

Sociology 6090
Graduate Seminar: Sociology of Prisoner Reentry

Instructor Information

Dr. Nicole Kaufman
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Office Hours:
 Thursday 10:15 AM to 12:30 PM
 Thursday 3:15 PM to 5:00 PM

Class Information

Tuesday 4:35-7:15 PM
Bentley Annex, Room 102
4 credit hours
Pre-requisite: Graduate standing

Course Description

This course examines the emerging sociology of reentry—a term used to refer to the mass return of nearly 13 million Americans from prisons and jails into communities each year, as well as the societal processes that explain and follow from this phenomenon. Mass incarceration and reentry are intimately tied, and so the course with an interrogation of the growth of the carceral state as documented in research on politics, race, and mass incarceration, gender, and poverty. We will reflect on how we picture reentry and on the methodological and ethical arrangements that allow reentry to be visible to social scientists. The main portion of the course covers two types of studies based on their main units of analysis: programs and individuals. Studies we will read build from an array of other subfields, including gender and state theory, the sociology of religion, sociology of race and ethnicity, life course theory, and social psychology. As we move our gaze from the macro- to the meso- and micro-levels of analysis during the course, we will observe how state actors and non-governmental program staff treat people with a variety of experiences in terms of criminal convictions, gender, age, and race and ethnicity. Finally, recognizing movements for decarceration, criminal justice reform, and prison abolition and the current political climate, the course closes with a discussion of future directions for policies impacting reentry. The semester-long project is designed for consumption by a public audience, reflecting the importance of communicating beyond the university about social science research on reentry.

Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Understand reentry in the era of mass incarceration as a phenomenon tied to deep and far-reaching social, political, and economic forces.
- Gain knowledge of substantive and methodological trends in sociological research on reentry.
- Analyze scholarly research based on the strengths and weaknesses of authors' claims.
- Integrate multiple perspectives to understand reentry, including through scholarly studies, documentaries featuring formerly incarcerated people, and web sites of organizations run by and for formerly incarcerated people.
- Synthesize findings of scholarly research, reports, and news articles on a specific topic.
- Improve skills to convey social scientific knowledge on reentry to the general public.
- Write and revise an op-ed on prisoner reentry and submit this op-ed to a newspaper or magazine.

Required Reading

Along with articles posted to Blackboard, the following texts are required. Bring a copy of the assigned reading to class.

Gottschalk, Marie. 2015. *Caught: The Prison State and the Lockdown of American Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. ISBN: 9781400880812.

Haney, Lynn. 2010. *Offending Women: Power, Punishment, and the Regulation of Desire*. Berkeley: University of California Press. ISBN: 9780520261914.

Flores, Edward Orozco. 2014. *God's Gangs: Barrio Ministry, Masculinity, and Gang Recovery*. New York: NYU Press. ISBN: 9781479878123.

Sered, Susan and Norton-Hawk, Maureen. 2014. *Can't Catch a Break: Gender, Jail, Drugs, and the Limits of Personal Responsibility*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Jamie Fader. 2013. *Falling Back: Incarceration and Transitions to Adulthood among Urban Youth*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. ISBN: 9780813560731.

Course Requirements

The course grade is based on the following components:

- Completion of an op-ed project (50% of the course grade).

Students will complete a semester-long project on a topic related to reentry. The final product is a short, fact-based opinion piece, approximately 800-1000 words, that will be submitted to a newspaper such as the *The Post*, *Columbus Dispatch*, or *Washington Post* or a magazine such as *Politico* (note that the recommended length varies with the publication). Revision of drafts, peer review, and familiarity with the target publication is important for a high-quality product. The project breaks as follows:

- **Initial topic selection**
- **Annotated bibliography** of 10 studies and reports relevant to the topic (10%).
- **Draft 1** (for peer review only; 5%)
- **Draft 2** (15%)
- **Draft 3** (for peer review only; 5%)
- **Final draft** plus a recommended headline and **“receipt”** from submitting the op-ed to a newspaper or magazine (15%)

- Completion of weekly summary and reflection papers. (25%)

Papers should provide a summary of authors' main arguments and the evidence used to support these arguments, as well as a critique of what was persuasive, what was not, and why. Connections to class discussions, other reading, and films/film clips shown in class are encouraged.

- Participation (25%)

Participation in seminar discussions and in peer review sessions is essential to our course.

Participation includes signing up during the first class to share your summary and critique of at least three aspects of the assigned reading twice during the semester. Presenters should plan on using a handout.

