

Course Outline

COURSE: **SOCI 3410B – Studies in Criminal Justice – Abolitionism & the Criminal Justice System**

TERM: **Winter 2026**

PREREQUISITES: **Prerequisites: [SOCI 2445](#) and [SOCI 2450](#) and third-year standing.**

CLASS: **Day & Time: [In – Person Fridays, 11:35-2:30 PM](#)**

Teaching Assistants: **Please see Brightspace**

Instructor: **Dr. Ellen Faulkner. Email: EllenFaulkner@cunet.carleton.ca**

Contact: **Office Hrs: [Friday after class 2:30-3:30 p.m. or by appointment.](#)**

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will focus on abolitionism in the criminal justice system with a specific focus on the abolition of prisons. This course provides an overview of prison and penal abolitionist thought including the justifications for their struggles, some of the strategies used to achieve their objectives, and their visions for a world without prisons, penality and carcerality. A central theme will be the abolition of the prison system. The course will explore definitions of abolitionism, prison failures, the history of abolitionism, slavery and resistance, how gender structures the prison system, the prison industrial complex, imprisoned communities and families, criminalization of marginalized communities, abolition of police, corporate crime and penal abolition in an international context, Feminist arguments for abolition, and alternatives to prison. Finally, we will analyze the grass-roots response to penality and carcerality. You will be asked to envision a world without prisons and engage in critically analyzing arguments for and against penality. The course articulates various theoretical grounding for abolitionism and incorporates a multidisciplinary experiential educational approach to the study of abolitionism through the use of faculty lectures, interactive learning, practical workshops, case studies and guest speakers. Students will be required to research and write two essays on why prisons should or should not be abolished incorporating theoretical arguments and research from course readings and will submit a presentation on their topic.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Through class lectures, and engagement with each other and the instructor, students will be able to think critically about abolitionism in North America and Internationally and state responses.
- Class lectures and discussion will allow students to engage more thoroughly with the course readings and develop their practical and analytic research skills.
- Faculty and Guest speakers will expose students to a breadth of contemporary abolition studies that demonstrate abolitionist theories in practice, including research that informs academic work as well as community-engaged studies.
- Special topics discussed in class will equip students with practical skills in researching abolition, including a practical case study focusing on the building of a new prison in Ottawa and the closure of the Ottawa Detention Centre. Students will write two essays (mid-term exam and final take home exam) and complete online discussion forum postings and prepare a presentation.
- Two essays (mid-term exam and final take home exam) will enable students to demonstrate their ability to conduct research in an area related to abolitionism.

REQUIRED TEXTS: Available online in Brightspace via MacOdurm Library.

- 1) Davis, Angela Y. (2003). *Are Prisons Obsolete?* New York: Seven Stories Press. E-book Full text available online through Carleton University Library and Hathi Trust and Seven Stories Press. https://www.feministes-radicales.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Angela-Davis-Are_Prisons_Obsolete.pdf. E-book available through Seven Stories Press: <https://www.sevenstories.com/books/2907-are-prisons-obsolete>. Please see PDF on Brightspace. Available for purchase at Carleton University Bookstore.
- 2) Mathieson, Thomas. (2006). *Prison on Trial*. Hampshire, UK: Waterside Press. E-Book available via Carleton University Library. <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy.library.carleton.ca/lib/oculcarleton-ebooks/reader.action?docID=3416310>. E-Book Available from Waterside Press. Link: <https://www.watersidepress.co.uk/acatalog/Prison-on-Trial-9781904380221.html3>
- 3) Morris, Ruth and Gordon West Eds. (2000). *The Case for Penal Abolitionism*. Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press. E-book available online via Carleton University Library and Scholar's Portal Books. https://books-scholarsportal-info.proxy.library.carleton.ca/en/read?id=ebooks/ebooks0/gibson_crkn/2009-12-01/5/412522#page=8.
- 4) Additional readings will be posted online via Brightspace.

COURSE EVALUATION: All assignments are due by 11:59 p.m. in Brightspace on the due dates.

