

**Soc 4650: Women, Crime, and the Justice System**  
**Fall 2016**  
**Appalachian State University**  
**Tuesday/Thursday 11:00-12:15 CW 221**

**Instructor:**

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Office Hours: Monday 10:00-12:00, Tuesday 12:30-1:30, and by appointment

**Course Description**

This course explores women's experiences with crime and the criminal justice system. Historically, criminologists have focused their research on men, as men are more likely to be both the victims and perpetrators of crimes. Yet women are more likely to be the victims of *certain* crimes, such as sexual assault, stalking, and intimate partner violence. In addition, as a result of changing conceptions of gender and the War on Drugs, women's incarceration rates are now increasing at a faster rate than men's. This has unique ramifications for communities, as women are more likely to be caretakers of children and other family members. Given that women's vulnerability to both victimization and offending is the result of a nexus of disadvantages related to gender, race, and socioeconomic status, this course is suited for students with interests in many sociological areas and serves as an upper division elective for the following sociology major concentrations: families and intimate relationships; social inequalities; and criminology, deviance, and law. As such, you do not need a background in criminology to take this course. Over the course of the semester, we will look at the following topics: women's victimization; the construction of women's vulnerability and the ideal victim narrative; how victimization is used to create support for an increasingly punitive criminal justice system; the relationship between women's victimization and offending; the new politics of women's imprisonment; the challenges of reentry after imprisonment; and women's relationships with criminalized men. After completing this course, you will have an understanding of some of the key current research findings and scholarly debates on women, crime, and the justice system.

**Course Objectives**

To analyze:

- the social and economic context that makes women susceptible to certain types of victimization.
- how constructions of gender, race, and class work to create popular narratives of innocent versus deserving victims and how these are used to support increasingly punitive laws.
- the relationship between victimization, social and economic marginalization, and criminal offending.

- how changing understandings of gender have led to new approaches to incarceration and rehabilitation.
- how women's greater assigned and assumed responsibility for family members creates particular challenges for women as they navigate the criminal justice system for both themselves and their loved ones.

## **Course Requirements**

### ***General:***

#### **Paper Format:**

All papers should be typed in Times New Roman 12-point font, double-spaced, with 1 inch margins. Papers not following the requested format will be penalized by 1/3 of a letter grade. I am strict about page requirements. Two and a half pages is NOT three pages and will be graded as an incomplete assignment. Please print and staple your papers yourself. There are nifty mini staplers you can purchase and keep in your bag. Printer problems or App Card problems are your problems alone and you must deal with them. They do not constitute an excuse for not having an assignment in on time.

#### **Late Papers:**

Late papers will result in a lowered grade. Your grade will be reduced by 1/3 of a letter grade per “business” day late (M-F), up to a limit of a three full grade reduction. You are free to turn in make-up work for partial credit up to the last day of class before the final exam period. Remember that an F on a paper is always better than a zero. You should treat this class as you would a job. This means that I will not track you down and ask for your papers; you are responsible for turning them in on your own. You should also take the workload (both readings and assignments) seriously and decide now if you are willing to do the work necessary to receive a passing grade in the class.

#### **Classroom Behavior:**

Please do not text, check the internet, or whisper to your friends during class. It is disrespectful to your classmates and me and interferes with learning. Yes, I notice!!

Throughout this course, we will be discussing many sensitive and contentious subjects. I encourage everyone to participate in discussions, raise questions, and offer interpretations. However, course content, including lectures, readings, videos, and discussions includes graphic descriptions of sexism, racism, and violence, including sexual assault and intimate partner violence. For students who are apprehensive and/or uncomfortable with the content, please speak to me about your uncertainties or drop the course early on. Although these anxieties are understandable, our job in the classroom is to learn about how inequalities, discrimination, and violence affect our lived experiences and the lived experiences of those around us. You need to immediately read through the syllabus to make sure you are able to complete the required readings and assignments.

Discussions will often involve personal experiences and beliefs. The college classroom at its best is a space for exploring ideas, from that we know to what we may not

understand. This is not the same as a space free from dissent or beliefs that you find distasteful or offensive. Please be respectful of the opinions and experiences of your classmates. I do not appreciate students trying to silence or shame other students for their thoughts on various subjects. These ideas may not be well-developed or well-stated, but may serve as someone's attempt to start thinking critically. You are free to offer a counter-argument through class discussion. Although students will not be asked specifically to relate personal information, it is expected that we keep confidential any information garnered from those who do. Thus, no audio recordings are allowed in the course.

