

POLI 3809: The Politics of Punishment (Honors Seminar)

Dr. Anna Gunderson

Spring 2020

E-mail: agunderson@lsu.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Office: 232 Stubbs Hall

Web: Moodle

Class Hours: Th 1:30-4:20 p.m.

Classroom: 203 French House

Course Description

One of the most significant developments in American politics over the last few decades has been the massive growth and expansion of the carceral state. More people are physically incarcerated and on programs like parole and probation than ever before: now, 1 in 31 Americans is under some form of correctional control. What explains this massive shift? How do our political institutions affect the nature and character of coercive institutions?

Political science has only recently begun to engage seriously with the implications of this massive expansion. This class engages directly with theoretical and empirical material to address the above questions and more. We will read academic articles and books, and you will be expected to take the time to read and understand the material. At the end of this course, you will have an understanding of the complex nature of our coercive institutions and the ways in which political science and other academic disciplines seek to understand them.

Required Materials

There is no assigned book for this class, though we will read excerpts of books below. I will make the chapters available electronically on Moodle, or you can purchase the books if you would like. Other journal articles we use can be accessed via LSU's library or on our class website on Moodle.

Books

1. *The Prison and the Gallows* by Marie Gottschalk
2. *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander
3. *The First Civil Right* by Naomi Murakawa
4. *Locked In* by John Pfaff
5. *Locking Up Our Own* by James Forman, Jr.
6. *Captive Nation* by Dan Berger

7. *Are Prisons Obsolete?* by Angela Y. Davis**Grading Policy**

Attendance and Participation	20% (60 points)
Discussion Facilitation	20% (60 points)
Angola Trip and Response	10% (30 points)
Final Paper Proposal	5% (15 points)
Final Paper	30% (90 points)
Final Presentation	10% (30 points)
Final Discussion	5% (15 points)
Total	100% (300 points)

- 20% of your grade is determined by *attendance and participation*. This grade has two components. First, physical *attendance* in class comprises 5%. An attendance sheet will be circulated each day. Each student is allowed two unexcused absences without penalty to their grade. However, things happen - illness, serious family emergency, participation in official university-sponsored events or competitions, religious holidays, etc. If this occurs, please contact me as soon as possible. The remaining 15% comes from active *participation* in our course. This is an honors seminar - there will be no lectures. You are expected to come to class prepared with questions and insights into that week's readings to share with your colleagues.
- 20% of your grade is determined by your participation as *discussant facilitators*. You will be required to facilitate the discussion of two sessions throughout the semester (to be chosen in the first class). As a discussion leader, you will help me and your other facilitators (two of your classmates) guide the course, asking questions and providing thoughtful commentary on that week's readings. You will be expected to move the discussion forward and engage your fellow students with the material. In addition to your participation as a facilitator, you will need to write an approximate 5-page document on that week's readings (**due to me via email by 11:59 p.m. on the Wednesday before your session**) to prepare for the discussion: a) a summary of the readings (what did they seek to study, why, what did they find); b) implications of the readings (what do we know now that we didn't know before, and how does it inform what we have already read or discussed); c) a set of approximately 10 questions to pose to the class (big picture questions that provide fodder for our discussion); d) new questions that arise out of these readings (what should be studied next); and finally, e) connections between the readings and current events and news (hint: the Vera Institute and the Marshall Project are great sources for this). You and your fellow facilitators may choose to meet with each other prior to the session but you will be graded separately based on your preparedness; the quality of your memo; and your performance as discussion leader.
- 10% of your grade is determined by a written response to a field trip to Angola Prison, date TBD. We will tour the prison and you must complete a three- to five-page reflection paper. In it, you will describe a) your initial expectations of the trip; b) describe the trip

and what you learned from it; c) evaluate your initial expectations in light of the trip; and d) link any of the experiences to politics more broadly (current events or any topics we have covered or will cover in the course). Please note that the trip is not mandatory, if you are unable to come because of scheduling or personal reasons. If you are unable to go for whatever reason, you will complete a similar assignment from a viewing of the Netflix series, *When They See Us*. What did you know about the case prior to this series, and how did those expectations change? How is the story impacted by politics? **Whether you attend the Angola Prison tour or watch *When They See Us*, the reflection papers are due in my mailbox one week after the tour is completed.**

