Sociology 400

Incarceration and Society:
Sociological perspectives on the criminal justice system

Instructor:
Dr. Ryan Alaniz
(Sociology)
Phone: 805.756.6261
Email: ralaniz@calpoly.edu
Class Time: Wednesday 5:30-7:00pm

Required Texts
Articles on Polylearn
TBD

Course Description and Pedagogy
The class is designed and framed to create a space for honest dialogue and real exchange between the inside (inmates) and outside (Cal Poly) students. By encountering one another in a safe and respectful context, all participants are challenged to re-evaluate cultural stereotypes, resist generalizations, and fully meet one another as fellow members of the same society. Students will: discuss and analyze sociological and criminological theory as it applies to the jail context; dialogue about social problems facing the community of San Luis Obispo and generate potential strategies to affect change; evaluate their own privileges, resources, and potential; develop a critical understanding of the criminal justice system (CJS) at the county level.

The pedagogy of the course will be based on a Freirian approach (Freire 1983) and service learning philosophy. Freirian pedagogy encourages problem-solving learning through student interaction and discussion. In this system, knowledge is not meant to be memorized but rather wrestled with internally in order for a student to claim it as her own. The service learning component will enable students to connect the social issue of incarceration through to sociological theory and vice versa. Combined, students will obtain a holistic educational experience through interaction, discussion, practice, and connection with our neighbors on the inside. All of these experiences align well with the recent strategic plan set forth during the WASC evaluation by Cal Poly administration (Cal Poly 2012).

Since this course will be populated by inside and outside students, by its very nature it will force students out of their intellectual comfort zone to wrestle with the issues from a different perspective. This opportunity provides all students the chance to investigate problems together and utilize each perspective’s strength to create a more complete understanding of society and the CJS. Additionally, the CSJ cannot be understood without taking into account broader social, economic, and historic forces, which will be discussed in class and through readings. Finally, students will also be able to grow in their own discipline. In small groups each student will necessarily need to share their disciplinary perspective with others.

Service Learning Component
This service-learning experience will be guided by the following principles, which state that an effective program (Honnet And Poulen, 1989):

- Engages people in responsible and challenging actions for the common good;
• Provide structured opportunities for students to reflect critically on their service experience
• Expects genuine, active, and sustained organizational commitment;
• Includes training, supervision, monitoring, support, recognition, and evaluation to meet service and learning goals;
• Ensures that the time commitment for service and learning is flexible, appropriate, and in the best interests of all involved;
• Is committed to program participation by and with diverse populations.

The service learning opportunities include:
• Book club; Garden Project; Alternatives to Violence Program; Sports at the Juvenile Hall; Community Education Panels; Mentoring; Re-entry programming; Non-Violent Communication; Music and Art Programming; Etc.

Service-Learning requires a 12-15 hour commitment outside of class in one of these projects or another approved by the instructor. The non-profit, Restorative Partners, will facilitate the applications and opportunities to serve. Please be in touch with Jason (jason@restorativepartners.org) before the second class to finalize your service-learning opportunity.

Learning Goals and Outcomes
As noted earlier, the learning goals attempt to provide students with a holistic, collaborative, and intergroup understanding and approach to the CJS.

By the end of the Sociology 400 course, students will:
1. Demonstrate an understanding of relationships between diversity, inequality, and social, economic, and political power in the United States, especially within the criminal justice system
2. Think critically and creatively
3. Communicate effectively
4. Work productively as individuals and in groups
5. Use their knowledge and skills to make a positive contribution to society
6. Demonstrate an understanding of relationships between diversity, inequality, and social, economic, and political power in the United States
7. Consider perspectives of diverse groups when making decisions
8. Explain how natural, economic, and social systems interact to foster or prevent sustainability
9. Analyze and explain local, national, and global sustainability using a multidisciplinary approach

These learning goals will be evaluated through reflection papers, participation in discussion, and a final reflection paper.

Course Requirements

| Participation and Attendance | 40 |
| Weekly reflections (8 x 5pts each) | 40 |
| Final Service Learning Paper OR | 20 |
| Final Literature Review Paper | (20) |

Attendance and Participation
Students will lose ten percentage points for every undocumented/unexcused class they miss.

