

SYLLABUS

Course Number: M405

“Mass-Incarceration and the Criminal Justice System”

June 5-9, 2017 – 9:00am – 5:00pm

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Location Information: TBA

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Congregations and community ministries are critical for addressing the complexities that arise from mass incarceration in the United States. Using the lens of public theology, this course examines the social and mental health issues giving rise to criminality, police as contributors to public safety and well-being while also prone to stereotyping, harsh treatment and acts of violence, as well as the shooting of unarmed citizens. In addition, attention will be paid to the U.S. prison-industrial-complex where in 2013, 2.3 million people were incarcerated, the majority being persons of color. Using an ethical, theological, and Christological investigation of scripture, doctrine, as well as church tradition, the course will pay attention to the intersection of race, class, gender and cultural analysis as a platform for creating robust faith-based advocacy (rooted in doing justice) and community leadership.

OVERVIEW

The course is an intensive seminar with emphasis on contextual education and will consist of at least two site visits to the Juvenile Detention Center and St. Leonard’s House. There will be guest lecturers, video presentations, class group presentations, and other activities. These activities, combined, are all geared to facilitate the student’s ability to engage in robust conversations, as well as articulate and provide a theological and ethical evaluation of the CJS. Ultimately, the goal of this course is to lead students toward action within these complex systems to develop next steps/plans to address the systemic, social, and mental factors that lead to oppression, discrimination, incarceration, and criminality.

COURSE LEARNING GOALS:

At the end this course the students will be able to:

- Understand, articulate, and evaluate the operation and function of the Criminal Justice System from Arrest to sentencing as a basis for understanding mass incarceration.
- Offer critical analysis of criminality and the social and mental conditions that give rise to negative behavior especially as it relates to intersectionality and the interlocking systems of oppression.
- Understand and articulate the rising marginalization of women and its connection with the Criminal Justice System.

- Through biblical, theological and ethical engagement and analysis, develop a faith base approach, responses and strategies for pastoral care/advocacy that is rooted in doing justice.
- Understand and articulate an ethical and social analysis of the prison industrial complex and develop models of pastoral presence and care through public theology and advocacy as methods of intervention which moves towards systemic change.

REQUIRED TEXT:

Alexander, Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, (The New Press, London), 2010 (ISBN) 978-1-59558-103-7.

Richie, Beth E., *Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence, and America's Prison Nation*, (New York University Press, NY), 2012 (ISBN) 978-0-8147-7623-0.

Stevenson, Bryan, *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*, (Spiegel and Grau), 2015 (ISBN 978-0-8129-8496-5).

RECOMMEND ADDITIONAL READINGS:

May be referenced during our class time. Not required texts for reading:

- America's Cradle to Prison Pipeline Report, Children's Defense Fund
<http://www.childrensdefense.org/library/data/cradle-prison-pipeline-report-2007-full-lowres.pdf>
- Healing Communities, Stephanie Boddie, Robert Franklin and Harold Dean Trulear
https://ojp.gov/fbnp/pdfs/Healing_Communities.pdf
- Young Men of Color and the Other Side of Harm, Danielle Sered
archive.vera.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/young-men-color-disparities-responses-violence.pdf
- Sentencing Reform: Among Mass Incarcerations, Guarded Optimism, Marc Mauer
[file:///C:/Users/Sharon/Downloads/ABA-Sentencing-Reform-Amid-Mass-Incarcerations-Guarded-Optimism.pdf](http://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/sentencing-reform-amid-mass-incarcerations-guarded-optimism/)
OR <http://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/sentencing-reform-amid-mass-incarcerations-guarded-optimism/>
- Faith Based Initiatives and High Risk Youth, Harold Dean Trulear
http://www.issuelab.org/resource/faith_based_institutions_and_high_risk_youth

RECOMMENDED: OTHER INFORMATIONAL WEBSITES FOR EXPLORATION

websites for additional material that may be referred to during our class time:

The Annie E. Casey Foundation, www.aecf.org.
National Alliance of Faith and Justice, www.nafj.org
Amachi Mentoring, www.amachimentoring.org
Prison Fellowship, www.prisonfellowship.org

The Sentencing Project, www.sentencingproject.org
National Association of the Community of Restorative Justice, <http://www.nacrj.org/>
The National Reentry Resource Center, <https://csgjusticecenter.org/nrrc>
JustLeadershipUSA, <https://www.justleadershipusa.org/>
Project Iron Kids, <https://www.prbuzz.com/education/204978-project-iron-kids-initiative-works-to-increase-books-for-children-of-the-incarcerated-and-helps-end-silence-with-educational-books-1.html>

PRE-COURSE READING REQUIREMENTS:

Please have the following required text read prior to our class time

Michelle Alexander, “The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness”
Bryan Stevenson, “Just Mercy: A story of Justice and Redemption”

Note: Our third course require text, “Arrested Justice”, will be utilized for group presentations. Chapters for this text will be assigned as soon as I received the class list, (before class). Students will be responsible, then, for reading their assigned chapter prior to our class meeting in preparation for the presentation. Time will be allowed during class time for you to organize your presentation with members of your group.