Deadline	Assignment	Percentage
1) Week 7 Sunday March 1 by 11:59 p.m. in Brightspace	Mid-term Exam	35%
2) Week 11 Sunday March 29, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. in Brightspace	Take Home Exam	35%
3) Week 12 Due April 8 by 11:59 p.m. on Brightspace	Multi-media or PowerPoint Presentation based on Essay Topic	10%

4) 8 Online Posts 8 per term – ongoing due the week it is assigned by 11:59 p.m. in Brightspace	8 Online Posts –2.5 pts each Week: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10	20%
Total		100%

Students should note that a considerable portion of your grade involves writing. An inability to present a clear and concise work will have an impact on the grade you receive for the class. Cheating, plagiarism, handing in the same assignment as someone else in the class, and handing in the same assignment or essay for two or more courses (without the permission of all instructors involved) are classified by the University as academic offences and will be dealt with accordingly.

Please note: 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.**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- 1) MID-TERM EXAM – Week 7 – Midterm Exam due 11:59 p.m. Sunday March 1, 2026 in Brightspace. (Worth 35%).**

Assignment Description:

Students will write an essay on a) why abolitionists would argue against the building of a new and bigger jail in Ottawa (25 marks) and then b) produce material educating the public about the potential pitfalls of carceral expansion in our community based on their essay content (10 marks) drawing on lecture materials, along with course readings and external peer-reviewed sources.

- Formatting (marks will be deducted where not followed). To be specified in the mid-term take-home exam handout.
- Assessment criteria. To be specified in the mid-term take-home exam handout.
- **Due Date: Week 7: Sunday, March 1, 2026 by 11:59 p.m. in Brightspace.**

Essay guidelines:

- 1) Avoid inflammatory rhetoric, over-generalizations, and long quotations (paraphrase informational claims and theoretical postulates, acknowledging sources).
- 2) Accept no claims as self-evident or definitive, and do not exhort your reader to treat your claims (conclusions) as self-evident or definitive (you cannot “prove” anything in an essay; nor can anyone else).
- 3) Focus on interpreting and analyzing (i.e. arguing) rather than on merely describing (remembering to maintain a sceptical, challenging, critical, and scholarly (formal) tone and stance throughout the essay).
- 4) Use Chicago format for In-text citations and References List. Provide exact pages in the in-text citations.
- 5) Remember – to fail to acknowledge a source is plagiarism; to treat a secondary source as a primary source is plagiarism; to advance a claim without a source is poor scholarship!

2) TAKE HOME EXAM – Due Week 11 – Sunday March 29, 2026 by 11:59 p.m. on Brightspace. (Worth 35%).

Assignment Description:

Students will write an essay on a) what abolitionists would propose building instead of a new and bigger jail in Ottawa (25 marks) and then b) produce material educating the public about alternative ways to enhance community well-being and safety based on their essay content (10 marks) drawing on lecture materials, along with course readings and external peer-reviewed sources.

- Formatting (marks will be deducted where not followed). To be specified in the mid-term take-home exam handout.
- Assessment Criteria. To be specified in the mid-term take-home exam handout.
- **Due Date: Week 11: Sunday March 29, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. in Brightspace.**

Essay guidelines:

- 6) Avoid inflammatory rhetoric, over-generalizations, and long quotations (paraphrase informational claims and theoretical postulates, acknowledging sources).
- 7) Accept no claims as self-evident or definitive, and do not exhort your reader to treat your claims (conclusions) as self-evident or definitive (you cannot “prove” anything in an essay; nor can anyone else).
- 8) Focus on interpreting and analyzing (i.e. arguing) rather than on merely describing (remembering to maintain a sceptical, challenging, critical, and scholarly (formal) tone and stance throughout the essay).
- 9) Use Chicago format for In-text citations and References List. Provide exact page numbers in the in-text citations.
- 10) Remember – to fail to acknowledge a source is plagiarism; to treat a secondary source as a primary source is plagiarism; to advance a claim without a source is poor scholarship!

3) PRESENTATION – Due Wednesday, April 8, 2026 – Week 12 -to be uploaded to Brightspace by 11:59 p.m. (Worth 10%).

