

**Carleton University
Institute of Criminology & Criminal Justice
CRCJ 2200-D: Contemporary Issues in Criminology
Course Outline
Winter 2021**

Instructor: Natasha Stirrett
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Office Hours: by appointment via email
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Classroom Location: Virtual
Course Time: (asynchronous)
Pre-requisites: CRCJ 1000

Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or Faculty of Public Affairs 20 Teaching Regulations 2020-21 as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details [click here](#).

Religious obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details [click here](#).

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520- 6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the [PMC website](#) for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

Survivors of Sexual Violence: As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services>

Accommodation for Student Activities: Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist
<https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

Accommodation for International Students:

This has course had been designed to be accessible to students from diverse locations and time zones. If your internet access or access to course content is limited, please connect with your instructor by email within the first two weeks of class to discuss alternate arrangements on a case by case basis. Please consult Carleton's [International Student Services Office](#) website for information about additional supports.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will address some of the most pressing issues in criminology and criminal justice today. Students will examine debates regarding: the policing of Indigenous communities, the “War on Drugs”,

police defunding and abolition, the use of administrative segregation in prisons, policing, poverty and homelessness, right-wing violent extremism, the policing of COVID-19, and the use of surveillance and technology by police and the criminal justice system.

The course will be oriented around the concept of *criminalization*, a main organizing principle in contemporary society. Talking about contemporary criminological issues using the frame of criminalization moves discussions about crime in society away from an understanding that crime is inherent or natural in certain people or communities. Rather, the notion of criminalization acknowledges that what comes to be understood as *against the law* is constructed by social, political, cultural, and economic forces.

Throughout the course, students will learn to engage with critical criminological approaches including intersectional, abolitionist and transformative justice frameworks, and will apply these ideas to examining ongoing issues, debates, and movements. Informed by Indigenous, Black, anti-racist, and feminist readings, this course will critically examine criminalization, racial and colonial injustice, policing and punitive practices. Students will learn about abolitionist praxis, collective care and community mobilization. This 2nd year undergraduate level course aims to build upon foundational concepts from CRCJ 1000: Introduction to Criminology and will prepare students for courses at the 3rd and 4th year level.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, successful students will have demonstrated their ability to:

- Identify, compare and contrast an array of important contemporary criminological issues and appraise different theoretical frameworks and approaches
- Define and explain the concept of criminalization and its application to contemporary socio-legal issues in Canadian society, debates, and movements
- Employ close, critical reading of course texts and content, and identify both central and supporting ideas
- Critically examine racial and colonial injustice, policing and punitive practices through analyzing real-world problems and apply this knowledge through individual writing exercises and online collaborative activities and discussions

cuLearn, Modules and Readings

This is an asynchronous course, which is an online course where the instructor and students share information, ideas, and learning experiences in a virtual course space. Asynchronous courses do not have live, scheduled meetings online. However, students are expected to remain up to date with the deadlines and due dates provided by the instructor. These courses require high-speed Internet access and a computer.

This asynchronous course is fully online and uses cuLearn to provide the required readings on ARES, access to course announcements, the assignment submission dropbox and other links to course materials and resources. Our course will cover a range of contemporary criminological topics and emergent issues relevant to the themes of the course.

The course content and weekly modules are organized under 3 learning sections:

- 1) Ongoing colonization and criminalization**
- 2) Racism, misogyny, violence, and surveillance**
- 3) Imagining transformation and abolition**

There is no one simple textbook or a (couple of texts) that are able to address the many complex and current issues this course will address, and therefore the learning sections will include a range of articles,

book chapters, videos, and other online resources. Each weekly module will be prefaced by videos and a power point guide to address learning objectives and unpack main themes, ideas and concepts. Additionally, there will be interviews provided for students to address course themes, issues and debates.

Just because this course is all online does not mean, however, that connecting with your instructor, your TAs, and your other classmates is not a priority. Rather, it is highly encouraged to support your learning and engagement!

ASSIGNMENTS

The assignments in this course are designed to build upon each other and ensure students do a close and critical reading of all the course content and are thus able to realize the learning objectives. The assignments are intended to support student success, to develop critical thinking skills and engagement with pressing criminological issues.

