

Course Outline

COURSE: CRCJ 4001-B Anarchism and Abolition

TERM: Winter 2024

PREREQUISITES:

CLASS: **Day & Time:** Thursday 2:35pm - 5:25pm
 Room: Please check Carleton Central for current room location.

INSTRUCTOR: Alexander McClelland

CONTACT: **Office:** 1714 DT
 Office Hrs: Thursday 1-2pm

***Email:** alexander.mcclelland@carleton.ca

*You must use your Carleton email address in all correspondence with the instructor.

Link to Brightspace page: <https://brightspace.carleton.ca/d2l/home/221140>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & AFFIRMATION

ANISHNABE

Ni manàdjiyànànig Màmìwininì Anishinàbeg, ogog kà nàgadawàbandadjig iyo akì eko weshkad. Ako nongom ega wìkàd kì mìgiwewàdj.

Ni manàdjiyànànig kakina Anishinàbeg ondaje kaye ogog kakina eniyagizidjig enigokamigàg Kanadàng eji ondàpinangig endàwàdjìn Odàwàng.

Ninìsidawinawànànig kenawendamòdjig kije kikenindamàwin; weshkinigidjig kaye kejeyàdizidjig. Nìgijeweninmànànig ogog kà nìgànì sòngideyedjig; weshkad, nongom; kaye àyànikàdj.

ENGLISH

We pay respect to the Algonquin people, who are the traditional guardians of this land. We acknowledge their longstanding relationship with this territory, which remains unceded.

We pay respect to all Indigenous people in this region, from all nations across Canada, who call Ottawa home. We acknowledge the traditional knowledge keepers, both young and old.

And we honour their courageous leaders: past, present, future

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Anarchist theory and practice is often wrongly equated with violence, chaos, and destruction; indeed, those understandings are quite counter to what anarchism intends to make possible: to jointly build a non-coercive society, free of oppression, and exploitation. Anarchists were among some of the first social theorists to offer a critique of state sanctioned forms of policing and punishment.

While today, there are many splintered groups of anarchist thought, many seek a vision for addressing social problems free from coercion and violence. Since before the inception of the modern penitentiary, state sanctioned forms of punishment have been critiqued as regressive, savage, and inhumane. In some cases, penal abolitionists have focused solely on a society free

from prisons, without accounting for social inequity, how crime is socially conceived, or issues of criminalization. In other cases, penal abolitionism, may have a vision aligned with anarchist principles seeking the transformation of society through undoing state sanctioned violence and punishment. Through examining anarchist and abolitionist thought, this course will examine cross-over, common threads of analysis, contentious debates, and gaps, across these divergent and sometimes connected movements and ideas.

Throughout this interdisciplinary course, students will have the opportunity – *should they collectively choose* - to engage with a range of texts from the fields of critical criminology, Indigenous studies, feminism, critical race studies, and abolition and justice studies to explore a diverse range of theories of anarchism and abolitionism and examine how they conceive of, and contend with, notions of a world free of oppression, prisons, and punishment.

While recognizing that this course is taking place within the hierarchical structure of a western neo-liberal university, the course will aim to be organized around anarchist principles of non-hierarchical/horizontal organization, collective decision-making, and non-coercion. What is proposed as a guiding approach for the class, is what anarchist scholar James C. Scott calls, a “process-oriented” anarchist view *, or anarchism through the integration of theory and practice. What this means is that addressing a way forward for student learning must come through a dialectical relationship between concerned groups of people – i.e., the instructor and students. Such a grounded approach to anarchism ensures that collectively as a class we can be flexible, fluid, responsive, and spontaneous to the needs of students as they emerge, and we can be resistant to the solely ridged and ideological.

This pragmatic and collaborative approach will require a deep engagement and commitment from students, as the class will collectively work – *in consultation with the instructor* - to develop their own learning objectives, assignments, and evaluation criteria. Students will have an opportunity to determine for themselves what they want to learn and how best to facilitate learning. This *learning-by-doing* approach to engaging with anarchist principles will be collectively negotiated as we address a range of issues including anarchist and abolitionist history, anarcho-Indigenism, anarcho-feminism, Black anarchism, violence & the state, Indigenous abolitionism, anarchist criminology, prisoners’ rights, horizontal forms of social organization, mutual aid & do no harm, abolitionism & pragmatism, transformative justice, abolitionist utopias, rule-breaking & anarchist conceptions of law.