The Government of Ontario is currently planning to build a new and bigger jail to replace the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre. Drawing on the mid term exam and final take home exam material, lecture materials, along with course readings and external peer-reviewed sources, students will select an abolitionist alternative and draft a work plan. Individuals will prepare a PowerPoint or other multi-media presentation and post it to the class Forum during the last two weeks of class. (Please see the guidelines and grading rubric).

4) DISCUSSION FORUM POSTS – 20% (8 Per Term) – Ongoing – Weeks: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 10 by 11:59 p.m. Sunday to Brightspace (2.5 pts each).

Discussion Forum Posts and Reply (20%): Eight posts per term (2.5 pts each). Questions will be posted on Brightspace. The questions will require you to make connections with weekly assigned course content. You will be asked to respond to the posts of your classmates online. Posts can be viewed by other students in the class which will enable sharing of ideas and potential discussion. (Please see the guidelines and grading rubric).

NOTE: All assignments should use a reasonably sized font (e.g., 12 point Arial or Times New Roman Font) and be double-spaced. Students must use the Chicago Style reference system.

SCHEDULE. *Please note that on occasion the class schedule may vary slightly from the course outline.* This schedule is a general guide and subject to change, as deemed necessary in keeping with course objectives.

PART I: ABOLITIONIST VISIONS OF WHAT IS TO BE DISMANTLED?

Week 1: January 5-9, 2026 **What is Abolitionism? *Abolitionism as a Hopeful Critique of Penality***

Learning Outcomes

- ❑ Overview of Requirements for Course
- ❑ What is Abolitionism
- ❑ Overview of definitions of Abolitionism
- ❑ Activity: Self Introduction due week 1 (not graded)**

Required Readings:

- W. Gordon West and Ruth Morris, Canada, “Introduction to the Case for Penal Abolition.” In *The Case for Penal Abolitionism*. Toronto: Canadian Scholar’s Press PP. 3-17.
- Viviane Saleh-Hanna, Canada. “An Introduction to Penal Abolition: Assessing Penology and Social Control.” In *The Case for Penal Abolitionism*. Toronto: Canadian Scholar’s Press, Pp. 18-43.
- Davis, Angela Y. “Imprisonment and Reform.” In *Are Prisons Obsolete?* New York: Seven Stories Press, pp. 40-59.

Supplementary Readings:

- News Articles: The Conversation. July 6, 2020. “If Canada is serious about confronting systemic racism, we must abolish prisons. <https://theconversation.com/if-canada-is-serious-about-confronting-systemic-racism-we-must-abolish-prisons-141408>
- Upping the Anti. A Journal of Theory and Action. October 26, 2009. “Prison Abolition in Canada.” Issue 4. Roundtable: <https://uppingtheanti.org/journal/article/04-prison-abolition-in-canada>

Videos:

- Video: Davis, Angela Y. March 27, 2018. “The Fallacy of Prison Reform.” YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LfnbnTs0r-M>

- Video: Schenwar, Maya (2016). Beyond Reform: Abolishing Prisons. TEDx Baltimore. YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JFTRn_sIGiQ

- Reading: Macdonald, N. (2016). Canada’s Prisons are the new ‘residential schools.’” Macleans, 18. <https://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/canadas-prisons-are-the-new-residential-schools/>

Assignment:

- ❑ Activity: Self Introduction due week 1 (not graded)**

Discussion Post & Reply #1 Listen to the CBC Radio interview “If we Abolish Prisons” and answer the question: Why is mass incarceration a failed social experiment? List 10-15 problems with prisons and the criminal justice system identified by Abolitionists in this interview. CBC Radio Ideas. December 18, 2019. “If we Abolish Prisons, What’s Next?” Online: <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/ideas/if-we-abolish-prisons-what-s-next-1.5399845>

Due: Next Week: Sunday January 18 at 11:59 p.m. in Brightspace.

Week 2: January 12-16, 2026:

The Location of Abolitionism in Criminology

Learning Outcomes

- ❑ The location of abolition in the discipline of Criminology
- ❑ Critical Carceral Studies
- ❑ Abolitionism in Canada

❑ Assignment: Discussion Forum Post #1 Due on Brightspace Sunday January 18 at 11:59 p.m.

