SOCI 350:
SCHOOL + PUNISHMENT SOCIOLOGY

Professor: Christi M. Smith
Office: King Building 301B
Office Hours: Mondays, 4:30-6pm and by appointment

Meeting Place: King Building 127
Meeting Time: MWF

COURSE DESCRIPTION

“Many do not, we image, fully realize the issues of our democratic theories – see clearly the radical distinction between the American and the old world idea of government. Such discrimination is essential to conscious citizenship. The duties of maintaining and continually improving our public schools system cannot be too strongly urged upon the public attention.”

- “Education & Public Schools”
The Chicago Tribune, May 20, 1865

“The history of this age will read, no doubt, like a romance to future generations, and they will wonder how such things could be. Noble schemes and philanthropy ideas have been conceived, perfected, and hurried to glorious end...This is, beyond a doubt, set forth in the constantly increasing desire among all nations to abhor and discontinue making capital of human flesh, and in the establishment of great educational centers everywhere.”

-G.R.H., Lincoln University, letter to the editor
The Christian Recorder, November 22, 1872.

“Incarceration has become the response to every social problem we have.”
-Kentucky Commissioner of Juvenile Justice Hasan Davis

This course examines two important social institutions: schools and prisons. Rhetorically, schools and prisons were both designed to cure social ills and instill morals, habits of industry, and discipline the citizenry. Schools are once again deeply segregated by race and class, and recently even the White House has recognized ‘mass incarceration’ as a social and political problem. In understanding waves of reform impacting schools and prisons, we explore how the broader socio-political context shaped the emergence and structure of these institutions over the past 150 years. This class will use multiple theoretical perspectives to understand sociological approaches to race, class, and gender as they pertain to social schools and prisons. We will focus on the U.S. domestic context as well as contemporary education and prison reform in international-comparative perspective. Finally, we will put what we learn to use through a data consulting partnership with Oberlin Community Services to collect and analyze data on a TANF-funded youth program.
REQUIRED TEXTS (available at the Oberlin College Bookstore):
These are also available on reserve at Mudd.

Hochschild, Jennifer and Nathan Scovronick. 2003. The American Dream and Public Schools. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. (please note: additional unassigned chapters from this text are an excellent resource for your Solutions project)

Berrey, Ellen. 2015. The Enigma of Diversity: The Language of Race and the Limits of Racial Justice. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. (please note: additional unassigned chapters from this text are an excellent resource for your Solutions project)


In Class Etiquette:
This is an upper-level course. I hope you have enrolled because you want to be here. We will confront emotionally difficult topics and in a time when there is increased attention to issues of racial injustice. I anticipate that you will be thoughtful and patient (with me, with each other, with yourself) about how we talk about the material covered in this course, recognizing that we cannot know how our words and what we read will impact others without honest dialogue. As a country, we need places and spaces where we can talk about difficult matters in ways that are honest and thorough. Let’s do all we can to make this class one such space, and remain hopeful that in developing our abilities to facilitate difficult discussions we can foster more of these conversations – on campus and when we are far from Oberlin.

In pursuit of that goal, please also respect the following:
No need to raise your hand - Look around. Be on time (or early!) Learn names. Be kind. Ask classmates (and me) to clarify comments and provide evidence to support their contributions. To do this, bring your reading notes and discussion questions, have the texts, and reading notes, and listen to others. Like all courses, students will bring different types of experience and our course will be richer and more interesting if we are attentive to and engage with multiple perspectives.
ASSESSMENT

Participation: 20 points
High quality participation is demonstrated by being prepared with reading notes and questions for discussion and encouraging others to participate. I will sometimes collect reading questions and reflections in the first five minutes of class (or discussion reflections at the end of class) as part of assessing participation.

Discussion Leadership: 80 points (2x40). On a few occasions, you will – in cooperation with a few others – take the lead in facilitating class discussion. While I expect that you will read all the material closely on these days, you should come prepared with questions for discussion (and page numbers to direct us to particular passages), connect the day’s reading to prior readings and discussions, and it is up to you to get conversation going if we hit a lag! Please submit your written memos (including a discussion agenda, questions, passages of particular note, and your summary of the reading) to me by email by 9am on the morning of class and bring a typed copy to class. If I do not receive a copy by 9am, 10 % will be deducted from your grade.

