

University of Florida  
Department of History and African American Studies  
Spring 2017

**AFA 3930/AMH 3931: The New Jim Crow**

Dr. Lauren Pearlman

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T/R: 5-6/6 (11:45-1:40/12:50-1:40)

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or by appointment

**Course Description**

Scholar Michelle Alexander argues that mass incarceration is “a stunningly comprehensive and well-disguised system of racialized social control that functions in a manner strikingly similar to Jim Crow.” In fact, more African American adults are under correctional supervision—in prison or jail, on probation or on parole—than were enslaved in 1850. In this course, we will read works by Alexander and other scholars that make connections between race and the criminal justice system. We will focus on punishment in post-civil rights America (including policing, the war on crime, and the war on drugs), examine the social and political implications of mass incarceration, and research possible alternatives to the current system. Our goal is to understand the historical and contemporary circumstances that have allowed mass incarceration to become a seemingly permanent feature of African American life.

**Course Objectives:** You are about to learn a lot about the U.S. criminal justice system. Here are some of our goals for the semester:

1. Learn about key developments in the U.S. criminal justice system as well as *how* it functions as a system of racialized social control and *how* it has shaped the world in which we live.
2. Analyze evidence, synthesize conflicting points of view, evaluate assumptions and biases to attain a balanced perspective, and develop critical interpretations of their significance.
3. Develop the ability to effectively communicate critical thinking, both orally and in writing.
4. Learn key themes, principles, terminology, and methodology related to the study of race and the criminal justice system.

**Required Readings**

We will read a variety of books, articles, and primary documents. There are three (3) required texts available for purchase at the UF Bookstore or from an online retailer. Note: Amazon.com offers competitive pricing on many of these books, including the option to rent books and purchase used copies. If you decide to purchase your books online, please make sure that you purchase the correct edition and that you allow enough time for shipping. In addition to these books, there will be various readings, images, and other primary documents available online via Canvas, the course e-learning site, at <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/>. These are required readings and will form the basis of many assignments. Whether you print them out as hard copy or not is up to you, but please be sure that you can access them in time for class.

- Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (available as eBook via UFL library)
- Meda Chesney-Lind and March Mauer, *Invisible Punishment: The Collateral Consequences of Mass Imprisonment*
- Assata Shakur, *Assata: An Autobiography* (available as eBook via UFL library)

### Required Film Screenings

Film screenings are a crucial component of this class. There are eight (8) required films of varying lengths. All screenings will be held during class time. If you miss a screening, you are responsible for making up the viewing on your own time. Note: there will be writing assignments associated with the screenings and they are considered fair material on which to be tested.

- *Slavery by Another Name* (1hr30mins)
- *Angola for Life* (13mins)
- *13th* (1hr40mins)
- *A Sentence Apart* (12 mins)
- *Mothers of Bedford* (1hr33mins)
- *The Central Park Five* (2hrs)
- *The Hunted and the Hated* (13mins)
- *Visions of Abolition* (48mins)

### Course Assignments:

- This is an upper-level course. As such, this class requires a serious commitment of time and energy. Please have your syllabus on hand and be sure to keep up with all of the reading and writing deadlines.
- **Readings:** Each week, you will be assigned roughly 100 pages of reading. You are expected to read all of the assigned readings before class and arrive in class with questions, comments, and opinions about what you have read. Make sure to allow enough time in your schedule to read thoroughly and critically.
- **Quizzes:** There will be six (6) quizzes given during the semester. I reserve the right to let you know when they will be administered (or not!). These quizzes will be short and will be on the day's reading. Quizzes will be graded on a 20-point scale, and you may drop your lowest score.
- **Film Reflections:** You are required to write a five hundred (500) word reflection on five of the films/documentaries we watch in class. These will be due at the beginning of the class following the screening unless otherwise noted. Film reflections will be graded on a 20-point scale.
- **Timeline Exercise:** You are required to research a police-citizen confrontation through newspaper articles and other online reports and construct a detailed timeline about it. You will also present your findings in class. Further instructions regarding format and content

will be distributed before the assignment is due. Timelines are due on **January 31**. Presentations will be ongoing.

