, placing special emphasis on methodological considerations and challenges, as well as areas that are less-developed, such as research on heterogeneity of effects.
- **Weeks 11 to 13**: Explore trends, disproportionalities, and outcomes of other formal punishments, including probation and parole, monetary sanctions, and school discipline.
- **Weeks 14 to 16**: Review research on justice system inequality more broadly and consider specific recommendations by leading scholars for policy, practice, and future research.

You Have Three Primary Learning Objectives in This Course

1. Gain a solid grounding in research on social inequality as it relates to the justice system.
2. Understand the implications of this research for policy, practice, and future research.
3. Apply this understanding to your own research.

Required Readings
We will read many journal articles, chapters, and reports throughout the course. A few will be made available on ELMS or handed out in class (some are drafts that should NOT be shared), but you will need to find most readings on your own using the UMD Library tools or Google Scholar. We will also read the following books, which may be purchased online or through the campus bookstore (#4 may be downloaded for free online):

Optional Books
You may also find the following books interesting or helpful in your study:


Course Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Percent of final grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>March 7</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan</td>
<td>March 7</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First draft</td>
<td>April 11</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final draft</td>
<td>May 15</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two peer reviews</td>
<td>April 25</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written responses</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion leader</td>
<td>Weekly, rotating</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Paper.** This may be either (1) a review of prior research or (2) a work of original empirical research. You should write the paper as if you were preparing it for submission to a peer-reviewed journal. **If you already have a working paper on a related topic (on which you are first author), I suggest using this as an opportunity to get feedback**
and make progress on it. A one-page summary of what you plan to do is due in class on Wednesday, March 7. A first draft of the paper is due in class on Wednesday, April 11 (bring two blinded hard copies). The final draft is due via email or in my mailbox at 12:00 p.m. noon on Tuesday, May 15.

2. **Two Peer Reviews.** You will review the papers of two other students in the class. You should write these reviews as if you were reviewing for a peer-reviewed academic journal. Each should be at least one page (single-space). They are due to me via email by 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, April 25 (no class this day).

3. **Written Responses.** Each student should complete all of the assigned readings before class each week. In doing so, you should respond to the five discussion questions listed in the course schedule (no more than two paragraphs for each question). These are due each week in class, and we will use them in class discussions. For Weeks 6 and 10, this should be accompanied with a reading list (see special instructions in the course schedule). Throughout the semester, I will grade a random selection of each your responses.

4. **Discussion Leader.** Students and I will serve as discussion leaders each week on a rotating schedule. There will be one discussion leader per reading, and most students will take the lead on a reading each week. The role of the discussion leader is to present a short (5-minute max) summary of the reading and pose an additional question or topic on the reading for the group to discuss (apart from the five discussion questions). For full points, you should prepare your discussion well and be an active participant in others.

**As a UMD Graduate Student, You Are Committed to Academic Integrity**
I require absolute academic integrity in this course and will refer any suspected cases of academic dishonesty to the University Honor Council. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, plagiarizing, cheating, having unauthorized possession of an examination, fabricating citations or other information, submitting or tampering with the work of another person, and aiding another person in doing any of these things. For more information on academic dishonesty and the accompanying procedures and consequences, visit [http://www.sbc.umd.edu/code.html](http://www.sbc.umd.edu/code.html)

**Information for Students with Disabilities**
Students seeking accommodations for a disability should contact the UMD Accessibility and Disability Service (ADS) at 301.314.7682, or adsfrontdesk@umd.edu. After receiving an Accommodations Letter from ADS, you should meet with me in person within the first week of class to provide a copy of the Accommodations Letter and for my signature on the Acknowledgement of Student Request form. We will discuss a plan for how the accommodations will be implemented. Specific details must be documented and added to the Acknowledgment of Student Request form.

**University and Course Related Policies**
For additional information on UMD course related policies, please visit: [https://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html](https://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html)
Course Schedule
Readings and discussion questions are subject to change up to one week prior.

Week 1: Jan 24  
**Punishment and Inequality**

a) What is inequality? What is social stratification? Why should we care in criminology?
b) Has inequality in the US changed in the past half-century? In what ways?
c) How has crime control and its emphasis in US institutions and culture changed?
d) Apart from crime rates, what specific factors contributed to these changes? Explain.
e) Describe the growth of incarceration in the past half-century and its distribution across race, class, and gender.

