

The Inmate Experience: Examining the Effects of Incarceration
Fall 2016
CRM 397-901

Instructor: Caryn Saxon

Office: Strong Hall 234

Office Phone: (417) 836-5898

Email: CSaxon@MissouriState.edu

Fax: (417) 836-3200

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays from 11:00-12:30 or by appointment

Course Description: In this course we will attempt to reach beyond our assumptions and expectations about the incarcerated by exploring the experiences and perceptions of prison inmates as expressed through their own writing. This course will deepen our understanding of the effects and experience of incarceration, as well as the relationship between coercive restraint and human creativity.

Course Materials:

There are two required texts for this class. All other materials will be provided by the instructor.

George, E. (2015). *A woman doing life: Notes from a prison for women* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Hassine, V. (2011). *Life without parole: Living and dying in prison today* (5th ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

It is important that we connect this course to our department's core learning outcomes and objectives. In this course you can expect to develop the following skills and competencies:

Written Communication Skills: Through our online discussions and your journal entries you will develop your writing skills and your ability to express critical thought through the written word.

Develop in Core Proficiency of Corrections: If you are a criminology major you are expected to be proficient in four core areas: theory, law, enforcement, and corrections. In our course you will engage in a unique way of studying corrections that should give you a perspective you will not find in your other courses.

Critical Thinking: The materials in our course will provide you with the opportunity to think about prisons and incarceration from the inmates' perspective. Your journal and class discussions will provide you with opportunities for critical reflection and dialogue.

Diversity & Human Rights: We will be reading the work of a diverse range of individuals and will also be confronted with topics that encourage us to reflect on the rights and needs of the imprisoned, their victims, and the community at large.

Cultural Competency: Our readings will welcome us into cultures and experiences different from our own, and this exposure should expand our point of view and understanding of others.

Oral Communication Skills: You will have an opportunity in our class to practice and improve your presentation and facilitation skills through general class discussion, as well as your class facilitation assignment.

Communication

It is important to me that I have good communication with all of my students. I want to encourage you to arrange times to meet with me in person or via phone to discuss any questions or concerns you may have throughout the semester. Email is also a great way to reach me and, during the work week, I typically respond very quickly. Please note, however, that I do not necessarily engage in email on Sundays. It is therefore important that you **email me questions before noon on Saturday if you need a response before a Sunday deadline.**

Late Work

Generally speaking, late work is not accepted in this class. In cases of emergencies, please communicate with me. Exceptions can be given when the circumstances call for more flexibility.

Important MSU Policies and Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Missouri State University is a community of scholars committed to developing educated persons who accept the responsibility to practice personal and academic integrity. You are responsible for knowing and following the university's student honor code which is available online, as well as at the Reserves Desk in Meyer Library. Any student participating in any form of academic dishonesty will be subject to sanctions as described in this policy. Please note that any person plagiarizing will receive a "O" for the assignment and risks the possibility of an "F" or "XF" for the course. This means that you must turn in original work created by you specifically for this course, as well as cite authors that you paraphrase or quote in your papers, assignments, and in our online discussion forums. If you have any questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty you need to ask me and/or refer to MSU's policy.

Statement of Nondiscrimination: Missouri State University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution, and maintains a grievance procedure available to any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against. At all times, it is your right to address inquiries or concerns about possible discrimination to the Office for Institutional Equity and Compliance, Park Central Office Building, 117

Park Central Square, Suite 111, (417) 836-4252. Other types of concerns (i.e., concerns of an academic nature) should be discussed directly with me, your instructor, and can also be brought to the attention of your instructor's Department Head. Please visit the OED website at www.missouristate.edu/equity/. It is personally important to me that we create a learning environment together where no student experiences discrimination due to sex, age, sexual and/or gender identity, race or ethnicity, religious affiliation, or economic status. Please work with me in cultivating and maintaining such an environment, and alert me quickly to any indication of discrimination in our class or campus.

