

CRIME, INEQUALITY, & JUSTICE

Syllabus

The most successful ideological effects are those which have no need for words, and ask no more than complicitous silence.

-- Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002)

Outline of a Theory of Practice



Nils Christie, in his book *Crime Control as Industry*, opens as follows: "This book is a warning against recent developments in the field of crime control" (13). This course, too, carries a warning: We will face the worst elements of our criminal justice system (and, arguably, our society). As the title of the course heralds, we will study at once those most vulnerable and those most powerful in our society. In fact, I will argue that one cannot exist without the other.

Course readings cover both ends of the power spectrum in the United States; often, this disproportionality parallels wealth but not always. These populations of interest can be roughly divided into political dissidents and political elites. Omissions from the reading list include many classics and a few excellent contemporary works, each of which addresses the powerless/powerful groups that constitute the subject of this study. I also omitted many classes of crimes, criminals, and topics that address the nexus of crime and inequality, most notably so-called white-collar crime and corporate crime. Certainly, these are worthy of study when addressing crime and inequality. However, I chose to include populations that are most difficult to access: those invisible because no one cares much (e.g., Native Americans and convicts) and those invisible because they wield the power to conceal or justify their criminal behavior (e.g., crimes of the state).

Conventional sociological principles addressing inequality will be integrated throughout the course, including theoretical perspectives dominated by conflict and feminist frameworks, and social constructionist concepts of race/class/ gender/sexuality. The emphasis is on critical and cultural criminology.

Copyright 2006 is declared by Dr. L. Susan Williams, Kansas State University, as to this syllabus and all lectures. During this course, students are prohibited from selling notes to or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the express written permission of the professor teaching this course.

REQUIRED READINGS

Brownmiller, Susan. 1993. *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape*. New York: Ballentine Books. ISBN: 0449908208. New \$9.95; used \$1.97+.

Butterfield, Fox. 1996. *All God's Children: The Bosket Family and the American Tradition of Violence*. New York: Harper Perennial. ISBN: 0380728621. \$9.75 new; used \$4.40+.

Chancer, Lynn S. 2005. *High Profile Crimes: When Legal Cases Become Social Causes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. ISBN: 0226101126. New \$38.00; used \$24.49+.

Christie, Nils. 2000. *Crime Control as Industry: Towards Gulags, Western Style* (3rd edition). New York: Routledge. ISBN: 0415234875. New \$44.95; used \$17.00+.

Hersh, Seymour M. 2005. *Chain of Command: The Road from 9/11 to Abu Ghraib*. New York: Harper Perennial. ISBN: 0060955376. New \$9.72; used \$.50+.

Hitchens, Christopher. 2002. *The Trial of Henry Kissinger*. New York: Verso. ISBN: 1859843980. New \$9.24; used \$2.44+.

Leonard, Elizabeth Dermody. 2002. *Convicted Survivors: The Imprisonment of Battered Women Who Kill*. New York: State University of New York Press. ISBN: 0791453286 New \$12.97; used \$9.95+.

Lowenthal, Gary T. 2003. *Down and Dirty Justice: A Chilling Journey into the Dark World of Crime and the Criminal Courts*. Far Hills, NJ: New Horizon Press. ISBN: 0882822357 New \$25.95; used \$4.25+.

Messerschmidt, Jim. 2003. *The Trial of Leonard Peltier*. South End Press. ISBN: 089608163X. New \$16.00; used \$3.98+.

Peterson, Ruth D., Lauren Joy Krivo, and John Hagan. 2006. *The Many Colors of Crime: New Perspectives on Crime, Deviance, and Law*. New York: New York University Press. ISBN: 0814767206. New \$25.00.

Ross, Jeffrey Ian and Stephen C. Richards. 2003. *Convict Criminology*. Belmont CA: Wadsworth/Thomson. ISBN: 0534574335. New \$43.95; used \$23.95+.

Sayer, John William. 2000. *Ghost Dancing the Law: The Wounded Knee Trials*. Boston: Harvard University Press. ISBN: 0674001842. New \$22.95 new; used \$11.50+.

Note: I will add occasional articles and/or papers as supplemental material. Selection will be based, in part, on your interests as the seminar develops.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS



I organize course evaluation by a 1000-point system, as follows:

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| Building Knowledge..... | 300 |
| Assessment of Knowledge..... | 500 |
| Writing Project Option | |
| Research Paper Option | |
| Application of Knowledge..... | 200 |

Building Knowledge

Full seminar-type participation is required. You will be asked to assist in the organization and preparation for one class period and then assume responsibility for another. On each of these occasions, you will need to meet with me on Tuesday/Wednesday before the class for which you are assigned, as well as the day immediately prior to the class. These assignments are worth 50 points each, for a total of **100 points**.

When you do not share responsibility for seminar preparation, you are expected to provide a response paper based on the assigned readings for that week. You may hand these in the day of the seminar (by Tuesday noon), but you should prepare one to three discussion-type questions (again, based on the readings and/or the week’s topic) and submit to the organizer/ discussant for that week by Monday noon. These questions should be submitted electronically, through K-State Online. The papers and questions (as a set) are worth 10 points each, for a total of **100 points**.

In addition, you are expected to present some of your work to a department colloquium. This, together with my evaluation of your participatory performance throughout the semester, is worth **100 points**. KSOL message boards encouraged.

