

CRCJ 3380: Race, Ethnicity, and Criminal Justice

University of Nebraska at Omaha
Spring 2023

Instructor: Chiara Clio Packard
Pronouns: she/her/hers
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Office: CPACS 218
Office Hours: Mon & Wed 2:30-3:30pm
(*Students must make an appointment*)

Class Time: Mon & Wed 1:00-2:15pm
Class Location: CPACS 221
Course Credits: 3 credits
Prerequisites: CRCJ 1010, ENGL 1160,
and 45 credit hours; OR instructor
permission

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines social science research on the relationship between race, ethnicity, crime, and punishment, primarily in the US context. We start by considering how race and ethnicity are socially constructed concepts that have evolved over time, and yet have had profound consequences for individuals and groups. We then explore how the development of criminal legal institutions is inextricably tied to race and racial dynamics in our society. The bulk of this course will then focus on what social science research tells us about racial and ethnic disparities in crime and punishment and explanations for these disparities. Importantly, throughout the course we will think critically about the concepts of crime and criminality by examining how punishment is not just a mechanical response to crime, but rather a social and political process. We will end the course with an exploration of how we should move forward to address racial and ethnic disparities in the criminal legal system.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students will be able to...

1. Describe how race and ethnicity were central to the historical development of the criminal legal system in the United States.
2. Identify various theories that explain racial and ethnic variation in crime, criminal legal involvement, and victimization.
3. Describe research about racial and ethnic disparities, bias, and discrimination throughout the criminal legal system.
4. Analyze social science research and media by evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of evidence provided by the authors.
5. Use evidence from social science research to build an argument and communicate that argument effectively in original written materials.
6. Engage in discussions about topics related to race, ethnicity, and criminal justice using effective communication skills.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

The Color of Justice: Race, Ethnicity, and Crime in America [6th edition] by Walker, Spohn, and Delone (ISBN 978-1-337-09186-2)

All other readings and course materials will be provided on Canvas.

CLASS EXPECTATIONS AND ENVIRONMENT

On a weekly basis, students will be expected to read ~70 pages of the textbook and supplemental materials and write a reflection, due by Sunday at noon on Canvas. The reflections are intended to help students think more deeply about the topics covered in the readings, so that they are prepared to engage in conversation in class. The reflections also help me understand which topics students found interesting or confusing and which concepts might need more clarification in class. On Mondays and Wednesdays, students should come to class prepared to discuss the material. I will provide some lecture content and clarify concepts for students, but most of the class time will be reserved for small group and class-wide discussions and activities.

It is my goal to make every student in this class feel included and welcome and to create a scholarly environment in which we respect our differences, consider alternative viewpoints, and support our arguments with evidence. However, I need your help to achieve that goal:

1. Respect your classmates, your instructor, and yourself. Provocative ideas and questions are encouraged; do not be afraid to voice your opinion because it may be different. However, intentional insults, animosity, or disrespect will not be tolerated. Remember to discuss and critique *ideas* and never *people* themselves.
2. Do not hesitate to ask questions. We all have different backgrounds and experiences, and your questions may spark conversation or bring to light different perspectives.
3. Never assume what other individuals are thinking or what groups they represent.
4. If someone says something that offends you or makes you feel uncomfortable, I encourage you to respectfully voice your concern in class. These moments can be good learning experiences for all of us. If you do not feel comfortable doing so, please come talk to me about it.
5. We are building a conversation. To that end, learn and use your classmates' names and try whenever possible to respond to the person who spoke right before you rather than saying something disconnected. If you have contributed a lot in one discussion, make space for others to contribute.
6. Refrain from packing up or leaving until class is over.

Finally, we will be discussing some challenging topics in this class that can be emotionally disturbing and triggering, such as crime, sexual violence, police brutality, and drug use. I take students' wellbeing very seriously and I encourage you to come speak to me if you are concerned, would like to share your thoughts, or need support. However, students should also take this into consideration before enrolling in the course.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

1. Attendance and Participation (200 points): Class discussion is at the heart of this course, so students are required to attend class and come prepared to participate in discussions about the assigned readings and other course material. You can miss up to two classes without it affecting your grade. If you miss any additional classes, please contact me. To participate effectively, you must do the readings carefully. I appreciate your contribution regardless of its correctness; focus instead on thinking critically about the concepts, attempting to apply them, and engaging your peers in the conversation. Your participation grade will be based on your contributions to in-class discussions, your participation in in-class activities, and your punctual arrival to class.

