



# *The* **POLITICS** *of* **PUNISHMENT** *Inside-Out Prison Exchange Course*

Department of Political Science at Swarthmore College  
&  
State Correctional Institution at Chester  
Course Syllabus  
Spring 2012

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**Instructor: Keith Reeves**  
**Co-Instructors: Tom Elverson & Karlene Burrell-McRae**

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## **Course Description and Objectives:**

The question of why the United States has become a vastly more punitive society — some 2.3 million Americans are held in jails and prisons throughout this country, at last count — is the subject of this seminar. Just “how and why did this extraordinary policy development take place?”

The aim of the seminar is to provide both a critical and in-depth exploration of the interplay among American electoral politics, public concerns regarding crime, and criminal justice policy. Among the central questions we will examine are: How is it that so many Americans are either locked up behind bars or under the supervision of the criminal justice system? And where did the idea of using “jails” and “prisons” as instruments of social and crime control come from? What explains the racial and class differences in criminal behavior and incarceration rates? What does it mean to be poor, a person of color — and in “jail” or “prison?” How and why does criminal justice policy in this country have its roots in both the media culture and political campaigns? And how might “politics” underpin what is known as “felon disenfranchisement” or “prison-based gerrymandering?” What are the implications for public safety, reentry, and recidivism? And importantly, what are the prospects for reform of America’s incarceration complex?

## **Course Meeting Schedule:**

Class meetings are Wednesday afternoons (1.00-3.30 pm) at SCI-Chester. Outside students will meet in the Rose Garden at noon. Seminar sessions will begin promptly. It is important that Outside Students are on time and flexible and are respectful of SCI-Chester's regulations as well as time and participation of Inside Students.

## **Course Requirements and Grading:**

All students are expected to complete the course readings, attend and actively participate in the day's discussion. Please note that this is a very demanding seminar. Consequently, it is imperative that you keep up with the assigned reading each week. Your grade will be lowered if you miss more than two (2) class meetings.

Each student is asked to prepare 1 (one) discussion question and bring that question to the seminar meeting each week.

The grading weight of each course assignment is as follows:

1. Class Attendance, Discussion Questions, and Active Class Participation: 20%.
2. Journal (Collected at the Mid-Term and Final Break Periods): 10%
3. Two (2) Response Papers: 20%
4. Take-Home Mid-Term Essay Assignment: 25%.
5. Final Group Presentations and Projects: 25%

## **Required Readings:**

There are only two (2) required texts for this seminar:

1. Michelle Alexander. 2010. The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness (New York: The New Press).
2. Walter Mosley. 1998. Always Outnumbered, Always Outgunned (New York: W.W. Norton).

For Inside students, the two required texts have been purchased for you — and importantly, are yours to keep. Meanwhile, Outside students will find the texts in the College Bookstore.

For Outside students, additional required readings have been placed on Blackboard 5, the e-Learning software and course management platform. For Inside students, the required reading has been assembled into individual course packets. These specific materials primarily consist of journal articles, graphs and illustrations, news clippings, judicial cases, and selected portions from other texts. For all students, it is especially important that you consult the syllabus before each seminar meeting.

Lastly, I will often provide additional, illustrative handouts during our seminar sessions. These documents will figure prominently in our discussions, your response papers, the Mid-Term Assignment, as well as the Final Group Projects. As such, you should hold onto them, as you will be expected to consult the handouts throughout the semester.

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**Week 1: Seminar Orientation**  
**Introduction to Seminar Themes and Course Participants**  
**Groups Meet Separately**  
**(Inside Students Only: Afternoon at SCI-Chester; Outside Students Only: Morning at BCC)**  
**(Wednesday, January 18)**

Note: We will utilize our first meeting to get organized, acquainted, and review the goals and objectives of the Inside-Out Program. In addition, we will review the required documentation, SCI-Chester protocols, labeling language, and complete a Pre-Seminar Questionnaire.

**Week 2:**  
**Introduction to Seminar Themes and Course Participants, Continued:**  
**(Both Groups of Students Meet Combined at SCI-Chester)**  
**(Wednesday, January 25)**

- Assigned Reading for Today's Seminar Meeting:

1. Walter Mosley. 1998. Always Outnumbered, Always Outgunned (New York: W.W. Norton), pp. 1-78.



**Week 3: Debrief**  
**What Are Prisons For?: The Discovery of the Penitentiary**  
**and the Emergence of Social Control in America**  
**(Inside Students Only: Afternoon at SCI-Chester; Outside Students Only: Morning at BCC)**  
**(Wednesday, February 1)**

- Assigned Reading for Today's Seminar Meeting:

1. Walter Mosley. 1998. Always Outnumbered, Always Outgunned (New York: W.W. Norton), pp. 79-109.
2. Michael Welch. 1999. Punishment in America: Social Control and the Ironies of Imprisonment (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.), pp. 1-13, 89-128.
3. Marie Gottschalk. 2006. The Prison and the Gallows: The Politics of Mass Incarceration in America. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 18-40.

