

SOC 1003-11: Introduction to Criminal Justice Syllabus

Fall 2022

Instructor: Prof. Amanda Pierson (miss/she/her/hers)

Teaching Assistant: _____

Course: MW 4:45 PM – 6:00 pm

Contacting Us

Communications should be collegial, polite, and professional. Please avoid informalities in emails and other written communication. Unless you are divulging information that is sensitive where a TA should not be included, please include both the TA and myself on all emails. This will ensure that we as a teaching team are on the same page and can support you as fully and quickly as possible.

About the Course

Crime, punishment, policing, police abuse, law and order, mass incarceration, racialized criminal justice systems, how profit and poverty shape criminal justice: these are central issues of our time. From the #BlackLivesMatter protests to the attempted insurrection of January 6, 2021, few people probably need convincing that issues of criminal justice (CJ) are important. To understand, let alone decide, what the problems and solutions regarding CJ involve, we must know and understand what the systems and institutions of CJ are and how they relate to each other and to other aspects of society. This class introduces students to the formal, theoretical, and real-world realities of CJ institutions, research, ideas, and change.

Criminal justice systems are typically organized around three sets of institutions: policing, courts and corrections. A meaningful understanding of criminal justice requires understanding not just the formal and functional reality of these entities, but also crime and criminal justice in a social and political context. Such an inquiry raises questions such as what acts should be defined as crimes, the gap between ideals and realities of how criminal justice policies are implemented, which public problems are best understood in terms of criminal justice, and how democratic values and the rule of law shape criminal justice.

This class introduces students to contemporary criminal justice institutions and issues in the United States with a particular focus on empowering students to be engaged citizens, locally, nationally, and globally. The factual knowledge and critical thinking skills honed in this course will serve future criminal justice majors as well as students going on to other majors and jobs in all disciplines and fields. We cover the core institutions of criminal justice as well as introducing fields of study such as sociology, criminology, political science, and public policy.

Prerequisites

There are no academic prerequisites for this class. However, this class assumes a very basic knowledge of the United States government and, to a lesser extent, American history. If you do not have that background for whatever reason, please reach out so we can ensure you catch up on the necessary background so you can succeed in the course.

Learning Objectives

As a result of completing this course, students will be able to

- Map the structure of the U.S. criminal justice system and its component institutions according to various models;
- Know, explain, and use factual information, terms, and ideas about criminal justice used by both academics and professionals;
- Compare theories and conceptual approaches to criminal justice and criminology;
- Recognize different methodologies used in researching criminal justice;
- Integrate contemporary news and events with subject matter from class;
- Analyze how power and social structures impact the nature and function of criminal justice, and vice versa; and
- Distinguish among different bases for claims and what constitutes credible evidence to support these claims.

Additionally, this course fulfills the GPAC requirement of critical thinking in the social sciences.

As a result, students are also expected to

- Analyze and evaluate complex information;
- Analyze scholarly literature, in particular, its theoretical orientation and sources of support; and
- Formulate an argument based on the analysis of scholarly literature.

Course Structure

The course is primarily lecture-based with occasional in-class discussion. There is no required textbook, however, you may find purchasing the textbook useful for following along in class depending on your learning style. Although there is no assigned textbook, there will be required readings and multimedia assignments throughout the semester. These items will be made available to you via Blackboard at no cost beyond your exorbitant tuition.

The grading structure is as follows:

- Test 1 – 20%
- Test 2 – 20%
- Test 3 – 20%
- Written Assignment 1 – 15%
- Written Assignment 2 – 15%
- Participation – 10%

Requests for grading “bumps” or rounding up will not be granted.

The course is centered around three tests and a two-part written assignment. There are no other mandatory assignments, quizzes, essays, etc. The tests will be primarily multiple choice with some short answer questions. Students should use their lecture notes and the class PowerPoints as their study guide; synthesizing the readings, lectures, and concepts will be key to success in the course. There will be no final exam.

The instructions and rubric for the two-part written assignment is on Blackboard. Please note that you need to provide a hard copy in class in addition to submitting it online via SafeAssign. Printing at GW is lowkey very expensive. You have options available to you. If you use resources of a group on campus (e.g. the Multicultural Student Services Center) we ask that you support them – attend and promote their events, volunteer with them, ask them the best

way you can support them etc. Do not exploit their resources; that's some colonizer behavior. If all else fails, please reach out to myself and the TA. Regardless of the process, the deadlines and penalties remain the same for all students.