The organization of the weekly 3-hour course will be determined collectively and will likely consist of a series of student-led conversation groups, instructor presentations, videos, assignments, and student presentations. To organize the course, the first 2 weeks of the course will be focused on determining a group process for moving forward with collective learning. Students will be broken up into committees – based on their choice and interest, including, but not limited to, a *pedagogy committee* (to determine final plan of topics and readings), a *planning and evaluation committee* (to lay out the course plan, including when teach-ins will occur, and determine evaluation metrics), and an *anarchist and abolitionist history committee* (who will briefly present on issues related to anarchist and abolitionist history each week). The decided upon course content will be posted in Brightspace by the instructor, as will assignment portals, if necessary.

*See here for more details (also a proposed reading): <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/james-c-scott->

[two-cheers-for-anarchism](#)**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Course objectives will be determined in collaboration with students.

“...only anarchy points the way along which they can find, by trial and error, that solution which best satisfies the dictates of science as well as the needs and wishes of everybody.

How will children be educated? We don't know. So, what will happen? Parents, pedagogues and all who are concerned with the future of the young generation will come together, will discuss, will agree, or divide according to the views they hold, and will put into practice the methods which they think are the best. And with practice that method which in fact is the best, will in the end be adopted.

And similarly with all problems which present themselves.”

- *Errico Malatesta, written in 1891. Retrieved from:
<https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/errico-malatesta-anarchy>*

TEXTS

The proposed topics and readings are merely suggestions from the instructor and will be further refined and determined in collaboration with students during the first 3 weeks of the course. Depending on student needs and interests, the following topics/texts could be presented as a student teach-in assignment, by the instructor, or through collaborative conversations.

Anarchist orientations

Noam Chomsky. (2013). *On Anarchism. Chapter 1: Notes on Anarchism (pp. 1-20); Chapter 2: Excerpts from Understanding Power (pp.21-44)*. The New Press.

Emma Goldman. (1917). *Anarchy: What is really stands for*. New York: Mother Earth Publishing Association (pp. 1-9).

James C. Scott. (2012). *Two cheers for anarchism. Preface; Chapter 1: The uses of disorder and charisma*. Princeton University Press.

Errico Malatesta. (1981). *Anarchy*.

Zoe Barker. (2021). *Bakunin was a Racist*. Anarchopac.

Jeff Shantz. (2019). *Spaces of Learning: Anarchist Free Skool*. Anarchist Pedagogies.

Abolitionist orientations

Nicolas Carrier et Justin Piché, «The State of Abolitionism», *Champ pénal/Penal field* [En ligne], Vol. XII | 2015.

Rachel Kushner. (April 17, 2019). *Is Prison Necessary? Ruth Wilson Gilmore Might Change Your Mind*. New York Times.

Also see: Ruth Wilson Gilmore – interview Democracy Now! (May 2015). The Case for Prison Abolition: Ruth Wilson Gilmore on COVID-19, Racial Capitalism & Decarceration

Thomas Mathiesen. (2015). *The Politics of Abolition Revisited*. Routledge. Chapter 1: Abolition.

Richard. J. Day. (2009). Prison Abolition in Canada. *Upping the Anti*, 4.

The International Conference on Penal Abolition (ICOPA). (2015). Exploring Dynamics and Controversies as observed at ICOPA 15 on Algonquin Territory.

Angela Davis. (2003). Are Prisons Obsolete? Chapter 1: Introduction-Prison Reform or Prison Abolition? (pp. 9-21); Chapter 2: Slavery, Civil Rights, and Abolitionist Perspectives Toward Prison (pp. 22-39).

David Moffette (2021) Immigration status and policing in Canada: current problems, activist strategies and abolitionist visions, *Citizenship Studies*, 25:2, 273-291.

Indigenous & anti-colonial abolitionism

Heidi Kiiwetinepinesiik Stark. (2016). “Criminal Empire: The Making of the Savage in a Lawless Land.” *Theory & Event* Vol. 19, Iss. 4.

Free Lands Free People. (2021). Chapter 9. A Brief Introduction to Anti-colonial Abolition, (pp. 74-82) in: *Disarm, Defund, Dismantle: Police Abolition in Canada*, Edited by Shiri Pasternak, Abby Stadnyk, and Kevin Walby. Between the Lines.

Audra Simpson. (2020). The Sovereignty of Critique. *South Atlantic Quarterly*. 119 (4): 685–699.

Solomon, Art (1990) “If There is No Justice There Will Be No Peace”, *Journal of Prisoners on Prisons*, 2(2): 29-38.

Monture-Angus, Patricia (1995) “Myths and Revolution: Thoughts on Moving Justice Forward in Aboriginal Communities”, *Thunder in my Soul: A Mohawk Woman Speaks*, Halifax: Fernwood, pp. 249-264.

