

Minority Issues in Justice Systems

Sociology 344-01

Rhode Island College, Fall 2014

Wednesday, 4-7:50 PM, Craig-Lee 152

Prerequisite: Any 200-level sociology course

Instructor Information

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Office: Craig Lee Hall room 451

Drop-In Availability: 2:30-3:30 Tuesdays and Thursdays (appointments available Wednesdays)

This course uses the Blackboard course management system. You will not have reliable Internet access on computer or tablet, or scheduled time in the campus computer labs, in order to successfully complete this course. You will also need to check your email regularly.

Course Description

This course considers the historical and contemporary relationships between people of color and the United States justice system. Though a broad swath of issues will be discussed, the primary focus will be on the criminal justice process, and (for reasons that will become clear during the course of the semester) the experiences of Blacks as related to criminal justice. The course will explore the racial disparities that exist in and around the justice system and various structural and institutional explanations for these disparities. Students will also gain practice in creating written work in which they draw on social scientific evidence to support arguments about the causes and consequences of disparities and the appropriate policy responses.

Course Materials

Black. 2010. *When a Heart Turns Rock Solid: The Lives of Three Puerto Rican Brothers On and Off the Streets*. Vintage. ISBN 0-30-745487-8. List price \$17.

Goffman. 2014. *On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City*. Chicago. ISBN 0-22-613671-X. List price \$25.

Mauer & Jones. 2013. *Race to Incarcerate: A Graphic Retelling*. New Press. ISBN 1-59-558541-9. List price \$18.

Papachristou & Williams. 2011. *Blind Goddess: A Reader on Race and Justice*. New Press. ISBN 1-59-558699-7. List price \$26.

Additional reading materials will be made available via Blackboard; students are also encouraged to activate their RIC IDs at the library as soon as possible (via the Adams Library website or the circulation desk). All required texts are available on reserve at Adams Library.

THIS SYLLABUS IS TENTATIVE AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

Course Requirements

This course incorporates a variety of ways for you to demonstrate your engagement, learning, and competency regarding the course material. You will have some flexibility in choosing how and where to deploy your efforts; if you were to successfully complete all possible course assignments, you could earn 110+ points (the cutoff for an A grade is roughly 95 points). Because there are so many opportunities to earn points, most assignments cannot be made up or turned in late. If you experience an unusual or extraordinary circumstance, such as hospitalization, that requires an alternative plan for completing your work, please contact me as soon as possible to discuss this.

- 1) **PARTICIPATION:** You are expected to come on time for every class meeting. If you must miss class, you are still responsible for the material we covered. Part of your attendance is the expectation that you will participate in class sessions by contributing something to our discussions, as this course will be taught in a discussion-based format. If you have significant problems speaking in class, I strongly urge you to come speak to me privately as soon as possible to develop alternative participation mechanisms (such as private meetings or e-mail discussions) so that you can meet this requirement. Remember that there are few stupid questions and that all questions and comments should be made in a spirit of respect for other students and their contributions to the class. Participation will be assessed, in part, using a rubric available in Blackboard. **15 POINTS.**
- 2) **IN-CLASS & BLACKBOARD ACTIVITIES:** At various points during the semester, you will complete in-class and Blackboard activities, graded on complete/not complete or a ✓⁺, ✓, ✓⁻, 0 basis. These include a survey in the first week of class, a proposal for your final paper, and in-class quizzes or group assignments. In-class activities and assignments will not be listed on the syllabus and cannot be made up. Extra, optional assignments in this category may be added during the semester. **10 points.**
- 3) **WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS.** Each week, you will complete a weekly writing assignment. These assignments will take different forms, such as policy memos, analytical essays, or online activities followed by personal reflections. In some weeks, you may have a choice of topics, but all assignments will require you to incorporate ideas, themes, and concepts from the reading. The length will vary, but expect to write an average of 600-700 words per week. Assignment details will be made available in Blackboard a minimum of 10-14 days before each assignment is due; assignments must be submitted via Blackboard before class begins for that week. **4 POINTS PER WEEK, 14 WEEKS.**
- 4) **FINAL COURSE PROJECT.** During the final exam period, you will complete a final course project. You will have different options for this project, including a policy-analysis paper or a multi-media project. More details will be made available in Blackboard. **25 POINTS.**
- 5) **READING:** You are expected to complete all assigned course readings prior to the date for which they are assigned.

