Corrections
SOC/CRM 464 (PS)
State University of New York, Cortland

Syllabus
Craig Little           Fall 2008
Office:  Cornish D310        Sociology/Anthropology
Office Hours: M, 10:00-11:30; T, 2:00-3:00      E-mail: littlec@cortland.edu
W, 10:00-11:30; 2:00-3:00, or by appointment  Phone:  X-2470
Section 001 8:30-9:45 T/R Corn D205
Section 002 10:05-11:20 T/R Corn D205

Course Description
This course takes a long-range historical approach to correctional ideas and institutions in the United States and Europe. It focuses on the development of theories and practices for “correcting” dependent poverty, criminality, delinquency and mental illness. In particular, the course examines the changing relationship between punishment and inequality. It also analyzes the reciprocal effects of mass imprisonment on the American economy, politics, families and other social institutions.

We begin with the sociology of punishment. The core questions are: Why do we punish? And what social imperatives influence how punishment has been practiced in various times and places? Next, we turn to American penology beginning with the European historical and philosophical foundations of punishment practices in the American Colonial era. The course then traces American penal history from the Colonial period to the present, elucidating the criminological, political, economic and popular rationales for key transitions and reforms. America’s “imprisonment binge” of the last quarter of the 20th century, into the 21st, concludes our historical survey. Analyses of prisons and prisoners will include the perspectives of corrections officers, prisoners, prisoners’ families and crime victims. Numerous alternatives to incarceration will be explored. The course concludes by proposing a political economy of punishment as a model for understanding the inequalities inherent in American mass imprisonment and the prison/industrial complex.

Course Learning Objectives
By the end of this course students will be able to address the following questions intelligently:

- What is punishment? Why do we punish?
- What are the major sociological theories of punishment?
- What are the ancient and modern foundations of Western punishment philosophies and practices?
- What are the outlines of American penal history, from the Colonial Era to the present?
- How do the major theories of crime relate to various penal practices and reforms?
- How can we best explain America’s imprisonment binge of the late-20th and early-21st centuries?
- What are the major contemporary issues for students and practitioners of American corrections?
- What are the causes and consequences of America’s policy of mass imprisonment?
- What is the American prison/industrial complex and how can it be explained?
Books


Course Requirements

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<tr>
<th>Course Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid Term Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>Final</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>Research Project:</td>
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<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Discussion</td>
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*Mid Term and Final Exams:*

These exams will be comprised of objective (multiple-choice, true-false) questions and essays written in the class. Approximately one week prior to each exam I will give you a list of about six essay questions from which I will ask you to write on two or three during the exam in class. While I encourage you to study for the exam by taking notes, constructing outlines and writing practice essays, you will **not** be permitted to bring notes into class to use during the exam.

*Research Project: Presentation Skills*

With two partners, you will research a “corrections issue” for presentation in class. For examples of possible “corrections issues,” see the list under weeks 12-13 on the Course Outline. You may propose any other issue, in addition to the ones on the list, for my approval. Your presentation will be approximately 15 minutes long with an additional five minutes for questions from your student colleagues and me. I encourage you to use PowerPoint or other audio-visual aids and class handouts to enhance your presentation. You will also submit to me a brief, 4-5 page paper on your corrections issue. The paper will include your PowerPoint presentation (and handouts if you use them) as appendices. The paper should be carefully documented with appropriate footnotes and references. The paper and its appendices must be submitted to me **both** in hard-copy and as an e-mail attachment to me. This is a cooperative project. Therefore, the grade you receive will be assigned to the partners as a group. I will distribute and discuss additional guidelines for preparation of the class presentation, its proper delivery, and preparation of the associated paper. Consistent with the requirements for Presentation Skills (PS) course designation, both you (as the presenters) and the students in the class (your audience) will evaluate your presentation according to criteria provided on the assignment instructions. Criteria for evaluation of your presentation and your paper will be distributed and discussed in class. **Read the criteria and pay careful attention to them. Your grade will depend on it.**
Class Discussion:

During the semester, there will be opportunities for you to participate in discussions with the entire class and in smaller groups. I will be using your participation as an indicator of how well you are keeping up with the reading and thinking about it. At the end of the semester, I will rate your overall class discussion according to this scale: Above Average; Average; and Below Average. You can ask me anytime how I am rating your performance.