Required Readings:

Brown, Michelle and Judah Schept. 2017. "New Abolition, Criminology and critical carceral studies." *Punishment and Society*. Epub: <https://journals-sagepub-com.proxy.library.carleton.ca/doi/pdf/10.1177/1462474516666281>

Carrier, Nicholas and J. Piche. 2015. The State of Abolitionism." Champ Penal/Penal Field. Online: <https://journals.openedition.org/champpenal/9164>

Carrier, Nicolas, and Justin Piche. "On (In)justice: Undisciplined Abolitionism in Canada." *Social Justice*, vol. 45, no. 4, 2019, p. 35+. *Gale Academic OneFile*, https://link-gale-com.proxy.library.carleton.ca/apps/doc/A605510394/AONE?u=ocul_carleton&sid=AONE&xid=d4458b3c. Accessed 21 July 2020.

Assignment:

Discussion Forum Post #1 Listen to the CBC Radio interview "If we Abolish Prisons" and answer the question: Why is mass incarceration a failed social experiment? List 10-15 problems with prisons and the criminal justice system identified by Abolitionists in this interview. CBC Radio Ideas. December 18, 2019. "If we Abolish Prisons, What's Next?" Online: <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/ideas/if-we-abolish-prisons-what-s-next-1.5399845>

Due: Sunday January 18 at 11:59 p.m. in Brightspace.

Week 3: January 19-23, 2026

Problematizing Prisons and Prison Failures

Learning Outcomes:

- ❑ Problematizing prisons and prison failures
- ❑ Why is the Prison on trial?
- ❑ The Future of Imprisonment?

❑ Assignment: Discussion Forum Post #2 due Sunday January 25 at 11:59 p.m. in Brightspace.

Required Readings:

Mathiesen, Thomas (2006). *Prison on Trial*, Hampshire (UK): Waterside Press, pp. 9-140. <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.proxy.library.carleton.ca/lib/oculcarleton-ebooks/reader.action?docID=3416310>

Mathiesen, T. (2006) Ch 1 "Prison: Does it Have a Defense?" *Prison on Trial*. Online.

Mathiesen, T. (2006) Ch 6 "The Future of Imprisonment." *Prison on Trial*. Online.

Videos:

Video: Novara Media. 2018. "A world without Prisons? YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wkd1khe3T9A>

Video: Democracy Now. May 5, 2020. Ruth Wilson Gilmore on Abolitionism. YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1HWqYANmWLY>

Senator Kim Pate. 2018. There are too many indigenous women in Prison. APTN Face-to-face.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ArPMF3YyAU>

Video: Democracy Now. May 5, 2020. Ruth Wilson Gilmore on Abolitionism. YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1HWqYANmWLY>

Assignment:

Discussion Forum Post and Reply #2: Watch the video "Ruth Wilson Gilmore on Abolitionism" Question: Do Prisons have a Defense and what would be a world without prisons look like? Discuss in 350-500 words using sentences. **Due: Sunday January 25 at 11:59 p.m. on Brightspace.**

Week 4: January 26-30, 2026 The Prison as Success Story? The History of Abolitionism, Slavery and Resistance**Learning Outcomes**

- Challenges to the Prison as a Success Story
- The history of Abolitionism, Slavery and Resistance
- How Gender Structures the Prison System
- The Prison Industrial Complex
- Assignment: Discussion Forum Post #3 Due: Sunday February 1 at 11:59 p.m. in Brightspace.**

Required Readings:

Davis, Angela Y. (2003). "Slavery, Civil Rights, and abolitionist Perspectives Toward Prison, Are Prisons Obsolete? pp. 22-40. https://www.feministes-radicales.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/Angela-Davis-Are_Prisons_Obsolete.pdf

Davis, Angela Y. (2003). "How Gender Structures the Prison System." Are Prisons Obsolete? Pp. 60-84.

Davis, Angela Y. (2003). "The Prison Industrial Complex." Are Prisons Obsolete? Pp. 84-105.