2. Weekly Reflections (200 points): After completing the readings for each upcoming week, students will write a reflection and submit it on Canvas by Sunday at noon. These reflections should be 500-700 words. You will not be graded on grammar or structure, but rather on whether or not you are thoughtfully engaging with the readings. You will submit 12 reflections, worth 20 points each, throughout the semester (every week except for Week 12, when your Podcast Paper draft is due) and your lowest two reflection grades will be dropped. Each reflection should include the following:

- 1) *Summarize*: Provide brief 2-3 main takeaways for each assigned reading/podcast, focusing on the key arguments/concepts. These may be in bullet point form if you wish.
- 2) *Reflect*: The bulk of your reflections should consist of, you guessed it, reflection! Consider the following questions: What surprised/confused/annoyed/frustrated you most in the readings? How do the readings relate to your life, other classes, or current events? How have the readings challenged your beliefs or your previous understanding of things? Which 2-3 passages do you most want to discuss in class with your fellow classmates? Which previous readings do these ones remind you of and why? You do not need to answer all these questions in each reflection. You can respond to just one or several.
- 3) *Ask questions* about the readings and highlight concepts or passages that are confusing.

3. Infographic/Social Media Campaign (200 points): Students can choose to create an infographic or a social media campaign for their midterm assignment. The purpose of this assignment is to develop the valuable skill of science communication (i.e., condensing research findings into easily digestible and accessible material for public consumption). Students can pick whichever topic they like, as long as it relates to race, ethnicity, and criminal justice. Finally, students must reference at least 3 scholarly sources, 2 of which can be assigned readings for this course. Students will submit their chosen topic by Sunday, Feb 19th at 11:59pm (20 points) and the final infographic/social media campaign by Friday, Mar 10th at 11:59pm (180 points).

4. Podcast Paper (400 points): For the final assignment, students will use social science research to write the script for and record a 12- to 15-minute podcast on any topic related to race, ethnicity, and criminal justice. This podcast paper should be between 2,200 and 2,700 words (roughly 8-10 pages double-spaced) and must reference at least 6 scholarly sources, 3 of which can be assigned readings for this course. Students will submit a rough draft, a draft for peer review, and the final draft. Here are the deadlines and points for each draft:

- 1) Rough draft of Podcast Paper: Sunday, Apr 16th at 11:59pm (100 points)
- 2) Rough draft of Podcast Paper for peer-review: Sunday, May 7th at 11:59pm (100 points)

3) Final Podcast Paper and Recording: Wednesday, May 17th at 11:59pm (200 points)

GRADING POLICY

A total of 1,000 points are available in this course. Final grades will be assigned according to the table below, which reflects university grade distributions and cut-off points. Final grades will not be rounded up or down. I will try my best to return your graded assignments within one week of submission.

Points	Grade
970-1,000	A+
930-969	A
900-929	A-
870-899	B+
830-869	B
800-829	B-
770-799	C+
730-769	C
700-729	C-
670-699	D+
630-669	D
600-629	D-
0-599	F

Regrading: I grade all your assignments carefully and according to my training and expertise and the quality of your work. However, if you feel a grade does not properly reflect your performance, you can formally object to the grade. Objections must be submitted to me by email *after* 24 hours from the return of your grade and *within* one week of the grade being posted on Canvas (for example, if you receive your grade at 12pm on a Monday March 6th, you have from Tuesday March 7th at 12pm to the following Tuesday March 14th at 12pm to object). Written objections must state what precisely you are objecting to, and your reasons for believing the grade was inappropriate. I will then regrade your assignment as a “blank slate.” Importantly, I reserve the right to *lower* your grade if I feel the submission was too generously graded beforehand.

ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES

Communication: Please email me at any time if you have any questions or concerns about this course. I will respond to all emails within 24 hours during the week and within 48 hours on the weekend. If I have not responded within this time frame, feel free to email me a reminder. However, *please check the syllabus before emailing me with a question to ensure the information is not already contained here.* If you communicate something to me verbally, please follow up with an email so that we both have a record of that communication. These emails are also useful reminders for when I am expected to follow up on a request or question from you.

