

Black and Brown Bodies and Criminal Justice Systems
LCS 01:595:312:01 Topics in Latino and/or Caribbean (Fall 2018)
PCJ 202:389:01 Criminal Justice Seminar (Fall 2018)
Instructor: Kenneth Sebastian Leon

This course examines the impacts of criminal justice systems on communities of color in the United States, with particular focus on how various social, political, ideological, and economic structures have contributed to the disproportionate placement of Black and Brown bodies under systems of formal social control. After studying fundamental concepts of race and ethnicity, the course will cover mass incarceration, state surveillance, migration-related criminal justice policies (e.g., *crimmigration*), and the history of criminal justice through a critical race theory and critical legal theory framework. The class format will generally consist of discussion-driven analyses of assigned readings and multimedia, in addition to substantive lectures.

Some of the questions this course will navigate include:

- What are the historical and sociological underpinnings that resulted in the disproportionate criminalization and control of communities of color?
- How can we better understand the past and present features of U.S. criminal justice by studying the history of race and class relations in the United States?
- What are the larger social, political, economic, and ideological superstructures that allow for the current crime and justice paradigm?

Course Learning Goals

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Critically reflect on the criminal justice system's role in racializing human "subjects"
- Understand the historical underpinnings of mass incarceration
- Better navigate the scholarly literature on mass incarceration, migrant detention, and racially disparate criminal justice policies and practices
- Further develop critical thinking skills and the ability to speak and write clearly and analytically
- Connect a series of social movements (e.g. *Black Lives Matter*) to academic literature on race and criminal justice
- Situate select Latino/a/x scholarship within a historical framework of U.S. criminal justice and contemporary carceral studies
- Critically reflect on the systems of state governance, institutions, organizations, commercial enterprises, and non-profits built around and upon the project of mass imprisonment
- Anchor criminal justice policy in electoral politics and the racial politics of crime control
- Understand the special role of three types of institutions: Police, Corrections, and Courts – and their impact on communities of color
- Confidently engage with advanced readings of peer-reviewed scholarly articles and explore potential scholarship and activism opportunities beyond the Fall 2018 semester

*This synopsis is intended for informative purposes only; it is provisional and subject to change before the beginning of the semester.

A complete description of Department Learning Goals and Major/Minor requirements can be found on the LCS website: <http://latcar.rutgers.edu/>

Required Reading*

Barak, Gregg, Paul Leighton and Allison Cotton. 2018. *Class, Race, Gender, and Crime – The Social Realities of Justice in America*, Fifth Edition. [ISBN: 978-1-4422-6885-2]

Forman Jr., James. 2017. *Locking Up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux [ISBN: 0374189978]

Hayes, Chris. 2017. *A Colony in a Nation*. W. W. Norton & Company. [ISBN: 0393254224]

Students may consider obtaining a copy of the following texts to supplement lectures:

Gabbidon, Shaun L. and Helen Taylor Greene. 2016. *Race & Crime*, 4th edition. [SAGE](#). [ISBN: 9781483384184]

Coates, Rodney D., Abby L. Ferber and David L. Brunsma. 2018. *The Matrix of Race – Social Construction, Intersectionality, and Inequality*. [SAGE](#). [ISBN: 9781452202693]

*Consult Rutgers Barnes & Noble for current books for the course. Additional articles and resources are available through the course Sakai site.

Evaluation*

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|
| Weekly Discussion Board Submissions | = 30% |
| Take-Home Midterm Exam | = 30% |
| Final Paper | = 30% |

*This synopsis is intended for informative purposes only; it is provisional and subject to change before the beginning of the semester.