Alignment with Conceptual Framework and Organizational Standards

This course covers many of the themes and objectives specified in the Conceptual Framework of SUNY Cortland's Teacher Education program. It covers the Liberal Learning themes of social justice and global understanding and it focuses on Learning Outcomes #1, 2, and 12.

College Policies

Academic Dishonesty: The College policy concerning academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced in this course. See the College Handbook for procedures and possible sanctions.

ADA:

SUNY Cortland is committed to upholding and maintaining all aspects of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. If you are a student with a disability and wish to request accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services located in B-1 Van Hoesen Hall or call (607) 753-2066 for an appointment. Any information regarding your disability will remain confidential. Because many accommodations require early planning, requests for accommodations should be made as early as possible. Any requests for accommodations will be reviewed in a timely manner to determine their appropriateness to this setting.

Attendance

If a class is so poorly taught or the material presented is so trivial as to be not worth your time, I believe you should not be forced to attend under threat of a penalty. I hope neither of these two conditions applies to this course. Regardless, attendance is at your option, without penalty for absence. However, be forewarned! Long experience has shown that students who miss classes tend to do very poorly. The reading in this course is plentiful and challenging. The period spent in class will be repaid many times over in orienting you to the reading and helping you to make analytical connections.

It goes without saying that with class discussion a portion of your grade, failure to attend class will hurt this aspect of your final evaluation.

Important note: There will be an exception to this attendance policy for the classes when there are student presentations. Attendance will be taken during these classes and it will be a factor in your own student presentation grade.
Communication

E-Mail

When you e-mail me you **must** put “SOC 464” in the subject line of the message. If I do not see this, I am likely to assume that your e-mail message is “Spam” and delete it. You can assume that e-mail messages to me will not be read unless they have “SOC 464” in the subject line.

Blackboard

Many of the course materials will be available on Blackboard, including some assigned readings. The course modules on the course outline below correspond to the “Learning Modules” on Blackboard. If you have any difficulty accessing or using Blackboard inform me immediately via e-mail or phone.

Readings and the Exams

The topics for your exam essays will provide ample opportunity to make use of the assigned readings. You should do so. Indeed, my evaluation of your essays will include attention to how well you understand and make use of this material. If you keep up with the reading, attend class and review the materials posted on Blackboard conscientiously, you should do well on the exams.

Suggested Additional Reading: Resource Bibliography

The following books and reports are among the most influential on my thinking as I have prepared this course. Collectively they represent the contemporary intellectual core of American penology.


Internet Web Sites

There are countless useful sources available on the Web. These are among the most helpful for a start.

Bureau of Justice Statistics:  http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/
National Criminal Justice Reference Service:  http://www.ncjrs.org/
Vera Institute of Justice:  http://www.vera.org/
Human Rights Watch:  http://www.hrw.org/prisons/
The Sentencing Project:  http://www.sentencingproject.org/
Links to the “Corrections Industry”:  http://www.corections.com/
# SOC/CRM 464
## Course Outline

