RACE, CRIME & LAW
Summer 2018 (Session I)
Tuesday/Thursday, 1:00 - 4:10PM
318 Hamilton Hall

Instructor: Brittany Fox-Williams
Preferred Pronouns: she/her/hers
Email: bnf2102@columbia.edu
Office: 302 Philosophy Hall
Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday, 10:30AM - 12:00PM (sign up here)

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course critically examines the interplay between race, crime, and the administration of justice in the United States through a sociological lens. From policing and mass incarceration to gun violence and drug offenses, matters of race and crime garner significant attention from the media, policy makers, and the public. What is crime and how might its definition be socially constructed? Are their racial and ethnic differences in criminal involvement and what explains these differences? How do race and ethnicity shape the criminal justice system experience and response? How does inequality intersect with these issues? We will address these questions and more to learn about the state of knowledge on the relationship between race, crime, and law.

Students will engage theoretical and empirical research about the ways in which race and ethnicity are linked to crime, victimization, and criminal justice processing. This course surveys a range of topics including theories of crime and deviance, crime measurement, urban inequality, policing and courts, incarceration and reentry, gender and social control, juvenile justice, and the American culture of violence. Each class will proceed in two parts. The first part will be a lecture and the second part will be a seminar-style discussion.

Course Objectives:
In the course, we will:
- Develop a nuanced understanding of sociological theories and discourses on crime
- Examine how the implementation of the law can perpetuate social inequality
- Explore contemporary crime and justice controversies relating to topics such as policing, mass incarceration, juvenile justice, and reproductive rights
- Apply the ideas and concepts learned in this course to our observation of a criminal courtroom and our analysis of the American legacy of violence

Expectations:
In order to get the most out of this course, students are expected to:
- Read assigned material
- Attend class regularly and be on time
- Think critically about ideas raised during class and in the course materials
- Actively participate and engage in respectful discussion
- Submit assignments on time and proofread all assignments
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance & class participation: 10pts
2. Discussion questions: 20pts
3. Leading discussion: 20pts
4. Court observation memo: 20pts
5. Final exam: 30pts

Total: 100pts

1. Attendance & Participation (10pts): Attendance is essential, especially since we will be covering a lot of material in a short period of time. Students are expected to attend all scheduled class meetings and to be on time. Your active participation in class is also strongly encouraged. Please complete assigned readings before each class and come prepared to discuss them. Absences will negatively impact your participation grade unless you have a documented personal emergency, in which case you should provide a note from your advising dean or your physician. If you are absent, you are still responsible for missed material and making arrangements to turn in any assignments. You are encouraged to get notes from at least two people who were in class and come to office hours for clarification if needed.

2. Discussion Questions (20pts): From May 24 – June 26, students are required to submit one discussion question before each class meeting that may be used to advance our discussion of course readings (10 questions total). Questions are due by 9AM on the day of class. Please submit questions in the “Assignments” section of CourseWorks. Questions should reflect a comprehension of the central arguments in the reading and an understanding of the larger themes of the course. Issues of race, crime & law are all around us, so you’re welcome to reference relevant contemporary events in your questions. Excellent questions will be thought provoking and inspire healthy debate.

3. Leading Discussion (20pts): For each class meeting, one student will be responsible for starting our discussion with a presentation summarizing the assigned readings (about 15 minutes). You will be responsible for: (1) highlighting the main themes and conclusions from the readings; and (2) posing 3 questions for discussion (including the discussion question you submitted for that day). You are welcome to use handouts, slides, or other learning aids during your presentation. Additional guidelines will be provided.

4. Court Observation Memo (20pts): On May 31, we will visit the Manhattan Criminal Court and observe court proceedings for approximately two hours. Students will complete a reaction memo about the experience. You will provide a thick description and reflection of your visit. Please bring a small notebook to jot down your observations. Memos should be 3-4 pages (double spaced, one-inch margins, 12-point Times New Roman font). A hard copy of this memo is due at the beginning of class on June 7. Additional guidelines will be provided.

5. Final Exam (30pts): The final will be a take-home exam and you are encouraged to consult course material. It will have an essay format. The exam will cover concepts and topics explored in the lectures and readings. It will be distributed at the end of class on June 26. The exam is due by 4:10PM on June 28. More information about the exam and the submission process will be provided.

*An opportunity for extra credit will be announced midway through the course.*
COURSE POLICIES

• **Disability Accommodations:** If you are a student with a disability and have a Disability Services-certified ‘Accommodation Letter’ please contact me at the beginning of the course (preferably by May 29) to confirm your accommodation needs. If you believe that you might have a disability that requires accommodation, you should contact Disability Services at 212-854-2388 or disability@columbia.edu.

• **Laptops and Other Electronics:** Laptops and tablets may be used during lecture for note-taking purposes only. Please avoid using the internet or email. We will rely on the honor code for the reinforcement of this rule. However, I reserve the right to restrict laptops and tablets based on internet abuse. After the lecture portion of class, you will be asked to close your laptop to encourage a more vibrant discussion. All cell phones must have the ringer disabled. No phones are to be visible during class time.

