

ETHN 189 Race, Class, Punishment

Spring 2008

Dr. Randall Williams

Office Hours: Tu/Th 130-300

Office Location: SSB 249

Contact Information: 619-917-7283 or 213-487-2939

Email: Williams.randall@gmail.com

Course Description

In this course we will examine some of the most influential attempts to understand the politics of incarceration and to advance the struggle for the abolition of the prison system. We will focus on the work of three activist-intellectuals – Michel Foucault, Angela Davis and Ruth Gilmore – with a particular emphasis on the theory of power that each articulates through their analysis of the institution of the prison. In this way, while our object of inquiry is the prison system, our study is more broadly directed towards the analysis of relations of power in the context of contemporary capitalist globalization.

Course Requirements

Students must do all the assigned readings and attend lectures. More than two absences will lower your grade (one letter grade per excessive absence). There will be a mid-term exam and a final paper (8-10 pages).

Course Materials

1. Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?*
2. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*
3. Ruth Gilmore, *Golden Gulag*
[all books are available at Groundwork Books]
4. Course Reader [R]
[available through University Readers]

Grading Policy

The final course grade will be based on the following criteria:

Mid-Term	40%
Final Research paper	40%
Participation	20% (attendance, quizzes, classroom discussion)

Syllabus

Week 1

- 4/1 Introduction
4/3 Donziger, “Crime and Policy” and “Prisons” [R]

Week 2

- 4/8 Mauer, “The Incarceration ‘Experiment’” [R]
4/10 Davis, *Are Prison Obsolete?*, pp. 9-39

Week 3

- 4/15 Davis, pp. 40-83
4/17 Davis, pp. 84-115

Week 4

- 4/22 Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, pp. 3-72
4/24 Foucault, pp. 135-194

Week 5

- 4/29 Foucault, pp. 195-308
5/1 Linebaugh, “Jack Sheppard and the Common Discourse of the Whole Nation” [R]

Week 6

- 5/6 MID-TERM
5/8 James, “Erasing the Spectacle of Racialized State Violence” [R]
Foucault, “On Attica” [R]

Week 7

- 5/13 Oshinsky, “American Siberia” [R]
5/15 Parenti, “Nixon’s Splendid Little War” [R]

Week 8

- 5/20 Parenti, “From Crisis to Rollback” and “A War for All Seasons” [R]
5/22 Gilmore, *Golden Gulag*, pp. 30-86

Week 9

- 5/27 Gilmore, pp. 87-180
5/29 Gilmore, pp. 181-251

Week 10

- 6/3 Discussion
6/5 Discussion

Research Paper due by 3pm on June 9