Videos:

Lecture: Angela Y. Davis. 2013. Angela Y. Davis – 150 Years Later: Abolition in the 21st Century. McMaster Humanities. YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9NAhbp4co>

Video: Smithsonian (2020). How Did Angela Davis Inspire a Movement? YouTube:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QBNZo_joB-E

Activity: Video – Angela Davis on Feminism and Prison Abolition (2013) YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gpFZxYU7hbw>

The Good Stuff. Feb 19, 2020. "From the Abolitionist Movement to #BlackLivesMatter." YouTube:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vm_4kPlalj4

Assignment:

Discussion Forum Post & Reply # 3: Watch the video of Angela Davis on Feminism and Prison Abolition and the video “From the Abolitionist Movement to #BlackLivesMatter” Question: What is the connection between Abolition and the BLM movement and how is feminism and Abolition connected to this movement? In 350-500 words Incorporate your knowledge of the assigned readings and information from the videos in your answer.

Discussion Post #3 Due: Sunday February 1 at 11:59 p.m. in Brightspace.

Week 5: February 2-6, 2026

Class & Imprisoned Communities and Families

Learning Outcomes

- ❑ Class bias in the criminal justice system
 - ❑ Disproportionate incarceration based on class and race
 - ❑ Impacts on Victims and Communities
- ❑ Assignment: Discussion Forum Post #4 Due Sunday February 8 at 11:59 p.m. on Brightspace.**

Required Readings:

Nicolas Carrier and Justine Piche'. 2015. "The malign neglect of the interests and needs of victims and communities." In "The State of Abolitionism," *Champ Penal*. Online:

<https://journals.openedition.org/champenal/9164>

Clarke, John 2000. Serve the rich and punish the Poor: Law as an Enforcer of Inequality. In, W. Gordon West and Ruth Morris. *The Case for Penal Abolition*. 77-89.

Maur, Marc. 2000. "The Race to Incarcerate." In, W. Gordon West and Ruth Morris. *The Case for Penal Abolition*. 98-100.

Videos:

Activity: Video Angela Davis (2018) How Capitalism Affects the Working Class. YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jUeHI06HavE>

Activity: Ruth Wilson Gilmore. October 26, 2011. "Beyond the Prison Industrial Complex: YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sTPjC-7EDkc>

Assignment:

Discussion Forum Post #4 and Reply: Watch "How Capitalism affects the Working Class" and "Beyond the Prison Industrial Complex." Question: How does capitalism affect the working class? How can we move beyond the present prison industrial complex? Discuss in 350-500 words using sentences. **Due: Sunday February 8 at 11:59 p.m. on Brightspace.**

Week 6: February 9-13, 2026 - Criminalization and Punishment: How could Penalization of 'Street Criminality' be abolished?

Learning Outcomes

- ❑ Caging the Poor: The case against the Prison System
 - ❑ Criminalization of marginalized populations
 - ❑ Police Abolition
- ❑ Assignment: Discussion Post & Reply #5 due Sunday February 15 at 11:59 p.m. on Brightspace.**

Required Readings:

- McDowell, Meghan G. and Luis A. Fernandez (2018) “‘Disband, Disempower, and Disarm’: Amplifying the Theory and Practice of Police Abolition”, *Critical Criminology*, 26(3): 373-391. PDF available online.
- McMurtry, John. *Caging the Poor: The Case Against the Prison System.* *The Case for Penal Abolitionism.* Toronto: Canadian Scholar’s Press.
- Morris, Ruth. “Reconciled with Whom? Wrong Criminals, Wrong Goal.” *The Case for Penal Abolitionism.* Toronto: Canadian Scholar’s Press.
- Spring, A Magazine of Socialist Ideas. 2002. Abolish the Police: A Reader: <https://springmag.ca/abolish-the-police-a-reader>

Supplementary:

- Hulsman, Louk (1986) “Critical Criminology and the Concept of Crime”, *Contemporary Crisis* (now *Crime, Law and Social Change*), 10(1): 63-80. PDF available online.
- Christie, Nils (1977) “Conflicts as Property”, *British Journal of Criminology*, 17(1): 1-15. PDF available.