Participation requires attendance. In the event of an emergency, documented medical condition or illness, authorized university activity, or military service/training, please notify me about your absence so we may accommodate it together. Participation also requires being mentally present. To minimize distractions for all, there is a no phone rule.

Responsibilities and Policies

As a seminar, the quality of our discussions depends on students' preparedness and willingness to both listen and share ideas. Our discussions require an environment of mutual respect. Please notify me if you feel uncomfortable with the way we are addressing the course content.

Academic integrity an expectation in all OU classes and applies in this class. The Ohio University Student Code of Conduct prohibits all forms of academic dishonesty, including: cheating, plagiarism, forgery, and collusion. Students who fail to observe these standards are subject to disciplinary action.

Any student who suspects s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately and provide written documentation from the Office of Student Accessibility Services.

Grading Policy

I use the following conversion between percentage of possible points earned and the final letter grades:

95-100 %	A	74-76%	C
90-94	A-	70-73	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
84-86	B	64-66	D
80-83	B-	60-63	D-
77-79	C+	59 or below	F

Please take 24 hours before speaking to me about a graded assignment or exam score. Assignments are due at the beginning of class. For every day late, I will deduct 10% of the possible points for that assignment.

CALENDAR

1/16 Introduction to the course

The Carceral State

1/23 Gottschalk *Caught*, chapters 1, 4 and 5

1/30 Gottschalk *Caught*, chapters 8, 9, 11, and 12

2/6 Gottschalk *Caught*, chapters 6 and 7

Wacquant, Loïc. 2002. "From Slavery to Mass Incarceration." *New Left Review* 13:41-60.

Visualizing Reentry

2/13 (with a selection from "The Return," de la Vega and Galloway, 2016)

- Martin, Liam. 2017 (online ahead of print). “‘Free but Still Walking the Yard’: Prisonization and the Problems of Reentry.” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*.
- Rumpf, Cesraéa. “Decentering Power in Research with Criminalized Women: A Case for Photo-Elicitation Interviewing.” *Sociological Focus* 50(1): 18–35.
- Pick one organization run by formerly incarcerated people (see list by FIPC Movement on Blackboard) and read web and social media content and relevant reports from this organization.

Research Focused on Programs

- 2/20 (With a selection from “Life Outside,” Negrón-Muntaner, 2015)
Haney, *Offending Women*, introduction and chapters 1 and 2
Op-ed topic selection due
- 2/27 Haney, *Offending Women*, chapters 3, 4 and 5
- 3/6 Haney, *Offending Women*, chapter 6 and conclusion
Annotated bibliography due
- 3/13 No class, spring break
- 3/20 Flores, *God’s Gangs*, introduction and chapters 3 and 4
- 3/27 (With in-class peer review)
Flores, *God’s Gangs*, chapters 5 and 6 and conclusion
Op-ed draft 1 due (for peer review)

Research Focused on Individuals

- 4/3 Sered and Norton-Hawk, *Can’t Catch a Break*: introduction, chapters 2, 3, 5, 6, and 8, and conclusion
Op-ed draft 2 due (*also turn in prior draft and peer feedback)
- 4/10 (with selection from “Pull of Gravity,” Sawyer and Kaufman, 2013)
Fader, *Falling Back*: introduction and chapters 1 and 4
- 4/17 (with in-class peer review)
Fader, *Falling Back*: chapters 5, 6 and 7
Op-ed draft 3 due (for peer review)

Looking into the Future: Reform? Prison Abolition? Something Else?

4/24 (with a reading of the op-eds)

Ciaramella, C.J. 2017. The Fight for Criminal Justice Reform is Moving to the States.
Reason, February 8.

Steinzor, Rena. "Trump-era Criminal Justice 'Reform' Won't Help Stop Mass
Incarceration." *The Hill*, December 19.

Ben-Moshe, Liat. 2013. "The Tension between Abolition and Reform." *Value Inquiry
Book Series* 261: 83-92.

Byrd, Renee. 2016. "'Punishment's Twin': Theorizing Prisoner Reentry for a Politics of
Abolition." *Social Justice* 43(1):1-22.

5/1 Op-eds (final draft) due. Turn in final draft, all prior drafts and peer review feedback, and a
"receipt" of submission to one newspaper or magazine submission. Due at 5:00 PM.

The lectures, classroom activities, and all materials associated with this class and developed by
the instructor are copyrighted in the name of Dr. Nicole Kaufman on Jan. 9, 2018.