Participation in this course is self-assessed and rooted in skill-building rather than blind assessment (see Gillis 2019). The instructions for the self-assessment are on Blackboard and are completed through Google Forms. While participation is self-assessed, you must submit the self-assessment thoughtfully and on time to receive full credit. Although attendance will not be counted toward your participation grade per se, there will still be an attendance sheet and attendance is strongly encouraged.

On Equity, Diversity, and Respect

When approaching any topic, we come with our habitus - our personhood, experiences, perspective, and ignorance - and I am no different. It is my expectation that all members of the course actively work to create a space where students are able to express themselves free of judgment. Students are strongly encouraged to practice self-awareness, humility, and respect when having difficult conversations regarding race, class, gender identity, sexuality, religion, political affiliation, and other potentially sensitive topics. Hateful, violent, or sexually explicit comments will not be tolerated.

Because of the nature of the course, trigger or content warnings will not be provided. This course is centered, by its very definition, around concepts of violence, victimization, and issues of equity. These topics are, for most people, uncomfortable. For some, they are unbearable.

Unfortunately, these are topics that cannot be avoided and will be discussed with such frequency and range that TWs would be ubiquitous. In other words, you should assume these topics will be discussed throughout and within every class.

On Preparation, Time Management, and Organization

This course is purposefully designed to be manageable and free (i.e. not incurring extra cost through textbooks, clickers, etc). That being said, to receive an A in the course, students will likely find organization, time management, and synthesizing knowledge paramount (in other words, how do concepts relate to each other across lectures?) If you find you are struggling in these areas, feel free to reach out to the teaching team. To aid in this, lecture materials will be made available prior to class, though you will likely find these alone are insufficient to prepare for the tests.

For each credit of a course, students are expected to spend a minimum of 100 minutes in independent learning for every 50 minutes of direct instruction for a minimum total of 2.5 hours per week or 37.5 hours for the semester. For this 3-credit course, for example, students will receive 2.5 hours of direct instruction and should expect a minimum of 5 hours of independent learning per week for a combined minimum total of 7.5 hours per week or 112.5 hours per semester. See [Assignment of Credit Hour Policy](#) for more information.

Readings and Assignments

<p>Week 1: Introduction; Criminal Justice Myths</p>	<p>M (8/29):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Syllabus <p>W (8/31): Participation Goals Due by 11:59 PM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Reconceptualizing Participation Grading as Skill Building” Note: skimming is fine <i>Surviving Justice</i> Appendix A: Causes of Wrongful Conviction” Note: focus on <u>myths</u> in this chapter. What do we think we know about CJ vs. how does it actually work in practice? <i>Last Week Tonight</i> s4e25 “Forensic Science”
<p>Week 2: Defining, Measuring, and Classifying Crime</p>	<p>M (9/5): NO CLASS</p> <p>W (9/7):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New York City Department of Corrections FY2019 Report
<p>Week 3: Defining, Measuring, and Classifying Crime</p>	<p>M (9/12):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Inside This Place, Not of It</i> Appendix II: Forms of Violence Against Incarcerated Women Part I – Sexual Abuse and Misconduct <p>W (9/14):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>With Liberty and Justice for Some</i> Introduction
<p>Week 4: Criminal Law</p>	<p>M (9/19):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excerpt from <i>Terry v. Ohio</i> (1968) Excerpt from <i>Floyd v. City of New York</i> (2013) Excerpt from <i>Mapp v. Ohio</i> (1961) <p>W (9/21):</p>
<p>WEEK 5 – NO CLASS</p>	
<p>Week 6: Criminal Law</p>	<p>M (10/3):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “S03 Episode 01: A Bar Fight Walks into the Justice Center” from <i>Serial</i> <p>W (10/5): Test 1</p>
<p>Week 7: Criminology and Victimology</p>	<p>M (10/10): NO CLASS</p> <p>W (10/12):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “What Type of Criminal Are You?” from <i>History</i>
<p>Week 8: Policing</p>	<p>M (10/17):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “How America’s justice system is rigged against the poor” from <i>Vox</i> <i>Last Week Tonight</i> s2e7 “Municipal Violations” Excerpt from “A Routine Activities Approach to Technology Enhanced Sexual Crimes Against Children” <p>W (10/19):</p>