Office Hours: I will hold office hours on Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:30-3:30pm. To attend, please make an appointment by following [this link](#) and meet me in the CPACS 218 reception area at the reserved time. I encourage you to attend office hours if you have any questions, comments, or concerns about anything related to class. This is *your* time. It is a chance for you to chat with me one-on-one about anything related to the course. Use it! You can come to discuss a course assignment that you are struggling with, discuss a course topic further, or ask about additional research in a certain subfield.

Workload: This is a 3-credit course, which corresponds to 9 credit hours of work per week. Therefore, students should expect to spend, on average, 6.5 hours each week on coursework in addition to the 2.5 hours of class. If it is taking you much longer to complete all the required readings and assignments, please come talk to me.

Extensions: I understand that life happens, and unforeseen challenges or personal emergencies may make it difficult to meet a deadline. Therefore, each student can have one 3-day extension, no questions asked, for any course assignment EXCEPT the peer review of the Podcast Paper. You only get one, though, so plan wisely. In order to claim your extension, you must simply email me by the assignment deadline to let me know.

Late Assignments: Your grade on assignments will drop by 10% for each day they are late.

Extra credit: You have two opportunities for extra credit in this class. First, you will receive 5 extra credit points if you come to office hours at least once during the semester *before Prep Week* with a question about the course content or an assignment. Second, you will receive 25 extra credit points if you attend one of the UNO SCCJ 2023 Spring Speaker Series talks and write a 500 to 700-word reflection paper connecting what you learned at the talk to course material. This extra credit reflection paper is due on Wednesday May 17th at 11:59pm. If these talks conflict with your schedule, email me *within the first few weeks of the semester* and I will provide you with an alternative talk to attend.

Technology: Please respect your instructor and fellow students by refraining from distracting use of technology in class. Students may use computers in class only to take notes and access readings. However, phones must be turned off or silenced and put away. Any inappropriate use of technology in the classroom will negatively affect your participation grade.

Course Feedback: I encourage and welcome your feedback on this course. I will provide you with structured opportunities to provide feedback, such as a brief mid-semester evaluation, and I also welcome more informal feedback at any time in person after class or in my office hours. I truly value your honest thoughts and suggestions on how to improve the course. However, *I understand that the power dynamics between student and instructor may make it difficult for you to approach me if you have any concerns.* Therefore, I have also created [this anonymous survey](#) that you can fill out at any time during the semester to submit feedback to me about the readings, discussions, and/or your interactions with me or your peers. Did someone (student or instructor) say something that made you feel uncomfortable in class? Was an assignment unhelpful or unclear? Was one of the readings offensive or triggering for you? I want to know. My goal is to

make you feel welcome, safe, and heard. If I deem it appropriate, I may bring up the concern in class and take steps to address it.

Preferred Name and Preferred Gender Pronouns: Class rosters are provided to me with students' legal name. I will gladly address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun if you wish. Please let me know of this preference early in the semester so that I can change my records accordingly.

Students with Children: I am willing to make accommodations for students with parenting responsibilities. If that's your case and you expect to need such accommodations, please let me know early in the semester.

Wellness and Health: As your instructor, I value your physical and mental health and safety. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you are facing any challenges that are getting in the way of your work. We can talk through how to move forward together. Importantly, there are resources at the university to support you, including but not limited to:

- Counseling resources: [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) are free and confidential for enrolled students. For more information, contact CAPS at 402.554.2409, H&K 101, Monday – Friday, 8a.m. - 5p.m. If you are in crisis or dealing with thoughts of suicide, please call 402.554.2409 (and press "2" after-hours) to speak to a counselor immediately.
- Advocacy resources: [UNO Victim & Survivor Advocates](#)
- Wellness: [UNO Wellness Coaching](#)

If you need any help navigating these various resources, please let me know. I would be happy to meet with you individually to talk through them.

Writing Center: This course entails a good deal of writing, so you may want to use the UNO Writing Center services at some point throughout the semester. The UNO Writing Center offers free one-on-one consultations with trained consultants to all students, faculty, and staff. Their goal is to help writers improve their writing skills and confidence in all types of writing, in all subject areas, and at all stages of the writing process. For more information about their hours and locations or to schedule an appointment, go to writingcenter.unomaha.edu.

