Course Info:  
Course no:  SW 849-001  
Title:  Punishment and Social Theory  
Term:  Fall 2015  
Times/Dates:  Mon 9:00 am to 12 noon, Sept. 14- Dec. 14, 2015  
Room:  SSWB 2609  

Instructor:  
Reuben Jonathan Miller, PhD, AM  
Assistant Professor, School of Social Work  
Faculty Associate, Population Studies Center  
Faculty Affiliate, Afro American and African Studies  

Office:  
SSWB 2772  
(734) 763-5951  
mreuben@umich.edu  

Office Hours:  
Mondays, 12:30 to 2:30 pm by appointment (signup sheet will be on my door)  

Course Description:  
This course covers selected major readings in the sociology of punishment and the rise and implications of the expanded carceral state. The course begins with a reading of the classics of penology, discussing the role and function of the prison at its “birth” through the modern age. The next section examines the “work” of punishment in the social body. The final section moves us beyond the prison to think carefully about the work of jails, police, the courts and other penal forms not as widely discussed in the extant literature.  

This course is organized around four lines of inquiry:

1. How is the power to punish derived?  
2. In what ways has the role of punishment in society been conceived?  
3. What do the practices of punishment produce?  
4. Are there alternatives?  

Taking up one or more of these questions in each course, students will outline major theories of punishment advanced by classical political philosophers and penologists (i.e. Locke, Hume, Beccaria, Bentham, etc.), and trace the trajectory of our modern impulse to punish through the works of the “masters of suspicion,” (Freud, Marx, and Nietzsche). They will interrogate the political economy, culture, and politics of punishment through readings on the carceral state (i.e. the works of Alexander, Allen, Dubois, Garland, Gilmore, Gottschalk, Foucault, Harcourt,  

Muhammad, Rusche and Kirchheimer, Wacquant, Western, etc.), and conclude by raising new questions about implications of punishment *in* society in an age of mass imprisonment.

**Course Requirements:** There are three course requirements:

1. **Weekly Readings:** Students are expected to read all materials before each week. The readings are copious and subtle. They will take time to digest. Give yourself enough time to read and sit with the course content. If you do not, you will not be able to contribute, in a meaningful way, to course discussions and will not get much out of the course.

   Each week, students will post questions they have from the readings on our class discussion board. These will help us with class discussion.

2. **Assignment 2:** Each week, two students will present the readings, one taking a position in support of the author, the other as a critic (against the authors’ work). This means that each student will present twice: Once to present a work and the other to defend a work from critics.

3. **Assignment 3:** Each student will write a final paper on a topic of their choosing related to punishment and social theory. The final paper should be no more than 10 pages and will be due at the end of class. I will request that you let me know what you intend to write by the third class. This way, I can help advise you if need be.

**Class structure:** Each week, students will present readings (this will likely last 45 minutes to an hour given the presentations in support and against the readings), I will lead a 30-45 minute lecture-based discussion to give the readings broader context (I take this to mean historical, intellectual, cultural, and political), and we will discuss student questions. This may happen in any order depending on the flow of the class. Some weeks, I expect the discussion to generate more interest than what I have to say. In other weeks, the students’ questions will be more interesting and insightful. We will therefore spend more time and attention addressing these. Some weeks, I may have something to say that’s worth dwelling on. We'll play this by ear so that the class flows smoothly.

**Field Trips:** Depending on access and timing, I hope to take the class on three field trips: One to a prison, one to a jail, one to a community corrections facility.

**Course Content:** The course employs frameworks of social justice, intersectionality and other core social work values for the critical examination of theoretical perspectives on punishment and social inequality. Students will examine theories related to punishment, poverty, inequality, different forms of oppression and privilege, the political economy, and culture.

In examining theories of punishment, students will explore the intersectionality of diverse structural and cultural dimensions [e.g. ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation], how these affect work towards justice, and barriers to this work.
A range of approaches to theorizing will be employed, with an emphasis on those that enhance different types of analysis and illuminate many aspects of organizations, communities, and society. A central theme will be on factors that contribute to power inequities and can be mobilized for change.

**Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Education Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS):** This course will use a variety of pedagogical strategies, including readings, class exercises, case studies, and debates to address the CSWE Education Policy and Accreditation Standards.

- **Social Justice**: Social Justice and Social Change will be addressed within the goals and assumptions of each theoretical approach. Most of the course will focus on social justice goals and conceptualizing and operationalizing social change.
- **Multiculturalism & Diversity**: Multiculturalism and Diversity will be addressed in this course by identifying theories espoused by and compatible with different cultural traditions, by critiquing theories from different cultural perspectives, and through course examples about the uses of theory in different interest and ontological groups.
- **Behavioral and Social Science Research**: Behavioral and Social Science Research will be addressed by examining the evidence used to build theory and test theory through its applications in practice.
- **Social Work Ethics and Values**: We will spend considerable time thinking through the ethical dimensions of punishment.