**Week 4:**  
**Criminological Influences: Why Do People Commit Crimes — and Who Gets Punished?**  
**(Wednesday, February 8)**

- Assigned Reading for Today's Seminar Meeting:



1. Walter Mosley. 1998. Always Outnumbered, Always Outgunned (New York: W.W. Norton), pp. 79-109.
2. Anthony C. Thompson. 2008. Releasing Prisoners, Redeeming Communities: Reentry, Race, and Politics. (New York: New York University Press), pp. 27-44.
3. PEW Center on the States. "One in 100: Behind Bars in America 2008." (Washington, D.C.: The Pew Charitable Trusts).
4. Michael Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi. 2000. "The Nature of Criminality: Low Self-Control," in Robert D. Crutchfield, George S. Bridges, Joseph G. Weis, and Charis Kubrin, eds. Crime Readings, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Boston, MA: Pine Forge Press), pp. 399-403.
5. Robert Sampson and John Laub. 2000. "Toward an Age-Graded Theory of Informal Social Control," in Robert D. Crutchfield, George S. Bridges, Joseph G. Weis, and Charis Kubrin, eds. Crime Readings, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Boston, MA: Pine Forge Press), pp. 404-407.

**Week 5:**  
**Drug War Politics: Crime, Punishment, and the Courts**  
**(Wednesday, February 15)**

- Assigned Reading for Today's Seminar Meeting:

1. Michelle Alexander. 2010. The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness (New York: The New Press), pp. 1-36.
2. Eva Bertram, Morris Blachman, Kenneth Sharpe, and Peter Andreas. 1996. Drug War Politics: The Price of Denial (Berkeley: University of California Press), pp. 32-54).
3. Juan Williams. 2006. Enough: The Phony Leaders, Dead-End Movements, and Culture of Failure That Are Undermining Black America — and What We Can Do About It (New York: Three Rivers Press), pp. 106-124.

**Week 6:**  
**Drug War Politics: Crime, Punishment, and the Courts, Continued**  
**(Wednesday, February 22)**



- Assigned Reading for Today's Seminar Meeting:

1. Michelle Alexander. 2010. The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness (New York: The New Press), pp. 137-248.
2. Walter Mosley. 1998. Always Outnumbered, Always Outgunned (New York: W.W. Norton), pp. 110-139.

**Week 7:**  
**How Ghettos, Prisons, and Victimization Happen**  
**(Wednesday, February 29)**

- Assigned Reading for Today's Seminar Meeting:

1. Walter Mosley. 1998. Always Outnumbered, Always Outgunned (New York: W.W. Norton), pp. 182-208.
2. David Hilfiker. 2002. Urban Injustice: How Ghettos Happen. New York: Seven Stories Press, pp. 17-44.
3. William Julius Wilson. 1987. The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass and Public Policy (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press), pp. 3-19.

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**Spring Break at Swarthmore College, March 2-12**  
**No Seminar Meeting on Wednesday, March 7**



**Week 8:**  
**Consequences I: Felon Disenfranchisement, Citizenship, and the Creation of a “Civic Underclass”**  
**(Wednesday, March 14)**

- Assigned Reading for Today’s Seminar Meeting:

1. Walter Mosley. 1998. Always Outnumbered, Always Outgunned (New York: W.W. Norton), pp. 140-181.
2. Anthony C. Thompson. 2008. Releasing Prisoners, Redeeming Communities: Reentry, Race, and Politics. (New York: New York University Press), pp. 122-138,
3. Jeff Manza and Christopher Uggen. 2006. Locked Out: Felon Disenfranchisement and American Democracy (New York: Oxford University Press), pp. 137-163.



**Week 9:**  
**Consequences II: Prison-Based Gerrymandering and the Prison-Industrial Complex**  
**(Wednesday, March 21)**

- Assigned Reading for Today’s Seminar Meeting:

1. Thomas Bryne Edsall and Mary D. Edsall. 1992. Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company), pp. 215-255.
2. Tracy Huling. 2002. “Building a Prison Economy in Rural America,” In Marc Mauer and Meda Chesney-Lind, eds. Invisible Punishment: The Collateral Consequences of Mass Imprisonment, (New York: The New Press), pp. 197-213.
3. David Schlosser. 1998. “The Prison-Industrial Complex.” The Atlantic (December).