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<th>Module</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Read/Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Introduction: Course Overview</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>The Sociology of Punishment</strong>&lt;br&gt;Punishment: What is it? Why do it? The goals of punishment</td>
<td>B&amp;L: Chap. 1</td>
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<td><strong>Sociological Theories</strong>&lt;br&gt;Durkheim: Social Solidarity&lt;br&gt;Marx: Class-Based Regulation&lt;br&gt;Foucault: Strategies of Domination&lt;br&gt;Elias: Civilizing Sensibilities</td>
<td>Blackboard Readings</td>
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<td><strong>Western Traditions of Punishment</strong>&lt;br&gt;Ancient and Medieval (through the 1700s): Private Vengeance</td>
<td>B&amp;L: Chap. 2</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td><strong>American Penal History</strong>&lt;br&gt;Colonial America (1600-1790): Public Justice&lt;br&gt;Federalist America (1790-1830): Early Reforms&lt;br&gt;Democratization and Reform (1830-1880s): Rise of the Penitentiary</td>
<td>B&amp;L: Chap. 3&lt;br&gt;B&amp;L: Chap. 4&lt;br&gt;B&amp;L: Chap. 5</td>
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<td><strong>Progressive America (1880s-1930s):</strong>&lt;br&gt;Positivist Criminology: Biology; Psychology; Sociology&lt;br&gt;Progressive Penology:&lt;br&gt;Reformatories, Parole and Probation&lt;br&gt;American 20th Century Penology:&lt;br&gt;The Rehabilitative Ideal (1900-1960s): Prison Subcultures</td>
<td>B&amp;L: Chap. 6&lt;br&gt;B&amp;L: Chaps. 7&amp;8&lt;br&gt;B&amp;L: Chap. 9</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Breakdown of the Reform Model</strong> (1960s-1970s):</td>
<td>B&amp;L: Chaps. 10-11</td>
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<td><em>Prisoners’ Rights</em></td>
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<td><em>Decentralization: Less is better</em></td>
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<td><strong>Law and Order Punishment</strong> (1980s-present)</td>
<td>B&amp;L: Chap. 12</td>
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<td><strong>Special Prison Populations: Women, the sick and the elderly</strong></td>
<td>B&amp;L: Chap. 13</td>
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<td><strong>Penal Reform and the Culture of Control</strong> (1990s--)</td>
<td>B&amp;L: Chap. 14</td>
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<td><strong>Recapitulation and Review</strong></td>
<td>Review of B&amp;L</td>
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<td><em>Mid-Term Exam (October 2)</em></td>
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<td>October Break, Fri. 10/3-Mon. 10/6</td>
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<td><strong>3</strong> Mass Imprisonment</td>
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<td><strong>Mass Imprisonment in America:</strong></td>
<td>I: Chap. 1</td>
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<td>in America</td>
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<td><em>International Comparisons</em></td>
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<td><em>State Comparisons</em></td>
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<td><strong>The Demographics of Imprisonment: Who? Where?</strong></td>
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<td>8-9</td>
<td><strong>America’s Imprisonment Binge:</strong></td>
<td>I: Chap. 2</td>
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<td><em>Why? Why not?</em></td>
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<td><em>The Criminal Justice Funnel</em></td>
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<td><em>Sentencing Issues</em></td>
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<td>10</td>
<td><strong>The Warehouse Prison: Prisoner’s Perspective</strong></td>
<td>I: Chaps 3-6</td>
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<td><em>Doing Time</em></td>
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<td><em>Super Max</em></td>
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<td><strong>Inside the Big House: Correction Officer’s Perspective</strong></td>
<td>Conover: All</td>
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<td><em>Guarding at Sing Sing</em></td>
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| 6 Correctional Issues: Student Presentations | 12-13 | Corrections Issues: Student Presentations  
Aging Prisoners  
Prisoners’ rights  
Victims’ rights  
Corrections Officers: Working Conditions and Workers’ Rights  
Women as corrections officers  
Prisoner, ex-convicts and voting rights  
Suicide in prisons and jails  
Mental illness among inmates  
Drugs in prisons  
Prison gangs  
Alternatives to incarceration  
Prisoners’ families: prison consequences  
Prison cultural effects: music, fashion and the like  
Private prisons and jails  
Women in prison  
Juvenile corrections (boys or girls)  
HIV/AIDS in prisons & jails  
Prison architecture  
Electronic monitoring/supervision  
Prison communities: Where prisons are built and why?  
Prisoner Release and reentry | I: Chaps. 7-Afterward |
| 7 Punishment and Inequality in America | 13   | Punishment and Inequality in America  
(Bruce Western, 2006)  
Consequences of mass imprisonment  
Labor market  
Politics  
Families and communities  
The crime drop | Blackboard |
| 14 The Correctional/Industrial Complex: | 14   | The Political Economy of Punishment | Blackboard |
| 14 Punishment: A Reconsideration | 14   | Recapitulation and Review | Blackboard |

October Break: 8am, Friday, 10/3; classes resume, 8am, Monday, 10/6  
Thanksgiving Break: Begins 8am, Wednesday, 11/26; classes resume, 8am, Monday, 12/1  
12/5, All classes end  
12/6-12/7, Study Days  
12/8-12/12, Finals