Assessment of Knowledge

Two options are available, the writing project option and the research paper option. If you have a clear direction for your thesis or dissertation, I recommend that you choose the research paper option. Otherwise, you probably should choose the writing project option. Choose one option, for a total of **500 points**.

Writing Project Option

You are expected to produce three 10-page papers, similar to an essay exam. I will provide semi-focused questions, from which you will choose two for each writing project. The essays should reflect your understanding and synthesis of the seminar material covered in specific segments of the course.

Research Paper Option

This option will result in a 30-page research paper, designed similar to a research proposal. I will work with you individually to best meet your needs, depending on where you are in your program of study.

Application of Knowledge

I am a firm believer in giving back. You are expected to come up with a plan for giving back – to the community, to an organization, to a long-term project, or to the discipline as a whole. The plan needs to be focused, linked to some aspect of crime/inequality/justice, and must include a practical implementation plan. I expect that it may take the form of a 10-page proposal-type plan, but I encourage creative formats of other kinds. This component is worth **200 points**.

Personal and Academic Integrity

Part of the purpose of a seminar is to continue our development as scholars and role models. I trust that you will be respectful of one another, of others who are the subject of our study, and especially of those with whom you do not agree. My mantra is, “Just do the right thing.” In keeping with the mission of Kansas State University, please include the Honor Code on all of your written work: “On my honor as a student, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this academic work.”

Community Principles.

K-State focuses on positive student development and general principles of integrity, so much so that we put it in writing. The entire statement can be found at:

<http://courses.k-state.edu/catalog/undergraduate/regulations/community.html> .

In particular, I draw your attention to the following excerpts:

We affirm the value of human diversity for community. We confront and reject all forms of prejudice and discrimination, including those based on race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, economic status, or any other differences that have led to misunderstandings, hostility, and injustice.

We acknowledge that we are a part of the larger Kansas community and that we have an obligation to be engaged in a positive way with our civic partners.

We recognize our individual obligations to the university community and to the principles that sustain it. We will each strive to contribute to a positive spirit that affirms learning and growth for all members of the community.

In addition, K-State is committed to active nonviolence, as set forth by and enacted through the Campaign for Nonviolence: <http://www.k-state.edu/nonviolence/> .

Non-discrimination:

Kansas State University is committed to a policy of non-discrimination on the basis of race, sex, national origin, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation, or other non-merit reason, in admissions, educational programs or activities, and employment (including employment of disabled veterans and veterans of the Vietnam Era), all as required by applicable laws and regulations. Responsibility for coordination of compliance efforts and receipt of inquiries, including those concerning Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, has been delegated to, Clyde Howard, Director of Affirmative Action, Kansas State University, 214 Anderson Hall, Manhattan, KS 66506-0124 (785-532-6220).

Also see university policies on affirmative action, sexual harassment, racial harassment, and other forms of discrimination. <http://www.k-state.edu/affact/Policies/index.htm>



COURSE OUTLINE

| Week | Date | Topic | Readings | Organizer | Other notes |
|------|-------|--|--|--------------------|---|
| 1 | 8/22 | Introduction | <i>Many Colors</i> , pp 1-38 Cultural Criminology (excerpts from Ferrell) | | |
| 2 | 8/29 | Context of Crime, Inequality & Justice | <i>Many Colors</i> , pp 39-66; pp 157-178 | | |
| 3 | 9/5 | | <i>All God's Children</i> <i>Many Colors</i> , pp 122-137 | Sarah | |
| 4 | 9/12 | | <i>Ghost Dancing the Law</i> | Andy | Meet with me by this date for individual course plan |
| 5 | 9/19 | Researching Crime, Inequality & Justice | <i>Many Colors</i> , pp 179-220; 256-276; other selections tba | Sarah | |
| 6 | 9/26 | | <i>Many Colors</i> , pp 138-156; 295-312 <i>Ethnography at the Edge</i> (excerpts) | Travis | Writing Project I due 2-page Research Paper outline due |
| 7 | 10/3 | The Process of Crime, Inequality & Justice | <i>Political Trials</i> (excerpts) The Secret Government <i>Many Colors</i> , pp 277-294 | Larry | |
| 8 | 10/10 | | <i>Down & Dirty Justice</i> <i>Many Colors</i> , pp 221-236 | Allison | |
| 9 | 10/17 | | <i>Convicted Survivors</i> | Egbert | |
| 10 | 10/24 | | <i>The Trial of Leonard Peltier</i> <i>The Trial of Henry</i> <i>Kissinger</i> | Allison Kristen | Writing Project II due Research Paper annotated bib due |
| 11 | 10/31 | Costs of Crime, Inequality, & Justice | <i>Against Our Will</i> | Kristen | |
| 12 | 11/7 | | <i>Convict Criminology</i> <i>Actual Innocence</i> (excerpts) | Larry Henry | |
| 13 | 11/14 | | <i>Chain of Command</i> | Andy | |
| 14 | 11/21 | Responses to Crime, Inequality, & Justice | <i>Crime Control as Industry</i> ; <i>Many Colors</i> , pp 357-366 | Travis | |
| | | | Thanksgiving Holiday 11/22 - 11/26 | | |
| 15 | 11/28 | | <i>When Legal Cases Become</i> <i>Social Causes</i> | Egbert Henry | |
| 16 | 12/5 | | Presentations | | Writing Project III; Semester Paper due |

*This outline provides a tentative schedule. We may find it necessary or beneficial to change the course outline from time to time. Any changes will be announced in class prior to the next week's assignment.