

SYLLABUS – CRCJ 3201 A

Carleton University	Institute of Criminology & Criminal Justice
	Course Outline
Course:	CRJ 3202A Prison Law in Action
Term:	Fall 2025
Prerequisites:	CRCJ 1000, third-year standing, and enrollment in a B.A. or Minor in Criminology and Criminal Justice, or by permission of the Institute.
Class:	Day & Time: Wednesdays, 6:05 pm to 8:55 pm Room: Please check Carleton Central
Contact:	Office: 1717 Dunton Tower Office Hours: By appointment

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & AFFIRMATION

ANISHNABE

Ni manàdjiyànànig Màmìwininì Anishinàbeg, ogo kà nàgadawàbandadjig iyo akì eko weshkad. Ako nongom ega wìkàd kì mìgiwewàdj. Ni manàdjiyànànig kakina Anishinàbeg ondaje kaye ogo kakina eniyagizidjig enigokamigàg Kanadàng eji ondàpinangig endàwàdjìn Odàwàng. Ninisidawinawànànig kenawendamòdjig kije kikenindamàwin; weshkinìgidjig kaye kejeyàdizidjig. Nigijeweninmànànig ogo 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.

Instructors: Alexandria Bonney BA, JD – alexandriabonney@cunet.carleton.ca
Lydia Dobson BA, MA, JD – lydiadobson@cunet.carleton.ca

Teaching Assistants: Please note that your first point of contact for any questions related to the course is your assigned Teaching Assistant. TA's will endeavour to respond to your emails within 2 business days (this does not include weekends and holidays).

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1. Course Description

Through seminars and experiential learning, students will delve into the complexities of Prison Law in Ontario and learn how the law is used to advocate for prisoners. This class will collaborate with the organization Prisoner Legal Supports, which provides free legal services (including running a legal information hotline) to provincial prisoners. **Learning Outcomes**

This course is intended to introduce students to the theory of prison abolition and the legal frameworks enabling incarceration in Ontario. The course focuses on the experiences of various criminalized groups and prioritizes the voices of people with lived experiences of incarceration and criminalization. Upon completing the course, students will have achieved a thorough understanding of the prison industrial complex and the legal framework of incarceration in Ontario, and they will have developed tangible steps to address the conditions of confinement and over-incarceration in society.

2. Texts & Course Materials

Students are not required to purchase textbooks or other learning materials for this course. All materials will be available at no cost and accessible on Brightspace and via hyperlinks in the syllabus.

3. Course Calendar

Lecture Modules and Discussion Sessions	Assigned Readings
September 3, 2025	Course Overview 1. Lydia Dobson, Who is a Prisoner , Briarpatch

	<p>This class will be used to review the syllabus and course materials and to establish core concepts and terms that will be used throughout the term.</p>
September 10, 2025	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Theories of Abolition</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Angela Davis, <i>Are Prisons Obsolete?</i>, (2003) (chapter 1) 2. The Next System Project, Towards the horizon of abolition: A conversation with Miriam Kaba. (9 November 2017). 3. Emma Goldman, <i>Prisons: A Social Crime and Failure</i>, Anarchism and Other Essays (Third revised edition, New York: Mother Earth Publishing Association, 1917)
September 17, 2025	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Prison Conditions</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tracking (In)justice: Deaths in Custody 2. The Code, Ombudsman Report into Use of Force, Stories Behind Bars, page 18-33 3. The Mandela Rules (https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/Nelson_Mandela_Rules-E-ebook.pdf).
September 24, 2025	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Colonization and Incarceration</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Michaela McGuire and Danielle Murdoch, (In)-justice: An exploration of the dehumanization, victimization, criminalization, and over-incarceration of Indigenous women in Canada, (2022) Punishment and Society vol 24(4) 2. Ewert, Jeff, “Taming the Moose: The Colonialism of Canada’s Subordinated Indigenous Prisoner Population in the 21st Century” Journal of Prisoners on Prisons vol 30(2) 2022 3. Indigenous Spirituality in Correctional Services, Government of Ontario, 2023
October 1, 2025	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Gender in Prisons</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Boyer et al., “Vulnerable Targets: Transgender Prisoner Safety, the Law and Sexual Violence in the Prison System” Canadian Journal of Women and the Law 34(1) (2019)