Note: federal guidelines (<http://ifap.ed.gov/dpclatters/attachments/GEN1106.pdf>) expect students to complete two hours of work out of class for every one hour of in-class time.

Course Schedule

All readings are due by the time class begins on that date, unless otherwise noted. All assignments have specific due dates and times listed. Readings not in required course texts are available via Blackboard.

September 3 Understanding Race and Racism

- Read: entire course syllabus
- Complete: Blackboard survey (due 9 am Fri Sept. 5)
- Read: Williams, "Foreword," *Blind Goddess* (viii-xii)
- Read: "Introduction," *On the Run* (1-9)
- Get: course texts

- September 10 The History of Race in the Justice System
- Read: Alexander, “The New Jim Crow,” *Blind Goddess* (3-20)
 - Read: *Race to Incarcerate* (2-31)
 - Read: Kennedy, “History: Unequal Protection,” *Race, Crime, and the Law* (29-75)
 - Read: Brown, “History’s Strange Fruit,” *The Color of Crime* (35-52)
 - Complete: Weekly Assignment (due before class begins today)
- September 17 Victimization, Offending, and Social Structure
- Read: Introduction and Chapters 1-3, *When a Heart Turns Rock Solid* (ix-69)
 - Read: Walker *et al*, “Victims and Offenders,” *The Color of Justice* (39-88)
 - Read: Waquant, “Class, Race, & Hyperincarceration,” *Blind Goddess* (30-46)
 - Complete: Weekly Assignment (due before class begins today)
- September 24 No class—Rosh Hashanah (Online class—more on race, crime, and context)
- Read: Chapters 4-7, *When a Heart Turns Rock Solid* (70-209)
 - Take an Implicit Association Test at <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html> (recommended: the Weapons IAT or the Race IAT). **Results are confidential!**
 - Watch: *Basic Black: Jordan, Trayvon, and the Consequences of Implicit Bias*
 - Complete: Weekly Assignment (due Friday, September 25 at noon)
- October 1 Policing Practices I
- Read: Harris, “Profiling Unmasked,” *Blind Goddess* (49-56)
 - Read: Brunson, “Beyond Stop Rates,” from *Race, Ethnicity, and Policing* (221-38)
 - Read: Bergner, “Is Stop-and-Frisk Worth It?” *Atlantic Monthly* 04/19/14
 - Read: Harris, “The Stories, the Statistics, and the Law: Why ‘Driving While Black’ Matters,” *Minnesota Law Review* 84, 265-326
 - Complete: Weekly Assignment (due before class begins today)
- October 8 Policing Practices II
- Read: Chapters 1-4, *On the Run* (9-95 only)
 - Complete: Weekly Assignment (due before class begins today)
- October 15 No Class—RIC Monday (online class on justice system personnel)
- Read: Ward, “Race and the Justice Workforce,” *The Many Colors of Crime* (67-90)
 - Read: Barak, Leighton, and Flavin, “Workers and the Enterprise of Criminal Justice,” *Class, Race, Gender, and Crime* (226-247)
 - Read: Toobin, “This is My Jail,” *The New Yorker* 04/14/2014 (26-32)
 - View: video lecture on Justice System Personnel
 - Complete: Weekly Assignment (due by noon on Thursday, October 16)
- October 22 Courts, Juries, and Trials
- Read: Part IV, “Lawyering,” *Blind Goddess* (85-114)
 - Read: Part V, “Juries,” *Blind Goddess* (115-156)
 - Read: Heffernan, “Jury Nullification,” *The Life of the Law* 06/24/2014
 - Read: Brigham, “The Influence of Race on Eyewitness Memory,” *Handbook of Eyewitness Psychology* (257-81)
 - Complete: Weekly Assignment (due before class begins today)