Week 9: Policing	<p>M (10/24): NO CLASS</p> <p>W (10/26): Written Assignment 1 Due in Class and on Bb by 11:59 PM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excerpt from <i>Pushout</i> • Excerpt from <i>Hands Up, Don't Shoot</i> • Excerpt from <i>Locking Up Our Own</i>
Week 10: Courts	<p>M (10/31): Participation Goal Midyear Review Due 11:59 PM</p> <p>W (11/2): Test 2</p>
Week 11: Courts	<p>M (11/7):</p> <p>W (11/9):</p>
Week 12: Courts	<p>M (11/14):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excerpt from <i>Privilege and Punishment</i> <p>W (11/16):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Last Week Tonight</i> s7e21 "Juries"
WEEK 13 – NO CLASS	
Week 14: Corrections	<p>M (11/28):</p> <p>W (11/30):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Cruel and Unusual" from <i>More Perfect</i> (WNYC) • <i>Last Week Tonight</i> s6e19 "Prison Labor"
Week 15: Corrections; Reentry	<p>M (12/5): Written Assignment 2 Due in Class and on Bb by 11:59 PM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Surviving Justice: The Prison Experience</i> • <i>Inside This Place, Not of It</i> Appendix III: Forms of Violence Against Incarcerated Women Part II – Lack of Adequate Healthcare <p>W (12/7):</p>
Week 16: Abolition	<p>M (12/10):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excerpt from <i>The End of Policing</i> (Vitale) • Excerpt from <i>A World Without Police</i> (Maher) • Excerpt from <i>Are Prisons Obsolete?</i> (Davis) <p>W (12/12): Test 3 / Participation Goal Final Review Due 11:59 PM</p>

Suggested, But Not Essential, Materials

These are selections that just don't fit into this class because of time or topic constraints, but are excellent resources depending on where your interests lie or if you plan on majoring.

Again, to reiterate, these are not required. All are worthy of purchase in my opinion, but you do not need them for the course and many are available for free through Gelman or the DC Public Library.

Books

- *Locking Up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America* by James Forman Jr.
- *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas
- *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander
- *Catch and Kill: Lies, Spies, and a Conspiracy to Protect Predators* by Ronan Farrow
- *The Nickel Boys* by Colson Whitehead
- *The Source of Self-Regard: Selected Essays, Speeches, and Meditations* by Toni Morrison
- *Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools* by Monique W. Morris
- *Calling Bullshit: The Art of Skepticism in a Data-Driven World* by Carl T. Bergstrom
- *Data Feminism* by Catherine D'Ignazio and Lauren Klein
- *Parkland: Birth of a Movement* by Dave Cullen
- *Are Prisons Obsolete?* By Angela Y. Davis
- *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates
- *The End of Policing* by Alex S. Vitale
- *A World Without Police* by Geo Maher
- *Death Makes the News: How the Media Censor and Display the Dead* by Jessica M. Fishman
- *Wounded City: Violent Turf Wars in a Chicago Barrio* by Robert Vargas
- *After Life Imprisonment: Reentry in the Era of Mass Incarceration* by Marieke Liem
- *Halfway House: Prisoner Reentry and the Shadow of Carceral Care* by Liam Martin
- *Sexual Citizens: Sex, Power, and Assault on Campus* by Jennifer S. Hirsch and Shamus Khan
- *The Pastoral Clinic: Addiction and Dispossession along the Rio Grande* by Angela Garcia
- *Zero Fail: The Rise and Fall of the Secret Service* by Carol Leonnig
- *Evicted* by Michael Desmond

Documentaries and Docuseries

- *13th* (2016) on Netflix
- *Crime + Punishment* (2018) on Hulu
- *Time: The Kalief Browder Story* (2017) on Netflix
- *Crack: Cocaine, Corruption & Conspiracy* (2021) on Netflix

Podcasts and Radio

- *In The Dark Season 2* regarding Curtis Flowers (Podcast)
- *Serial Season 3* (Podcast)
- *More Perfect* from NPR
- *Ear Hustle* from NPR
- *On Our Watch* from NPR

On COVID-19 Precautions and Virtual Learning

We can expect this semester will likely occur in a hybrid environment as the University reacts to the latest updates regarding COVID-19 and its variants.

Students are expected to follow all university policies regarding COVID-19 precautions (e.g. masking) while in the classroom or meetings with other students and/or faculty. If you are feeling unwell, please do not come to class. Students are responsible for materials they miss due to absence, regardless of the reason.

It is my strong preference that students have their video on during virtual class and office hours. Other virtual learning norms should be followed, including muted microphones, raising hands, limiting the use of filters and distracting backgrounds, etc. Sharing recordings of the course outside of those enrolled in the course is strictly prohibited.