10% Quizzes on weekly readings (10 at 1% each)

30% Critical course content responses (2 at 15% each)

60% Take home exams (1st at 25%, 2nd at 35%)

Online Course Content Quizzes 10%

At the end of each week of course content there will be a short quiz. The quizzes will consist of 10 multiple-choice/true and false questions based on the assigned weekly readings and other course content presented in the modules on cuLearn. All Quizzes will stay open for 1 week and will close Sunday at 11:59pm. You will have 45 minutes to complete the quiz. Quizzes not completed within the allocated time will receive a 0 for that week. Further details will be provided prior to the first quiz.

Critical Reading Responses 30% (2 at 15% each)

You are asked to submit 2 (3-page) reading response papers. The first response paper will be based on weeks 1 to 3 of the course. The second response paper will be based on weeks 4-6. You will conduct a close reading of a text. Rather than merely summarizing the reading you are required to take an analytical approach to the text. This means that responses should reflect upon, engage and evaluate the ideas, arguments in the readings, and comment on their implications, articulate new insights you have acquired, or questions the reading raises that you would like to discuss. To demonstrate engagement with the reading students are asked to develop 3 interesting or surprising things you learned, 2 critical questions you would like to pose to the author, along with a short description of the argument. This assignment must be based solely on a reading, not other course content such as videos, websites, or lectures. Further details and a grading rubric will be posted on CuLearn.

Take Home Exams (25% mid-term due week of February 22nd and the 35% final will be held during the exam period)

Each take home exam will build upon the themes of the weekly quizzes and are designed to evaluate your knowledge of the course materials. The open-book exams will be posted on Culearn. Please cite properly. The mid-term exam will consist of multiple choice, short answer questions and an essay question (due February 22nd). The final exam will be posted on the last day of class and comprise a series of short answer and essay questions. The final exam will be due during the formal exam period. Grading rubrics will be posted on Culearn.

How to submit assignments: Please submit assignments using the dropbox feature located on cuLearn. Assignments are due by 11:59pm on the due date. All assignments must be completed to receive a passing grade.

COURSE INFORMATION

Online engagement: Under normal circumstances this course would be delivered in a classroom where we could all interact as a group to engage in respectful discussion and co-learning. Due to the course being online, things will be different than the norm, but we will all work together to create a respectful and valuable learning experience.

What students can expect from the Instructor and TAs: This is an 'asynchronous' course, which means that all required material will be posted each week, and students can flexibly engage with the material on their own weekly schedules. Weekly content will feature short topical videos, powerpoints and video interviews with scholars and community activists on given weeks. Students can expect a weekly message from their instructor. Your instructor and TAs are available for office hours by appointment, and we can be contacted by email; the primary mode of engagement with the course material, however, should be via the course site so we can connect and discuss the material and ideas together.

What we expect from students: As members of the Institute of Criminology and Criminal Justice and of Carleton University, CRCJ 2200 students are expected to engage in respectful consideration and analysis of course topics, and with the teaching team. Students should allocate enough time each week to complete the assigned readings, view the lecture, to engage with other posted media, and to complete the weekly quiz; this should take approximately 3 hours per week. Some weeks will involve more work, and should be allocated time accordingly: preparing the 2 critical reading responses should be estimated at a maximum of 5 hours each; the take home exams are more variable, but we recommend that you budget enough time to review and study the material and to write the exams.

Expectations & Sanctions Regarding Due Dates: Sometimes life sucks and things fall apart a little, especially during a pandemic. A late assignment for serious reasons such as illness, injury or other extraordinary circumstances beyond your control must be justified in writing to the course instructor, within 3 working days following the date of the exam or submission of an assignment. The course instructor reserves the right to accept or refuse the reason. Reasons such as travel, jobs, or any misreading of the examination timetable are not acceptable.

Email policy: Please engage with the instructor and course TAs in a formal fashion when communicating via email. Before sending an email please check the "Ask Your Instructor Forum" (info below) in cuLearn to see if your question has already been answered.

If your question or issue is not addressed there, and if your question is not of a private or personal matter, you are strongly encouraged to post your question in the "Ask Your Instructor" forum on cuLearn so all students in the class can benefit from the information.