### ***Assignments:***

**Readings:** You are expected to come to every class having read all the assigned readings *and* prepared to discuss them. You need to have access to the readings in class, whether printed or on your computer. You may find it helpful to summarize each author's argument in a short paragraph and write down any interesting points or questions raised that you would like to discuss. While you read, please start to think through the following questions:

- What is the author's main argument?
- How does the author support his/her/their argument?
- What are the implications of the author's findings?
- Do you find the author's argument convincing? Why or why not?
- What other issues might be relevant to the author's argument and findings?
- How does the text reflect or challenge cultural attitudes?
- Did you find your own values and assumptions reflected or challenged in the text?
- How do the ideas in the text relate to your own experience? Why might this be?

**Short Papers:** You will write four short papers.

**Paper 1:** You will write a 3-5 page book review of *Getting Played*. Your book review should include: (a) a summary of the book's contents, central argument, and methodology; and (b) your assessment of the book's merits and limitations. Think about what the book contributes to our *sociological* knowledge on the topic and remember that "limitations" doesn't necessarily mean flaws, but instead may also refer to questions the book leaves unanswered and directions for future research. No book can answer all questions on a topic or cover all demographics in its analysis. Analyze the book for what it aims to do. Please read the guide to writing book reviews on AsU Learn before you write your own review. It provides many helpful tips for writing a successful review.

**Paper 1 is due 9/1.**

**Paper 2:** You will write a 3-5 page paper analyzing the case assigned for the group presentation. Start by providing an overview of the crime and the media response. How were the victim and perpetrator portrayed? Next discuss the public and political response to the crime. Finally, discuss any new laws that came out of the case, what they intended to achieve, what they actually achieved, and how they have been received both by those

for and against the laws. Pay attention to any unintended consequences of the laws. **Paper 2 is due 9/22.**

**Paper 3:** You will write a 3-5 page paper arguing for a particular policy approach to prostitution. Summarize the arguments for and against the various policy positions on prostitution. Then, using your own research, make an argument for one of the positions. I have posted a couple of sources on AsU Learn. **Paper 3 is due 10/11.**

**Paper 4:** You will write a 3-5 page book review of *Breaking Women* following the same format as Paper 1. **Paper 4 is due 11/3.**

**Course Paper:** We cannot go over every topic of importance in this course, nor devote sufficient time to the topics we do discuss. This paper allows you to explore a topic of interest in greater depth. Choose a social problem related to the course content that you wish to investigate further. Final paper topics should be discussed with me during office hours and submitted by email with a preliminary outline and sources for the paper, **by September 29th.** Then, you will write a policy brief in which you discuss the social problem, its causes and consequences, the issue's legislative and political history, the current policy response or lack thereof, and recommendations for a course of action to be taken based on relevant research findings on the topic. Your final paper should be 10 pages, excluding the bibliography, and should be written for an educated audience. Please use ASA citation style (style guide posted on AsU Learn). Detailed instructions for the assignment are posted on AsU Learn. **Course papers are due 12/2.**

**Group Presentation:** Each group will give an approximately 20 minute presentation on their assigned case. The instructor will assign groups. The presentations should touch on the same points as paper 2, but should conclude with two discussion questions for the class. The method of presentation is up to you, but each person in the group must be part of the presentation. **Presentations are on 9/20 and 9/22.**

**Participation:** This course will be run as a seminar, with discussion based on the assigned readings. Participation is critical. This includes attendance and participation in and preparedness for class discussion and in-class activities. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. You are allowed three absences over the course of the semester. You will be marked down if you miss more than three classes or repeatedly leave class early or arrive late. Missing class is inadvisable, as it will influence your class participation grade *and* your understanding of the material. Short homework or in-class assignments will be included in your participation grade. If you must miss class, obtain a copy of the notes from another student in class. If you have ongoing medical or personal issues that require frequent absences, please see me as soon as possible to work out accommodations. I require an email from the Dean of Students office verifying the reason for your absences and requesting accommodations. Please use your allotted absences judiciously. This means that if you know you will need to miss a class for a school sponsored or family activity, save an absence for that day. In addition, if you are sensitive to a particular subject, please

use one of your allotted absences that day.

**Grading:**

Short Papers	40%
Group Presentations	10%
Course Paper	25%
Participation	25%

**Grading Scale:**

A+ 99-100	C+ 77-79
A 94-98	C 74-76
A- 90-93	C- 70-73
B+ 87-89	D+ 67-69
B 84-86	D 64-66
B- 80-83	D- 60-63
	F 59 and below

**A range**      **Excellent work.** Demonstrates superior ability to creatively and thoughtfully organize and express ideas. Displays excellent comprehension of all course material and provides a well-considered and thorough response to the assignment.

**B range**      **Good work.** Demonstrates good organization and expression of ideas. Displays a good understanding of course material and provides detailed response to the assignment, although there may be some oversights or missing connections.

**C range**      **Fair work.** Demonstrates uneven skills in organization and expression of ideas, and displays a satisfactory understanding of general course concepts, but with significant gaps in understanding of details, applications, or connections.