1. Amato et al. 2015: Selected sections [on ELMS]
2. Garland 2001: Chapter 1 [on ELMS]
3. Grusky 2014: Pages 1 to 16 [on ELMS]
4. Grusky 2014: Pages 17 to 25, 39 to 42 [on ELMS]
6. Reardon 2013 [on ELMS] and Rosin 2010 [on ELMS]
7. Western 2006: Chapter 1

Week 2: Jan 31  
**The Role of Crime**

a) How have crime rates changed over the past half-century? How are they distributed across race, class, and gender?
b) In what ways did changing crime rates contribute to the growth of incarceration?
c) What does prior research suggest about the effect of incarceration on crime rates? Expound.
d) To what extent is differential exposure to punishment due to differences in crime? Explain.
e) To what extent is differential exposure to punishment due to justice system bias? Explain.

1. Forman 2017: Chapter 1
2. Forman 2017: Chapter 2
3. Forman 2017: Chapter 3
4. Laub 2014: Pages 1 to 6 [on ELMS]
6. Western 2006: Chapter 2
7. Western 2006: Chapter 7

Week 3: Feb 7  
**The Causes of Mass Incarceration**

a) What specific changes in policy and practice contributed to the growth of incarceration in the last half-century? Explain.
b) How did these factors affect the distribution of incarceration rates across race and class?
c) What other social and economic factors contributed to the growth of incarceration in the last half-century? Explain.
d) How did these factors affect the distribution of incarceration rates across race and class?
e) Is there a single policy, practice, or set of actors you feel was most influential? Explain.

1. Pfaff 2017: Chapter 1
2. Pfaff 2017: Chapter 2
Week 4: Feb 14  The Causes of Mass Incarceration 2
a) What other policies and practices contributed to the growth of incarceration?
b) How did these factors affect the distribution of incarceration rates across race and class?
c) What criminal justice actors and organizations do you feel were most influential? Explain.
d) Given the causes we have identified in the readings these two weeks, what do you feel are the solutions to reducing incarceration rates? To what level should they be reduced?
e) Given the causes we have identified in the readings these two weeks, what do you feel are the solutions to reducing inequality in incarceration? To what level should they be reduced?

Week 5: Feb 21  Theories on Punishment and Inequality
a) What do criminological theories of punishment and crime causation imply about inequality?
b) Do labeling theory and deterrence theory have implications for inequality? What are they?
c) What is social exclusion? What are its various manifestations? Why should we care about it?
d) In what ways are concepts “system avoidance” and “social exclusion” related?
e) What might each concept contribute to traditional criminological theories of punishment?

Week 6: Feb 28  Positive, Negative, and Null Effects of Incarceration

a) What are the effects of incarceration on the outcomes you have chosen, if any?
b) What are the circumstances, if any, in which incarceration is beneficial for your outcome?
c) What are the underlying mechanisms of these effects, according to the researchers? Have these mechanism been tested empirically?
d) How do these effects vary by race, class, and gender?
e) What are the implications of all of these findings for inequality?

Reading assignment: With a partner or on your own, review all the research you can find on one outcome of your choice from the list below. For individual-level outcomes, you may focus on outcomes of those who experience the incarceration directly, or you may focus on their child or romantic partner. You should do your best to examine the outcome for the incarceration of men and women (or, in the case of child outcomes, fathers and mothers). Bring a handout to the class with a reading list you have compiled (enough copies for each person in class), in addition to your answers to the study questions above.

Outcomes to choose from:
- Antisocial or criminal behavior
- Civic engagement
- Community and neighborhood characteristics
- Economic wellbeing and access to services
- Educational attainment, achievement, and readiness
- Employment and earnings
- Family formation (marriage, cohabitation, birth)
- Instrumental and social support
- Mental and/or physical health outcomes
- Parental involvement (at school or in general)
- Residential stability and homelessness
- Romantic relationship stability

Week 7: Mar 7  Data and Methodological Considerations

***One-page plan for research paper due in class***

a) What are the pros and cons of various data sources used to study incarceration?
b) What are the most important methodological challenges researchers face in testing the effects of incarceration? Explain.
c) Has prior research adequately addressed any of these methodological challenges? Explain.
d) What characteristics of a dataset (sources, content, structure, etc.) make addressing these methodological challenges most feasible? Provide an example.
e) What are the implications of all of these findings for inequality and what we know about it?

Week 8: Mar 14  |  Heterogeneity in Incarceration and Its Effects
---|---
a) How has most prior research measured incarceration? Why is this important?
b) In what ways do experiences with incarceration likely vary in a general population?
c) What is the role of this variation in the effects of incarceration? Do we know? Explain.
d) What are the implications of these findings for inequality?
e) What should researchers and practitioners do to address these limitations? Explain.