	<p>2. Vicki Chartrand, <i>Landscapes of Violence: Women and Canadian Prisons</i>, Champ pénal/Penal field, vol. XII, (2015)</p>
October 8, 2025	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Anti-Black Racism in Prison</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Angela Davis, <i>Are Prisons Obsolete?</i>, (2003) (chapter 2) 2. John Howard Society of Ontario, “Anti-Black Racism in the Criminal Justice System” (9 February 2023). 3. Michelle Alexander, The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness, <i>The Rebirth of Caste</i>, page 25-74
October 15, 2025	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Prison Labour</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Angela Davis, Are Prisons Obsolete?, (2003) (chapter 5) 2. Gregory McMaster and Jordan House, An Insider’s Perspective on Canadian Prison Labour: An Interview, <i>Journal of Prisoners on Prisons</i>, volume 31(2) 2022 3. Jordan House, When Prisoners Had a Union: The Canadian Food and Allied Workers Union Local 240, (2019) <i>Journal of Canadian Labour Studies</i> <p style="text-align: center;">Optional: Watch 13th (Available on Netflix)</p>
October 22, 2025	<p>FALL BREAK – NO CLASSES</p>
October 29, 2025	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Solitary Confinement</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lydia Dobson "Out of Sight, Out of Mind: Bill C-83, Solitary Confinement, and Mental Health," <i>Journal of Law and Social Policy</i> Vol 33. (2021) 2. Motion RE Ontario’s Non-Compliance with the <i>Jahn v MCSCS</i> and <i>OHRC v Ontario Terms</i> 3. Class Action Claim Form

November 5, 2025	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Healthcare and Deaths in Custody</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adelina Iftene, <u>Life and death in Canadian penitentiaries</u>, (2020) Canadian Family Physician 2. University of Ottawa Prison Law Clinic, <u>Open Letter on Healthcare in Prisons</u> (2021) 3. Anna Mehler Paperny, <u>Canada's jailhouse secret: Legally innocent prisoners are dying</u>, (2017) Reuters 4. <u>Ontario Deaths in Custody of the Rise</u> (December 2022), Tracking (IN)Justice
November 12, 2025	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Prisoner Rights Advocacy in Ontario</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Aisha Benslimane, Sarah Speight, Justin Piché, Aaron Doyle, The Jail Accountability & Information Line: Early Reflections on Praxis, (2020) Journal of Law and Social Policy vol 33 2. Lydia Dobson, Portia Larlee, Carol Drumm, Ontario is Exposing Prisoners to Torturous Conditions, (2021) Ottawa Citizen <p>Review the following organizational websites: <u>Criminalization and Punishment Education Project</u> <u>PASAN</u> <u>Coalition Against Proposed Prison</u> <u>Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies</u></p>
November 19, 2025	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Prison Law Strategies & Remedies</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Human Rights Tribunal Ontario: <u>Review all eight steps</u> 2. Freedom of Information Request, Government of Ontario, 2024 3. Habeas Corpus Guide, Uottawa Prison Law Clinic and Jail Accountability & Information Line
November 26, 2025	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Alternatives to Incarceration</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prison Research Education Action. (1976). Instead of prisons: A handbook for abolitionists: <u>Chapter 5: Decarcerate..</u> 2. Hewitt, J. G. (2016). <u>Indigenous Restorative Justice: Approaches, Meaning & Possibility</u>. University of New Brunswick Law Journal, 67, 313.

December 3	<u>WRAP-UP</u>

4. Evaluation

Assessment	Due Date	Value
Attendance and Participation	Ongoing	20%
Reflection	October 29, 2025	30%
Final Research paper	December 5, 2025	50%

Attendance and Participation: Engaged discussion is an essential part of this class. Students

are expected to attend all classes unless they have an approved absence. A question based on the week's readings will be posted on Brightspace at the beginning of each class for students to answer before class is over. Time will be provided during class for students to respond.