**D-F range**    **Marginal to Unacceptable work.** Demonstrates little ability to organize and express ideas in an understandable manner, displays little comprehension of course concepts or provides an incomplete assignment.

**Student Policies:**

There are important university policies that you should be aware of, such as the add/drop policy, cheating and plagiarism policy, grade appeal procedures, and accommodations for students for university-sponsored activities. Go to this URL to find them: <http://academicaffairs.appstate.edu/resources>. I take plagiarism seriously. If you are caught plagiarizing, you will receive an automatic zero for the assignment and your case will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

### **Academic Integrity**

*As a community of learners at Appalachian State University, we must create an atmosphere of honesty, fairness, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of each other. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of an Appalachian degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form and will oppose any instance of academic dishonesty. This course will follow the provisions of the Academic Integrity Code, which can be found on the Office of Student Conduct Web Site: [www.studentconduct.appstate.edu](http://www.studentconduct.appstate.edu).*

### **Accommodations For Students With Disabilities**

*Appalachian State University is committed to making reasonable accommodations for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. If you have a disability and may need reasonable accommodations in order to have equal access to the University's courses, programs and activities, please contact the Office of Disability Services (828.262.3056 or [www.ods.appstate.edu](http://www.ods.appstate.edu)). Once registration is complete, individuals will meet with ODS staff to discuss eligibility and appropriate accommodations.*

If you require accommodations for a documented qualifying disability, you must see me in office hours at the beginning of the semester so that we can make arrangements. It is up to you to schedule this appointment.

### **Religious Observance**

*All ASU students are allowed a minimum of two absences per year for religious observances. Up to two absences for such observances will be excused, without penalty to the student, provided that the student has informed the instructor in the manner specified in the syllabus. Notice must be given by the student to the instructor before the absence occurs and no later than three weeks after the start of the semester in which the absence(s) will occur. Arrangements will be made to make up work missed by these religious observances, without penalty to the student. For the purposes of this policy, ASU defines the term "religious observance" to include religious holidays, holy days, or similar observances associated with a student's faith that require absence from class.*

### **Statement on Student Engagement with Courses**

**The following statement has been approved by the Faculty Senate and the Academic Policies and Procedures Committee.**

In its mission statement, Appalachian State University aims at "providing undergraduate students a rigorous liberal education that emphasizes transferable skills and preparation for professional careers" as well as "maintaining a faculty whose members serve as excellent teachers and scholarly mentors for their students." Such rigor means that the foremost activity of Appalachian students is an intense engagement with their courses. In practical terms, students should expect to spend two to three hours of studying for every hour of class time.

Required Texts:

McCorkel, Jill (2013) *Breaking Women: Gender, Race, and the New Politics of Imprisonment*. (for purchase)

Miller, Jody (2008) *Getting Played: African American Girls, Urban Inequality, and Gendered Violence*. (for rent)

All other course readings are available on ASU Learn

**Course Schedule**

Week 1

8/16 - Introduction to the Course

**Women's Victimization**

8/18 - Miller, Jody (2008) *Getting Played: African American Girls, Urban Inequality, and Gendered Violence*. Pgs. 1-31.

Week 2

8/23 - Miller, Jody (2008) *Getting Played: African American Girls, Urban Inequality, and Gendered Violence*. Pgs. 32-113.

8/25 - Miller, Jody (2008) *Getting Played: African American Girls, Urban Inequality, and Gendered Violence*. Pgs. 114-190.

Week 3

8/30 - Miller, Jody (2008) *Getting Played: African American Girls, Urban Inequality, and Gendered Violence*. Pgs. 191-221.

**Ideal Victims and the Construction of Female Vulnerability**

9/1 - Madriz, Esther (1997) "Innocent and Culpable Victims" *Nothing Bad Happens to Good Girls: Fear of Crime in Women's Lives*. Pgs. 71-93.  
**Paper 1 Due**

Week 4

9/6 - Dunn, Jennifer (2002) "Innocence Lost: Accomplishing Victimization in the Domestic Violence Unit" *Courting Disaster: Intimate Stalking, Culture, and Criminal Justice*. Pgs. 81-119.

- 9/8 - Bazelon, Emily (2015) "The Stanford Undergraduate and the Mentor" *The New York Times Magazine*. Pgs. 1-23.  
McCaughey, Martha (1998) "The Fighting Spirit: Women's Self-Defense Training and the Discourse of Sexed Embodiment" *Gender & Society* 12: 277-300.

