HIST 219Q
Incarceration Nation:
America Behind Bars

Summer 2019
Class Meetings: KEY 1117 MTuWThF 9am-12pm
Prof. Bell Office Hours: Mondays, Wednesday 1pm-3pm, KEY 2136

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Course Description:
There are more than two million Americans behind bars. The United States, which is home to just 5% of the world's population, incarcers 25% of the global prison population, vastly more than any other country in the world.

How did it come to this? When did the land of the free become the land of the unfree? This course tries to understand how, when, and why America became the world's jailor by examining its long history of captivity.

Students in this course will be challenged to enlarge their definitions of captivity and incarceration by comparing American prison life to other carceral environments like the mental asylum, the prisoner of war camp, and the slave plantation. We will learn how to test the various justifications Americans have used to lock up our fellow citizens and determine the assumptions we’ve made about the causes of deviance, crime and criminality, the power of reading and education, the function of capital punishment, and the power of prisons to punish, reform, or even rehabilitate their inmates. We will do all this by examining a variety of first-hand accounts written by those who experienced life behind bars as well as current writing on the subject to explore the changing relationship between liberty and captivity in America.

Expectations & Grading:
As your course instructor, my role is to design and manage a learning environment that is rigorous, engaging, and focused on helping you read, think, write and speak more critically. As a student, your role is to take personal responsibility for your learning and actively engage in all aspects of this course. As such, I expect each of you to attend and participate fully in all class meetings. Two short writing assignments accompany an intensive in-class debate, an oral presentation during a field trip to Philadelphia, and an open-book final exam. The grading breakdown is as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 1</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>In-Class Debate</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td>Oral Presentation</td>
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<td>Assignment 2</td>
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<td>Take-Home Final</td>
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* Late papers must be supported by medical documentation or will face stringent penalties
* No outside research beyond on assignments or exams is expected or permitted
* For all other course policies, see: www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html

This syllabus may be subject to change.
Grading Scale:

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<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100-94</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>&lt;94-90</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>&lt;90-87</td>
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<tr>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>D-</td>
<td>&lt;64-61</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Below 61</td>
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Reading & Meeting Schedule:

Prof. Bell will supply all readings in hard copy.

Mon 8 July: Our Incarceration Nation & Origins
Discussion:
- *The House I Live In* (2012) – available on Amazon and YouTube

Tue 9 July: Bondage
Discussion: (upload 2 questions by 10am today)

Wed 10 July: Prisoners of War
Discussion:

Thu 11 July: The Gallows
Discussion:
- *Narrative of the Pious Death of the Penitent Henry Mills who was Executed in Galesboro’, Penn., on the 15th of July last, for the murder of his wife and five children…* (Boston: H. Trumbull, 1817)
- *The (Boston) Hangman*, 21 May 1845

This syllabus may be subject to change.
Fri 12 July: Experiments in Discipline
Discussion:
- Benjamin Rush, An Enquiry into the Effects of Public Punishments upon Criminals and upon Society... (Philadelphia: Joseph James, 1787), 1-15

Sun 16 July: Assignment #1 due via elms by noon.

Mon 15 July: The Promise of the Penitentiary
Discussion:
- Johnston, Forms of Constraint, 42-87

Tue 16 July: Eastern State Penitentiary
Class Visit to Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia
- G. W. S. A View and Description of the Eastern Penitentiary of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons, 1830)

Wed 17 July: Life Behind Bars
Discussion:
- Austin Reed, The Life and Adventures of a Haunted Convict (New York: Random House, 2016), v, 140-157
- The (Boston) Prisoner’s Friend, 26 May 1846

Thu 18 July: The Prison-Industrial Complex and the Civil War
Discussion:
- Bruce Catton, ed, John Ransom’s Andersonville Diary: Life inside the Civil War’s most Infamous prison (New York: Berkley Books, 1994), 53-77

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Fri 19 July: The Path to the Present Discussion:

Sun 21 July: Assignment #2 due via elms by noon.

Mon 22 July: Mass Incarceration Discussion (and Debate Prep Activity):

Tue 23 July: In-Class Debates
Motion #1: All Private Prisons Should Be Abolished
   - *Readings to be selected by the two debate teams*
Motion #2: All Ex-Convicts Should Be Allowed To Vote
   - *Readings to be selected by the two debate teams*

Wed 24 July: In-Class Debates
Motion #3: All UMD Purchases From MCE Should Cease
   - *Readings to be selected by the two debate teams*
Motion #4: All Minimum Sentences Should Be Abolished
   - *Readings to be selected by the two debate teams*

Thu 25 July: Marc Mauer Visit
Special event with Marc Mauer, Executive Director of The Sentencing Project.

Fri 26 July: What Now?
Discussion:
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JBUSzXvMWck](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JBUSzXvMWck)

Open-Book, Take-Home Final Exam due via elms by midnight

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