- A midterm exam covering all material up to that point will be on **February 14**.
- **Policy Paper:** You are required to research and write a policy paper on any aspect of the New Jim Crow. The topic is due on **February 23**. The proposal is due on **March 21** and the final policy paper is due on **April 18**. This will be a group project. Further instructions regarding format and content will be distributed before the assignments are due.

**Grades:** Your grade in this class will be determined largely by your performance on a variety of written assignments and exams. These exercises will allow you to hone your critical thinking and writing skills and allow you to reflect thoughtfully on race and the criminal justice system. Improvement over the course of the semester is not only encouraged but also rewarded.

Your grade for this class will be determined as follows:

Participation and Attendance	15%
Quizzes	10%
Film reflections	10%
Timeline Exercise	15%
Timeline	10%
Presentation	5%
Midterm	20%
Policy Paper Proposal	10%
Policy Paper	20%

**UF Grading Scale**

Letter Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E	WF	I	N	G	S	U
Grade Points	4.0	3.67	3.33	3.0	2.67	2.33	2.0	1.67	1.33	1.0	.67	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

A100-94, A-: 90-93	C+: 77-79, C: 74-76, C-: 70-73
B+: 87-89, B: 84-86, B-: 80-83	D+: 67-69, D: 64-66, D-: 60-64      F: below 60

**Essays:** Generally speaking, I will look for the following in your papers:

1. Analysis. Does the paper make a convincing and coherent argument?
2. Evidence. Is the argument well supported by evidence? Is evidence used effectively?
3. Organization. Is the paper structured in logical way?
4. Content and originality. Does the paper make an original contribution or insight? Does the author’s own opinion and voice come through?
5. Mechanics and style. Is the paper free of spelling and grammar errors? Is it clearly written?

### Attendance and Assignment Policies

- Attendance is required, expected, and central to your learning experience. Attendance is taken in a few ways including: roll call, sign-up sheets, quizzes, and in class activities.
- Class will begin and end on time each day. Please be considerate of your classmates and avoid disrupting their learning.
- In addition to showing up for class on time, be ready to articulate and defend your ideas, as well as to listen to and work with the ideas of others.
- Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date and turned in by you and you alone. Unless stated otherwise, late assignments will be penalized one-third-letter grade per 24-hour period after the deadline. So if you turn your assignment in after class ends the same day it is due, and your grade is a B, your final grade will be a B-.
- In order for assignments to be accepted without losing points, please contact me as soon as possible and provide documentation of illness or other university-approved absences. Dated documentation can include, but are not limited to: dated doctor's note, documentation of jury duty, obituary, etc. I reserve the right to contact the appropriate sources to confirm the documentation. If you know you must have an excused absence, contact me beforehand to make arrangements to turn in work before class.
- If you turn in an assignment and leave before class ends, your assignment will be discarded and will be considered late once re-submitted.
- You are responsible for getting the information and material you miss in class from a classmate. A student with 5 unexcused absences will have their grade dropped a full letter grade. More than 8 absences will result in automatic failure of the course. Arriving at class late and/or leaving before class is over counts as ½ an absence. I will not contact students during the semester to apprise them of their attendance status; it is the responsibility of the students to check this regularly. Religious holidays, UF athletic travel conflicts, and written explanations from a certified health professional are eligible for an excused absence when cleared with the instructor ahead of time. See UF attendance policy at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

### Guidelines for Discussion

Participation in discussion is an important part of your role as a member of this class. I expect students to be prepared and engaged in discussion. You should expect to be called on from time to time. Please keep in mind that conversations about race can stir up strong emotions. A great deal of this results from the environment of mistrust and misunderstanding that exists in the wider society. I start from the assumption that those of you that have chosen to take this class have come with an open mind, ready not only to share your points of view but to try to understand the perspectives of others. Thoughtful, insightful, and honest points of view are needed in order to help us all learn to communicate more effectively and openly about race. So that everyone feels respected in the classroom, use tact and understanding when presenting your ideas. Personal attacks, disparaging remarks, or attempts to dominate the conversation will not be tolerated. Remember as well that individuals in the classroom may have been personally affected by the issues that we are discussing; and to show respect to your peers and the educational process.

