

**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

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**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 there 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 course material
- Attend class regularly and be on time
- Think critically about ideas raised during class and in the course material
- Actively participate and engage in respectful discussion
- Submit assignments on time and proofread work

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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

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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 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. 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 to June 26, students are required to submit one discussion question before each class (10 questions total). Your questions will be used to advance our discussion of course readings. 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. Examples will be provided.
- 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 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 28. The exam is due by 4:10PM on July 3. More information about the exam and submission process will be provided.

## 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, please contact Disability Services at (212) 854-2388 or [disability@columbia.edu](mailto: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. 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. Please step out of the classroom to take an emergency call.
- **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 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. 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

1. Alexander, Michelle. 2012. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York, NY: The New Press.
2. Butterfield, Fox. 1995. *All God's Children: The Bosket Family and the American Tradition of Violence*. New York: Avon.
3. Loury, Glenn C. 2003. *The Anatomy of Racial Inequality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
4. Rios, Victor M. 2011. *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys*. New York, NY: New York University Press.

These texts are available for purchase at Book Culture. The Loury (2003) text is also available as an e-book on CLIO [here](#). Other readings are 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**

- Loury, Glenn C. (2003). *The Anatomy of Racial Inequality*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Read chapters 1-4 (pp. 1-107)

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

### Week 2

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

- Hagan, John. 1991. *Crime and Disrepute*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications. Read chapters 1-2 (pp. 1-58)
- Becker, Howard S. 1966. *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*. New York, NY: The Free Press. Read chapter 1 (pp. 1-18)

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

- Du Bois, W.E.B. 1995. *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press. Read the Introduction (pp. ix-xxxvi) and chapter 13 (pp. 235-68)
- Muhammad, Khalil Gibran. 2011. *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime and the Making of Modern Urban America*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Read the Introduction (pp. 1-14)

\*Manhattan Criminal Court Visit\*

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

### Week 3

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

- Sampson, Robert J. and Lydia Bean. 2006. "Cultural Mechanisms and Killing Fields: A Revised Theory of Community-Level Racial Inequality." Pp. 8-36 in *The Many Colors of Crime: Inequalities of Race, Ethnicity, and Crime in America*. New York, NY: NYU Press.
- Russell-Brown, Katheryn. 2008. *The Color of Crime*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: NYU Press. Read chapter 7 (pp. 128-48).
- Sampson, Robert J. 2007. "Rethinking Crime and Immigration." *Contexts* 7(1):28-33.

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

- Pattillo, Mary E. 1998. "Sweet Mothers and Gangbangers: Managing Crime in a Black Middle-Class Neighborhood." *Social Forces* 76(3):747-74.
- Sampson, Robert J. and William Julius Wilson. 1995. "Toward a Theory of Race, Crime, and Urban Inequality." Pp. 37-56 in *Crime and Inequality*, edited by J. Hagan and R. Peterson. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

- Anderson, Elijah. 1994. “The Code of the Streets.” *The Atlantic*, May. Access it [here](#).

\*Court Observation Memo Due\*

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

Week 4
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**Tuesday, June 12: Courts and Legal Actors**

- Clair, Matthew and Alex S. Winter. 2016. “How Judges Think about Racial Disparities: Situational Decision-Making in the Criminal Justice System.” *Criminology* 54(2):332–59.
- Provine, Doris Marie. 2006. “Creating Racial Disadvantage: The Case of Crack Cocaine.” Pp. 277-294 in *The Many Colors of Crime: Inequalities of Race, Ethnicity, and Crime in America*. New York, NY: NYU Press.
- Harris, Alexes. 2016. *Monetary Sanctions as Punishment for the Poor*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation. Read chapter 1 (pp. 1-17).

**Thursday, June 14: Policing and Surveillance**

- Kelling, George L. and James Q. Wilson. 1982. “Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety.” *The Atlantic*, March. Access it [here](#).
- Bell, Monica. 2016. “What Happens When Low-Income Mothers Call the Police.” *Talk Poverty*, March 10. Access it [here](#).
- Jacques paper Jacques, Scott. 2017. “‘A Run-in with the Cops Is Really Few and Far Between’: Negative Evidence and Ethnographic Understanding of Racial Discrimination by Police.” *Sociological Focus* 50(1):7–17.

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

Week 5
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**Tuesday, June 19: Roots of Mass Incarceration**

- Alexander, Michelle. 2012. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York, NY: The New Press. Read chapters 1-3 (pp. 1-139).

**Thursday, June 21: Reentry with a Record**

- Pager, Devah. 2003. “The Mark of a Criminal Record.” *American Journal of Sociology* 108(5):937–75.
- Greene, Joss T. 2018. “Categorical Exclusions: How Racialized Gender Regulation Reproduces Reentry Hardship.” *Social Problems* doi: 10.1093/socpro/spy023; pp. 1-16

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

Week 6
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**Tuesday, June 26: Gender and Social Control**

- Roberts, Dorothy E. 1997. *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty*. New York, NY: Vintage. Read chapter 4 (pp. 150-201)

- Matthew Desmond and Nicol Valdez. 2013. “Unpolicing the Urban Poor: Consequences of Third-Party Policing for Inner-City Women.” *American Sociological Review* 78(1):117–41.

**Thursday, June 28: Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice**

- Rios, Victor M. 2011. *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys*. New York, NY: New York University Press. Read chapters 1-4 (pp. 1-94)
- Gonnerman, Jennifer. 2014. “Three Years on Rikers Without Trial.” *The New Yorker*. Access it [here](#).

\*Class Discussion of *All God's Children*\*

**Tuesday, July 3: Final Exam Due at 4:10PM**