Week 9: Mar 21  |  Spring break – No class

Week 10: Mar 28  |  Incarceration Experiences that Receive Less Attention
---|---
a) How have trends in incarceration for the population you have chosen changed in the past half-century? What factors explain these changes, or what might explain them?
b) How is incarceration for the population you have chosen distributed by race, class, and gender, if applicable? What factors explain this distribution?
c) What are the positive and negative outcomes of incarceration among individuals of the population you have chosen? Do we know? Explain.
d) What data issues complicate the study of incarceration among this population?
e) Describe the systems (for example, immigrant detention, youth corrections, etc.) and experiences that are unique to or more salient for the population you have chosen.
Reading assignment: With a partner or on your own, review all the research you can find on incarceration experiences among individuals in a population of your choice from the list below. Bring a handout to the class with a reading list you have compiled (enough copies for the class), in addition to your answers to the study questions above.

Populations to choose from:
- Children and adolescents
- Elderly populations
- Hispanics and/or immigrants
- Individuals with disabilities or impairments
- Native Americans and other indigenous populations
- Other racial-ethnic minorities
- Sexual minorities
- Veterans
- Women

Week 11: Apr 4  Parole and Probation
a) What is parole? To whom and under what circumstances is it administered?
b) What is probation? To whom and under what circumstances is it administered?
c) How are parole and probation distributed by race, class and gender, relative to incarceration?
d) How are parole and probation each related to recidivism and other outcomes?
e) What are the implications of these findings for inequality?

3. Harrington 2017 [hardcopy only – do not copy or share]
4. Kaeble and Bonczar 2017 [on ELMS]

Week 12: Apr 11  Monetary Sanctions
***Research paper draft due in class (bring two blinded copies)***

a) What forms of monetary sanctions can the criminal justice system impose?
b) What is legal debt and how is it distributed across race, class, and gender?
c) What is the relationship between legal debt and sanctions such as incarceration?
d) What are the positive and negative outcomes associated with monetary sanctions?
e) What are the implications of these findings for inequality?
Week 13: Apr 18  School Security and Punishment

a) What forms of punishment do US schools administer? Why should we care?
b) How have approaches to school security and punishment changed over time?
c) How is school punishment distributed across race, class, and gender? What factors explain this distribution?
d) What behavioral outcomes are associated with school punishment? Expound.
e) What implications do these findings have for the role of schools in justice system inequality?

Week 14: Apr 25  Population Association of America meeting – No class

*** Reviews due via email by 4:00 p.m. ***
Week 15: May 2  

**Implications and Directions for Research, Policy, and Practice 1**

a) What factors explain recent reductions in incarceration? The same that led to high rates?
b) Should incarceration rates be reduced? If so, should they be reduced for everyone? Explain.
c) What specific changes in policy and practice should be made to further reduce high rates of incarceration and other forms of punishment? Explain.
d) How might these suggested changes affect inequality in the justice system, if at all? Explain.
e) What should researchers focus on, and what do they need to address in moving forward?

1. Laub 2014: Pages 7 to 13 [on ELMS]
2. Pfaff 2017 Chapter 8
4. Laub. *Future of Children* Intro [hardcopy only – do not copy or share]
5. Hirschfield. *Future of Children* Paper 1 [hardcopy only – do not copy or share]
6. Yi and Wildeman. *Future of Children* Paper 2 [hardcopy only – do not copy or share]

Week 16: May 9  

**Implications and Directions for Research, Policy, and Practice 2**

a) Justice system inequality is due in part to inequalities present prior to justice system contact. What specific changes in policy and practice should be made to address these “inputs”?
b) Justice system inequality is due in part to effects of justice system response that reinforce or exacerbate existing inequalities. What specific changes in policy and practice should be made to address these “outputs”?
c) In making these suggested changes, what systems should be targeted first and foremost, to get the greatest “bang for our buck”? Schools? Police? Courts? Explain.
d) What are the most pressing issues for researchers in this area? Explain.
e) How do you plan to address these pressing research-related issues in your own work?

1. Forman 2017: Epilogue
2. Schlesinger. *Future of Children* Paper 3 [hardcopy only – do not copy or share]
3. Brunson and Pegram. *Future of Children* Paper 4 [hardcopy only – do not copy or share]
4. Copp and Bales. *Future of Children* Paper 5 [hardcopy only – do not copy or share]
5. Phelps. *Future of Children* Paper 6 [hardcopy only – do not copy or share]
6. Turney and Goodsell. *Future of Children* Paper 7 [hardcopy only – do not copy or share]

Week 17: May 15  

***Final research papers due 12:00pm (email or mailbox)***