



**COURSE TITLE/SECTION:**

SOCW 7350/Section 22316

Overrepresentation of Minority Males in Criminal Justice System

**TIME:** Wednesday, 9am-12pm

**ROOM:** 229 Social Work Building

**FACULTY:** Rev. William Lawson  
Lucinda Nevarez, PhD, LMSW

**OFFICE HOURS:** By Appointment Only

**E-mail:** [lnevarez@uh.edu](mailto:lnevarez@uh.edu)

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**I. Course**

**A. Catalog Description**

Selected topics in social work; topics will vary.

**B. Purpose**

This course is designed to provide the student with an understanding of the oppression of minority males in the United States and specifically in Texas with emphasis on their over-representation in the criminal justice system. This course is built on the assumption that social workers need to understand the economic, political, social and cultural forces that impact our clients and society. This course examines these forces as they generate and maintain oppression based on race and ethnicity in the U. S. Strategies for change are developed and are critically examined.

**II. Course Competencies**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. demonstrate an understanding of demographic trends and forces that influence and shape a diverse U. S. society.
2. identify and describe selected theories of oppression and apply them to the experience of minority males.

3. describe the U. S. criminal justice system and articulate the extent to which to which minority males are over-represented in prison systems, particularly in Texas.

4. reflect on the growth and maturation of their personal attitudes related to understanding oppression, as well as to their commitment to social justice.

5. demonstrate the ability to assess strengths and limitations of selected action strategies to combat aggression.

### III. Course Content

DATE	TOPIC	GUEST (s)	READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
Week 1: Jan. 16	Introduction of Course: Problem and Approach  Texas Criminal Justice System and Indigent Male Minorities	Bill Lawson, Instructor  Dr. Peggy Engram, Professor, Criminal Justice, UH Downtown <i>(confirmed)</i>	Deutsch (2006)- A Framework for Thinking About Oppression and Its Change <i>(Blackboard)</i>	
Week 2: Jan. 23	Apprehension and Prosecution in Texas	Mr. Charles McClelland Houston Chief of Police <i>(confirmed)</i>  Mr. Mike Anderson Harris County District Att. <i>(confirmed)</i>	Curry & Corral-Camacho (2008)- Sentencing Young Minority Males for Drug Offenses <i>(Blackboard)</i>  Munoz & Freng (2007)-Age, racial/ethnic minority status, gender and misdemeanor, sentencing <i>(Blackboard)</i>	<b>Summaries and Discussion Questions Week 1 (completed by GA)</b>

			<p>Robinson (2006)- How Psychology is Changing the Punishment Debate (Blackboard)</p> <p>Warren et al (2006)- Driving While Black: Bias processes and racial disparity in police stops. (Blackboard)</p>	
Week 3: Jan. 30	Defense System in Harris County	<p>Robert Jones, Criminal Defense Attorney (<i>confirmed</i>)</p> <p>Mike DeGeurin, Criminal Defense Attorney</p>	Barak, et al, (2010)- Chapter 10: Punishment, Sentencing and Imprisonment ( <i>UH library electronic book</i> )	<b>Summary and Discussion Questions Week 2</b>
Week 4: Feb. 6	Role of Public Defender	<p>Senator Rodney Ellis, Texas State Legislature</p> <p>Alex Bunin, Harris County Public Defender (<i>confirmed</i>)</p>	Wice, Paul (2005)- Chapter 2: Public Defender Agencies the Traditional Approach (Blackboard)	<b>Summary and Discussion Questions Week 3</b>
Week 5: Feb. 13	Harris County Judicial System	<p>Hon. Caprice Cosper, Director Harris County Office of Criminal Justice Policy</p> <p>Hon. Belinda Hill, Judge, 230<sup>th</sup> District Criminal Court; Chair, Harris County Criminal Justice Center (<i>confirmed</i>)</p>	<p>Barak, et al, (2010)- Chapter 9-Law enforcement and criminal prosecution (<i>UH library electronic book</i>)</p> <p>Barak, et al, (2010)- Chapter 2-Criminal justice work and the crime control</p>	<b>Summary and Discussion Questions, Week 4 due</b>

			enterprise ( <i>UH library electronic book</i> )	
Week 6: Feb. 20	<b>FIELD TRIP – Juvenile Detention Center</b>		No readings	<b>R and R Paper One due</b>
Week 7: Feb. 27	Juvenile Incarceration in Harris County	County Judge Ed Emmett  Mr. Tom Brooks, Executive Director Harris County Juvenile Probation Center	Bohland (2011)- No Longer a Child: Juvenile Incarceration in America  Rodney & Tachia (2004) Over- representation of Minorities in the Juvenile Justice System: Three Counties in Rural Texas	<b>Summary and Discussion Questions, Week 6 due</b>
Week 8: March 6	Prison System in Harris County	Adrian Garcia, Sheriff, Harris County;  Ms. Ana Yañez-Correa, Executive Director, Texas Criminal Justice Coalition	Robinson (2006)- How Psychology is Changing the Punishment Debate (Blackboard)  Warren et al (2006)- Driving While Black: Bias processes and racial disparity in police stops. ( <i>Blackboard</i> )	<b>Summary and Discussion Questions, Week 7 due</b>
Week 9: March 13	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>		No Readings	
Week	The Ugliness of	Mr. & Mrs. Cornelius	Walker, et al	<b>Summary and</b>