- 30% of your grade is determined by a 15-20 page *final paper* that analyzes some facet of the politics of punishment. This paper is an original research paper, whereby you are expected to engage with the readings in this class and others, put forth an original argument, and provide some detail on how you may test your argument empirically (though you do not have to implement your research design). More details below, but start thinking about an original research idea related to the politics of punishment now. Finally, see below, but you are expected to incorporate your discussant's comments in your final draft of the paper. **You must choose your topic and write an approximate two-page proposal (worth 5% of your grade), due March 5. The final draft will be due May 5 by 11:59 p.m.**
- 15% of your grade is determined by a 10-minute *final presentation* you will give on one of the final two days of class. You will present your final paper to your classmates following academic conference-style presentation structure, in which you briefly go over your topic, your argument, and your proposed research design. You must use presentation software like PowerPoint. Your classmates are then encouraged to ask you questions about your paper for approximately 5-10 minutes after the presentation.
- Finally, 5% of your grade comes from an approximately 5-page *final discussion* and commentary on another student's paper. Each of you will be paired with another student and you will be required to read that other student's paper. You will write a 5-page discussion of the paper: what you liked, what you thought they did well, and most importantly, how to improve. Note, these comments are not designed to be nit-picky (i.e. "You have a typo on page 5!"), but rather big picture questions about the theory, topic, or research design (i.e. "This variable you are looking to study is great, but what about this other variable? Doesn't that also reflect your topic?" or "The paper could use some additional clarification on how the argument relates to the research design" or "Make clearer the connection between politics and this argument"). I will give sample discussant comments on one of our papers to highlight how these comments are delivered in practice. **This paper is due by 11:59 p.m. on April 30. You are expected to send a rough draft of your paper to a classmate (assignment TBD) by the end of the day, April 9.**

Final Paper.

A 15-20 page final paper on a topic of your choosing related to the politics of punishment is due **May 5 by 11:59 p.m.** This paper is comprised of several elements: review the topic and link it to politics; describe the scholarly literature regarding this topic; put forth an original hypothesis on this topic; and suggest a possible research design to test this hypothesis (this can

be qualitative or quantitative, or a mix of both). Note that you do not have to carry out this research design, but provide a plausible way someone interested in your hypothesis could test it empirically. On **March 5**, you must choose your topic and submit a two-page paper proposal that briefly describes how the structure of your final paper will reflect the considerations above (i.e. I'm interested in private immigration facilities; this is what these facilities are and what they look like, and how they relate to politics; here is my initial research into the scholarly literature on the topic; here is my tentative hypothesis; and tentative research design). You are welcome to meet with me prior to this date to discuss research ideas. It may be difficult to come up with research ideas from scratch, so here are some potential ones: *juvenile justice reform; prosecutors and prosecutorial discretion; policing reform; the school-to-prison pipeline; the smart-on-crime initiative; comparative carceral policies (multi-state or multi-country); public opinion regarding crime and punishment; judicial sentencing decisions; corrections' officers or police unions; LGBTQ issues in prison and sentencing.*

Grade Scales

A+	97-100%	C	73-76%
A	93-96%	C-	70-72%
A-	90-92%	D+	67-69%
B+	87-89%	D	63-66%
B	83-86%	D-	60-62%
B-	80-82%	F	0-59%
C+	77-79%		

Grading Disputes and Questions

I will follow the 24-hour rule when it comes to the return of graded assignments. Students must wait a minimum of 24 hours after receiving a graded assignment before contacting me regarding their grade.