You will receive two grades for discussion leadership: one grade will be averaged from your discussion leadership memos from the first half of the class and the second will be averaged from the second half. On each of these two occasions, you should submit your collected memos (with my comments) and a synthesis of how you understand our discussions and readings so far. A synthesis should do three things: 1) summarize what you have gained from the readings and discussions so far, 2) address questions or topics that you find particularly important and how the various readings speak to each other, and 3) point to questions for areas for further sociological investigation.

The Solutions Project: (100 points)
Please note: there are five class meetings devoted to your project. This should provide you with ample time to coordinate as a research group. You should also establish a written contract that clearly delineates the work among individual group members fairly.

1. Organizational Profile (goals, mission, population served, financial base, activities, challenges) – 10 points
2. Data Collection - 20 points (You will write a description of the agency’s request, how you collect data, the type of data available and a reflection on your dream for what kind of data you would like to have for this effort)
3. Data Analysis -20 points
4. Report to Agency - 50 points
5. Sociological Analysis – 50 points

Total Possible Points: 250
Nitty-Gritties:

Readings:
It is very important that you read all assigned materials well in advance of the class where they are assigned. Please bring detailed reading notes and readings to class.

If a pdf or a link does not work, be resourceful: look for it on your own through OC libraries first.

LATE Assignments:
You must contact me within a week of an incorrect grade posted to Bb. Please save all of your corrected work. Assignments are DUE at the beginning of class. Assignments are docked 10 points per 24 hour period. (If received anytime between the start of class until the starting hour of class on the following day = 10 points docked. If you turn in a paper 3 days late, your maximum score is a 70, and so on). Being reliable is an important skill.

Formatting: Assignments should be single-spaced, Times New Roman 11 font, STAPLED, double-sided, and include page numbers. Your name, course title, total word count, and date should be at the heading of each page. Failure to properly format your paper may cost you 5% of the possible score.

Attendance Policy:
**It is your responsibility to inform me about missing class by email, preferably at least two hours in advance of class and no later than twelve hours after class unless you have a documented excuse from your Class Dean. Failure to do so will result in a 2 point reduction from your final grade.

If you miss more than 3 classes without documentation, you will not be able to earn more than a B in this course.
In the event that you do miss a class, you will be responsible for the material covered and all announcements made in class. (yes, this includes late additions to the course!)

Email:
I try to respond to emails within 24 hours on weekdays. If your question is covered in the syllabus, I will simply reply, “See syllabus.”
When sending an email, include the course number in the subject line. Please check Bb before sending an email to make sure that the information you need is not available via an announcement.
Creating a balance between work and life is a challenge. I encourage you to develop organizational skills now that will help you towards this goal in your future.
**Cell Phones and Laptops:**
Please be respectful that class time is not an appropriate time to use your phone. Please turn your cell phone off or put it in silence mode without light, vibration and sound. Unless specified for special needs accommodation, laptops are only needed for workshop days.

*I find it painfully irritating when students text in class. I may not be kind to people who text.*

**Blackboard:**
You are responsible for making sure your grades are correctly posted. Class handouts, readings not found in the texts, announcements, and important changes to the class schedule will be posted there.

*Do not use Bb to calculate your grade – use this syllabus. Bb is not set up to calculate your grade.*

**Oberlin College Policies:**

*College Sanctioned Absences*
If you intend to miss class for a college-sanctioned event (such as religious holidays or student athlete events) you should notify me within the first two weeks of the semester and provide the appropriate documentation. If you miss for a college-sanctioned reason, you are responsible for understanding the material but your absence is excused.

*Incompletes*
I will not grant an incomplete except in cases with *exceptionally* unusual circumstances. You will need to communicate with your Dean.

*Special Needs*
Students with special needs should inform me *within the first two weeks of class* and provide appropriate documentation from university services.

**Honor Code**
[http://www.oberlin.edu/students/links-life/honorcode.html](http://www.oberlin.edu/students/links-life/honorcode.html)
The Honor Code: Oberlin College students are on their honor to uphold a high degree of academic integrity. All work that students submit is expected to be of their own creation and give proper credit to the ideas and work of others. When students write and sign the Honor Pledge, they are affirming that they have not cheated, plagiarized, fabricated, or falsified information, nor assisted others in these actions.