Accessibility and Accommodations: Reasonable accommodations are provided for students who are registered with the Accessibility Services Center (ASC) and make their requests sufficiently in advance. For more information, contact the Accessibility Services Center (MBSC 126, Phone 554-2872, TTY 554-3799 or go to [this](#) website). The ASC recognizes that amidst the rolling transition back to campus, some students may still need to exercise physical distancing. This is especially the case for students who have underlying health conditions or who may be taking care of others who are at-risk for COVID-19. Please contact the ASC if there are concerns about on-campus courses and programming related to COVID-19.

Religious Holidays: Students anticipating an absence or missed coursework due to religious observances should provide reasonable and advance notice to me for the purposes of identifying and developing an appropriate accommodation.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: In this course, you may submit written work in which you make use of information and ideas found in print or online sources. Whenever you use material from another writer, it is important that you quote or paraphrase appropriately and cite the source. Never let it appear that ideas and information gleaned from other sources are your own. The UNO Academic Integrity policy defines plagiarism as “presenting the work of another as one’s own (i.e., without proper acknowledgment of the source) and submitting academic work in whole or in part as one’s own when such work has been prepared by another person or copied from another person.” Failure to cite sources appropriately is plagiarism, a serious academic offense. Plagiarized work will not be accepted. Consequences for plagiarism are up to the discretion of the instructor; they may range, for example, from rewriting all or part of a paper to a grade of F for the course. Students who plagiarize more than once are subject to disciplinary action, which may include expulsion from the university. If you have a question about using or citing another writer’s work, DO NOT GUESS. Check with your instructor or a consultant at the UNO Writing Center. Bring a printout of the original source and your paper to the consultation. The UNO Academic Integrity Policy can be found [here](#).

Fair Use Policy: Copying or recording classes and course materials without the express prior approval of your instructor is prohibited. All copies and recordings remain the property of UNO and your instructor. UNO and your instructor reserve the right to retrieve, inspect, or destroy the copies and recordings after their intended use. These policies are not intended to affect the rights of students with disabilities under applicable law or UNO policies.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Weekly Schedule

Sundays: Reflection due by noon

Mondays: Class 1:00-2:15pm

Wednesdays: Class 1:00-2:15pm

Important Dates

Sunday, Feb 19th at 11:59pm: Deadline to submit topic for Infographic/Social Media Campaign

Friday, Mar 10th at 11:59pm: Deadline to submit Infographic/Social Media Campaign

Sunday, Apr 16th at 11:59pm: Deadline to submit rough draft of Podcast Paper

Sunday, May 7th at 11:59pm: Deadline to submit revised draft of Podcast Paper for Peer Review

Wednesday May 17th at 11:59pm: Deadline to submit final Podcast Paper and Recording

The reading schedule below is subject to revision, if necessary, during the semester.

Week 1: Introduction (Jan 23rd & 25th)

- The syllabus

Week 2: Race and Ethnicity (Jan 30th & Feb 1st)

- TCOJ Chapter 1: “Race, Ethnicity, and Crime,” p. 1-35
- “Race names” by Pamela Oliver
- Podcast: “Brazil in Black and White.” *Rough Translation*, NPR.

Week 3: A Historical Look at Race, Crime, and Punishment (Feb 6th & 8th)

- Hinton, Elizabeth, and DeAnza Cook. 2021. “The Mass Criminalization of Black Americans: A Historical Overview.” *Annual Review of Criminology*.
- Ch 1, “Saving the Nation: The Racial Data Revolution and the Negro Problem” in *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America*, by Kahlil Gibran Muhammad.

Week 4: Myths vs. Empirical Realities (Feb 13th & 15th)

- TCOJ Chapter 2: “Victims and Offenders,” p. 43-94 (*the rest of the chapter is optional*).
- Sawyer, Wendy and Peter Wagner. 2022. “Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2022.” *Prison Policy Institute*.

* *Infographic/Social Media Campaign Topic DUE on Sunday, Feb 19th at 11:59pm* *

Week 5: Social Structure, Inequality, and Crime (Feb 20th & 22nd)

- TCOJ Chapter 3: “Race, Ethnicity, Social Structure, and Crime,” p. 113-143.
- Peterson, Ruth D. and Lauren J. Krivo. 2005. “Macrostructural Analyses of Race, Ethnicity, and Violent Crime: Recent Lessons and New Directions for Research.” *American Review of Sociology*.