If a student disputes their grade, they must do so in writing within one week of the date that grades are made available to the class. When requesting reconsideration of a grade, you should provide a clear explanation as to why a different grade is in order. You should also indicate what grade you believe is appropriate for your work. When work is reviewed for a grade dispute, the grade may be left unchanged, raised, or lowered. All grade disputes are due in hard copy within one week of the date that grades are returned in class. Grade disputes will not be considered if submitted past the one-week statute of limitations.

Course Policies

Contacting Me

I am available by email Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. You are welcome to stop by my office, 232 Stubbs Hall, if I am available, but an appointment is preferred. You can make an

appointment via Calendly online here: <https://calendly.com/agunderson/30min>. You can also visit during my office hours, Tuesdays from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. There is no guarantee I will respond to emails either in the evenings or on the weekends, so plan accordingly. A note on etiquette: please sign your emails with your name and include an appropriate salutation. (Hint: you can't go wrong with, "Hi, Dr. Gunderson.")

During Class

I will begin the semester giving students the benefit of the doubt and allow laptops. However, I reserve the right to ban laptops at any point, should they prove to be a distraction or to disrupt to the operation of the course. Students should only use laptops to access course readings and take course notes. No phones are permitted. *Thank you for reading the syllabus! If you see this note before the start of class on August 29, please send me an email with your favorite .gif (appropriate ones only, please) for two extra credit points. Note that your .gif may be shared in the first class.*

Class Discussions

The topics we will engage with can be difficult and controversial. I expect students to engage with the material and each other thoughtfully and critically, but not aggressively or in a mean-spirited way. You are expected to act professionally in our discussions (and, note that your attendance and participation grade will suffer if you do not follow this).

Time Requirements

Please keep in mind the university's definition of work required for each credit hour: "not less than one hour (50 minutes) of lecture/classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours out-of-class student work across 15 weeks for one semester." Given that this is a 3-hour course, this means that students are expected to devote a total of 9 hours of work each week: 3 hours in the classroom and an additional 6 hours of course related work outside the classroom.

Graduate Credit or Honors Credit

For students taking this course for graduate credit or for those who wish to receive special Honors credit, it is the student's responsibility to contact me during the first week of classes to make appropriate arrangements.

Filming and Recording

You may not film or record this class without permission.

Policies on Incomplete Grades and Late Assignments

You will be penalized for late assignments or missed exams unless the absence/delay is excused (whether due to illness, serious family emergency, participation in university events, religious holidays, etc., but must be cleared with me). The penalty for unexcused late assignments is ten percentage points per day. For example, if the quality of your work earned you a 95 on an assignment but you turned the assignment in two days late, you would receive a 75 for

the assignment. Extensions *may* be made on a case-by-case basis to accommodate unexpected difficulties (Note: having assignments due for other classes at the same time is not a sufficient reason for an extension). **No late work will be accepted 72 hours after a due date.**

Academic Integrity and Honesty

Plagiarism is not tolerated and will result in disciplinary action. The LSU Code of Student conduct defines plagiarism as "the unacknowledged inclusion, in work submitted for credit, of someone else's words, ideas, or data." Please review the University's guidelines on plagiarism here (https://www.lsu.edu/hss/english/university_writing/faculty_resources/policies_and_procedures/plagiarism.php) and the guidelines on academic integrity here (<https://www.lsu.edu/saa/students/academicintegrity/index.php>). Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to: cheating on exams, plagiarizing, buying or selling assignments, altering grades, intentional deception, and collaborating with others without permission. I reserve the right to investigate when I suspect a violation of any of these policies. All violations of the university's academic conduct policies are turned over to the Dean of Students.

Accommodations for Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for students with physical, cognitive, systemic, learning and psychiatric disabilities. Please contact me at the beginning of the semester to discuss any such accommodations for this course. In order to have any accommodations met, you must be registered with the LSU Office of Disability Services, located in 124 Johnston Hall and can be reached at 225-578-5919. More information on registering and accommodation is available on the ODS website here: <https://www.lsu.edu/disability/>.