### **Mobile Electronic Device Policy**

Recent studies have shown that college students retain less information when they use laptops instead of pen and paper, and that open laptops are disruptive to nearby students. However, I recognize that many of you are more comfortable taking notes on a computer, so I will allow it during lecture and discussion. Laptops will not be allowed during film screenings, so do bring pen and paper to class on these days. I reserve the right to ban laptops if they become disruptive over the course of the semester. Please silence your cell phone prior to the start of class, keep it out of sight, and do not text or use social media apps during class time.

### **Correspondence**

I will send important course announcements and other correspondence to you via your UF email account. If you do not use this as your primary account, please make sure that you have your UF email forwarded to you and check your email regularly! Sadly I will not text you reminders about when assignments are due.

### **How to get in touch with your professor**

- Come to office hours. I truly enjoy getting to know more about students outside of the classroom. You are encouraged to stop by with any questions that you may have about assignments, readings, your major, going grad school, or other pertinent topics.
- Email me at [lpearlman@ufl.edu](mailto:lpearlman@ufl.edu). I will generally get back to you within 24 hours, though my response will be slower during the weekend. Do not email me the night before an assignment is due and expect to receive a response.

### **Students with Disabilities**

Please do not hesitate to contact the instructor during the semester if you have any individual concerns or issues that need to be discussed. Students requesting classroom accommodations must first register with the Dean of Students Office (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting an accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

### **Academic Honesty**

The University, as well as your instructor, values and expects academic integrity. Ethical violations include cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, and academic misconduct (including turning in the work of others as your own and reusing old assignments). These will not be tolerated and will result in a failure of the assignment and the risk of an automatic failing grade in the course, and possible expulsion from UF. To avoid plagiarism, you must not copy the words, phrases, arguments, ideas, or conclusions of another person or source (including Internet sources) without properly crediting the person or source with both quotation marks and a footnote. Make sure that you properly cite direct quotations, paraphrased information, and facts that are not widely known. I will provide you with guidelines for proper citations and formatting prior to your submission of all written work, but you may contact me at any time for clarification. For more information on UF's honest policy, see <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/conductcode.php>. For more information on how UF's Judicial Affairs processes cases of plagiarism, see <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.php>.

Note: Only original work will receive a grade. A zero will be assigned to any work with unoriginal work until the situation is resolved.

### **Student Evaluations**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>.

### **U Matter, We Care**

Your well-being is important to the University of Florida. The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and to reach out for help if a member of our community is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) so that the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.

## Course Schedule

Please Note: the schedule is provisional and may be changed as needed by the instructor.

### Week One: Introduction

January 5      None

### Week Two: The Old Jim Crow

January 10      Read Syllabus and Ezekiel Kweku, "Slow Poison," Pacific Standard, August 15, 2015 (<https://psmag.com/slow-poison-e032ed935ff7#.9jrk6qrz5>)

January 12      Chafe, Remembering Jim Crow, selections (on Canvas)

### Week Three: A Brief History of Racialized Social Control

January 17      Film screening: Slavery by Another Name (1hr30mins)  
Alexander, The New Jim Crow, Introduction and ch 1  
Syllabus Acknowledgement form due

January 19      Alexander, The New Jim Crow, ch 2  
Film Reflection due

### Week Four: The Rise of Law and Order

January 24      Film screening: Angola for Life (13mins)  
Alexander, The New Jim Crow, ch 3

January 26      Heather Ann Thompson, "Why Mass Incarceration Matters: Rethinking Crisis, Decline, and Transformation in Postwar American History," Journal of American History, 97:3 2010: 703-734 (on Canvas)