10: March 20	Life Behind Bars	Dupree, Exoneree, 30 years( <i>confirmed</i> )  Non-guilty releases from Texas Prisons	(2000)- Chapter 9- Corrections: A Picture in Black and White ( <i>Blackboard</i> )  Weingand (2008)- Rebuilding a life: The wrongfully convicted and exonerated ( <i>Blackboard</i> )	<b>Discussion Questions, Week 8 due</b>
Week 11: March 27	Patterns of Racism in Criminal Justice Systems	Howard Jefferson, National NAACP Board  Mary Ramos, Regional Director, LULAC	Urbina (2006)- Latinos/as in the Criminal and juvenile justice system ( <i>Blackboard</i> )  MacDonald (2006) Is the Criminal Justice System Racist? ( <i>Blackboard</i> )	<b>R and R Paper Two due</b>
Week 12: April 3	Minority Families and Patterns of Rearing of Indigent Children	Dr.Needha Boutté-Queen Chair, Social Work Dept. Texas Southern University  Dr. James L. Conyers, Director, African American Studies, UH( <i>confirmed</i> )	Clear (2007)-Ch. 8 Dealing with Concentrated Incarceration: The Case for Community Justice ( <i>Blackboard</i> )  Stevens-Watkins & Graves (2011)-Risk and Protective Factors Among African American Adolescent Males that Predict Adult	<b>Summary and Discussion Questions, Week 11 due</b>

			<p>Involvement in the Criminal Justice System: Evidence from a National Sample. (Blackboard)</p> <p>Mesman, J., IJzendoorn, M.H., Bakermans-Kranenburg, M.J. (2010)-Unequal in opportunity; equal in process: parental sensitivity promotes positive child development in ethnic minority families (blackboard)</p>	
<p>Week 13: April 10</p>	<p>Role of Public Education Systems on Criminal Predisposition of Children</p>	<p>Dr. Renu Khator, President and Chancellor, University of Houston</p> <p>Dr. Rod Paige, CEO, Chartwell Education Group, LLC Former U.S. Secretary of Education</p>	<p>Archer (2009/2010)- Introduction: Challenging the School to Prison Pipeline (<i>Blackboard</i>).</p> <p>Strayhorn (2010)- When race and gender collide: Social and cultural capital influence on the academic achievement of African American and Latino males. (<i>blackboard</i>)</p>	<p><b>Summary and Discussion Questions, Week 12 due</b></p>

Week 14: April 17	Role of Mass Media, Radio, TV, Film, Print in Criminal Pre-disposition of Children	D'Artagnan Bebel, General Manager, Fox-26 TV <i>(confirmed)</i>  Melanie Lawson, News Anchor ABC-13 TV	Walker, et al (2011)-Chapter 2: Victims and Offenders: Myths and Realities about Crime <i>(Blackboard)</i>  Coyne (2007)- Does Media Violence cause Violent Crime <i>(Blackboard)</i>	Summary and Discussion Questions, Week 13 due
Week 15: April 24	Open Forum			R and R Paper Three due
May 1	FINAL EXAMINATION			

#### IV. Course Structure-

The course consists primarily in presentations by community leaders with front-line experience in working with the social systems and social agencies that impact minority males prior to, during, and following involvement with the criminal justice system.

#### V. Textbooks

There are no required textbooks for this course. All required and recommended readings will be made available on Blackboard or through electronic books via University of Houston MD Anderson Library

#### Required Reading Assignments

Archer, D. (2009). Introduction: challenging the school to prison pipeline. *New York Law School Law Review*, 54, 867-872.

Clear, T. R. (2007). *Imprisoning communities: How mass incarceration makes disadvantaged neighborhoods worse*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Barak, G., Leighton, P., & Flavin, J. (2010). *Class, race, gender, and crime*. Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield.

- Coyne, S.M. (2007). Does media violence cause violent crime? *European journal of criminal policy, 3*, 205-211.
- Curry, T. R. & Corral-Comach, G. (2008). Sentencing young minority males for drug Offenses: testing for conditional effects between race/ethnicity, gender and age during the war on drugs. *Punishment and Society, 10*(3), 253-275.
- Deutsch, M. (2006). A framework for thinking about oppression and its change. *Social Justice Research, 19*(1), 7-41.
- MacDonald, H. (2008). Is the criminal justice system racist?. *City Journal, 2008*, 15-19.
- Mesman, J., IJzendoorn, M., & Bakurmans-Kranenburg, M. (2011). Unequal in opportunity, equal in process: parental sensitivity promotes positive child development in ethnic minority families . *Child Development Perspective, 0*, 1-12.
- Munoz, E.A. & Freng, A.B. (2007). Age, racial/ethnic minority status, gender and misdemeanor sentencing. *Journal of ethnicity and criminal justice, 5*(4), 29-54.
- Robinson, P. (2007). How psychology is changing the punishment theory debate. *University of Pennsylvania public law working paper , 07-01*, 95-104.
- Stevens-Watkins, D., & Graves, S. (2011). Risk and protective factors among African American adolescent males that predict involvement in the criminal justice system . *Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice, 9*, 136-151.
- Strayhorn, T. (2010). When race and gender collide: Social and cultural capital influence on the academic achievement of African American and Latino males.. *The Review of Higher Education, 33*(3), 307-332.
- Urbina, M. (2007). Latino/as in the criminal justice system . *Critical Crimonology, 15*, 41-99.
- Walker, S., Spohn, C. & Delone, M. (2011). *The color of justice: race, ethnicity and crime in America*. Belmont, CA; Wadsworth.



