

Justification Statement

CJC 4510 – Punishment and Society

Currently, the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice does not have a class that engages with arguments and ideas around issues of punishment in US society. The course CJC 4510 is part of the academic project of interpreting contemporary forms of punishment by exploring the social, political, economic, and historical conditions in the society in which those forms arise. In this course, students will engage with these conditions to help them understand why punishment takes the shape it does in our society. The class relies on current and resonant examples for students as they work through the bigger-picture problems plaguing the US justice system.

CJC 4510–RVC: PUNISHMENT AND SOCIETY

DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINOLOGY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Course Description

The project of interpreting contemporary forms of punishment means exploring the social, political, economic, and historical conditions in the society in which those forms arise. In this course, we will engage with these conditions to help understand why punishment takes the shape it does in our society. In so doing students will gain an understanding of the reasons why people are punished and in what ways. The course diverges from traditional punishment and society courses and dives directly into one of the most important and consequential developments in US crime control: Mass incarceration. Guided by the ‘war on drugs,’ a relaxing of search and seizure protections, a more vengeful philosophy of punishment, and a view of the futility of rehabilitation, federal and state policymakers enacted harsh sentencing laws and built hundreds of new prisons to accommodate shifting sensibilities. The result has been that the U.S. has now become the world’s incarceration leader. In the first half of the class, we will examine the impact mass incarceration has on US society and how incarceration serves as a mirror to better understand the deep contours of US society. Using Dr. Travis Pratt’s second edition book *Addicted to Incarceration*, we will seek to understand what has fueled mass incarceration and how ineffective the rush to incarcerate has been in the last decade.

The second half of the course will draw from the book *Deadly Injustice: Trayvon Martin and the Criminal Justice System*, edited by Devon Johnson, Patricia Y. Warren, and Amy Farrell. The death of unarmed teenager Trayvon Martin and the subsequent trial and acquittal of his assailant, George Zimmerman, sparked a passionate national debate about criminal justice in America that involved everyone from bloggers to mayoral candidates to President Obama himself. The Trayvon Martin case brought the current nature of the American justice system to the forefront of our national consciousness. *Deadly Injustice* uses the Martin/Zimmerman case as a springboard to examine punishment and society in our current times. Contributors of the edited book explore how Americans think about criminality, how crimes are investigated and prosecuted, and how the media interprets and reports on crime. At the center of their analysis sit examples of the Zimmerman trial and Florida’s Stand Your Ground law, providing current and resonant examples for readers as they work through the bigger-picture problems plaguing the American justice system. This important volume demonstrates how highly publicized criminal cases go on to shape public views about offenders, the criminal process, and justice more generally, perpetuating the same unjust cycle for future generations.

Course Objectives

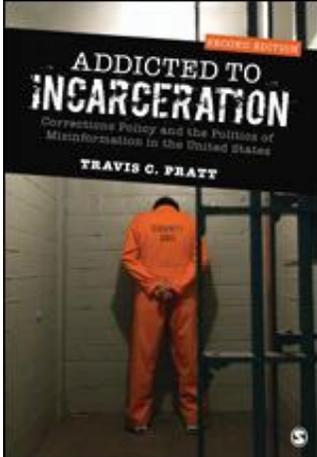
After successful completion of this course, you will:

- *Understand* the development of mass incarceration.
- *Relate* the changes of incarceration rates and practices to politics, public opinion, and perceptions of dangerousness and threat.
- *Evaluate* punishment in terms of its effects on individuals and communities.
- *Enhance* critical thinking by understanding society through the lens of punishment.

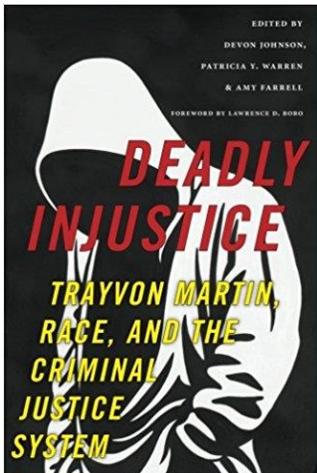
- *Develop* skills as an independent scholar by stating and defending one’s own position on punishment in the US.