Schedule and weekly learning goals

The schedule is tentative and subject to change. Always check Moodle for the most recent version.

Th, January 16: Introduction and Syllabus Day

- The Vera Institute. "People in Prison in 2018."
- The Prison Policy Initiative. "Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2019."

Th, January 23: American Exceptionalism and Mass Incarceration

- *The Prison and the Gallows*, Chapters 1 and 2
- Acharya, Avidit, Matthew Blackwell, and Maya Sen. "The Political Legacy of American Slavery." *The Journal of Politics* 78, no. 3 (2016): 621-641.
- "The Growth of Incarceration in the United States: Exploring Causes and Consequences," Chapters 1 and 2.

Th, January 30: Mass Incarceration and its Growth: the Common Suspects

- *Library day on research methods and sources*
- *The New Jim Crow*, Chapters 2, 3, 5, and 6
- **"The Growth of Incarceration in the United States: Exploring Causes and Consequences,"** Chapter 4.

Th, February 6: Mass Incarceration and its Growth: the Uncommon Suspects

- *The First Civil Right*, Chapter 1
- Hinton, Elizabeth. "'A War within Our Own Boundaries': Lyndon Johnson's Great Society and the Rise of the Carceral State." *The Journal of American History* 102, no. 1 (2015): 100-112.
- *Locked In*, Chapters 6 and 7

Th, February 13: Mass Incarceration: Political Actors I (Judges, Bureaucrats, and Legislators)

- Cohen, Alma, and Crystal S. Yang. "Judicial Politics and Sentencing Decisions." *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy* 11, no. 1 (2019): 160-91.
- A. Huber, Gregory, and Sanford C. Gordon. "Accountability and Coercion: Is Justice Blind when It Runs for Office?." *American Journal of Political Science* 48, no. 2 (2004): 247-263.
- Harris, Allison. "Can Racial Diversity Among Judges Affect Sentencing Outcomes?" **Available on Moodle.**
- Miller, Lisa L. "Rethinking Bureaucrats in the Policy Process: Criminal Justice Agents and the National Crime Agenda." *Policy Studies Journal* 32, no. 4 (2004): 569-588.
- Thorpe, Rebecca U. "Perverse Politics: The Persistence of Mass Imprisonment in the Twenty-first Century." *Perspectives on Politics* 13, no. 3 (2015): 618-637.

Th, February 20: Mass Incarceration: Political Actors II (Prosecutors, Unions, and Inmates)

- Bandyopadhyay, Siddhartha, and Bryan C. McCannon. "The Effect of the Election of Prosecutors on Criminal Trials." *Public Choice* 161, no. 1-2 (2014): 141-156. **Skim pages 143-148.**
- Page, Joshua. "Prison Officer Unions and the Perpetuation of the Penal Status Quo." *Criminology & Public Policy* 10 (2011): 735-770.
- *Captive Nation*, Chapters 2 and 6
- Schoenfeld, Heather. "Mass Incarceration and the Paradox of Prison Conditions Litigation." *Law Society Review* 44, no. 3-4 (2010): 731-768.

Th, February 27: Mass Incarceration: Political Actors III (Black Political Elites and the Black Public)

- Eckhouse, Laurel. "Race, Party, and Representation in Criminal Justice Politics." *The Journal of Politics* 81, no. 3 (July 2019): 1143-1152.

- Fortner, Michael Javen. "The Carceral State and the Crucible of Black Politics: An Urban History of the Rockefeller Drug Laws." *Studies in American Political Development* 27, no. 1 (2013): 14-35.
- *Locking Up Our Own*, Chapters 4-6

Th, March 5: Mass Incarceration: Victims and the Public (**Note, your topics must be cleared with me by this date.**)

- *The Prison and the Gallows*, Chapters 4-6
- Enns, Peter K. "The Public's Increasing Punitiveness and its Influence on Mass Incarceration in the United States." *American Journal of Political Science* 58, no. 4 (2014): 857-872.