Week 6: Policing (Feb 27th & Mar 1st)

- TCOJ Chapter 4: “Justice on the Street? The Police and People of Color,” p. 149-188.
- Beckett, Katherine, Kris Nyrop, and Lori Pfingst. 2006. “Race, Drugs, and Policing: Understanding Disparities in Drug Delivery Arrests.” *Criminology*. (Assigned pages TBD)
- Podcast: “American Police.” *Throughline*, NPR.

Week 7: Criminal Courts (Mar 6th & 8th)

- TCOJ Chapter 5: “The Courts: A Quest for Justice during the Pretrial Process,” p. 197-240.
- Introduction, *Privilege and Punishment: How Race and Class Matter in Criminal Court*, by Matthew Clair.

* *Infographic/Social Media Campaign DUE on Friday, Mar 10th at 11:59pm* *

ENJOY SPRING BREAK!

Week 8: Criminal Courts (Mar 20th & 22nd)

- TCOJ Chapter 6: “Justice on the Bench? Trial and Adjudication in Criminal Court,” p. 251-288.
- Van Cleve, Nicole Gonzalez, and Lauren Mayes. 2015. “Criminal Justice Through ‘Colorblind’ Lenses: A Call to Examine the Mutual Constitution of Race and Criminal Justice.” *Law & Social Inquiry*.
- Liptak, Adam. “Exclusion of Blacks from Juries Raises Renewed Scrutiny.” *The New York Times*.

Week 9: Sentencing (Mar 27th & 29th)

- TCOJ Chapter 7: “Race and Sentencing: In Search of Fairness and Justice,” p. 293-349.
- Cohen, Andrew. “How White Users Made Heroin a Public-Health Problem.” *The Atlantic*.
- Podcast: “Is the criminal justice system truly just? Race and Ethnicity within Criminal Justice with Marisa Omori.” *The Criminology Academy*.

Week 10: The Death Penalty (Apr 3rd & 5th)

- TCOJ Chapter 8: “The Color of Death: Race and the Death Penalty,” p. 359-407.
- Podcast: “Death Penalty.” *Justice in America*.

Week 11: Mass Incarceration (Apr 10th & 12th)

- TCOJ Chapter 9: “Corrections in America: A Portrait in Color” p. 419-433
- Campbell, Michael C., and Heather Schoenfeld. 2013. “The Transformation of America’s Penal Order: A Historicized Political Sociology of Punishment.” *American Journal of Sociology*. (Assigned pages TBD)
- Pettit, B., & Western, B. 2004. “Mass Imprisonment and the Life Course: Race and Class Inequality in U.S. Incarceration.” *American Sociological Review*. (Assigned pages TBD)
- Podcast: “Reframing History: Mass Incarceration.” *Throughline*, NPR.

* Rough Draft of Podcast Paper DUE on Sunday, Apr 16th at 11:59pm *

* Reminder: No Reflection due for Week 12 (below) *

Week 12: Reentry and Consequences of Mass Incarceration (Apr 17th & 19th)

- TCOJ Chapter 9: “Corrections in America: A Portrait in Color” p. 434-441
- Ch.2, “Guilt” in *Halfway Home: Race, punishment, and the afterlife of mass incarceration*, by Reuben Miller.

- Pager, Devah, Bart Bonikowski, and Bruce Western. 2009. "Discrimination in a Low-Wage Labor Market: A Field Experiment." *American Sociological Review*.

Week 13: Youth (Apr 24th & 26th)

- TCOJ Chapter 10: "Minority Youth and Crime: Minority Youth in Court," p. 461-503.
- Ch. 3, "The Labeling Hype" in *Punished*, by Victor M. Rios.

Week 14: Where do we go from here? (May 1st & 3rd)

- Coates, Ta-Nehisi, "The Case for Reparations." *The Atlantic*.
- Gilmore, Ruth Wilson, "Is Prison Necessary?" *The New York Times Magazine*.
- Podcast: "Restorative Justice." *Justice in America*

* Revised Draft of Podcast Paper for Peer Review DUE on Sunday, May 7th at 11:59pm *

Week 15: Prep Week (May 8th & 10th)

- No readings
- Podcast Peer Review

* Podcast Paper and Recording DUE on Wednesday May 17th at 11:59pm *