- October 29 Punishment I
- Read: Nellis, “No Exit,” *Blind Goddess* (159-170)
 - Read: Garland, “New Political and Cultural Meanings,” *Blind Goddess* (171-186)
 - Read: Spohn, “Thirty Years of Sentencing Reform,” from Horney, *Policies, Processes, & Decisions of the Criminal Justice System* (427-501)
 - Read: Ogletree, “Black Man’s Burden,” *Oregon Law Review* 81 (15-38)
 - Complete: Weekly Assignment (due before class begins today)
- November 5 Punishment II
- Read: Perkinson, “Texas Tough,” *Blind Goddess* (190-211)
 - Read: Chapters 8-10, *When a Heart Turns Rock Solid* (209-298)
 - Read: Prologue, *On the Run* (vii-ix)
 - Complete: Weekly Assignment (due before class begins today)
- November 12 Case Studies on Current Issues: The War on Drugs
- Read: *Race to Incarcerate* 33-98
 - Read: Part III, “The War on Drugs,” *Blind Goddess* (65-84)
 - Read: Chapter 11, *When a Heart Turns Rock Solid* (298-336)
 - Complete: Weekly Assignment (due before class begins today)
- November 19 Case Studies on Current Issues: Immigration; Terrorism
- Read: Sampson, “Rethinking Crime & Immigration,” *Contexts* 7 (28-33)
 - Read: Stalcup, “How We Train Our Cops to Fear Islam,” *Washington Monthly* March/April 2011 (1-9)
 - Read: Bayoumi, “American Girl,” *New York Magazine* 08/03/2008
 - Read: Finnegan, “The Deportation Machine,” *The New Yorker* 04/29/2013
 - Read: Sandoval, “Race and Immigration,” *The Modern American* 7:1 (42-58)
 - Complete: Weekly Assignment (due before class begins today)
 - Complete: proposal for final project due Monday, November 24 at 9 am
- November 26 Thanksgiving (No class meeting—online class on voting and politics)
- Read: Ancheta, “Discrimination and Antidiscrimination Law,” *Race, Rights, and the Asian American Experience* (42-60)
 - Read: Yoshino, “The Pressure to Cover,” *New York Times Magazine* (1-5)
 - Read: Uggen *et al.*, “Criminal Disenfranchisement,” *Ann. Rev. of Law & Social Science* (307-22)
 - Read: Weiser and Opsal, “The State of Voting in 2014,” Brennan Center for Justice (1-8)
 - Watch: video lecture on Race, Voting, and Politics
 - Play: the Redistricting Game, Mission 4, at <http://www.redistrictinggame.org/>
 - Complete: Weekly Assignment (due today at 8 pm)
- December 3 Consequences
- Read: Part VIII, “Collateral Consequences,” *Blind Goddess* (215-246)
 - Read: Chapter 6, Conclusion, and Epilogue, *On the Run* (141-162; 195-206)
 - Read: Conclusion, *When a Heart Turns Rock Solid* (336-351)
 - Read: Appendix, *On the Run* (211-262; if time is limited, focus on pages 246-261)
 - Complete: Weekly Assignment (due before class begins today)

December 10 Future Directions

- Read: Part IX, "Solutions," *Blind Goddess* (247-296)
- Read: *Race to Incarcerate* (99-108)
- Read: "Room for Debate: Young, Black and Male in America," *The New York Times* 04/12/2013
- Read: Mauer, "Racial Impact Statements" *Criminal Justice* 23 (19-22)
- Complete: Weekly Assignment (due before class begins today)

December 17 Final Project due, 5 PM

Course Policies

Academic Integrity

All students enrolling in this course are expected to abide by the Rhode Island College guidelines on academic honesty. More information about academic integrity and avoiding plagiarism, as well as RIC policies, can be found at <http://ric.libguides.com/integrity>. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to:

- Plagiarizing written work, including copying some or all of your work from a book, a website, or another student's paper. Think about how you would feel if someone passed off your hard work as their own.
- Using sources without proper attribution. Remember that all claims in a paper that did not spring fully formed from your own head need attribution, regardless of whether or not they are paraphrased, and all direct quotes should appear in quotation marks. If you are unsure how to document sources, please see me or reference the RIC Sociology Term Paper Guide at <http://www.ric.edu/sociology/termpaperguide.php>.
- Turning in research reports that are fabricated or which do not accurately represent the research activities in which you engaged.
- Turning in work completed for other classes without prior permission.
- Working together with other students or seeking help from professionals or peers on assignments which prohibit such activities.
- Destroying course materials or otherwise preventing other students from achieving fully in this course.

