

**St. Francis Xavier University  
Department of Sociology**

Sociology 451.20  
Winter, 2022

Dr. David Lynes  
Nicholson Tower, Rm. 616

**Selected Topics in Criminal and Social Justice**

**Incarceration as a Social Signifier**

This course examines how the practices of incarceration of people convicted of criminal offenses can be read as an important expression of any society's value system. In the process of embodying this expression, incarceration's significance extends well beyond its role as a signifier by actually influencing what it signifies – the value and justification of the collective exercising authority over its members in specifically punitive ways.

The objective of the course is to understand incarceration as a signifier in this sense by examining the ideological and practical development and history of incarceration in both Europe and North America as formulated by Michel Foucault in his book *Discipline and Punish*. In conjunction with this examination (and to some extent, in contrast to it), we will also look at the roots of the present crisis related to continually increasing incarceration rates around the world but in the United States in particular.

**Texts**

There are two required texts for this course:

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Toronto: Vintage, 1995).

Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York, NY: The New Press, 2012).

The readings from *Discipline and Punish* are assigned according to the listed dates below. Portions of *The New Jim Crow* will be assigned in class. Both books should be available in the university book store, but can also be found in any of the larger bookstores in most cities and can be ordered on line. Used copies may also be available. Most recent (soft cover) reprints of Foucault's book all maintain the original pagination. Any additional material will be made available on line via the Moodle site.

## Evaluation

The course grade will be based on a combination of tests and assignments designed to promote the critical analysis of various forms of culturally available information, conceptions and representations of punishment, incarceration and prisons.

Mid-Term test.....	25%
Essay assignment.....	25%
Final Exam.....	35%
In-class exercises.....	5%
Participation.....	10%

**Important Dates:** The first two weeks of this course are online. In-person classes are scheduled to resume on Monday, January 31, 2022. The Mid-Term test will be held in class on **Thursday, March 3, 2022**. The Due Date for the Term Essay Assignment is **Thursday, March 24, 2022**. The last day to drop second-term half courses is **Tuesday, March 22, 2022**. Students choosing to drop a course should do so online in Banner, in order for the course grade-to-date to be omitted from your official university transcript. The final examination will be held during the regular exam period in April, on the day assigned by the Registrar's Office. This date will be available early in the term.

## Class Format

The course will be taught on line for at least the first two weeks of classes and it will proceed synchronously for this period, in keeping with University policy. This means that we will all be meeting on line together at set times which correspond to the times listed for this course in the university timetable. For this course that is on Tuesdays from 12:45 until approximately 2:00 pm and on Thursdays from 11:15 until approximately 12:30. All times are Atlantic so you will need to account for this if you are in a different time zone. The class format and the speed at which the material is covered will be open for revision as the course develops and depending on the class' progress and facility with the material. However, the aim will always be to pursue the work within the context of open discussions and exercises, in addition to lectures and presentations. Please enter the virtual classroom by clicking on the "Online Classroom" link on the course Moodle page below the "Collaborate" section, at the start of class. Associated with this link are a series of notes and tutorials to help you navigate the process. If you have any difficulties in this regard, be sure to let me know.

**Please Note:** Attendance for this course is very important. The in-class discussions are designed to enhance the appreciation of the text and are essential to the spirit of the course

objectives. However, attendance is considered a prerequisite for, and not the substance of, the class participation component of the course. If you are unable to attend class for any length of time, please let me know and we can attempt to find a remedy. Any absences should be explained.

### **Office Hours**

My office is in Nicholson Tower, Room 616, however this year office hours will be held virtually, meaning I may not actually be in the office and the “meeting” will be on line. The virtual office hours are Wednesdays from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm. Please make an appointment via email to meet during this time. If you are unable to meet on Wednesday, we can arrange an alternate time on almost any other day. Contact me via e-mail to arrange a meeting or to ask any questions.

E-mail: <dlynes@stfx.ca>  
Phone: 902 867-3802

### **Additional Notes and Reminders**

Everyone learns more effectively in a respectful, safe and equitable learning environment, free from discrimination and harassment. I invite you to work with me to create a classroom space that fosters and promotes values of human dignity, equity, non-discrimination and respect for diversity”. Please feel free to contact the Human Rights and Equity Advisor Megan Fogarty if you have questions or concerns about equity in any class or in the StFX Community in general. Megan can be contacted by email at [mfogarty@stfx.ca](mailto:mfogarty@stfx.ca) or by telephone at 902-867-5306.

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### **Reading and Assignment Schedule**

**Note:** Page references listed below refer to Michel Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish*. Readings from Michelle Alexander’s *The New Jim Crow* will be assigned in class.

#### **Readings**

January 18<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> : Part One: Torture: “The Body of the Condemned” p. 3 – 31.

January 25<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> : The Spectacle of the Scaffold” p. 32 – 69.

February 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> : Part Two: Punishment: “Generalized Punishment” p. 73 – 103.

February 8<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> : “The Gentle way of Punishment” p. 104 – 131.

February 15<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> : Part Three: Discipline: “Docile Bodies” p. 135 – 169.

February 21<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup>                      **Reading Week**

March 1<sup>st</sup> : “Docile Bodies” (continued), March 3<sup>rd</sup> : **Mid-Term Test**

March 8<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> : “The Means of Correct Training” p. 170 – 194.

March 15<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> : “Panopticism” p. 195 – 228.

March 22<sup>nd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> : Part Four: Prison: “Complete and Austere Institutions” p.231 – 256.  
**Essay Assignment Due March 24th**

March 29<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> : “Illegalities and Delinquency” p. 257 – 292.

April 5<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> : “The Carceral” p. 293 – 308

April 12<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> : Foucault: Theory and Practice

**Final Exam: TBA**