Required Books

Addicted to Incarceration: Corrections Policy and the Politics of Misinformation in the United States, Second Edition, by Travis C. Pratt (2019) Sage. Paperback ISBN: 9781544308050. **Price: \$45.00.**



Deadly Injustice: Trayvon Martin, Race, and the Criminal Justice System edited by Devon Johnson, Amy Farrell, and Patricia Y. Warren (2015) New York University Press. Paperback ISBN: 9781479894291. **Price: \$28.00.**



Course Requirements

Discussion Questions (40%). There are four discussion questions throughout the semester. Each discussion question response will count for 10 percent toward your overall course grade. Your responses will be posted on Canvas’ Discussions and will be graded based on their overall quality and thoughtfulness. In other words, they should be well written, free of grammatical errors, and based on a close reading of the required book chapters, as well as, what you learned and know from lectures and academic journal articles.

Discussion Question Replies (10%). There are four reply posts to a classmate’s discussion question response. Each reply will count 2.25 percent toward your overall course grade. Your replies are graded and based on their overall quality and thoughtfulness. In other words, they should be well written, free of grammatical errors, and based on a close reading of the required book chapters, as well as, what you learned and know from lectures and academic journal articles.

Term Papers (50%). There are two term papers for this course: A mid-term paper and a final paper. The papers each count 25 percent towards your overall final course grade. The papers will be based on the assigned readings, discussions, and lectures. Late papers will be accepted, but only up to seven days after the due date. However, two points will be deducted for each day that it is submitted late for a maximum penalty of 14 points--after seven days the paper will be assigned a zero.

Grades

The method of determining final grades is based on the following course requirements. Please be advised that Criminal Justice majors must earn a grade of C or better to pass this class. Providing opportunities for extra credit is at the discretion of the instructor. The following grading scale will be used to determine your course grades:

Required Course Work	% Value
Discussion Question #1	10%
Discussion Question #2	10%
Discussion Question #3	10%
Discussion Question #4	10%
Discussion Question Responses 1-4	10%
Mid-term Paper	25%
End of term Paper	25%

Percent Grade	Letter Grade
90%—100%	A
88%—89.9%	B+
80%—87.9%	B
78%—79.9%	C+
70%—77.9%	C
60%—69.9%	D
00%—59.9%	F

Policies

Academic dishonesty. Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and to honestly demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which

demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University.

There is a *zero tolerance policy in terms of academic dishonesty* including but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, receiving and giving help (unless allowed by the professor), falsifying records, stealing exams, and submitting work from another course. Plagiarism means the use of somebody else's work without citing properly (including copying and pasting from the internet). Please visit the [FIU Plagiarism Prevention](#) site to help you avoid this type of misconduct. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the academic misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the [Student Handbook](#).

Harassment. The professor seeks to develop a meaningful academic student-professor environment. As such, any perceived unwelcome innuendos and overtures from students to professor or from students to another student will not be tolerated. In accordance with FIU commitment, students, faculty, and staff are entitled to work and study in an environment free from harassment. "Sexual harassment undermines the integrity of the academic and work environment, and prevents its victims and their peers from achieving their full potential. All members of the University community are entitled to work and study in an atmosphere free from sexual overtures or innuendoes that are unsolicited and unwelcome" (for more information see FIU-104 Sexual Harassment Regulation).

Accessibility and Accommodations. The Disability Resource Center collaborates with students, faculty, staff, and community members to create diverse learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive and sustainable. The DRC provides FIU students with disabilities the necessary support to successfully complete their education and participate in activities available to all students. If you have a diagnosed disability and plan to utilize academic accommodations, please contact the Center at 305-348-3532 or visit them at the Graham Center GC 190.