Accommodations or Disabilities Policy: To request academic accommodations for a disability, contact the Director of the Disability Resource Center, Meyer Library, Suite 111, 417-836-4192 or 417-836-6792 (TTY), www.missouristate.edu/disability/contact.htm. Students are required to provide documentation of disability to the Disability Resource Center prior to receiving accommodations. The Disability Resource Center refers some types of accommodation requests to the Learning Diagnostic Clinic, which also provides diagnostic testing for learning and psychological disabilities. For information about testing, contact the Director of the Learning Diagnostic Clinic, 417-836-4787, <http://psychology.missouristate.edu/ldc>.

Cell Phone Policy: As a member of the learning community, each student has a responsibility to other students who are members of the community. When cell phones or pagers ring and students respond in class or leave class to respond, it disrupts the class. Therefore, the Office of the Provost prohibits the use by students of cell phones, pagers, PDAs, or similar communication devices during scheduled classes. All such devices must be turned off or put in a silent (vibrate) mode and ordinarily should not be taken out during class. Given the fact that these same communication devices are an integral part of the University's emergency notification system, an exception to this policy would occur when numerous devices activate simultaneously. When this occurs, students may consult their devices to determine if a university emergency exists. If that is not the case, the devices should be immediately returned to silent mode and put away.

Dropping a Class: It is your responsibility to understand the university's procedure for dropping a class. If you stop participating in this class but do not follow proper procedure for dropping the class you will receive a failing grade and will also be financially obligated to pay for the class. For information about dropping a class, please see the Registrar's page on the MSU website. Please also review MSU's academic calendar for important deadline dates.

Classroom Emergencies: At the first class meeting, students should become familiar with a basic emergency response plan through a dialogue with the instructor that includes a review and awareness of exits specific to the classroom and the location of evacuation centers for the building. All instructors are provided this information specific to their classroom and/or lab assignments in an e-mail prior to the beginning of the fall semester from the Office of the Provost and Safety and Transportation. Students with disabilities impacting mobility should discuss the approved accommodations for emergency situations and additional options when

applicable with the instructor. For more information, go to <http://www.missouristate.edu/safetran/51597.htm> and <http://www.missouristate.edu/safetran/erp.htm>.

Emergency Response Statement

Students who require assistance during an emergency evacuation must discuss their needs with their professors and Disability Services. If you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible.

For additional information students should contact the [Disability Resource Center](#), 836-4192 (PSU 405), or Larry Combs, Interim Assistant Director of [Public Safety and Transportation](#) at 836-6576.

Course Assignments and Grading

Reading Journal: In this course, we will be reading the original writings of prison inmates. Each week you will be asked to complete one entry in your reading journal. These journal entries will need to be approximately 300-500 words in length. You will post these journal entries into our online discussion forums which will serve to get our online discussion going; however, these entries will be graded separately from your general course participation grade.

Online Participation: You will be graded on your engagement and participation in our online discussion. Each week you will be required to contribute to our Blackboard discussion a specified number of times, and will be graded on the substance and quality of those contributions

Attendance & Class Participation: You will be graded on your attendance to our biweekly class sessions, as well as your level of engagement and participation in class discussions. Many of our class sessions will rely completely on your willingness to participate and so we all need you to come to class ready to talk about the assigned readings.

Group Facilitation/Presentation: You will each participate in a group of 3-4 students who will provide a class presentation on a specific theme. I will provide you with more details about this assignment at the beginning of the semester. Your presentation will be around 30 minutes long.

Midterm & Final Exam: We will have two exams in our class. Each will cover lecture material from our major class themes; however, there will also be some questions over assigned readings. Each exam will be a mixture of multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and essay questions.