Technology Policy

Please turn your phones to do not disturb/silent during class. Laptops are allowed during regular class time, though again, please make sure you're muted. If I recall correctly, this classroom is particularly devoid of outlets, so please ensure you have something to take notes with should your battery die. Electronic devices of any kind are not allowed during tests, including smart watches. Please either leave them at home or keep them in your bag during these times.

There are some technologies that are never allowed to be used in or during class. These include headphones, vapes / THC pens, or recording devices. This list may be expanded throughout the semester.

I highly recommend all students download Zotero, a citation engine software that is free and embeds within Microsoft Word and Google Chrome. It's an absolute lifesaver and is pretty user-friendly. The download link is here: <https://www.zotero.org/download/>

University Policy

Academic Integrity Code

Academic integrity is an essential part of the educational process, and all members of the GW community take these matters very seriously. As the instructor of record for this course, my role is to provide clear expectations and uphold them in all assessments. Violations of academic integrity occur when students fail to cite research sources properly, engage in unauthorized collaboration, falsify data, and otherwise violate the [Code of Academic Integrity](#). If you have any questions about whether or not particular academic practices or resources are permitted, you should ask me for clarification. If you are reported for an academic integrity violation, you should contact the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities (SRR) to learn more about your rights and options in the process. Consequences can range from failure of assignment to expulsion from the university and may include a transcript notation. For more information, please refer to the SRR website (<https://studentconduct.gwu.edu/academic-integrity>), email rights@gwu.edu, or call 202-994-6757.

University Policy on Observance of Religious Holidays

Students must notify faculty during the first week of the semester in which they are enrolled in the course, or as early as possible, but no later than three weeks prior to the absence, of their

intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance. If the holiday falls within the first three weeks of class, the student must inform faculty in the first week of the semester. For details and policy, see "Religious Holidays" at provost.gwu.edu/policies-procedures-and-guidelines.

Use of Electronic Course Materials and Class Recordings

Students are encouraged to use electronic course materials, including recorded class sessions, for private personal use in connection with their academic program of study. Electronic course materials and recorded class sessions should not be shared or used for non-course related purposes unless express permission has been granted by the instructor. Students who impermissibly share any electronic course materials are subject to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct. Please contact the instructor if you have questions regarding what constitutes permissible or impermissible use of electronic course materials and/or recorded class sessions. Please contact Disability Support Services at disabilitysupport.gwu.edu if you have questions or need assistance in accessing electronic course materials.

Academic Support

Writing Center

GW's Writing Center cultivates confident writers in the University community by facilitating collaborative, critical, and inclusive conversations at all stages of the writing process. Working alongside peer mentors, writers develop strategies to write independently in academic and public settings. Appointments can be booked online at gwu.mywconline.

Academic Commons

Academic Commons provides tutoring and other academic support resources to students in many courses. Students can schedule virtual one-on-one appointments or attend virtual drop-in sessions. Students may schedule an appointment, review the tutoring schedule, access other academic support resources, or obtain assistance at academiccommons.gwu.edu.

Disability Support Services (DSS)

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact Disability Support Services at disabilitysupport.gwu.edu or 202-994-8250 to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

Other Sources of Support

Counseling and Psychological Services

GW's Colonial Health Center offers counseling and psychological services, supporting mental health and personal development by collaborating directly with students to overcome challenges and difficulties that may interfere with academic, emotional, and personal success. healthcenter.gwu.edu/counseling-and-psychological-services; 202-994-5300

Safety and Security

In an emergency: call GWPD 202-994-6111 or 911

For situation-specific actions: review the Emergency Response Handbook at:

safety.gwu.edu/emergency-response-handbook

In an active violence situation: Get Out, Hide Out, or Take Out. See go.gwu.edu/shooterpret

Stay informed: safety.gwu.edu/stay-informed

[From the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion \(https://diversity.gwu.edu/resources-0\)](https://diversity.gwu.edu/resources-0)

[Resources on Allyship](#)
[Resources on Anti-Semitism](#)
[Resources on the Black Experience](#)
[Resources on Decolonization](#)
[Resources on Disability Culture](#)
[Resources on Elections and Politics](#)
[Resources on Gender and Sexuality](#)
[Resources on Implicit Bias & Microaggressions](#)
[Resources on Intersectionality](#)
[Resources on Race & Anti-Racism](#)
[Resources for Faculty](#)
[Resources on Safely Protesting](#)
[Resources on Social Class](#)
[Resources on Wellness](#)
[Black-Owned Businesses in the DMV-Area](#)
[Resources to Further Education](#)
[Chosen Name, Gender Identity & Pronouns](#)

