

CLJ 540 - Processes and Institutions

Rahim Kurwa (rak@uic.edu)

Thursdays, 4-6:50pm

Office Hours by appointment

Draft as of Jan 6, 2022

Syllabus Contents

[Course Description](#)

[Course Logistics](#)

[Assignments](#)

[Course Schedule](#)

[Week 1 - January 13: Introduction](#)

[Week 2 - January 20: American Political Development](#)

[Week 3 - January 27: American Political Development](#)

[Week 4 - February 3: Early Histories of Policing and Punishment](#)

[Week 5 - February 10: Early Histories of Policing and Punishment](#)

[Week 6 - February 17: Open / Break](#)

[Week 7 - February 24: 20th Century History](#)

[Week 8 - March 3: 20th Century History](#)

[Week 9 - March 10: Courts](#)

[Week 10 - March 17: Prisons](#)

[Week 11 - March 24: Spring Break](#)

[Week 12 - March 31: Prisons](#)

[Week 13 - April 7: Re-entry / Carceral Citizenship](#)

[Week 14 - April 14: A Framework for Understanding the Border](#)

[Week 15 - April 21: Institutions of Border Policing](#)

[Week 16 - April 28: Informal Final Presentations, Reflections, Celebrations, and Summer Reading](#)

Course Description

This course seeks to understand key institutions of the criminal legal system: police, courts and prisons. This course will approach these institutions from a broad and historical perspective, trying to understand national characteristics, structures, and trends that contextualize, produce, and explain these institutions. This approach will blend with and transition into a sharper focus on case studies of police, courts, and prisons.

Course Logistics

This course was originally scheduled to meet in person, in Behavioral Sciences Building 119. Due to the pandemic, the first two weeks will be [online](#). Depending on the status of the pandemic and the preferences of students in the course, we will decide collectively whether to meet in person beginning in week 3, or continue remotely. Regardless of how we meet, students are expected to be highly engaged in class discussions as we attempt to collectively produce a thorough understanding of each week's material. Students will rotate between weekly roles, writing a précis that summarizes the reading, finding scholarly work that grounds or extends the current reading, identifying key quotes to discuss, and raising questions to think through. All materials for this course will be located in this Google Folder: [CLJ 540 - Spring 2022](#).

Assignments

1. Students will rotate performing the following weekly tasks. These items will be added to a collaborative google document for the week's readings.
 - a. Précis and presentation
 - i. A précis is a summary that contains the essential details about theory, method, and findings. It is not a critique. Aim for a 4-6 page, single-spaced précis. Précis should be added to the google doc by 9:00 a.m. Thursday morning.
 - ii. Present the book to the class as a grounding for the week's discussion.
 - b. Annotated Bibliography
 - c. Questions or quotes
 - d. In-class note takers
2. Final Paper (roughly 5,000 words, due at the end of the semester)
 - i. Put books that are not formal studies of institutions into conversation with books that are.
 - ii. Or extend the frameworks beyond those we formally outline.
 - iii. Or extend the institutions beyond those we read in class.
 - iv. Or set up a unique writing project with me that serves your graduate school progress while engaging in course material

Course Schedule

Week 1 - January 13: Introduction

Google Meet link: <https://meet.google.com/fzz-vdga-wme>

Optional Readings:

Disciplinary Innovation: Carcerality, Captivity, and Historicizing the Carceral State*

Brittany Friedman, University of Southern California ([ASC newsletter link](#))

[Editorial: Berkeley's School of Criminology, 1950-1976](#)

[UC Berkeley: The Closure of the School of Criminology, 1976 - FoundSE](#)

Week 2 - January 20: American Political Development

Google Meet link: <https://meet.google.com/fzz-vdga-wme>

Optional Resources:

Aziz Rana - The Two Faces of American Freedom, Intro and Chapters 1 and 2

Audio: [Universalizing American Liberty with Aziz Rana - The Dig](#)

Week 3 - January 27: American Political Development

Aziz Rana - The Two Faces of American Freedom, Chapters 3 and 4, and Conclusion

Week 4 - February 3: Early Histories of Policing and Punishment

Malka, Adam. The Men of Mobtown: Policing Baltimore in the Age of Slavery and Emancipation. UNC Press Books, 2018.

Audio: [American Police : Throughline : NPR](#)

Week 5 - February 10: Early Histories of Policing and Punishment

Sarah Haley - No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow modernity.

Week 6 - February 17: Open / Break

If we are behind on the first 5 weeks of material, we'll use this week to catch up. And if we're on pace, this week will be a break. Either way, this week will not include any new responsibilities.

Week 7 - February 24: 20th Century History

Bonnet, François. The Upper Limit: How low-wage work defines punishment and welfare. University of California Press, 2019.

Debate: 1) <https://catalyst-journal.com/2019/12/the-economic-origins-of-mass-incarceration> 2) <https://spectrejournal.com/the-racial-economics-of-mass-incarceration/>

Week 8 - March 3: 20th Century History

Murakawa, Naomi. *The first civil right: How liberals built prison America*. Oxford University Press, 2014.

Soss, Joe, and Vesla Weaver. "Police are our government: Politics, political science, and the policing of race–class subjugated communities." *Annual Review of Political Science* 20 (2017): 565-591.

Beckett, K., & Murakawa, N. (2012). Mapping the shadow carceral state: Toward an institutionally capacious approach to punishment. *Theoretical Criminology*, 16(2), 221-244.

Week 9 - March 10: Courts

Nicole Gonzales Van Cleve - Crook County: Racism and Injustice in America's Largest Criminal Court

Clair, Matthew, and Amanda Woog. "Courts and the abolition movement." *California Law Review* 110.1 (2022).
(<https://www.californialawreview.org/print/courts-and-the-abolition-movement/>)

Week 10 - March 17: Prisons

Ruth Wilson Gilmore - Golden Gulag

Week 11 - March 24: Spring Break

Week 12 - March 31: Prisons

Ruth Wilson Gilmore - Golden Gulag (continued)

Week 13 - April 7: Re-entry / Carceral Citizenship

Arresting Citizenship: The Democratic Consequences of American Crime Control
Amy E. Lerman and Vesla M. Weaver

Week 14 - April 14: A Framework for Understanding the Border

Greg Grandin - The End of the Myth: From the Frontier to the Border Wall in the Mind of America

Week 15 - April 21: Institutions of Border Policing

Kelly Lytle Hernandez - Migra! A History of the US Border Patrol

Week 16 - April 28: Informal Final Presentations, Reflections, Celebrations, and Summer Reading

To end the semester, I'd like everyone to give an informal overview of their projects, and for us to celebrate each other's work over the course of the semester. Finally, I'd like everyone to brainstorm one or two pieces of summer reading to assign to the class - what feels important, what did we miss, what is on the horizon, whatever it may be - put a copy or link to it in the google drive and tell us a bit about it. It can be any format, academic peer reviewed or not.