Honor Pledge: "I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment."
Sign each assignment—it is your reminder to know the boundaries of cheating (not doing your own work) plagiarism (taking credit for someone else’s work) and fabrication (making up sources, quotations or observations). If you feel hesitant or if you are tempted to plagiarize, come see me.

It is not possible for us to have an intellectual community without honor. I expect that you demonstrate respect by recognizing the labor of those who create scholarly works. If you cheat (and this includes plagiarism/ not citing sources), your final grade will be an F.
TAKEING NOTES:
It is your responsibility to take notes during class. You should exchange contact information with a few other students in the course in the event that you are absent.

It is to your advantage to take handwritten notes during class.
[http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/]

Here's some advice borrowed from Princeton:
(http://www.princeton.edu/mcgraw/library/for-students/great-notes/)

You can maximize what you learn in and from class by following three easy steps:

1) adopt active listening skills;

2) take clear, effective notes; and

3) review your notes within 24 hours of taking them.

Listen actively in lecture

(1. Take notes to be more present in class)

- Get to class early so that you can choose a seat free of distractions and close to the lecturer.
- Look over your notes from last time and prepare for the day's lecture, anticipating themes, concepts, and ideas that the lecturer will likely present.
- Listen both for main ideas and for the relevant details supporting them.
- Pay particular attention when the lecturer is analyzing, synthesizing, or processing information for you, such as when she makes a list, notes cause and effect, uses superlatives, or spends a lot of time explaining something.
- Ask questions when you don't understand something.

Take good notes during lecture using the Cornell Method of Note taking

(2. Take notes in a way that sets you up to listen and contribute effectively to class)

- Using only one side of your paper, draw a vertical line a few inches from the left side of the paper and a horizontal line a few inches up from the bottom of the page. (See example below.)
- Take legible notes in the central portion of your paper. Don't transcribe every word that the lecturer says. Rather, focus on main ideas, themes, and concepts, taking down only those details, examples, illustrations, or formulae that will help you to remember the central point(s) of the lecture.
• Use consistent, understandable abbreviations whenever possible.
• Skip lines to indicate transitions from one thought or idea to the next.
• Leave noticeable blanks for words, ideas, or dates that you didn't catch but can fill in later.
• Put question marks in the left-hand margin to indicate that you should do further investigation on this section of your notes, either on your own or by going to office hours.

Fill in and review notes after lecture

(3. Take notes to help you study more effectively)

• Review your notes within 24 hours of taking them. Students forget 50% of what they learn if they don't review within 24 hours.
• Fill in any blanks you left and answer any questions you may have from lecture.
• Use the left-hand margin to annotate your notes indicating key terms, concepts, dates, and any other important information that will help you to review for exams or write papers.
• Use the bottom margin to write a summary of each page of notes—or, if it makes more sense, summarize at the end of one set of lecture notes.

Following these steps will help you to store information in your long-term memory and better learn your course material the first time around.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

SECTION 1. Education and the Democratic Conundrum
Schools, Diversity, and Merit


August 31 - American Dream: Ch1, What Americans Want from Public Education

Sept. 2 - The Enigma of Diversity, Introduction;

Sept. 7 – The Enigma of Diversity, Chapter One: The Symbolic Politics of Racial Progress

Sept. 9 – Privilege, Introduction: Democratic Inequality and Chapter 1. The New Elite
Sept. 12 – *Privilege*, Chapter 2: Finding One's Place (Group 1) and Chapter 3: The Ease of Privilege (Group 2)

Sept. 14 – *Privilege*, Conclusion (Group 3); *Unequal Childhoods*, Ch. 6: Alexander Williams (Group 4); Ch. 7: Harold McAllister (Group 1)

Sept. 16 – First Group Meetings for The Solutions Project: Meeting with Cindy Andrews, Executive Director of Oberlin Community Services
http://www.oberlincommunityservices.org/community/our-staff/