Anarcho-Indigenism

Taiaiake Alfred. (2005). *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom*. University of Toronto Press. (Chapters read will be determined in conversation with students).

J. Kēhaulani Kauanui. (2021). The Politics of Indigeneity, Anarchist Praxis, and Decolonization. *Anarchist Developments in Cultural Studies*, 2021.1

Adam Gary Lewis. (2017). Imagining autonomy on stolen land settler colonialism, anarchism and the possibilities of decolonization? *Settler Colonial Studies*, Volume 7:4.

Jeff Corntassel. (2021). Life Beyond the State: Regenerating Indigenous International Relations and Everyday Challenges to Settler Colonialism. *Anarchist Developments in Cultural Studies*, 2021.1.

Jackie Lasky. (2011). Indigenism, Anarchism, Feminism: An Emerging Framework for Exploring Post-Imperial Futures. *Affinities Journal*.

An Indigenous Perspective. (2020). Voting is Not Harm Reduction.

Anarcha-feminism

Donna Haraway (1987) A manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, technology, and socialist feminism in the 1980s, *Australian Feminist Studies*, 2:4, 1-42.

Sanya Sethi. (2020) Anarcha Feminism: The Beginning Of The End Of All Forms Of Oppression. *Feminist India*.

Anarcha-feminism zine. (2007).

de Heredia, M. I. (2007). History and actuality of Anarcha-feminism: Lessons from Spain. *Lilith*, (16), 42–56.

Black anarchism

Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin. (2016). Anarchism and the Black Revolution, in: *Black Anarchism: A Reader*. Black Rose Anarchist Federation.

William C. Anderson & Zoé Samudzi. (2017). The Anarchism of Blackness. Roar Magazine.

William C. Anderson interviewing Lorenzo Kom'boa (2020). Ungovernable: An Interview with Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin. Black Rose Federation.

Also see: William C. Anderson & Mariame Kaba As Black as Resistance: Finding the Conditions for Liberation, at the Baltimore Book Festival's Radical Bookfair Pavilion 2018.

Marquis Bey. (2020). Anarcho-Blackness Notes Toward a Black Anarchism. AK Press. (Chapters read will be determined in conversation with students).

Violence & the state

Robert M. Cover. (1986). Violence and the Word. *The Yale Law Journal*, Vol. 95, No. 8, Charles L. Black, Jr. Festschrift, pp. 1601-1629.

Walter Benjamin. (1921). *Critique of violence*.

Hannah Arendt. (1970). *On violence*.

Fanon, F. (1963). *The wretched of the earth, Chapter: On violence* (pp.1-63). New York, NY, USA: Grove Press.

Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, peace, and peace research. *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3), 167–191.

Mariame Kaba. (2021). *Part VI: Accountability is Not Punishment: Transforming How We Deal with Harm and Punishment* (pp. 132-163), in *We Do This 'Til We Free Us*. Haymarket Books.

Anarchist criminology

Jeff Ferrell. (1998). Against the Law: Anarchist Criminology. *Social Anarchism*, Issue 25.

Kevin Walby. (2011). Anarcho-Abolitionism: a Challenge to Conservative and Liberal Criminology (pp.288-307). *Critical Criminology in Canada*, Editors: A. Doyle, D. Moore. University of British Columbia Press.

Lucy Parsons. (2020 – originally published in 1905). Principles of anarchism. *Classic Writings in Anarchist Criminology: A Historical Dismantling of Punishment and Domination*, edited by Anthony J. Nocella II, Mark Seis, and Jeff Shantz.

Harold P. Pepinsky. (2018). *Communist anarchism as an alternative to the rule of criminal law* (pp. 23-36), in *Contemporary Anarchist Criminology; Against Authoritarianism and Punishment*, by Anthony J. Nocella II; Mark C Seis; Jeff Shantz.

Errico Malatesta. (2020 – originally published in 1921). Further thoughts on the question of crime. *Classic Writings in Anarchist Criminology: A Historical Dismantling of Punishment and Domination*, edited by Anthony J. Nocella II, Mark Seis, and Jeff Shantz.

Prisoners' rights

Michel Foucault, Pierre Vidal-Nacquet, Jean-Marie Domenach. (1971). Manifesto of the Groupe d'Information sur les prisons.

Prisonjustice.ca. (No date). A history of prisoners' justice day.

Colleen Hackett and Ben Turk. (2018). "*Freedom Frist*": *pursuing abolition through supporting prisoner resistance*, in *Contemporary Anarchist Criminology; Against Authoritarianism and Punishment*, edited by Anthony J. Nocella II; Mark C Seis; Jeff Shantz.