Warren, P., Tomaskovic-Devey, D., Smith, W., Zingraff, M., & Mason, M. (2006). Driving while black: Bias processes and racial disparity in police stops. *Criminology*, 44(3), 709-738.

Weigand, H. (2008). Rebuilding a life: The wrongfully convicted and exonerated. *Public Interest Law Journal*, 18, 427-437.

Wice, P. B. (2005). *Public defenders and the American justice system*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger.

## VI Course Requirements

### A. Attendance and Participation

Attendance and participation are heavily weighted because much of the learning in the course will occur by means of participation in class activities, groups and assignments.

### B. Field Trips

February 20<sup>th</sup>: Harris County Juvenile Detention Center

### C. Written Assignments

1. **Reflection & Reaction Papers** (4-6 pages each) – Due dates are listed below. *In each paper you will be required to incorporate the required readings, guest speakers, classroom discussion, current events (if applicable) and your individual processing of all materials.* The purpose of these papers is for you to exhibit your understanding of all of the materials.

02/20/13      Weeks 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5

03/27/13      Weeks 6, 7, 8, & 10

04/24/13      Weeks 11, 12, 13, & 14

2. **Discussion Questions**- Each student will be assigned to a group who will create 10 questions related to the readings and guest speaker lectures for a designated week. Questions are due on the Wednesday following the designated week. Final exam questions will be drawn from these student questions.

- 3. Final Examination** – The final exam will consist of 40-50 short answer questions and multiple choice. Most of the questions will be drawn from the student discussion questions posted each week. A final exam study guide will be given once all of the student questions have been compiled and edited at the end of the semester.

## VII. Evaluation and Grading

- 1. Class attendance and participation (10%)**

Attendance and participation is expected, as much of the learning will occur as a result of interacting with guest speakers and class discussion. 2 grade points will be deducted from your final grade for each class absence. An absence is defined as missing more than 30 minutes of any class period or field trip.

- 2. Discussion Questions (10%)**

- 3. Reflection & Reaction Papers (45%)**

Each paper is worth 15%

- 4. Final Exam (35%)**

As is standard practice in the GCSW, an A will be 95% and higher, A- will be 90% to 95%, B+ will be 87% to 90%, B will be 83% to 86%, B- will be 80% to 83%, etc.

### **Policy on grades of I (Incomplete):**

The grade of I (Incomplete) is a conditional and temporary grade given when students are passing a course but, for reasons beyond their control, have not completed a relatively small part of all requirements. Incompletes will be given only under exceptional situations after consultation with the instructor

## VIII. Consultation

Consultation with the instructor will be on an appointment-only basis. In order to schedule contact with the instructor, students should contact the instructor via email at [arlachap@mail.uh.edu](mailto:arlachap@mail.uh.edu). Emails through Blackboard will not be checked.

## **IX. Policy on academic dishonesty and plagiarism**

Students are expected to demonstrate and maintain a professional standard of writing in all courses, do one's own work, give credit for the ideas of others, and provide proper citation of source materials. Any student who plagiarizes any part of a paper or assignment or engages in any form of academic dishonesty will receive an "I" for the class with a recommendation that a grade of F be assigned, subsequent to a College hearing, in accordance with the University policy on academic dishonesty. Other actions may also be recommended and/or taken by the College to suspend or expel a student who engages in academic dishonesty.

All papers and written assignments must be fully and properly referenced using APA style format (or as approved by the instructor), with credit given to the authors whose ideas you have used. If you are using direct quotes from a specific author (or authors), you must set the quote in quotation marks or use an indented quotation form. For all direct quotes, you must include the page number(s) in your text or references. Any time that you use more than four or five consecutive words taken from another author, you must clearly indicate that this is a direct quotation. Please consult the current APA manual for further information.

Academic dishonesty includes using any other person's work and representing it as your own. This includes (but is not limited to) using graded papers from students who have previously taken this course as the basis for your work. It also includes, but is not limited to submitting the same paper to more than one class.

If you have any specific questions about plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please raise these questions in class or make an appointment to see instructor. This statement is consistent with the University Policy on Academic Dishonesty that can be found in your UH Student Handbook..

## **X. Americans with Disabilities Statement**

Whenever possible, and in accordance with 504/ADA guidelines, the University of Houston will attempt to provide reasonable academic accommodations to students who request and require them. Please call 713-743-5400 for more assistance.