### Week Five: The New Jim Crow

January 31      Film screening: 13th (1hr40mins)  
**Timelines due**

February 2      Alexander, The New Jim Crow, ch 4  
Film Reflection due

### Week Six: Race, Crime, and Punishment

February 7      Mauer and Chesney-Lind, Invisible Punishment, Introduction and Part I: Beyond Doing Time: The Lifetime Consequences of Imprisonment, 1-58

February 9      Alexander, The New Jim Crow, ch 5

Week Seven: Midterm Exam and Research Day

February 14 **Midterm Exam**

February 16 Research Day – Meet in Library

Week Eight: The Consequences of the New Jim Crow

February 21 Film screening: A Sentence Apart (12 mins)  
Mauer and Chesney-Lind, Invisible Punishment, Part II: Distorting Justice, 59-114

February 23 Mauer and Chesney-Lind, Invisible Punishment, Part III: Fractured Families, 115-162  
**Policy Paper Topics due**

Week Nine: Communities in Crisis

February 28 Film screening: War on the Family (48mins)  
Mauer and Chesney-Lind, Invisible Punishment, Part IV: Communities in Crisis, 163-194

March 2 Mauer and Chesney-Lind, Invisible Punishment, Part V: Incarceration as Socially Corrosive, 195-257  
Film Reflection due

Week Ten: Spring Break

March 7 No Class

March 9 No Class

Week Eleven: Gender and The New Jim Crow

March 14 Film screening: Mothers of Bedford (1hr33mins)  
Assata, ch 1-4, 1-80

March 16 Assata, ch 5-11, 81-172  
Film Reflection due

Week Twelve: Gender and The New Jim Crow (cont.)

March 21 Film screening: The Central Park Five (2hrs)  
**Policy Paper Proposals due**



March 23 Assata, ch 12-end, 173-274  
Film Reflection due

Week Thirteen: Black Lives Matter

March 28 Film screening: The Hunted and the Hated (13mins)  
Blog posts and news articles posted on Canvas

March 30 Blog posts and news articles posted on Canvas

Week Fourteen: Bringing it Home – Race and Criminal Justice in Florida

April 4 Special guests Emily Le Coz and Josh Salman from the *Herald-Tribune*  
<http://projects.heraldtribune.com/bias/alachua/>;  
<http://projects.heraldtribune.com/bias/bauer/>;  
<http://projects.heraldtribune.com/bias/sentencing/>;  
<http://projects.heraldtribune.com/bias/politics/>

April 6 Juvenile Justice in Florida  
<http://www.tampabay.com/features/humaninterest/florida-juvenile-justice-dozier-schools-roster-of-the-lost/1056446>;  
<http://www.npr.org/2012/10/15/162941770/floridas-dozier-school-for-boys-a-true-horror-story>; <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/archaeologists-finally-know-what-happened-brutal-reform-school-180957911/>

Week Fifteen: What Should Be Done?

April 11 Film Screening: Visions of Abolition (48mins)  
Mauer and Chesney-Lind, Invisible Punishment, Part V: Incarceration as Socially Corrosive, 256-292; Alexander, The New Jim Crow, ch 6

April 13 Blog posts and news articles posted on Canvas

Week Sixteen: Conclusions

April 18 Sasha Abramsky, “Is This the End of the War on Crime?” June 2010  
(<https://www.thenation.com/article/end-war-crime/>); Bruce Dixon, “Black Mass Incarceration-Is it New? Is It Jim Crow? Is the Prison-Industrial Complex Real? And What Difference Does it Make?” Black Agenda Report, March 27, 2013  
(<http://www.blackagendareport.com/print/content/black-mass-incarceration-it-new-it-jim-crow-prison-industrial-complex-real-and-what-differen>)

**Policy Papers due**

**Syllabus Acknowledgement and Acceptance**

I \_\_\_\_\_ have carefully read the syllabus in its entirety and agree with the requirements, policies, and all other terms. I have asked clarifying questions to ensure that I understand what I read.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_