

Minority Issues in Justice Systems
Sociology 344-01
Rhode Island College, Spring 2010

Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:00 AM-12:20 PM, Craig-Lee Hall Room 228
Prerequisite: Any 200-level sociology course

Instructor Information

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Office: Craig Lee Hall room 451

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:15-10:45 am and 4:15-4:45 pm

Course Website: <http://www.ric.edu/faculty/marthur/classes.html>

Course Description

This course considers the historical and contemporary relationships between people of color and the United States justice system. Though a broad swath of issues will be discussed, the primary focus will be on the criminal justice process, and (for reasons that will become clear during the course of the semester) the experiences of Blacks as related to criminal justice. The course will explore the racial disparities that exist in and around the justice system and various structural and institutional explanations for these disparities. Students will also gain practice in creating written work in which they draw on social scientific evidence to support arguments about the causes and consequences of disparities and the appropriate policy responses.

Course Materials

Kennedy, Randall. **1997.** *Race, Crime, and the Law.* Vintage Books.

Meeks, Kenneth. **2000.** *Driving While Black.* Broadway.

Walker, Samuel, Cassia Spohn, and Miriam DeLone. **2007.** *The Color of Justice: Race, Ethnicity, and Crime in America.* Thomson Wadsworth, **4th Edition.**

Additional readings will be distributed electronically; students must to validate their RIC IDs at the library ASAP and ensure that they have access to the Blackboard system.

NOTE THAT THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

Course Requirements

1. IN AND OUT OF CLASS ASSIGNMENTS. This course requires use of the Blackboard Course Management System. In Blackboard, you will find quizzes, short writing assignments, or other exercises for each week of the semester. Quizzes will cover both class sessions and readings. This portion of the grade may also include individual or group assignments completed in class. It is your responsibility to keep track of these assignments and submit them before the due date; they cannot be submitted late or made up and may not be announced in class. However, because things do come up, there will be the opportunity to earn more points than you need for this component of the grade. **(30% of class grade)**
2. WRITING ASSIGNMENTS. Over the course of the semester, you will complete 4 writing assignments. These are outlined as follows, but specific instructions will be distributed later in the semester:
 - a. “Crime Happens” writing assignment: 1-2 page writing assignment to be submitted in class on February 18th. You will have some choice in what to address in this assignment. **(10% of class grade)**
 - b. Driving While Black writing assignment: 2-3 page writing assignment to be submitted in class on March 4th. This assignment will be related to the *Driving While Black* book. **(15% of class grade)**
 - c. *Option*: Juries & Trials writing assignment due April 1st **or** Sentencing writing assignment due April 15th. Either assignment is 2-3 pages and due in class. You may *not* submit both assignments. Unless you have significant time conflicts with the April 1st date or a very strong interest in sentencing, I encourage you to do the Juries & Trials assignment. **(15% of class grade)**
 - d. End-of-Term Op-Ed on a policy issue: 4-6 pages due May 13th (or May 11th for seniors). This will follow a very specific format, so be sure you have a copy of the assignment when the time comes. **(25% of class grade)**
3. PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE. You are expected to come on time for every class meeting and let me know as soon as possible (preferably in advance) if you must miss class for a legitimate reason. Frequent absences will result in a lower grade. Part of your attendance is the expectation that you will participate in class sessions by contributing something to our discussions. If you have significant problems speaking in class, I strongly urge you to come speak to me privately as soon as possible to develop alternative participation mechanisms (such as private meetings or e-mail discussions) so that you can meet this requirement. Remember that there are few stupid questions, but that all questions and comments should be made in a spirit of respect for other students and their contributions to the class. **(5% of class grade)**
4. READING. You are expected to complete all assigned course readings prior to the date for which they are assigned. Remember that normal expectations for a college course are that you should do two to three hours of work outside class for every one hour in class—since you are spending three hours a week in this class, that means you should expect to work on reading, writing assignments, and studying for this class for six to nine hours a week outside of class. While reading does not count for a separate percentage of your grade, students who do not complete the reading will find that they are not able to earn high grades in other components of the course.

Course Schedule

Readings and assignments are due on the *first day* under which they are listed. Readings and assignments in *Race, Crime, and the Law* are marked with a **K**, those in *Driving While Black* are marked with an **M**, those in *The Color of Justice* are marked with a **W**, and those available electronically are noted with an **E**. Do pay attention to the page numbers noted; sometimes, portions of a chapter are assigned rather than an entire chapter. In most cases, these instances are marked with ONLY.

