Texas A&M University—Texarkana
Criminial Justice Program
CJ 547 (Seminar in Corrections)
Spring Semester, 2014

I. Locator Information:
Professor:        Dr. Godpower O. Okereke
                 Professor of Sociology and Criminal Justice
Office:                  203 University Center
Office Hours:    MTWR 9:00 to 11:30 AM
                 Wednesdays 5:30 to 6:45 PM
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II. Course Description:
Seminar in Corrections is a course that examines the field of corrections from both
historical and contemporary perspectives. Course materials would include a discussion
of earlier forms of punishment, evolution of modern prisons, the philosophy of
community-based corrections and the controversies that plaque the field of corrections.

III. Course Objectives:
Relevant to the above, the objectives of this course are:
1. To discuss the history of correctional thought.
2. To identify and discuss various forms of punishment.
3. To discuss the evolution of the concepts of penitentiary and corrections.
4. To identify and discuss the various levels of imprisonment.
5. To discuss the history and development of probation and parole.
6. To discuss other forms of community-based corrections.
7. To identify and discuss factors that influence placement in the various types of
correctional facilities along with alternatives to imprisonment.
8. To discuss current controversies in the field of corrections

IV. Course Competencies:
Upon completion of this course, students would be able to:
1. Chronicle the history of modern prisons along with their alternatives.
2. Identify and discuss the purposes of criminal punishment.
3. Differentiate between various types of corrections and correctional facilities.
4. Enumerate at least five issues that plague the field of corrections today.
Va. Required Textbook:
The required text for this course is: *Addicted to Incarceration: Corrections Policy and the Politics of Misinformation in the United States* (2009) by Travis C. Pratt. ISBN: 978-0-7619-2832-4

Vb. Supplemental Textbook:

VI. Course Evaluation:
Ten Consecutive tests ........................................... 100 points
Research Project .................................................... 100 points
Presentation .......................................................... 50 points

Total points .......................................................... 250 points

VII. Schedule of Activities and Reading List:
Week 1: Introduction to the American Criminal Justice System with Emphasis on “Corrections”
Week 2: Chapter 1: Introduction: The Politics and Consequences of Incarceration
Week 3: Chapter 2: The Politics of “Punishment” in the United States
Week 5: Chapter 3: Misinformation About the Crime Problem
Week 6: Chapter 3: Misinformation About the Crime Problem
Week 7: Chapter 4: Misinformation About Public Opinion
Week 8: Chapter 4: Misinformation About Public Opinion
Week 9: Chapter 5: Misinformation About Prisons and Crime Control
Week 10: Chapter 5: Misinformation About Prisons and Crime Control
Week 11: Chapter 5: Misinformation About Prisons and Crime Control
Week 12: Chapter 6: The Social Costs and Consequences of Incarceration
Week 13: Chapter 6: The Social Costs and Consequences of Incarceration

Week 14: Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations.

Week 15: Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations.

IX. Teaching Methodologies:
This class is a graduate seminar. Like other graduate seminars, it encourages independence of thought. As a result, my strategy will be to present issues and subjects covered in both the required text and in the supplementary text and in any other course materials referenced or handed out in class to facilitate discussions on those issues and subjects in order to arouse the students’ intellect. The presentations will be designed to tickle the students’ intellectual curiosity so that each student can critically examine the issues under discussion and be able to articulate their own ideas and/or views on such issues or subjects. Guest speaker(s), visual and/or audio materials could be employed to augment the presentations if possible. Students’ participation in class discussions is essential.

X. Research Project:
Students are required to choose a topic within the sub-area of corrections by Friday, January 24th, 2014. Once approved by the professor, the student will research the issue thoroughly and then conduct an unbiased evaluation of the issue in light of contemporary realities regarding administration of justice under an adversarial criminal justice system. The student will then make a formal presentation to the class demonstrating the following:

1. A clear understanding of the issue.
2. Why the issue is important within the American system of justice.
3. The extent to which the issue affects those who are a part of the corrections system.
4. How the issue affects the American society as a whole.
5. What society could do about this issue and why.

A week before presentations begin, each student will turn in a typed two-page summary of their findings along with a complete list of the sources consulted to prepare the presentation. The two-page summary will be due on April 9th, 2014; presentations will begin on April 16th, 2014 and will proceed alphabetically.

XI. ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM
Academic honesty is expected of students enrolled in this course. Cheating on examinations, unauthorized collaboration, falsification of research data, plagiarism, and copying or undocumented use of materials from any source, constitute academic dishonesty, and may be grounds for a grade of “F” in the course and/or disciplinary action. The student is responsible for reading and understanding the University Policy
on Academic Integrity. For help identifying and avoiding plagiarism go to
http://www.turnitin.com/research_site/e_home.html

XII. DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION
“Students with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations through the A&M-Texarkana Disability Services Office by contacting Carl Greig by calling 903.223.3062.”

XIII. CLASSROOM COURTESY

- Cell phone and beepers: Students are required to turn off cell phones or beepers while in the classroom. If an emergency situation exists which requires you to be contacted immediately, you are expected to discuss the situation with the professor prior to the beginning of class presentation.
- Talking to fellow students.
- Students are expected to refrain from talking while formal instruction is being presented. This applies to the professor and student instruction.

XIV. References