Please visit our [ADA Compliance](#) webpage for information about accessibility involving the tools used in this course.

For additional assistance please contact FIU's [Disability Resource Center](#).

Class Calendar

Week & Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topic ❖ Task, Assignment, or Assessment 	Required Readings
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Week 1 8/22 – 8/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Review the Syllabus and Canvas Content ❖ Purchase the Required Books ❖ Review Lecture 1 ❖ Post Introduction on Canvas 	<p>Read: The Syllabus</p> <p>Read: The Preface of <i>Addicted to Incarceration</i></p>
Week 2 8/29 – 9/04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Scope of the Problem of Incarceration • Political Discussions and Information about Crime, Criminal Justice, and Punishment ❖ Review Lecture 2 	<p>Read: Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 of <i>Addicted to Incarceration</i> (pages 1–26)</p>
Week 3 9/06 – 9/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misinformation about the Crime Problem ❖ Review Lecture 3 ❖ Submit Discussion Question #1 	<p>Read: Chapter 3 of <i>Addicted to Incarceration</i> (pages 27–44)</p>
Week 4 9/12 – 9/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Attitude about Punishment ❖ Review Lecture 4 	<p>Read: Chapter 4 of <i>Addicted to Incarceration</i> (pages 45–59)</p> <p>Read: Punishment’s Place</p>
Week 5 9/19 – 9/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Empirical Status of Mass Incarceration ❖ Submit Discussion Question #2 	<p>Read: Chapter 5 of <i>Addicted to Incarceration</i> (pages 61–74)</p>
Week 6 9/26 – 10/02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Social Costs of Incarceration • Rethinking Punishment and Incarceration • Review Lecture 5 	<p>Read: Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 of <i>Addicted to Incarceration</i> (pages 75–105)</p>
Week 7 10/03 – 10/09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Submit the Mid-Term Paper 	-----
Week 8 10/10 – 10/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Death of Trayvon Martin • Suspicion and Surveillance Review Lecture 6 	<p>Read: The Forward, Introduction, and Chapter 1 in <i>Deadly Injustice</i> (pgs. xi–22)</p>
Week 9 10/17 – 10/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceptions of Crime and Criminals • Review Lecture 7 	<p>Read: Chapter 2 in <i>Deadly Injustice</i> (pgs. 23–58)</p>
Week 10 10/24 – 10/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policed, Punished, and Dehumanized • Review Lecture 8 • Discussion Question Response #3 	<p>Read: Chapter 3 in <i>Deadly Injustice</i> (pgs. 59–80)</p>
Week 11 10/31 – 11/06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Florida’s Stand Your Ground law • Perceptions by Law Enforcement ❖ Review Lecture 9 	<p>Read: Chapter 5 in <i>Deadly Injustice</i> (pgs. 115–145)</p> <p>Read: Chapter 6 in <i>Deadly Injustice</i> (pgs. 146–164)</p>
Week 12 11/07 – 11/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examining the Failed Prosecution of Two Cases • Media, Political Reaction, and Public Response • Discussion Question Response #4 	<p>Read: Chapter 9 in <i>Deadly Injustice</i> (pgs. 215–244)</p> <p>Read: Chapter 11 in <i>Deadly Injustice</i> (pgs. 275–297)</p>
Week 13 11/14 – 11/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing Violence and Deracializing Injustice 	<p>Read: Afterword in <i>Deadly Injustice</i> (pgs. 323–334)</p>
Week 14 11/21 – 11/27	Thanksgiving Break	-----
Week 15 11/28 – 12/04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Submit End of Term Paper 	-----

Week 16 12/05 – 12/11	❖ Complete SPOT survey	-----
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The course explores contemporary dimensions of punishment. It will engage with the social conditions to help understand the contours of punishment and why the U.S. is the world's incarceration leader.

Changes better reflect the course content that has been revised because of House Bill 7.