### **Sex Panics and Punitive Policies**

#### Week 5

- 9/13 - Beller, Sarah (2016) "Brock Turner Case: Our Hatred of Rape Should Not Make Us Into Proponents of Prison" *The Influence*.  
Kipnis, Laura (2015) "Sexual Paranoia Strikes Academe" *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Pgs. 1-11.  
Lancaster, Roger (2011) "State of Exception" etc. and "The Origins of Victims' Rights" etc. *Sex Panic and the Punitive State*. Pgs. 94-103 and 194-213.  
Spade, Dean (2012) "Their Laws Will Never Make Us Safer" *Against Equality: Prisons Will Not Protect You*. Pgs. 1-12.

9/15 - Group Presentation Preparation

#### Week 6

- 9/20 - Group Presentations: Megan Kanka and Megan's Law; Ryan Alan Hade and Sexually Violent Predator Legislation  
9/22 - Group Presentations: Polly Klaas and California's Prop 184; Laci Peterson and Laci and Conner's Act  
**Paper 2 Due**

### **From Victims to "Criminals"**

#### Week 7

- 9/27 - Sered, Susan Starr and Maureen Norton-Hawk (2014) "Joey Spit on Me: How Gender Inequality and Sexual Violence Make Women Sick" and "Nowhere to Go: Poverty, Homelessness, and the Limits of Personal Responsibility" *Can't Catch a Break: Gender, Jail, Drugs, and the Limits of Personal Responsibility*. Pgs. 21-56.  
9/29 - Richie, Beth (1996) "Trapped By Violence" *Compelled to Crime: The Gender Entrapment of Battered Black Women*. Pgs. 69-100.

#### Week 8

10/4 - Denvir, Daniel "Criminalizing the Hustle: Policing Poor People's Survival

Strategies from Eric Garner to Alton Sterling" *Salon*.  
Richie, Beth (1996) "Six Paths to Crime" *Compelled to Crime: The Gender Entrapment of Battered Black Women*. Pgs. 101-131.

10/6 - Cendeno, Marihug (2012) "Pimps, Johns, and Juvenile Prostitutes: Is New York Doing Enough to Combat the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children?" *Cornell Journal of Law and Public Policy* 22: 153-179.

***In-Class Film: Very Young Girls***

Week 9

10/11 - Rashburn, William (2013) "With Special Courts, State Aims to Steer Women Away From Sex Trade" *The New York Times*.

Weitzer, Ronald (1999) "Prostitution Control in America: Rethinking Public Policy" *Crime, Law, and Social Change* 32: 83-102.

***Paper 3 Due***

10/13- Fall Break - No Class

Week 10

10/18 - Calhoun, Ada (2012) "The Criminalization of Bad Mothers" *The New York Times Magazine*.

Martin, Nina (2015) "This Law Is Supposed to Protect Babies, But It's Putting Their Moms Behind Bars" *Mother Jones*.

### **The Gender Politics of Imprisonment and Reentry**

10/20 - McCorkel, Jill (2013) *Breaking Women: Gender, Race, and the New Politics of Imprisonment*. Pgs. 1-49.

Week 11

10/25 - McCorkel, Jill (2013) *Breaking Women: Gender, Race, and the New Politics of Imprisonment*. Pgs. 50-93.

10/27 - McCorkel, Jill (2013) *Breaking Women: Gender, Race, and the New Politics of Imprisonment*. Pgs. 97-151.

Week 12

11/1 - McCorkel, Jill (2013) *Breaking Women: Gender, Race, and the New Politics of Imprisonment*. Pgs. 155-227.

11/3 - Spade, Dean (2007) "'It's War In Here:' A Report on the Treatment of Transgender and Intersex People in New York State Men's Prisons" *Sylvia Rivera Law*

*Project. Pgs. 1-37.*  
**Paper 4 Due**

Week 13

11/8 - Sharp, Susan (2014) "The Children and Their Caregivers" *Mean Lives, Mean Laws: Oklahoma's Women Prisoners*. Pgs. 123-139.

***In-Class Film: Women Behind Bars: The Voices of Oklahoma's Incarcerated Women and Their Children***

11/10 - Ortiz, Juana (2014) "Going Back Again" *Mean Lives, Mean Laws: Oklahoma's Women Prisoners*. Pgs. 73-101.

### **Women's Relationships with Criminalized Men**

Week 14

11/15 - Goffman, Alice (2014) "When the Police Knock Your Door In" *On The Run: Fugitive Life in an American City*. Pgs. 55-90.

11/17 - Comfort, Megan (2008) "It's a Lot of Good Men behind Walls!" and "The Long Way Home" *Doing Time Together: Love and Family in the Shadow of Prison*. Pgs. 126-151.

Week 15

11/22 - Comfort, Megan (2008) "It's a Lot of Good Men behind Walls!" and "The Long Way Home" *Doing Time Together: Love and Family in the Shadow of Prison*. Pgs. 151-197.

11/24 – Thanksgiving - No Class

### **Conclusions**

Week 16

11/29 - Conclusions

***Final Exam Period: Friday, December 2 3:00-5:30***  
***Course Paper Due***