Reflection: The reflection paper is an opportunity for students to engage with their views of

prisons/prisoners and consider how the materials learned in class have impacted those perceptions. The paper must be between 3-5 pages, double-spaced. The papers should engage with at least two topics covered in class. A reflection paper grading rubric will be reviewed in advance of the due date.

Final Research Paper: Students are required to submit a research paper focused on one of the

lecture topics covered in the syllabus. Students are allowed to propose their own topics, but they must be approved by the instructors. The paper must be between 10-15 pages, double-spaced. Students will use APA-style citations. Research papers should have a clear thesis statement, draw on relevant academic and social research, and be thoroughly edited for spelling and grammar. A research paper grading rubric will be reviewed in advance of the research paper due date.

In accordance with the Carleton University Undergraduate Calendar Regulations, the letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100 B+ = 77-79 C+ = 67-69 D+ = 57-59

A = 85-89 B = 73-76 C = 63-66 D = 53-56
A - = 80-84 B - = 70-72 C - = 60-62 D - = 50-52
F = Below 50

WDN = Withdrawn from the course DEF = Deferred

Late Assignments

Late submission will be penalized. Assignments submitted later than the due date will be penalized 5% per day of the total value of the assignment. For example, if an assignment worth 25% of the total course grade is a day late, 1 point out of 20 (or 5% per day) will be deducted.

Final Grade Approval

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.

5. Requests for Academic Accommodations

Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. The accommodation request processes, including information about the *Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances*, are outlined on the Academic Accommodations website (students.carleton.ca/course-outline).

6. Classroom Etiquette

In this course, we will spend a lot of class time discussing challenging topics such as the over-representation of Indigenous people in the Canadian criminal justice system, and discrimination against women, racial, and other minorities within the system. In nearly every class, we will discuss traumatic experiences lived by vulnerable people. Recognising that each of you will have different experiences with these topics, and come equipped with various levels of familiarity with them, here are some principles that we will use when discussing difficult subjects such as these (these principles are adapted from principles originally used by Tracy Lindberg at the University of Alberta):

1. We each have the right to make kind mistakes. We will make mistakes, and it is each individual's responsibility to be as informed as possible when you get to class in order to ensure that your mistake is kind.

2. It actually does harm to hear stereotypes, generalizations and pejorative understandings about one's race, gender or subject position. While we can all make kind mistakes, let us also be fully informed and gentle as we may be talking about people in the room.
3. You have the right to ask any question. If you have a question or issue you'd like discussed but feel uncomfortable raising it in public, write it down or email it to me, and I will address it without naming the source.
4. The goal of these principles is to acknowledge that we have continuing relationships with each other. These relationships must be respectful and reciprocal in order for us to share space and ideas (inside of this classroom and outside).

7. Statement on Academic Integrity

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;
- 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.

Group work is only acceptable where specifically approved by the instructor.

The use of Generative AI is considered a violation of academic integrity standards, unless the instructors specifically approve its use.

8. Student Mental Health

As a 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. For more information, please consult <https://wellness.carleton.ca/>”

Emergency Resources (on and off campus)

- Suicide Crisis Helpline: call or text 9-8-8, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- For immediate danger or urgent medical support: call 9-1-1

Carleton Resources

- Mental Health and Wellbeing: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>
- Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>
- Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>
- Academic Advising Centre (AAC): <https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>
- Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/>
- Equity & Inclusivity Communities: <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

Off Campus Resources

- Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: call 613-238-3311, text 343-306-5550, or connect online at <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
- Mental Health Crisis Service: call 613-722-6914 or toll-free 1-866-996-0991, or connect online at <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- Empower Me Counselling Service: call 1-844-741-6389 or connect online at <https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/>
- Good2Talk: call 1-866-925-5454 or connect online at <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: for online or on-site service <https://walkincounselling.com>