• **Late Assignments:** Assignments should be submitted on the date and time specified. Discussion questions will not be accepted after 9:15AM. Court Observation Memos and Final Exams will be lowered by a third of a grade for every day late. For example, if your memo or exam would receive a B+, it will get a B if you are one day late, a B- if you are two days late, and so on. Extensions will be granted only in the case of a documented emergency or illness. If you have a personal emergency or are ill, you should provide a note from your advising dean or your physician.

• **Office Hours:** I am happy to meet with you individually to answer questions that you might not have the opportunity to ask during class. Also, I would like to get to know you, to learn more about your interests, and to see how I can best help you. The best method for this is my office hours and I recommend that you sign up for a 15-minute appointment. I will also try to stay a few minutes after each class. If you have “small” questions, then this will be a great time to speak with me. I would like you to do well in my course, so please do not hesitate to ask questions and to get feedback on your work. My office hours are on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:30AM - 12:00PM. To reserve an office hours appointment, sign up here.

• **Inclusive Teaching Policy:** Discussions require that students be willing to freely participate. It is my goal as the instructor to foster a learning environment where all members of the class can share their ideas and where we can interrogate those ideas for learning purposes. We should be mindful that some of the topics covered in this course are sensitive and may elicit strong feelings. However, we must still be willing to honestly and eagerly engage the course material.

We must remain respectful of divergent opinions and viewpoints. However, that does not mean you have to agree with everyone, including the instructor. Differences in opinion can provide an opportunity to look at situations from someone else’s perspective, which can aid in our intellectual growth. Be mindful that offensive remarks and personal attacks that demean and belittle other students will not be tolerated. **Criticize ideas, not individuals.** With that said, if you are disturbed by something said in class, please contact me so that we can resolve it.

• **Faculty Statement on Academic Integrity:** The intellectual venture in which we are all engaged requires of faculty and students alike the highest level of personal and academic
integrity. As members of an academic community, each one of us bears the responsibility to participate in scholarly discourse and research in a manner characterized by intellectual honesty and scholarly integrity.

Scholarship, by its very nature, is an iterative process, with ideas and insights building one upon the other. Collaborative scholarship requires the study of other scholars' work, the free discussion of such work, and the explicit acknowledgement of those ideas in any work that inform our own. This exchange of ideas relies upon a mutual trust that sources, opinions, facts, and insights will be properly noted and carefully credited.

In practical terms, this means that, as students, you must be responsible for the full citations of others' ideas in all of your research papers and projects; you must be scrupulously honest when taking your examinations; you must always submit your own work and not that of another student, scholar, or internet agent.

Any breach of this intellectual responsibility is a breach of faith with the rest of our academic community. It undermines our shared intellectual culture, and it cannot be tolerated. Students failing to meet these responsibilities should anticipate being asked to leave Columbia.

For more information on academic integrity at Columbia, students may refer to the Columbia University Undergraduate Guide to Academic Integrity

*If you have any questions about how to correctly cite sources in your work, please visit me during office hours.*

**REQUIRED TEXTS**


*These texts can be purchased at Book Culture. The Loury (2008) text is also available as an e-book via CLIO [here](#). Other readings will be available in the “Files” section of CourseWorks. If you’re unable to afford the books, please let me know as soon as possible.*
# COURSE SCHEDULE & READINGS

## Week 1

**Tuesday, May 22: What is Race?**

**Thursday, May 24: Racial Inequality in the US**

*This week read *All God’s Children*: pp. xiii-67

## Week 2

**Tuesday, May 29: Theories of Crime and Deviance**

**Thursday, May 31: Measuring Crime in the Social World**

*Manhattan Criminal Court Visit*

*This week read *All God’s Children*: pp. 71-128

## Week 3

**Tuesday, June 5: Race, Immigration and Crime**

**Thursday, June 7: Neighborhoods and Urban Inequality**

*Court Observation Memo Due*

*This week read All God’s Children: pp. 131-203

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**Week 4**

**Tuesday, June 12: Policing and Surveillance**


• Bell, Monica. 2016. “What Happens When Low-Income Mothers Call the Police.” Talk Poverty, March 10. Access it here.

**Thursday, June 14: Courts and Legal Actors**


*This week read All God’s Children: pp. 204-262

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**Week 5**

**Tuesday, June 19: Incarceration and Reentry**

• Loury, Glenn C. 2008. Race, Incarceration, and American Values. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Read all chapters (pp. 3-84)


**Thursday, June 21: Gender and Social Control**


*This week read All God’s Children: pp. 263-331
Week 6

Tuesday, June 26: Youth Violence and Juvenile (In)Justice


*Class Discussion of All God’s Children*

Thursday, June 28: *Final Exam Due at 4:10PM*