Everyone will be expected to participate equally and often. I have three goals in having students participate: to learn from one another, to be able to articulate clearly to others sociological theory via their experience, and to build confidence in speaking their opinion publicly. Effort is more important than right answers.
Readings—do them. I have chosen to go for depth rather than breadth so time should not be an issue. I recommend doing the reading and making notes in the margin, then going back later that day or the next day and reviewing the reading. This will help you “set” the information in your memory. These notes may also be useful as a reference for later classes or work.

Assignments
All assignments will be turned in on Polylearn unless otherwise noted. All assignments should be in PDF format. No late assignments will be accepted.

Weekly Reflections
You are required to write a reflection paper connecting reading, lecture, and class discussions each week. These should be relevant to the theme of the previous week. Please see Polylearn for further details.

Final Service-Learning Paper
The final reflection paper will be due during finals week. It will be between 5-6 pages. Please see polylearn for further details.

OR Final Literature Review Paper
Your literature review paper will be 6-8 pages long and provide an overview of a topic relevant to class and agreed upon by the instructor and student. Students should propose a topic by week three of the quarter. Please see polylearn for further details.

Other Issues
Transportation: It is up to the student to find reliable transportation to and from the Honor Farm. If you do not believe you can obtain reliable transportation, please do not take this class.

Late and Make up policy: Tardiness is not accepted in other work environments and will not be accepted in this class.

Late homework and papers will not be accepted unless there is documented illness/other emergency. If it is an emergency, please see me individually. Homework will only be accepted as an upload on polylearn.

Incompletes: No incompletes will be given unless you have a prior written agreement with me and will only be given out in rare situations with extenuating circumstances present.

Email: The simplicity of writing emails, I believe, has encouraged students to email their professor at every whim. I receive dozens of emails in which the answer could have been found in the syllabus, from a classmate, during class, or during office hours. Please only email me if it is critically urgent.

Disabilities: It is university policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. I encourage you to contact me to discuss any individual needs for accommodations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Class Theme</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1    | Introduction to course | Why this course?  
|      |         | Learning Objectives  
|      |         | Expectations  
|      |         | Logistics | Class at Cal Poly  
|      |         | No assignments |
| 2    | Mill:  
|      | Sociological Imagination  
|      | Contexts:  
|      | Inside-Outside | Introductions  
|      | Nosce Te Ipsum | Class at Honor Farm  
|      |         | 1-2 page reflection on reading and previous discussion |
| 3    | Freire:  
|      | Pedagogy of the Oppressed  
|      | Ch. 1 | Critical Thinking  
|      |         | Development of a critical consciousness | Class at Honor Farm  
|      |         | 1-2 page reflection on reading and previous discussion |
| 4    | Ferrante:  
|      | Introduction to  
|      | Sociology Ch. 10 | Contemporary theories of  
|      |         | Criminology | Class at Honor Farm  
|      |         | 1-2 page reflection on reading and previous discussion |
| 5    | Huff:  
|      | Historical Explanations of  
|      | Crime (Excerpt) | Societal perspectives on crime  
|      |         | The social construction of crime over time and space | Class at Honor Farm  
|      |         | 1-2 page reflection on reading and previous discussion |
| 6    | TBD | Impacts of crime on society | Class at Honor Farm  
|      |         | 1-2 page reflection on reading and previous discussion |
| 7    | TBD | Impacts of crime on the incarcerated and their family | Class at Honor Farm  
|      |         | 1-2 page reflection on reading and previous discussion |
| 8    | TBD | Critical discussion on the morality of crime and justice | Class at Honor Farm  
|      |         | 1-2 page reflection on reading and previous discussion |
| 9    | TBD | Moving through crime toward reconciliation  
|      |         | Graduation | Class at Honor Farm  
|      |         | 1-2 page reflection on reading and previous discussion |
| 10   | TBD | Moving Forward  
|      |         | Debrief experience | Class at Cal Poly |
| 11   | | Reflection on criminal justice system and impacts on various stakeholders | Final Paper Due Thursday |