

**Sociology 421**  
**The Sociology of Punishment**  
**Section B1 Winter 2017**

**“I know, up on top you are seeing great sights, but down here at the bottom we, too,  
should have rights.”**

**-Dr. Seuss, *Yertle the Turtle and Gertrude McFuzz***

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**Lectures:** MW 1:00-2:20 TB 129

**Instructor:** Jana Grekul

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**Office hours:** By appointment

**Calendar Course Description:** Historical and contemporary social underpinnings of punishment in the criminal justice apparatus.

**Prerequisite:** The prerequisite for this course is Sociology 225 or consent of instructor.

**Course Objectives:** This course aims to familiarize students with the social meaning and functioning of legal punishment in modern societies, specifically in Canada. It aims to develop a critical understanding as well as a systematic questioning of some of the most current and long-standing practical challenges and moral dilemmas of penal policies and practices. In this regard, several “common sense” realities, as well as “hidden” realities of imprisonment will be deconstructed and critiqued. The purpose of this course is to offer students an opportunity to reflect on the use of punishment in modernity and on its viability in a “post-modern” era.

The theme for the course is: “Tough on Crime: Implications for Punishment, Offenders, Victims, and the Public”. We will explore this theme, critically, analytically, as teacher and students, but also as a team. Using an experiential learning approach, the course format expects students to be active participants in both teaching and learning processes. We will work together to explore and analyze academic work, government reports, policy documents, media reports, and popular culture representations to fully understand what “getting tough on crime” means in policy and practice. Students will learn to navigate and understand academic, political, and lay representations of crime and punishment. Much of the work for the course will take place in smaller groups. Groups will focus on specific themes related to the way punishment plays out in society and will consider the different audiences who participate in discussions and debates surrounding punishment. Themes (as they relate to punishment) may include (though this may change depending on final number of students enrolled in the class and group size): Indigenous groups (Race/ethnicity), Women/Gender, Media/Popular representations and understandings of punishment, Life Behind Bars (for inmates and officers), Gangs, Families/Victims, Mental Health, Restorative Justice. There will be smaller group projects and a final group

project; students are encouraged to use all elements of communication – written, oral, visual, documentary etc. – in creating their final project. In addition to encouraging critical thinking about punishment, this course and its somewhat ‘unorthodox’ structure has three main functions: 1) understand the importance of ‘audience’ in discussions and debates surrounding crime and punishment; 2) prepare students for post-graduation careers by developing attributes that include but are not limited to – critical thinking skills, analytical thinking skills, communication skills, the ability to work in a team/group setting; 3) develop academic skills in terms of research, presentation, sociological, theoretical, and critical understandings of punishment.

**Student Evaluation:** This course is designed to teach students how to work as a team to reach several goals. First, through small assignments each group will learn how to understand how different audiences interpret and react to the presentation and representation of statistics and ideas about punishment. They will also learn how to access and navigate documents presented by and for different audiences or ‘stakeholders’ in the punishment arena. Second, students will, in groups of two or three, provide a critical reading response to an assigned reading. Finally students will produce a final project that targets a specific audience that is invested in and related to punishment (i.e. government, public, frontline workers). In doing this they will not only learn to work effectively together, but will learn how to present this material in a coherent and accessible manner, and will hone their oral, written, and visual communication skills. All of the above will help to prepare them for their post-graduate life.

There are no exams in this course. The student-centred approach means we will actively pursue and develop skills in critical thinking, communication, and the ability to relate to and navigate with numerous audiences together.

Your mark for the course is divided according to the following format:

<b>Work related to Group Assignment</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
1. Group Mini-Assignments (5%)	
Library Assignment (2.5%)	January 30
Semiotics (2.5%)	February 6
2. Group final project and presentation (40%)	last two weeks of class
3. Group Assessments (10%)	
Team members (5%)	throughout the term
Other groups (5%)	throughout the term
<b>Critical Reading Response (15%)</b>	once during term
<b>Attendance and Meaningful Participation (15%)</b>	throughout the term
<b>Reflective essay (15%)</b>	April 12

1. **Mini-Assignments: 5%** Students are required to complete two group mini-assignments, worth a total of 5%.
  - a. **Library Research Assignment**
  - b. **Semiotics Assignment**
  
2. **Attendance and Meaningful Participation: 15%** Students are expected to attend class, to participate fully in all aspects of the course, and will be evaluated on this throughout the term. Attendance in class is mandatory. You will be permitted a total of two class absences without marks being deducted but any unexcused absences after that will affect your participation mark. Excused absences include illness and family-related emergencies. Please advise me of your condition over email before class.
  