COURSE FINAL ASSIGNMENTS: DUE DATES - TBA

Required Field Trip On Your Own:

You will need to visit both *a state and county corrections* facility for this course. There is a difference between them. County jails are short term facilities, where persons are housed: 1) awaiting trial, 2) awaiting sentencing, 3) serving a sentence of 11 and 1/2 months or less or 4) awaiting transportation to a long-term facility, State prisons are long term facilities, usually for persons serving at least a one year sentence. Many churches have prison ministries, but only work in jails. Not knowing the difference, they lose sight of the ministry implications inherent in the fact that most of the people in the county jail will may be gone soon indeed, in most counties the average stay is less than two weeks. You will need to visit **BOTH** types of facilities for this class. Part of your final assignment will be a report on your visit. See the written assignments below for the exact format for your field trip report.

1. Write a 3-5-page critical analysis and reflection in response to one of the required reading books
2. Write a 2-3-page paper on your jail and prison field trips. What surprised you about your visit? What does your congregation/ministry/agency setting need to know about the facilities?
3. Write a 5-7-page proposal to your congregation, judicatory, ministry setting, or agency on the development of a comprehensive approach to the criminal justice system, and those impacted by it.

GRADING WILL UTILIZE A 100 POINT SYSTEM

CLASS PARTICIPATION – 30 POINTS

- Attend every class session
- Active participation in
- Attend all site visits
- Demonstrates knowledge of reading required text

CLASS GROUP PRESENTATIONS -20 POINTS

From Text Book: Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence, and America's Prison Nation

COURSE FINAL ASSIGNMENTS: 50 POINTS TOTAL (see below)

- First Assignment 10
- Second Assignment 15
- Third Assignment 25

PLEASE NOTE: Our class site visit may require utilizing public transportation and/or car-pooling unless other arrangements are made through the seminary. TBA

Course Outline

Monday& Tuesday: Intensive Engagement with Assigned Readings

The first two days will be spent intensely reviewing, analyzing, and discussing our texts, *The New Jim Crow*, and *Arrested Justice* as the class begins its contemplation as a precursor to developing an ethical and social analysis. We will engage other resources, primarily from the recommend readings and websites offering as needed throughout our times together. Through class presentations and lectures, the students will develop a perspective on women within the prison system, even before entering the system, as students gain an understanding of the term "Intersectionality." On Monday, time will be allocated for groups to plan their Tuesday's presentation. There will be time to overview course objectives and expectations with the expectation that the syllabus was previously read and if there are any questions the class will seek clarification.

Wednesday

Morning: **Site Visit:** 9-12pm- Juvenile Detention Center - guided tour/courtroom visit/lecture - 1100 S. Hamilton - If you drive, parking is directly across the street \$2

Afternoon: Classroom: 2-5:00pm

The afternoon on Wednesday will be spent discussing the site visit and Juvenile arrest/imprisonment and its impact on the family in understanding and developing a

comprehensive analysis of the Criminal Justice System as it relates to Arrest, trials, and prisons. We will introduce other material such as the sentencing project and the cradle to prison pipeline.

Thursday

Morning: **Site Visit:** St. Leonard's House

Afternoon: **Classroom:** 2-5pm

The afternoon on Thursday will be spent discussing the site visit especially as it relates to mass incarceration and arrest in communities of color and poor communities. As listed above, we will engage with other resources to gain a better understanding of the Criminal Justice System as well as organizations that continue to engage these systems within various organizational structures. Developing a theological and ethical framework for intervention are central to our analysis of our site visits, readings, lectures, and group dialog.

Friday

- Book Review of the required text, "Just Mercy"
- Introduction to Restorative Justice/Peace Circle
- The remainder of the day will be spent making up lectures we may not have had time for on the prescribed day. Where this last class is a 9 to 5 day, the probability of dismissing early may be feasible depending on our ability to complete our scheduled tasks. However, your plans should center around a 9am – 5pm day.
- Review of Final Coursework Assignments
- Closing