You should be aware that I have caught many students who have engaged in academic dishonesty. Cheating successfully is often harder than you think, and you might as well just put your effort into doing the assignment legitimately. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe, and include receiving a 0 on the assignment for the first minor offense, receiving an F for the class for a repeated offense, and report to the Vice President for Academic Affairs at RIC for all offenses. If you feel the urge to engage in academic dishonesty, stop and think about what you are doing, and then come see me so we can work out a plan together to ensure your success in the course.

Extensions, Absences, and Attendance

You are expected to attend class regularly, but I am aware that emergencies do come up and that this class is not the only priority in your life. It is your responsibility to get notes from a classmate (I do not provide notes to students) and to meet with me to clarify what you have missed. If you must be late to a class or if you must leave early, be sure not to disturb other students with your comings and goings. Be aware that repeated absences, even if excused, may imperil your ability to do well in the course, and that you cannot earn participation points (or points for in-class assignments, which cannot be made up) if you are not present. As this course meets **once per week**, lateness and absence adds up quickly and it will be hard to catch up if you miss class.

Unless otherwise noted, assignments are due in Blackboard at specific times as indicated in Blackboard. Assignments that are not posted directly to a Blackboard application (like blog posts) **must** be saved in *.rtf, *.doc, or *.docx (preferred). Blackboard does log your submissions; you can return to an assignment yourself to see if you have submitted it correctly, and I am happy to show you how to do this so that you will not need to email me to see if I have received your work. If unavoidable circumstances require you to seek an extension on your work, I am generally open to providing one **if** you request the extension via email at least 24 hours prior to the due date (unless the extension is due to a major emergency such as a health crisis or death in the family). Blog posts will not be accepted late, but you are still strongly encouraged to complete ALL blog posts, as many involve crucial stages in planning for your final paper.

Course Technology

Students are expected to check their RIC email addresses and Blackboard frequently, at a minimum twice a week before each class meeting. If you primarily use another email account, you must forward your RIC email, as I do use email to disseminate important information about the course. Students are also responsible for being able to access Blackboard. If you are not able to access email or Blackboard, you should seek assistance from User Support Services (<http://www.ric.edu/uss/> or x8886) right away so that you do not fall behind in the course.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability that might interfere with your ability to perform at your best in this course, it is your responsibility to come and speak with me as early as possible in the semester so that we can develop a plan together. All reasonable accommodations will be made. Students with disabilities should be sure that they are registered with Disability Services in order to ensure access to the full range of services available at Rhode Island College. Information about these services and about registration is available at <http://www.ric.edu/disabilityservices/>

Supplemental Services

Writing center: <http://www.ric.edu/writingcenter/>

Academic and Study Skills: <http://www.ric.edu/oasis/>

Counseling Center: <http://www.ric.edu/counselingctr/>

Career Development Center: <http://www.ric.edu/careerdevelopment/>

***Your tuition pays for these resources. **Use them!**

Course Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to meet the following learning outcomes of the Sociology & Justice Studies programs¹:

- ▶ To orient students toward a systematic perspective of the criminal justice system
- ▶ To develop a citizenry educated in the problems of crime and in the administration of justice
- ▶ To develop understanding of the causes of crime and societal responses to it
- ▶ To study criminal justice in the context of larger justice issues and with attention to the total environment in which the system operates
- ▶ An ability to articulate sociological analyses in oral and written form
- ▶ To provide an up-to-date understanding of law, human behavior, and social institutions.
- ▶ An understanding of the contribution of sociology to understanding the social world
- ▶ An ability to apply sociological perspectives to interpersonal and intergroup relations

¹ See <http://www.ric.edu/sociology/degreeList.php> and <http://www.ric.edu/sociology/programJSTD.php>.