If an email is required, please indicate the course name and number (CRCJ 2200) in the subject heading. Ensure that you include your full name, student number, and indicate clearly the objective(s) of your message. If you do not include all of these things, it will be difficult for the instructor and/or course TAs to assist you.

During the week it may take up to 48-hours for the professor to respond to your email. The course instructors and TAs do not respond to emails over the weekend. Please plan accordingly. If you send the course instructors and/or TAs more than one message about the same thing in one span of 48-hours, they will likely find this highly annoying (you would probably agree if you were in the instructor's shoes).

Ask Your Instructor Forum: Please post all course and content related questions in the "Ask Your Instructor" forum on cuLearn course page. A response to your question will be provided within 48 hours (excluding weekends).

Writing Policy and Format: You will also be evaluated on your writing abilities. It is recommended that you take the appropriate measures to avoid mistakes such as spelling, syntax, punctuation, and inappropriate use of terms.

Format for all written assignments

- Double spaced text (be sure there is no 'extra' space between paragraphs)
- Font should be Times New Roman
- Font size 12
- Font colour for all text should be black
- 1-inch/ 2.54 cm margins
- Include page numbers (preferably on the bottom right) starting on the first page of text (the title page should not be numbered)
- Include a title page with your name, student number, name of assignment, and title of paper
- Start references on a new page, APA referencing style is preferred, but not required. Be sure whatever referencing style you use to be consistent throughout. To learn more about this format see the Library reference page: <https://library.carleton.ca/help/apa-citation-style>

Did you know there is a dedicated librarian to legal studies and criminology? Find out more here:
<https://library.carleton.ca/research/subject-guides/criminology-and-criminal-justice-detailed-guide>

COURSE SCHEDULE

Section 1 Ongoing colonization & criminalization
<p>Week 1: January 11 Introduction</p> <p>Questions for this week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is critical criminology, criminalization, and settler-colonialism? • How can we better understand the present by looking to the past and is the history of policing in Canada connected to ongoing settler colonization? <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course syllabus! • Carmela Murdocca, (2014) <i>Racialization, Criminalization, Representation</i>, in: <i>Criminalization, Representation, Regulation: Thinking Differently About Crime</i>, pg. 107-132 • Merry, S. (1998). <i>The Criminalization of Everyday Life</i>. In A. Sarat (Ed.), <i>Everyday Practices and Trouble Cases</i> (pp. 14-40). Northwestern University Press. <p>Assignments due this week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course content quiz
<p>Week 2: January 18 Indigenous Peoples and the Criminal Justice System</p> <p>Questions for this week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is institutional and structural racism? • How does the Canadian settler-colonial criminal justice system impact Indigenous people? <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Criminal Justice System: Indigenous Over-Representation in the Criminal Justice System</i>, In: <i>Our Stories</i> (including embedded video, only until the end of the <i>Restorative Justice: Our Future</i> section) <p>Film: Hubbard, Tasha. 2019. "Nîpawistamâsowin: We Will Stand Up". 44 minutes https://gem.cbc.ca/media/cbc-docs-pov/season-3/episode-10/38e815a-0125a33dc27</p> <p>Assignments due this week:</p>

Course content quiz

Week 3: January 25

Policing of Indigenous communities protecting land from resource extraction

Question for this week:

- What is Indigenous law? And what is the settler-colonial rule of law? Who decides what law to follow?
- How has the Canadian government responded to Indigenous communities protecting their land from resource extraction, and how have communities responded?

Readings:

- King, Hayden; Pasternak, Shiri. 2019. "Yellow Institute. Land Back: A Yellowhead Institute Red Paper". Pp 1-44 <https://redpaper.yellowheadinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/red-paper-report-final.pdf>

Videos:

Ellen Gabriel speaks about ongoing demonstrations by Wet'suwet'en supporters, CBC News

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/1698209859586>

Reconciliation Is Dead: RCMP Invade Unist'ot'en Territory

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EgfVO6U5QuA&feature=emb_title

Website:

UNIST'OT'EN Heal the People, Heal the Land

<http://unistoten.camp/>

Assignments due this week:

- Course content quiz

Section 2: Racism, violence & surveillance

Week 4: February 1

Profiling, bias, carding, & force

Question for this week:

- What are racial bias and racial profiling in the context of policing?
- How do scholars and community activists measure profiling and bias in their research?
- How are communities affected by racial profiling and bias seeking justice?