*Education, Parenting, and “The Second Shift”:*

Sept. 19 – *Unequal Childhoods*, Ch8: Stacey Marshall (Group 2); Ch. 10: Wendy Driver (Group 3)

Sept. 21 – *Unequal Childhoods*, Ch. 12 The Power and Limits of Social Class

Sept. 23 – *Playing to Win*, Ch. 2: More than Playing Around (Group 4): Studying Competitive Childhoods and Ch.3: Cultivating Competitive Kid Capital: Generalist and Specialist Parents Speak (Group 1)

*September 26 and 28: (The Solutions Project Group Coordination Days – see schedule)*

Sept. 30 – *Playing to Win*, Ch. 6: Trophies, Triumphs, and Tears: Competitive Kids in Action (Group 2)

Oct. 3 – Synthesis of *Privilege* and *Playing to Win*; in class Group Meetings

Oct. 5 – *Playing to Win*, Appendix: Questioning Kids: Experiences from Fieldwork and Interviews; *Privilege*, Methodological and Theoretical Reflections; *Unequal Childhoods*, Appendices A and B and Ch. 15 *Unequal Childhoods* in Context

Oct. 7 – *American Dream*, Ch. 4 School Reform (Group 3)

DUE: *The Solutions Project* Organizational Profile (goals, mission, population served, financial base, activities, challenges); Data Collection Summary

SECTION 2. Racial Disparities, Educational Inequality, and School Discipline

Oct. 10 – Desmond, Matthew and Mustafa Emirbayer. “What is Racial Domination?”

Oct. 12 Yom Kippur (No classes on campus)

Discussion Leadership Collected Memos (Part 1) DUE

*Oct. 15-23: Fall Break*

Oct. 24 – *American Dream*, Ch. 2: School Desegregation (Group 1); Heitzeg, “Education or Incarceration: Zero Tolerance Policies and The School” to Prison Pipeline” Forum on Public Policy, 2009. (Group 2)

Oct. 26 - *American Dream*, Ch.5: Choice (Group 3)

Oct. 28- *American Dream*, Ch. 6: Separation and Inclusion (Group 1 and 4)

Oct. 31 – The Solutions Project Research Day


**Nov. 4** - The Solutions Project Day – (in Class – see SP schedule)


The Solutions Project Day: Data Analysis Workshop (in Class)

**SECTION 3. Inequality, Punishment, and Alternatives**

**Nov. 11** – *Punishment and Modern Society*, Ch. 1: The Sociology of Punishment and Punishment Today (Group 4) and Ch. 12 Punishment as a Social Institution (Group 1)

**Nov. 14** – *Punishment and Modern Society*, Ch. 6: Punishment and the Technologies of Power: The Work of Michel Foucualt (Group 2); Ch. 7 The Rationalization of Punishment: Weberian Themes in Modern Penality (Group 3)

**Nov. 16** – *Incarceration Nations*, Introduction and Ch. 1 Revenge and Reconciliation, Rwanda (Group 4)

**Nov. 18** The Solutions Project Day (Group Coordination Meetings)
Nov. 21 – 25 Thanksgiving Recess

Nov. 28 – Incarceration Nations, Ch. 2 Sorry, South Africa (Group 1)
The Solutions Project Day: Data Analysis (Round 1) DUE


Dec. 2 – Punishment and Inequality in America, Ch. 1: Mass Imprisonment (Group 3) and Ch. 2: Inequality, Crime, and the Prison Boom (Group 4)
The Solutions Project Day Preliminary Draft DUE

Dec. 5 - Punishment and Inequality in America, Ch. 1: Mass Imprisonment (Group 1) and Ch. 2: Inequality, Crime, and the Prison Boom (Group 2)

Dec. 7 - Punishment and Inequality in America, Ch. 4: Invisible Inequality (Group 3) and Ch. 6 Incarceration, Marriage and Family Life (Group 4)

Dec. 9 – Solutions Project Presentations in class for Oberlin Community Services
Executive Director, Cindy Andrews
Discussion Leadership Collected Memos (Part 2) DUE

Wednesday December 14: Final Product for The Solutions Project DUE before 4pm. Deliver paper copy to King 301b and email electronic copy to csmith3@oberlin.edu