Tuesday, January 26	First Day of Class
Thursday, January 28	Considering Race and Crime ◆ “Race, Ethnicity, and Crime,” 1-28 W
Tuesday, February 2	Understanding Race and Racism ◆ “The Race Question in Criminal Law,” 3-28 K ◆ “Theoretical Perspectives,” 92-97 W
Thursday, February 4	History of Race in the Justice System, Part I ◆ “History,” 29-63 AND 76-107 K ◆ Student Info Sheet/Photo Due
Tuesday, February 9	History of Race in the Justice System, Part II ◆ “History,” 63-75 AND 105-135 K
Thursday, February 11	Race, Social Structure, and Crime ◆ “Race, Ethnicity, Social Structure, and Crime,” 77-92, 97-105 W
Tuesday, February 16	Race and Victimization ◆ “Victims and Offenders,” 29-45 ONLY W ◆ “Juveniles as Victims of Crime,” 376-381 ONLY W
Thursday, February 18	Offending Patterns ◆ “Victims and Offenders,” 45-76 ONLY W ◆ “Juveniles as Offenders,” 381-386 ONLY W ◆ “ <i>Crime Happens</i> ” Writing Assignment Due
Tuesday, February 23	Policing Practices ◆ “Justice on the Street?” 106-118, 135-145, 153-162 ONLY W ◆ “Juveniles of Color and the Police,” 386-389 ONLY W
Thursday, February 25	Racial Profiling, Part I ◆ “Race, Law, and Suspicion,” 136-167 K ◆ “Justice on the Street?” 118-135 ONLY W
Tuesday, March 2	Racial Profiling, Part II ◆ <i>Driving While Black</i> , xi-180 and 218-244 ONLY M

Thursday, March 4

Personnel in the Justice System

- ◆ “Justice on the Street?” 145-153 **ONLY W**
- ◆ Barak, Leighton, and Flavin, “Workers and the Enterprise of Criminal Justice,” from *Class, Race, Gender, and Crime* 226-247 **E**
- ◆ *Driving While Black assignment due*

Tuesday, March 9

Pre-Trial Processes

- ◆ “The Courts,” 163-200 **W**

Thursday, March 11

More on Juries

- ◆ “Race & the Composition of Juries,” 180-193, 227-245, 253-256 **K**



Tuesday, March 23

The Trial Process

- ◆ “Justice on the Bench?” 201-230 **W**
- ◆ “Race/Ethnicity & Juvenile Justice System,” 390-409 **ONLY W**

Thursday, March 25

More on the Trial Process (OJ)

- ◆ “Playing the Race Card in a Criminal Trial,” 256-262 & 286-310 **K**

Tuesday, March 30

Passover—No Class Meeting

Thursday, April 1

Sentencing

- ◆ “Race and Sentencing,” 231-271 **W**
 - ◆ *Juries/Trials paper option due*
- ***Deadline for Withdrawing from the Course: **April 2**

Tuesday, April 6

Corrections & Imprisonment

- ◆ “Corrections in America,” 341-374 **W**
- ◆ “Juvenciles Under Correctional Supervision,” 409-412 **ONLY W**

Thursday, April 8

The Death Penalty

- ◆ “The Color of Death,” 290-340 **W**
- ◆ “Race, Law, and Punishment,” 211-350 **K**

Tuesday, April 13

The War on Drugs

- ◆ “Race, Law, and Punishment,” 351-386 **K**
- ◆ Dwyer, “Whites Smoke Pot, but Blacks are Arrested,” *New York Times* 12/22/2009, A24 **E**

Thursday, April 15

Hate Crimes

- ◆ Petrosino, “Connecting the Past to the Future,” *J. of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 15: 22-47 **E**
- ◆ Levin, “Hate Crimes,” *J. of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 15: 6-21 **E**
- ◆ *Sentencing Paper Option Due*

Tuesday, April 20

Consequences of Disparities in the System

- ◆ Pager, “The Mark of a Criminal Record,” *American Journal of Sociology* 108: 937-75 **E**
- ◆ Western, “The Black Family and Mass Incarceration” (podcast & slides from The Moynihan Report Revisited Conference) **E**

Thursday, April 22

Moving Forward: Methods of Combating Discrimination

- ◆ Ancheta, “Discrimination and Antidiscrimination Law,” *Race, Rights, and the Asian American Experience* 42-60 **E**
- ◆ Yoshino, “The Pressure to Cover,” *New York Times Magazine* **E**

Tuesday, April 27

Moving Forward: Political Power & Representation

- ◆ Uggen *et al.*, “Criminal Disenfranchisement,” *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 1: 307-22 **E**
- ◆ Arden *et al.*, “Introduction: Racial and Ethnic Discrimination,” *Redistricting Law 2000*, National Conference of State Legislatures **E**
<http://www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/departments/scr/redist/red2000/Ch3part1.htm>
- ◆ Play the Redistricting Game, Mission 4, at <http://www.redistrictinggame.org/> **E**

Thursday, April 29

Moving Forward: Criminal Justice Policy

- ◆ Mauer, “Racial Impact Statements” *Criminal Justice* 23, 19-22 **E**
- ◆ “The Color of Justice,” 418-423 **W**
- ◆ “Afterword,” 387-390 **K**

Tuesday, May 4

Case Study: Terrorism

- ◆ Rudovsky and Banks, “Debate: Racial Profiling and the War on Terror,” *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 155, 173-185 **E**
- ◆ Harris, “Flying While Arab,” *Civil Rights Journal* 6, 8-13 **E**
- ◆ Bayoumi, “American Girl,” *New York Magazine* 08/03/2008 **E**
Optional: Watch “A Dream in Doubt” online at http://www.snagfilms.com/films/title/dream_in_doubt

Thursday, May 6

Course Conclusion

- ◆ American Sociological Association, “Race, Ethnicity, and the Criminal Justice System,” 1-23 **E**

Final Op-Ed Assignments Due

Thursday, May 13th at Noon in my mailbox in the sociology department.