Points Breakdown

Reading Journal: Fourteen entries @ 10 points each	140 Points
Online Participation: Fourteen modules @ 5 points each	70 Points
Attendance	50 Points
Class Participation	50 Points
Group Presentation	100 Points
Midterm Exam	50 Points
Final Exam	70 Points

Total **530 Points**

Grading Structure

A= 90%-100%

B= 80%-89.9%

C= 70%-79.9%

D= 60%-69.9%

F= Below 60%

Course Schedule

Below is a projected schedule for our course together; however, we may make adjustments as needed throughout the semester. **Please note that in each module I may assign additional supplemental reading not listed on this schedule.** Please note that participation requirements (such as discussion forums) are not listed here as assignments. You will need to log onto to our Blackboard course site regularly to find weekly participation requirements.

Module	Dates	Class Sessions	Readings	Assignments
Module 1	Monday August 22 – Sunday August 28	Monday: Course Overview Wednesday: Lecture & Discussion	Woman Doing Life Chapter 1 (pages 3-24)	Journal Entry due Thursday August 25 & Student Information Sheet due Sunday August 28
Module 2	Monday August 29 – Sunday September 4	Monday: Discussion Wednesday: Discussion	Woman Doing Life Chapters 2-5 (pages 25-100)	Journal Entry due Thursday September 1

Module 3	Monday September 5 – Sunday September 11	Monday: No Class Wednesday: Discussion	Woman Doing Life Chapters 6-9 (pages 101-186)	Journal Entry due Thursday September 8
Module 4	Monday September 12 – Sunday September 18	Monday: Discussion Wednesday: Discussion	Woman Doing Life Chapters 10-11 & Epilogue (pages 187-219; 221-223)	Journal Entry due Thursday September 15
Module 5	Monday September 19 – Sunday September 25	Monday: Student Presentation & Lecture on Incarceration’s Effect on Children, Families, & Communities Wednesday: Discussion	Supplemental Readings	Journal Entry due Thursday September 22
Module 6	Monday September 26 – Sunday October 2	Monday: Student Presentation & Lecture on Solitary Confinement Wednesday: Discussion	Supplemental Readings	Journal Entry due Thursday September 29
Module 7	Monday October 3 – Sunday October 9	Monday: Student Presentation & Lecture on Prison Rape & Violence Wednesday: Discussion	Supplemental Readings	Journal Entry due Thursday October 6
Module 8	Monday October 10 – Sunday October 16	Monday: No Class Wednesday: Midterm Exam	(none)	Midterm Exam Wednesday October 12
Module 9	Monday October 17 – Sunday October 23	Monday: Prison Programming Lecture & Video Wednesday: Finish Video	Supplemental Readings	Journal Entry due Thursday October 20
Module 10	Monday October 24 – Sunday October 30	Monday: Student Presentation & Lecture on Death Row/Death Penalty Wednesday: Discussion	Supplemental Readings	Journal Entry due Thursday October 27

Module 11	Monday October 31 – Sunday November 6	Monday: Student Presentation & Lecture on Prisoner Reentry & Reintegration Wednesday: Discussion	Supplemental Readings	Journal Entry due Thursday November 3
Module 12	Monday November 7 – Sunday November 13	Monday: Student Presentation & Lecture on Juveniles in Detention & Prison Wednesday: Discussion	Supplemental Readings	Journal Entry due Thursday November 10
Module 13	Monday November 14 – Friday November 18	Monday: Discussion Wednesday: Discussion	Life Without Parole Chapters 1-5 (pages 1-39)	Journal Entry due Thursday November 17
	Saturday November 19 – Sunday November 27	Thanksgiving Break		
Module 14	Monday November 28 – Sunday December 4	Monday: Discussion Wednesday: Discussion	Life Without Parole Chapters 6-10 (pages 41-101)	Journal Entry due Thursday December 1
Module 15	Monday December 5 – Thursday December 8	Monday: Discussion Wednesday: Discussion	Life Without Parole Chapters 11-15 (pages 103-147)	Journal Entry due Thursday December 8
FINAL				Final Exam Wednesday December 14 8:45-10:45 a.m.