Th, March 12: Mass Incarceration and Collateral Consequences I

- Uggen, Christopher, Jeff Manza, and Melissa Thompson. "Citizenship, Democracy, and the Civic Reintegration of Criminal Offenders." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 605, no. 1 (May 2006): 281-310.
- The Sentencing Project. "**Felony Disenfranchisement: A Primer.**".
- Anoll, Allison, and Mackenzie Israel-Trummel. "Do Felony Disenfranchisement Laws (De) Mobilize? A Case of Surrogate Participation." *The Journal of Politics* 81, no. 4 (2019): 1523-1527.
- Uggen, Christopher, and Jeff Manza. "Democratic Contraction? Political Consequences of Felon Disenfranchisement in the United States." *American Sociological Review* (2002): 777-803.

Th, March 19: Mass Incarceration and Collateral Consequences II

- White, Ariel. "Misdemeanor Disenfranchisement? The Demobilizing Effects of Brief Jail Spells on Potential Voters." *American Political Science Review* 113, no. 2 (2019): 311-24.
- Gerber, Alan S., Gregory A. Huber, Marc Meredith, Daniel R. Biggers, and David J. Hendry. "Does Incarceration Reduce Voting? Evidence about the Political Consequences of Spending Time in Prison." *The Journal of Politics* 79, no. 4 (2017): 1130-1146.
- Weaver, Vesla M., and Amy E. Lerman. "Political Consequences of the Carceral State." *American Political Science Review* 104, no. 4 (2010): 817-833.
- Walker, Hannah L. "Targeted: The Mobilizing Effect of Perceptions of Unfair Policing Practices." *The Journal of Politics* 82, no. 1 (2020).
- Owens, Michael Leo, and Hannah L. Walker. "The Civic Voluntarism of "Custodial Citizens": Involuntary Criminal Justice Contact, Associational Life, and Political Participation." *Perspectives on Politics* 16, no. 4 (2018): 990-1013.

Th, March 26: Spring Break!

Th, April 2: Thinking Outside Mass Incarceration: Policing

- Mummolo, Jonathan. "Modern Police Tactics, Police-Citizen Interactions, and the Prospects for Reform." *The Journal of Politics* 80, no. 1 (2018): 1-15.
- Mummolo, Jonathan. "Militarization Fails to Enhance Police Safety or Reduce Crime but May Harm Police Reputation." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 115, no. 37 (2018): 9181-9186. **Browse the supplementary information as well.**
- Cohen, Elisha, Anna Gunderson, Kaylyn Jackson, Paul Zachary, Tom S. Clark, Adam N. Glynn, and Michael Leo Owens, "Do Officer-Involved Shootings Reduce Citizen Contact with Government?." *The Journal of Politics* 81, no. 3 (July 2019): 1111-1123.
- Lerman, Amy E., and Vesla Weaver. "Staying Out of Sight? Concentrated Policing and Local Political Action." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 651, no. 1 (2014): 202-219.
- Baumgartner, Frank R., Derek A. Epp, Kelsey Shoub, and Bayard Love. "Targeting Young Men of Color for Search and Arrest During Traffic Stops: Evidence from North Carolina, 2002-2013." *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 5, no. 1 (2017): 107-131.

Th, April 9: Thinking Outside Mass Incarceration: Where Do We Go From Here?

- Skim *Are Prisons Obsolete?*, with special attention to Chapter 6
- Dagan, David, and Steven M. Teles. "Locked In? Conservative Reform and the Future of Mass Incarceration." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 651, no. 1 (2014): 266-276.
- *Locked In*, Chapter 8

Th, April 16: *No Class - Dr. Gunderson in Chicago*

- **Assignment: Watch *13th* on Netflix**

Th, April 23: Presentations, Day 1

Th, April 30: Presentations, Day 2

May 5: Final Paper Due