3. **Critical Reading Response: 15%** Every day that readings are assigned students will be asked to provide a ‘critical reading response’ to each reading. Students can sign up for these presentations within the first week of class. They will be done in groups of two or three students. The critical reading response should be about 15 minutes and should include a **brief** summary of the reading, and any linkages that may be made to course material and current events. Students should also offer a critical analysis of the reading, can discuss any further questions the reading raises, and should also come prepared with two to three discussion questions relating to the reading for the class. Students will be expected to lead a class discussion relating to the article and the topic or issues the article explores. Students must hand in (individually) their critical reading response. This is a short paper (2-4 pages) briefly summarizing the article and providing a critical analysis of it (the paper should be the basis for the ‘presentation’). Five percent of the totally critical reading response grade will be based on the oral presentation and 10 percent will be based on the written component.
  
4. **Group final project and presentation: 40%** Each student is expected to complete a group presentation. Each group is responsible for one of seven “themes” as they relate to punishment. Groups will work during class time on their projects but are also expected to meet outside of class to work on them as well. Feedback from the instructor and classmates will be provided during classes throughout the term as students work on their projects. In consultation with the instructor, each group will decide on the type of “audience” their presentation will be directed to (government/policy, frontline worker or some combination) and will structure their project accordingly. **All group members are expected to be active and contributing members in their groups.** Near the end of the term, groups will present their projects to the class. Ideally the project should have some relevance for government agencies, non-profit organizations, or other groups that work with/are affiliated with/make up the criminal justice system. The mark for the final project will be based on the presentation, final project, and the entirety of the project development process. I will be providing a marking rubric that more clearly outlines the expectations for the final project/presentation.

- 5. Group Assessments: 10%** Students will be asked to assess the work of their own group members as well as the final projects/presentations by other groups. The instructor will take these assessments into account when individual marks are assigned but the instructor ultimately makes the final decision on students' marks. Peer marking is to be taken seriously as it is an indicator of student engagement with class material.
- 6. Reflective essay: 15%** Following completion of the group project students will be asked to write a reflective essay, approximately 4-6 pages in length. The reflection can be of a personal nature or more academically based.

**Option 1:** Personal reflection. This reflection is meant to be a personal reflection on the nature of the course, the learning you experienced, and an opportunity to honestly reflect on the group work component of the course, including the final project. It is intended to provide an opportunity for critical reflection on the project-based learning process and the overall learning that took place in the course.

**Option 2:** Academic reflection. This reflection must be on a topic covered in class **other than** that focused on by your own group. The essay can be written in the first person. It should clearly illustrate an academic and practical understanding of the chosen theme/topic and should provide critical insight into the topic.

**7. Instructions for all written assignments:**

- Assignments should be typed, double spaced using a maximum font equivalent to 12 Times New Roman.
- Assignments should use standard social science citations in the text (e.g. Garland, 1993: 134).
- Assignments should be in APA or MLA academic format (e.g. with headings and paragraphs).
- You are strongly encouraged to use extensive direct quotes from authors as **little as possible** as they provide little access to your own understanding of the issues discussed. Paraphrasing (i.e. using your own words to describe someone else's ideas or words) and referencing the source is recommended.
- I prefer to have assignments submitted electronically through eclass (or email). Assignments should be submitted by midnight the day they are due.
- You are expected to carefully proofread assignments for spelling and grammar. Marks will be deducted in cases where due diligence is not exhibited.
- Permission to submit assignments after the due date must be obtained from me before the due date, not after the fact.

- Late assignments will incur a reduction of 10% of the total mark per day including weekend days (if permission to submit after the due date was not obtained). No exceptions.

### Grading

Final grades are not curved or scaled. They will be assigned according to the following guideline:

Percentage	Grade	Value	Descriptor
96-100	A+	4.0	Excellent
92-95	A	4.0	
88-91	A-	3.7	
84-87	B+	3.3	Good
80-83	B	3.0	
76-79	B-	2.7	
70-75	C+	2.3	Satisfactory
65-69	C	2.0	
58-64	C-	1.7	
54-57	D+	1.3	Failure
50-53	D	1.0	
0-49	F	0.0	

**Please note:** “Policy about course outlines can be found in [Course Requirements, Evaluation Procedures and Grading](#) in the University Calendar.”

### Academic Integrity

“The University of Alberta is committed to the highest levels of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provision of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at [www.governance.ualberta.ca](http://www.governance.ualberta.ca)) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.” For resources on Academic Integrity students may want to consult the Student Conduct and Accountability website at <http://www.osja.ualberta.ca/en/Students.aspx>

### Learning and Working Environment

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring that all students, faculty and staff are able to work and study in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy, you may contact the student ombudservice: <http://www.ombudservice.ualberta.ca/>

### **Attendance, Absences and Missed Grade Components**

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by email within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult [Attendance](#) of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed in or completed as a result.