**Privilege, Oppression, Diversity and Social Justice (PODS):** This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of theories, practice and/or policies that promote social justice, illuminate injustices and are consistent with scientific and professional knowledge. Through the use of a variety of instructional methods, this course will support students to develop a vision of social justice, learn to recognize and reduce mechanisms that support oppression and injustice, work toward social justice processes, apply intersectionality and intercultural frameworks, and strengthen critical consciousness, self-knowledge and self-awareness to facilitate PODS learning.

**Course Design:** Required readings are selected by the instructor. Suggested references will be included for your convenience. Class room activities include lectures, discussion, short videos/films, and the presentation of case studies. This is a seminar course. Students are expected to facilitate discussions of the assigned readings and participate in class.

All journal articles assigned are available through the University of Michigan library system. Book chapters not available through the library will be posted in the CANVAS website or a link will be provided for ease of access.

**Cell Phones, Laptops, Video and Voice Recorder Policy:** Cell phones should be turned off at the beginning of each class and stored appropriately; laptop use is to be confined to taking/making notes. Students requiring an exemption from these rules for any given class should discuss this with the instructor prior to the beginning of that class.
Grading and Requirements: The overall grade for the course will be based on the following:
1. Class attendance and participation (25%)
2. Presentation of the readings (25% of grade)
3. Final paper (50% of final grade)

Grading: A 100 point system is used:

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>91-94</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-90</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>81-83</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-80</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>74-76</td>
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<td>C-</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>E</td>
<td>64 or fewer points</td>
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“A” is awarded for exceptional performance and the mastery of the material
“B” is awarded for papers that demonstrate mastery of the material
“C” is awarded when mastery of the material is minimal
“D” indicates deficiency and carries no credit
“E” indicates failure and carries no credit

Submitting written assignments: Questions from the reading should be posted on the discussion board the night before class. Students should bring their questions with them and write them on the board in the 10 minutes before class begins each week.

The final paper should be submitted by no later than 11:59 PM on December 14, 2015 through the course website and turn in a hard copy to me on or before the day it is due.

PLEASE NOTE:
- If you are differently-abled or have a condition that may interfere with your participation in this course, please schedule a private appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss accommodations for your specific needs. This information will be kept strictly confidential. For more information and resources, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities office at G664 Haven Hall, 734-763-3000.

- Although the University of Michigan, as an institution, does not observe religious holidays, it has long been the University's policy that every reasonable effort should be made to help students avoid negative academic consequences when their religious obligations conflict with academic requirements. Absence from classes for religious reasons does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course work required during the period of absence. Students who expect to miss in-class assignments as a consequence of their religious observance shall be provided with a reasonable alternative opportunity to complete such academic responsibilities. It is the obligation of students to provide faculty with reasonable notice of the dates of religious holidays on which they will be absent. Such notice must be given by the drop/add deadline of the given term. Students who are absent on days of class assignments shall be offered an opportunity to make up the work, without penalty, unless it can be demonstrated that a make-up opportunity would interfere unreasonably with the delivery of the course.
• **I DO NOT ACCEPT LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

• Students are to use the guidelines of their respective disciplines when writing assignments. While these guidelines may vary, each assignment needs to include appropriate attribution of authorship for paraphrases or ideas acquired from another source or appropriate citations, including page numbers, for direct quotes.

• **IF YOU PLAGIARISE IN THIS COURSE YOU WILL FAIL IT.**

  Plagiarism includes:

  - Taking credit for someone else’s work (i.e. paraphrasing their work without citing them, or using text from their work without attributing it to them)
  - Turning in work you’ve submitted for a grade in another course
  - Please review the Student Guide section on “Ethical Conduct in the University Environment.” This section specifically addresses plagiarism and the possible consequences for engaging in this behavior. The University of Michigan Library system has an on-line resource that can assist you in preparing proper citations for assignments using APA format. Go to: (http://www.lib.mich.edu/ug/research/citationguide/AP5thed/pdf)

**REQUIRED READINGS (That you may need to buy)**


CLASS SCHEDULE AND READINGS

September 14, 2015: Introduction to the course
***Course introduction, No required readings***

September 21, 2015: Reading the Classics Pt. 1: The Power to Punish

September 28, 2015: Reading the Classics: Pt. 2: Staging the Sovereign

October 5, 2015: Challenging the classics, or, Uncovering our impulse to punish

October 12, 2015: The “work” of punishment
- Emile Durkheim, “Crime and Punishment” and “The Evolution of Punishment” from Lukes and Scull (PDF Posted)

October 19, 2015: ***FALL BREAK, NO CLASS***

October 26, 2015: Punishment and Labor

**November 2, 2015: Toward a New Theory of Labor and Punishment**

**November 9, 2015: Punishment as a social institution**
- Foucault, Michel. Discipline and Punish.

**November 16, 2015: Punishment in Society**
- Western, Bruce. 2006. Punishment and Inequality. Russell Sage (selections)

**November 23, 2015: Beyond the Prison**
- Miller, Reuben. 2014. “Devolving the Carceral State.” Punishment and Society

**December 7, 2015: On Race and Punishment**
- Dubois, W.E.B. The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study. (Selections, available online)

**December 14: Final Papers Due**