**Week 10:**  
**Releasing Those Who Are Incarcerated, Redeeming Communities**  
**(Wednesday, March 28)**

- Assigned Reading for Today’s Seminar Meeting:

1. Anthony C. Thompson. 2008. Releasing Prisoners, Redeeming Communities: Reentry, Race, and Politics. (New York: New York University Press), pp. 139-153.

2. Keith Reeves. 2011. "Finding a Lazarus," in W. Wilson Goode, Sr., Charles E. Lewis, Jr., and Harold Dean Trulerar, eds. Ministry with Prisoners and Families: The Way Forward (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press), pp. 44-56.
3. Peter Edelman. 2008. "What Do We Do Now?: Toward A Brighter Future for African American Men," in Elijah Anderson, eds. Against the Wall: Poor, Young, Black, and Male (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press), pp. 252-267.
4. Todd Clear. 2007. Imprisoning Communities: How Mass Incarceration Makes Disadvantaged Neighborhoods Worse. (New York: Oxford University Press), pp. 175-208.

**Week 11:**  
**(Work on Group Projects Begins)**  
**(Wednesday, April 4)**

- No Assigned Reading for Today's Seminar Meeting:

**Week 12:**  
**(Work on Group Projects Continues)**  
**(Wednesday, April 11)**

- No Assigned Reading for Today's Seminar Meeting:

**Week 13:**  
**(Work on Group Projects Concludes)**  
**(Wednesday, April 18)**

- Assigned Reading for Today's Seminar Meeting:

1. David Kennedy. 2011. Releasing Prisoners, Redeeming Communities: Reentry, Race, and Politics. (New York: New York University Press), TBA.

Note: In today's session, we will be joined by noted criminologist David Kennedy, Swarthmore College Class of 1975.

**Week 14:**  
**Seminar Conclusion and Closing Ceremony at SCI-Chester**  
**(Wednesday, April 25)**

Note: Welcoming of Guests, Presentations, Group Project Overviews, and Closing Remarks.

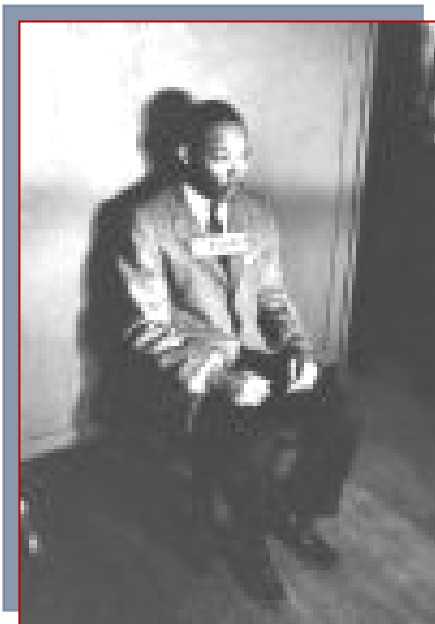
**Week 15:**  
**Seminar Debrief**  
**(Inside Students Only: Afternoon at SCI-Chester; Outside Students Only: Morning at BCC)**  
**(Wednesday, May 2)**

Note: Post-Seminar Questionnaire; Group Discussion of the Inside-Out Experience, and Closing Commentary.

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**Acknowledgements:** I am deeply indebted — and wish to acknowledge — the enormous intellectual and personal contributions of the following Swarthmore College students who assisted in the initial development of this course syllabus during the Spring Semester 2011: Tiffany Barron '13, Cecily Bumbray '12, Anjali Cadambi '13, Jonathan Erwin-Frank '11, Alison Kelly '11, Robert LaMoy (Middlebury College, VT), Gloria Mensah '12, Sable Mensah '11, Summer Miller-Walfish '11, Justin Reyes '13, and Sonja Spoo '13.

Moreover, heartfelt thanks and acknowledgments are extended to members of the Temple University Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program Think Tank at the State Correctional Institution at Graterford — most notably, Tyrone Werts who strongly and enthusiastically advocated for a political science/public policy course during my Inside-Out training in July 2010.



Finally, the seminar could not be offered without the support and guidance of the Center for Social and Policy Studies (particularly, the administrative support of Cathy Wareham), the Department of Political Science, the Registrar's Office (especially, Martin Warner, the College Registrar), and the Dean's Office — all at Swarthmore College.

It goes without saying that this transformative educational experience for all students and instructors would not have materialized without the invaluable support, genuine cooperation, and efforts of the State Correctional Institution at Chester (particularly, Superintendent John C. Thomas, Denise Campbell, and Petterece Jenkins-Terry) and the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program at Temple University under the leadership of Lori Pompa.

For additional information on the Inside-Out Program, please visit: <http://www.insideoutcenter.org/home.html>.

— **Professor Keith W. Reeves**  
**Swarthmore College**



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**An Important Note on Assignments, Schedule, Grading Expectations, and ...:**