Shook, Jarrod, McInnis, Bridget, & Piché, Justin. (Eds.). (2017). Dialogue on Canada's Federal Penitentiary System and the Need for Change. *Journal of Prisoners on Prisons*, 26(1 & 2).

Decarceration

Prison Research Education Action. (1976). *Instead of prisons: A handbook for abolitionists: Chapter 5: Decarcerate.*

Prisoner's Justice Day Committee. (No date). *Alternatives to incarceration.*

Howard Sapers. (2020). *The Case for Prison Depopulation: Prison Health, Public Safety and the Pandemic.* *Journal of Community Safety and Well-Being*, 5(2), 79–81.

The Marshall Project: decarceration resource page:
<https://www.themarshallproject.org/records/1094-decarceration>

Horizontal social organization & governance

James C. Scott. (2012). *Two cheers for anarchism. Chapter 2: Vernacular Order, Official Order.* Princeton University Press.

James C. Scott. (2020). *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia.* Yale University Press. (*Chapters read will be determined in conversation with students*).

Gaston Leval. (1975). *Collectives in the Spanish revolution: Detailed account of worker-controlled agriculture, industry and public services in revolutionary Spain during the civil war.* Freedom Press. (*Chapters read will be determined in conversation with students*).

Rules and Rule Breaking

Mariana Valverde. (2012). *Everyday law on the street: City Governance in an Age of Diversity.* Chapters 1, 2. University of Chicago Press.

Wired. (2004). *Roads Gone Wild: No street signs. No cross walks. No accidents. Surprise: Making driving seem more dangerous could make it safer.* Article on the work of Hans Monderman <https://www.wired.com/2004/12/traffic/>

See: City News: Unsanctioned, pop-up safe injection site opens at Moss Park:
<https://toronto.citynews.ca/2017/08/12/1626015/>

David Graeber. (2015). *The Utopia of Rules: On technology, stupidity, and the secret joys of bureaucracy.* Melville House Publishing. pp. 149-206

Chas Critcher. (2000) 'still raving': social reaction to Ecstasy, *Leisure Studies*, 19:3, 145-162.

Mutual aid & do no harm

Dean Spade. (2022). *Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity During This Crisis (and the Next).*

Verso.

Christopher B.R. Smith. (2012). Harm reduction as anarchist practice A user's guide to capitalism and addiction in North America. *Critical Public Health*, 22:2.

Zena Sharman. (2021). *The Care We Dream Of: Liberatory and Transformative Approaches to LGBTQ+ Health*, Regrowth in Ruins: Abolitionist Dreams for Health System Transformation (pp.135-158), and Putting Yourself on the Line – Interview with Ronica Mukerjee (pp.159-170).

Emily Hobson, (2016). *Lavender and Red: Liberation and Solidarity in the Lesbian and Gay Left*, Chapter 5, pp. 120-154. University of California Press.

Dean Spade. 2019. *Mutual Aid Chart*.

Zoë Dodd & Alexander McClelland. (2017). *Taking Risks is A Path to Survival*.

The Dangerous Few

Prison Research Education Action. (1976). Instead of prisons: A handbook for abolitionists: *Chapter 7: Restraint of the Few*.

Nicolas Carrier et Justin Piché. (2015). Blind Spots of Abolitionist Thought in Academia: On Longstanding and Emerging Challenges. *Champ pénal/Penal field* [En ligne], Vol. XII.

Judith Levine and Erica R. Meiners. (2020). *The Feminist and the Sex Offender: Confronting Sexual Harm, Ending State Violence*. Verso Books. (*Chapters read will be determined in conversation with students*).

Debra Parkes. (2021). *Starting With Life: Murder Sentencing and Feminist Prison Abolitionist Praxis*, in Taylor & Struthers-Montfort, eds, *Building Abolition: Decarceration and Social Justice*. Routledge.

Transformative & restorative justice

Mariame Kaba. (2021). *Part III: The State Can't Give Ys Transformative Justice* (pp. 63-103), in *We Do This 'Til We Free Us*. Haymarket Books.

Laura Magnani. (2018). *From prison abolition to transformative justice* (pp. 73-84), in *Contemporary Anarchist Criminology; Against Authoritarianism and Punishment*, by Anthony J. Nocella II; Mark C Seis; Jeff Shantz.

Hewitt, J. G. (2016). Indigenous Restorative Justice: Approaches, Meaning & Possibility. *University of New Brunswick Law Journal*, 67, 313.

jaye simpson. (2019). ["A Conversation I Can't Yet Have: Why I Will Not Name My Indigenous Abusers."](#) GUTS Magazine.