(Graduating seniors who want grades filed on time must turn in their papers by

Tuesday, May 11th at 3:30 PM.)

Course Policies

Academic Honesty

All students enrolling in this course are expected to abide by the Rhode Island College guidelines on academic honesty, which can be located in the Student Handbook and other official documents.

Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to:

- Plagiarizing written work, including copying some or all of your work from a book, a website, or another student's paper. Think about how you would feel if someone passed off your hard work as their own.
- Using sources without proper attribution. Remember that all claims in a paper that did not spring fully formed from your own head need attribution, regardless of whether or not they are paraphrased, and all direct quotes should appear in quotation marks. If you are unsure how to document sources, please see me or reference the sociology department term paper guide, available at <http://www.ric.edu/sociology/termpaperguide.php>.
- Turning in work completed for other classes without prior permission.
- Working together with another student on an assignment, or seeking assistance with the content of your work from professionals, parents, or peers, without prior permission. (The exception to this policy is proofreading.)
- Copying off of another student or off of materials you have brought without permission during an exam. This includes text messaging and use of the internet during exams.
- Destroying course materials or otherwise preventing other students from achieving fully in this course.

You should be aware that I have caught many students who have engaged in academic dishonesty. Cheating successfully is often harder than you think, and you might as well just put your effort into doing the assignment legitimately. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe, and include receiving a 0 on the assignment for the first minor offense, receiving an F for the class for a repeated offense, and report to the Vice President for Academic Affairs at RIC. If you feel the urge to engage in academic dishonesty, stop and think about what you are doing, and then come see me so we can work out a plan together to ensure your success in the course.

Extensions, Absences, and Attendance

You are expected to attend class regularly, but I am aware that emergencies do come up and that this class is not the only priority in your life. If you know in advance that you will be absent for a legitimate reason, please let me know via email so that you can be excused. If something unavoidable comes up, it is your responsibility to let me know as soon as possible afterwards. Regardless, it is your responsibility to get notes from a classmate (I do not provide notes to students) and to meet with me to clarify what you have missed. If you must be late to a class or if you must leave early, you should try to let me know in advance, and you should always be sure not to disturb other students with your comings and goings. Be aware that repeated absences, even if excused, may imperil your ability to do well in the course, and that you can not earn participation points if you are not present.

All assignments are due in class at the start of class. While I understand that you may occasionally experience printer problems, these are not an excuse for late work. It is my preference that all work be turned in on paper, but in unavoidable situations you may email me your work. If you must email me your work, it must be sent at least 15 minute prior to the start of class (you may not skip class to

finish your work) in *.rtf, *.doc, *.docx, *.pdf, or *.html format (try “Save As” to select one of these formats). I will write back to you letting you know that I received and could open your work. If I do not receive it or can not open it, it does not count as having been submitted, so I encourage you to try your best to get me a paper copy. If unavoidable circumstances require you to seek an extension on your work, I am generally open to providing one. However, you will need to request the extension via email at least 24 hours prior to the due date unless the extension is due to a major emergency (health crisis, death in the family, etc.) – so plan ahead.

Course Technology

Students are expected to check their RIC email addresses frequently, at a minimum twice a week before each class meeting. If you primarily use another email account, I would suggest you arrange for your RIC email to be forwarded, as I do use email to disseminate important information about the course. Students are also responsible for being able to access the WebCT site for this course (through which you can access the course website), as course documents and information will be made available there. If you are not able to access email, WebCT, or the course website, you should seek assistance from User Support Services (<http://www.ric.edu/uss/> or 456-8803) right away so that you do not fall behind in the course.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability that might interfere with your ability to perform at your best in this course, it is your responsibility to come and speak with me as early as possible in the semester so that we can develop a plan together. All reasonable accommodations will be made. Students with disabilities should be sure that they are registered with Disability Services in order to ensure access to the full range of services available at Rhode Island College. Information about these services and about registration is available at <http://www.ric.edu/disabilityservices/>.

Supplemental Services

Writing Center: <http://www.ric.edu/writingcenter/>

OASIS (academic support, time management, ESL, etc.): <http://www.ric.edu/oasis>

Counseling Center (confidential & free services): <http://www.ric.edu/counselingctr/>