

CANADIAN CORRECTIONAL POLICIES IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

LAWS 3903A

Prof. Maeve McMahon

Fall 2010

ESSAY INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

(The essay is due on Wednesday October 13 at 2pm. You should deposit your essay at the 'drop box' at the Law Department, C473 Loeb. Be sure to keep a hard copy of your paper until course grades are finalized)

You are asked to submit an essay of 10-12 pages, plus your title page, a table of contents, any footnotes/endnotes, and a bibliography. Key criteria in marking your essay will include the clarity and logic of the essay you write, and your ability to draw upon relevant course materials (i.e. lectures, guest lectures, readings and media sources) in making your points. Additional information about the essay format and content follow at the end of the topics suggested below. Your essay should draw upon at least 3 academic/research sources. It is expected that, as well as drawing from materials used in the course, students will locate additional relevant sources.

Do not exceed the assigned length.

Your essay is worth 44% of your final grade.

Suggested topics

- In order to understand corrections in historical perspective, it is necessary to examine not only historical *facts* about imprisonment and alternatives, but also the *discourses* that are prevalent at any given time. Discuss, with reference to the key issue of 'penalty.'
- The story of corrections from the early 1800s until the early 1980s was that of the gradual rise, and the sudden decline, of the popularity of rehabilitation as a penal strategy advocated by penal reformers. Discuss.
- Watching movies can be a useful educational supplement to academic sources about the history of corrections. Discuss academic course material, with reference to one of the following movies:
 - *In the Name of the Father*
 - *Blow*
 - *The Green Mile*(You can also choose another corrections-related movie, subject to the approval of the instructor)
- In the early 1970s a crisis in penal reform took place with academic and political cultures converging in producing policy and intellectual movements away from the prison. Discuss.
- The development in the 1980s of critical criminological perceptions concerning 'net-widening' in corrections had some politically problematic consequences both academically and with respect to policy decisions. Discuss.
- "Widening the net' describes the nightmare of the benevolent state gone haywire. This horror has already been vividly portrayed in Orwell's *1984*, Solzhenitsyn's *Cancer Ward*, and Burgess's *Clockwork Orange*. Social scientists and criminologists have just caught up with the humanists. (Austin and Krisberg 1981: 188-9).' Discuss.
- Understanding data on imprisonment and alternatives is a complex matter. Discuss with reference to debates about 'net-widening'.
- 'Since the 1980s the issue of private prisons has been fraught with controversy.' Discuss.

- ‘Calls for penal reform are as old as the prison itself.’ Discuss, with reference to the early days of Kingston Penitentiary.
- ‘Women, both as offenders and as workers in corrections, have faced many difficulties.’ Discuss. (It is also acceptable to choose either female offenders *or* workers).
- ‘Commissions of Inquiry have played an important part in the reform of imprisonment and corrections in Canada historically.’ Discuss. (If you wish you may focus on one Commission of Inquiry, e.g. the Arbour Commission concerning certain events at the Prison for Women, published in 1996).

Other topic options

If you wish, you may, in consultation with the instructor, choose variations on these topics, or a different topic. Additional options include issues concerning the death penalty; the situation of aboriginal people and imprisonment in Canada; young offenders and corrections; the use of security certificates in Canada; mandatory minimum sentences; matters concerning the recent emphasis on restorative justice in corrections; and a review and discussion of the Report of the Correctional Service Review Panel [Sampson Report] *A Roadmap to Strengthening Public Safety*,¹ 2007 and the ensuing report by Michael Jackson and Graham Stewart *A Flawed Compass: A Human Rights Analysis of the Roadmap to Strengthening Public Safety*, 2009 (available at www.justicebehindthewalls.net). You will be provided with relevant references, and you are also expected, to seek out additional academic sources.

Additional Information Concerning Essay Style and Content:

Essays should:

- have a title, and a sub-title on the cover page;
- have an introduction;
- have a conclusion;
- use sub-headings as appropriate
- provide at least 3 key historical points in the text;
- identify relevant authors and their ideas;
- provide complete bibliographic information concerning individual authors;
- be explanatory and analytical, so evidencing your understanding of, and reflections on, the topic;
- reflect attention to grammar and spelling;
- be broken into paragraphs;
- exercise brevity and clarity of expression;

In general, it is advisable to consult guides to writing academic essays. A list of these concerning social scientific writing is available from the information desk on the main floor in the MacOdrum library.

For the purposes of this course, it is recommended that you use the MLA style (i.e. following your paraphrasing or quoting an author in the text of your essay insert a reference, in brackets, providing the author’s family name, year of publication, and relevant page number/s).

Additional information will be provided in class. Students can also receive one-on-one consultation, especially during office hours (Mondays and Fridays, 3.15-4.30pm, Loeb D586. Tel: (6130-520-2600 ext 8095). <C:\Documents and Settings\joanclarke\Local Settings\Temp\www.barcharts.com><C:\Documents and Settings\joanclarke\Local Settings\Temp\www.barcharts.com>

¹ A hard copy of this report can be found in the government publications section of the MacOdrum library (in the DDV area). Call number: CAIPSP805 – 2007.a57

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