### **Recording of Lectures**

Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor as part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and it not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

### **Important General Information**

- Re-writing papers, submitting extra work or any other option to increase grades will not be considered under any circumstances.
- Pleas for higher marks to get into quota University programs will not be heard under any circumstances.
- This will be a classroom in which we all feel free to express our opinions and points of view. When you have the floor, it is expected that you will express your views politely. The classroom atmosphere at the same time will allow us all to question each other and the world around us in a respectful manner. Students who monopolize class discussions are also disruptive to the discussion process.
- The official class list is produced by the third week of term. Instructors are forbidden to add student names to grade sheets. Students not on grade sheets are not deemed to be properly registered and may not submit exams or assignments. It is your responsibility to check your Class Schedule on Bear Tracks to ensure you are officially registered.
- Students requiring assistance for a variety of needs are encouraged to refer to the following website: <https://uofa.ualberta.ca/current-students> which lists support services available to undergraduate students. For example, for concerns regarding exam anxiety and concerns of an academic nature, the Student Success Centre is available for assistance (492-2682); Counselling and Clinical Services (492-5205) provides support of a more personal nature.

## **TENTATIVE LIST OF CLASSES AND READINGS – SOCIOLOGY 421 WINTER 2017**

(This is subject to change based on how things go)

### **Week One: Introduction**

Jan. 9            General Introduction

Jan. 11            What is the Sociology of Punishment? Why Study Punishment?  
 Garland, D. 1990. "The Sociology of Punishment and Punishment Today."  
*Punishment and Modern Society: A Study in Social Theory*. Chicago:  
 University of Chicago Press.

**Week Two: Why Punish?**

Jan. 16            Hudson, B. Chapter 3 – "Retribution"

Jan. 18            Hudson, B. Chapter 6 – "Punishment and modernity: the sociological  
 perspective"

**Week Three: Penal Histories**

Jan. 23            Garland, D. 2001. "A History of the Present". *The Culture of Control:  
 Crime and Social Order in Contemporary Society*. Chicago: The  
 University of Chicago Press. 1-16.

Jan. 25            Power of Semiotics

**Week Four: Setting Up the Projects and Assignments; Project Work**

Jan. 30            Preparing for Group Work and the Assignments; Tools and Resources  
**Assignment to groups; work starts immediately (Library assignment  
 due)**

Feb. 1             Foucault, M. 1977. "The Body of the Condemned". *Discipline and  
 Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage Books. 3-31.

**Week Five: "Corrections" and "Managing Risk"**

Feb. 6             Feeley, Malcolm M. and Jonathan Simon. 1992. "The New Penology:  
 Notes on the Emerging Strategy of Corrections and its Implications."  
*Criminology*. Vol. 30, No. 4: 449-474. **(Semiotics Assignment due)**

Feb. 8             Hannah-Moffat, Kelly. 2005. "Criminogenic needs and the transformative  
 risk subject." *Punishment & Society*. Vol.7, No. 1: 29-51.

**Week Six: Gender, Race, Class and Punishment**

Feb. 13            Razack, Sherene H. 2000. "Gendered Racial Violence and Spatialized  
 Justice: The Murder of Pamela George," *Canadian Journal of Law and  
 Society*, Vol. 15, No. 2: 91-130.

Feb. 15            Group Work

**Week Seven: READING WEEK**

**Feb. 20            Reading Week: No class**

**Feb. 22            Reading Week: No class**

**Week Eight: Gender, Race, Class and Punishment**

Feb. 27 Wacquant Loïc. 2001. "Deadly Symbiosis: When ghetto and prison meet and mesh." *Punishment & Society*. Vol. 3 (1): 95-134.

March 1 Group Work

**Week Nine: Gender, Race, Class and Punishment**

March 6 Struthers, Montford, K. 2015. "Transforming choices: The marginalization of gender specific policy making in Canadian approaches to women's federal imprisonment." *Canadian Journal of Women & the Law*, 27 (2): 284-310.

Kilty, J.M. 2012. "'It's like they don't want you to get better': Psy control of women in the carceral context." *Feminism & Psychology*, 22 (2): 162-182.

March 8 Group Work/Film

**Week Ten:**

March 13 Martel, Joane and Renée Brassard. 2008. "Painting the Prison 'Red': Constructing and Experiencing Aboriginal Identities in Prison". *British Journal of Social Work*. 38, 340-361.

March 15 Group Work

**Week Eleven:**

March 20 Group work/Guest speaker

March 22 Group work

**Week Twelve: Project Presentations**

March 27

March 29

**Week Thirteen: Project Presentations**

April 3

April 5

**Week Fourteen: Project Presentations/Wrapping Things Up**

April 10

April 12

(Reflective essay due)

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"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not." – Dr. Seuss, *The Lorax*.