Readings:

- Samuels-Wortley, Kanika. 2019. Youthful Discretion: Police Selection Bias in Access to Pre-Charge Diversion Programs in Canada. *Race and Justice*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2153368719889093>
- Cole, Desmond. 2020. Justice for Abdirahman (march) pp. 39-60, In: *The Skin We're In: A year of Black resistance and power*. Random House: Toronto, Canada.

Video: Conversation with Kanika Samuels-Wortley on racial profiling and policing

Websites:

- CBC's Deadly Force database <https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/fatalpoliceencounters/>
- Justice for Abdirahman <http://www.justiceforabdirahman.ca/>

- Ontario Human Rights Commission 2020 Report on Racial Profiling and Racial Discrimination by the Toronto Police Service [racial disparities in arrests, charges, and use of force] <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/disparate-impact-second-interim-report-inquiry-racial-profiling-and-racial-discrimination-black>

Podcast:

- Desmond Cole and Police Accountability for Abdirahman Abdi: <http://www.michaelspratt.com/podcast-legal-matters/desmond-cole-police-accountability-and-abdirahman-abdi>

Assignments due this week:

- Course content quiz
- #1 Critical reading response

Week 5: February 8
The “War on Drugs” and the drug poisoning crisis

Question for this week:

- What are alternatives to the “War on Drugs”? What is drug legalization? What is drug decriminalization?
- What is structural violence? How has criminalization fueled the drug poisoning crisis?

Readings:

- Tyndall, Mark, & Dodd, Zoë. 2020. *How Structural Violence, Prohibition, and Stigma Have Paralyzed North American Responses to Opioid Overdose*.
- Canadian Drug Policy Coalition. 2012. *Changing the Frame: A New Approach to Drug Policy in Canada*.
- Lupcik, Travis. 2020. Decriminalization is just the start of real reform – and drug users need to be part of the conversation, *Globe and Mail*.

Video: Conversation with Zoë Dodd, Toronto Overdose Prevention Society

Website: Canadian Association of People who Use Drugs
<https://capud.ca/>

Videos: Trudeau vs Zoe Dodd on the opioid crisis
<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/928667203881>

Assignments due this week:

- Course content quiz

*******WINTER BREAK (February 15-19)*******

Week 6: February 22
The homeless crisis and policing of people living in poverty (COVID-19 encampments)

Question for this week:

- How are experiences of racialization, poverty, and criminalization interconnected?
- What is the dictionary definition of ‘homelessness’? What is different about Thistle’s approach to defining Indigenous Homelessness?

Readings:

- Thistle, Adrian Jesse. 2017. "Definition of Indigenous Homelessness in Canada". Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press.
<https://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/COHIndigenousHomelessnessDefinition.pdf>
- Grace-Edward Galabuzi. 2010. Chapter 5. "The Intersecting Experience of Racialized Poverty and the Criminalization of the Poor" in: (eds: Crocker, Diane; Johnston, Val Marie) *Poverty, Regulation and Social Justice: Readings on the Criminalization of Poverty*.

Video: Conversation with Lindsay on Belle Park Encampment

Assignments due this week:

- Course content quiz
- Take home exam #1

Week 7: March 1

Debates over the use of surveillance and technology by police and the criminal justice system (i.e. CCTV to surveil communities, facial recognition, and algorithms for predictive policing)

Question for this week:

- What is 'big data analytics'? What kinds of practices are considered to be 'surveillance'?
- How has facial recognition been used by police? How might facial recognition technologies worsen racial discrimination?
- How are communities responding to increased surveillance in their communities?