Dawn Moore and Vared Ben-David. (2021). "Looking from North West to South East: Feminist carceralism, gender equality and global responses to gender based violence", in Kelly Struthers Montford, Chloë Taylor: *Building Abolition: Decarceration and Social Justice*. Routledge.

And watch: More Laws = More Violence: Criminalization as a Failed Strategy for Anti-Violence Movements

COURSE CALENDAR.

The class will take place in-person from during the winter term.

Thursday January 11: Class 1

Class conversation and decision-making on course organization

Thursday January 18: Class 2

Class conversation and decision-making on course organization

Thursday January 25: Class 3

To be determined by class

Thursday February 1: Class 4

To be determined by class

Thursday February 8: Class 5

To be determined by class

Thursday February 15: Class 6

To be determined by class

****Winter Break** No class**

Thursday February 29: Class 7

To be determined by class

Thursday March 7: Class 8

To be determined by class

Thursday March 14: Class 9

To be determined by class

Thursday March 21: Class 10

To be determined by class

Thursday March 30: Class 11

To be determined by class

Thursday April 4: Class 12

To be determined by class

EVALUATION

This course will require a rigorous evaluation criterion equal to the level of other 4th year ICCJ courses. The details of the evaluation criteria will be determined in collaboration with students.

As an initial starting point, the instructor proposes that evaluation consist of the following components:

- **Learning objective statement** – students will outline 4 course learning objectives for themselves. These learning objective statements will be used to determine overall course learning objectives.
- **Utopian abolitionist/anarchist vision statement** – students will critically engage with course topics/texts and describe in detail a utopian vision for a future free from oppression, punishment, and coercion. The assignment will be blinded and passed on to another student, who will provide constructive and critical feedback, along with a grade.
- **Teach-in sessions** – students will become an expert on one of the proposed course topics and will then conduct a teach-in session – *i.e., an informal lecture and structured discussion* - for other students during course time to communicate what they have learned and pass on their knowledge. Teach-in sessions will be approximately 30 minutes, and will consist of an informal presentation, the development of a flyer/zine/webpage on the topic to be distributed to participants, and the development of discussion questions. It is proposed that there will be 2 teach-ins per week, which will run simultaneously in Zoom breakout rooms, and students can self-select which to attend/participate in.
- **Abolitionist/anarchist research project** – students will conduct a research project on a topic of their interest - as it relates to abolitionism and/or anarchism. The final parameters and format of the research project will be determined in conversation with the class.

The grading weight of each component will be discussed and determined in collaboration with students and the instructor.

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

ANARCHIST & ABOLITION RESEARCH RESOURCES

How To Find Anarchist Primary Sources?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zckvdXgkKAk&ab_channel=ZoeBaker

The Anarchist Library

<https://theanarchistlibrary.org/special/index>

Libcom.org

<https://libcom.org/>

LIDIAP – list of digitized anarchist periodicals

<https://lidiap.ficedl.info/>

noprison.ca

<https://www.noprison.ca/abolition-syllabus>

An Indigenous Abolitionist Study Guide

<https://yellowheadinstitute.org/2020/08/10/an-indigenous-abolitionist-study-group-guide/>

prisonjustice.ca

https://www.vcn.bc.ca/august10/politics/all_articles.html

Abolitionist Futures (UK-based initiative & resource)

<https://abolitionistfutures.com/>

Critical Resistance (UK-based initiative & resource)

<http://criticalresistance.org/resources/>

Also, sites to access books and journal articles online:

Sci-hub

<https://sci-hub.mkسا.top/>

Library Genesis

<https://libgen.is/>

PLAGIARISM

The University Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, artworks, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else, including the unauthorized use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT);
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;
- submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one’s own; and
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Classroom teaching and learning activities, including lectures, discussions, presentations, etc., by both instructors and students, are copy protected and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s). All course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, outlines, and other materials, are also protected by copyright and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s).

Students registered in the course may take notes and make copies of course materials for their own educational use only. Students are not permitted to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly for commercial or non-commercial purposes without express written consent from the copyright holder(s).

STATEMENT ON STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

As a University student, you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. Here is a link to information about all of the resources, both on campus and off, that you may find helpful: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes can be found at the below link:

<https://students.carleton.ca/course-outline/>

The development of this syllabus was inspired by:

Dana Williams. (2017). Teaching Anarchism by Practicing Anarchy: Reflections on Facilitating the Student-Creation of a College Course (pp.153-172). In book: Out of the Ruins: The Emergence of Radical Informal Learning Spaces, Editors: Robert H. Haworth, John M. Elmore. Publisher: PM Press.