Readings:

- Sarah Brayne. 2017. "Big Data Surveillance: The Case of Policing." *American Sociological Review* 82(5), 977-1008.
- Malkia Devich-Cyril. 2020. "Defund Facial Recognition." *The Atlantic* July 5, 2020. Online: <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2020/07/defund-facial-recognition/613771/>
- Chelsea Barabas. 2020. "Beyond Accuracy and Bias: The Pursuit of 'Ethical AI' in Criminal Law." *Ethics of AI in Context* [Podcast]. Online: <https://soundcloud.com/ethics-of-ai-lab/chelsea-barabas-beyond-accuracy-and-bias-the-pursuit-of-ethical-ai-in-criminal-law>

Websites:

- Office of the Privacy Commissioner, statement on Clearview AI
https://www.priv.gc.ca/en/opc-news/news-and-announcements/2020/nr-c_200706/
- Coalition Against More Surveillance, Ottawa
<https://cams-ottawa.ca/>
- Data for Black Lives
<https://d4bl.org/>

Assignments due this week:

Course content quiz

Week 8: March 8

Approaches to countering violent extremism by right-wing and misogynist movements: counter-terrorism and surveillance, countering with compassion, and spectacular ironic counter argument.

Question for this week:

- What is misogyny? What is right-wing extremism? Why do these movements proliferate online?
- How do the three 'counter' approaches studied this week think change will occur? (The three approaches are counter-terrorism, compassionate intervention, and spectacular ironic counter-argument - think in detail about the 'how' of these processes.)

Readings:

- Shanifa Nasser. 2020. "Terror charges in alleged 'incel'-inspired stabbing could force reckoning of Canada's terrorism laws: experts." CBC News. Online: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/incel-canada-terrorism-1.5577015>
- Moonshot CVE [Countering Violent Extremism]. 2020. Covid-19: Increase in far-right searches in Canada. Online: <http://moonshotcve.com/covid-19-increase-in-searches-for-violent-far-right-content-in-canada/>

Videos:

Vidhya Ramalingam (founder of Moonshot CVE) on big data surveillance and use of google ads to counter right-wing radicalization

<https://youtu.be/Otv0WVgHc3U?t=208> (start at 3:28 mins)

Natalie Wynn. *ContraPoints* (Youtube Channel)

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNvslonJdJ5E4EXMa65VYpA>

Assignments due this week:

- Course content quiz
- #2 Critical reading response

Section 3 IMAGINING TRANSFORMATION AND ABOLITION**Week 9: March 15****The movement for racial justice and calls to defund the police****Questions for this week:**

- How do Black Lives Matter activists articulate the relationship between policing and racial injustice?
- What are people asking for when they call for "defunding the police"?
- What is the proportion of the total city budgets spent on policing in Canada's prairie region? Which racialized (and politicized) communities are disproportionately policed in these cities?

Readings:

- Hudson, Sandy, Diverlus. 2020. "The Origin Story of Black Lives Matter Canada" in *Until We Are Free: Reflections on Black Lives Matter in Canada*. Pg 1-5. University of Regina Press.
- Emily Riddle. 2020. *Abolish the Police: The Financial Cost of Law Enforcement in Prairie Cities*.
- Kaba, Mirame. 2020. *Yes, We Mean Literally Abolish the Police*. New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/12/opinion/sunday/floyd-abolish-defund-police.html>

Videos:

Black Lives Matter Toronto calls for police defunding, protesters charged

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=42IT6WnEiP4>

Ravyn Wngz on the Black Lives Matter movement

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iLO7_sx6uKs

Assignments due this week:

- Course content quiz

Week 10: March 22**Transformational Justice, Mutual Aid, and Abolition****Questions for this week:**

- What is transformational justice? What is mutual aid?
- What are people calling for when they call for abolition?

Readings:

- Maree Brown, Adrienne. 2020. Chapter 23 “What is/Isn’t Transformational Justice?” *Beyond Survival: Strategies and Stories from the Transformative Justice Movement*. Edited by Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, Ejeris Dixon. Chico, CA: AK Press.
- Spade, David. 2020. “Solidarity Not Charity: Mutual Aid for Mobilization and Survival”. Duke University Press. *Social Text*, 2020-03, Vol.38 (1), p.131-151

Videos: Conversation with Shaun on Ecological Economics and Re-thinking our Relations
 Conversation with Matt and Jeremy on Mutual Aid Katarokwi-Kingston

Assignments due this week:

- Course content quiz

Week 11: March 29 **Take Home Exam Prep Week******

Week 12: April 5 Take Home Exam Assigned (due during formal exam period)

STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This can include:

- 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;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in “substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.”

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).

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