Videos:

- Activity: Video: Democracy Now. June 12, 2020. “Uprising and Abolition, Defund the Police and Angela Davis.” YouTube” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NL4yxg3vl_o
- Activity: Los Angeles Times. June 13, 2020. Defund the Police what does it mean? YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K8T8p416s9Q>
- Hubbard, T., Dir. (2004). Two Worlds Colliding. Canada. National Film Board of Canada. (Starlight Tours, Canada). https://www.nfb.ca/film/two_worlds_colliding/
- CBCPovDocs. “The Skin I’m In: Pulling back the curtain on racism in Canada.” CBC Docs. Urgent, controversial, and undeniably honest, The Skin We’re In is a wake-up call to complacent Canadians. Racism is here. It is everywhere. It is us and we are it. Following celebrated journalist Desmond Cole as he researches his hotly anticipated book, this documentary from acclaimed director Charles Officer pulls back the curtain on racism in Canada. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=msoBTlv1VqM>
- CBC Radio Canada. June 1, 2020. “Desmond Cole: ‘Disarm and defund police’ and give money to communities.” Amid international protests over the death of George Floyd, activist and author Desmond Cole says he believes police can’t be “trained out of their ways” and that Canada needs to address its own issues of violence toward marginalized communities. Question: What does defunding the police mean?: CBC Radio Canada. June 1, 2020. “Desmond Cole: ‘Disarm and defund police’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llkOG2vtE1g>
- Tv Ontario. 2015. “Desmond Cole” CBC Radio Canada. June 1, 2020. Black like Me.” In a recent Toronto Life article, Desmond Cole writes that he has been stopped by police on more than 50 occasions because of his skin colour. He tells Steve Paikin about these experiences and discusses the challenges and hopes for Toronto’s new Police Chief Mark Saunders. “Desmond Cole: ‘Disarm and defund police’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llkOG2vtE1g> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pMuyKPOCPpg>

Discussion Post 5: Watch “Defund the Police” by Angela Davis and Desmond Cole’s Defund Police. Read “Defund the Police: What does it mean?”. What are the abolitionist arguments for defunding police and how can it work to resolve the concerns of the BLM movement?

Democracy Now. June 12, 2020. “Uprising and Abolition, Defund the Police and Angela Davis.” YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NL4yxg3vl_o

“Desmond Cole: ‘Disarm and defund police’ CBC Radio Canada. June 1, 2020.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llkOG2vtE1g> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pMuyKPOCPpg>

Discussion Post #5 due Sunday February 15 at 11:59 p.m. on Brightspace.

WINTER BREAK FEBRUARY 16-20, 2026 – NO CLASSES

Week 7: February 23-27, 2026 - - Midterm Exam due: Sunday March 1, 2026 in Brightspace at 11:59 p.m.

Week 8: March 2-6, 2026 - - How could Penalization of “Suite Criminality” be Abolished?

Learning Outcomes & Topics:

- ❑ Corporate Crime
- ❑ Regulating toxic capitalism
- ❑ Penal Abolition in an International Context

❑ Assignment: Discussion Forum Post #6 due Sunday March 8, 2026 in Brightspace at 11:59 p.m.

Required Readings:

Snider, Laureen. ‘Relocating Law: Making Corporate Crime Disappear.’ *The Case for Penal Abolitionism*. Toronto: Canadian Scholar’s Press.

Pearce, Frank and Steve Toombs. ‘Regulating Toxic Capitalism.’ *The Case for Penal Abolitionism*. Toronto: Canadian Scholar’s Press.

West, Gordon. ‘Conceptualizing a Comparative Critical Criminology of Penal Abolition.’ *The Case for Penal Abolitionism*. Toronto: Canadian Scholar’s Press.

Videos:

Video: Prison Industrial Complex: 2017. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=41Q_nhuu9sU
CNBC. 2019. Who Makes Money from Private Prisons? YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3uv7iK5UxM4>

Video: Prisons for Profit. What happens when prisoners become dollar signs? Watch ‘Prisons for Profit,’ a short documentary chronicling the first 18 months in the life of the nation’s first state prison sold to a for-profit corporation. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YQcZzS7egfY>

Video: Michelle Alexander. 2013. ‘The New Jim Crow.’ George E. Kent Lecture.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gln1JwDUI64>

Assignment:

Discussion Forum #6 & Reply Due: Sunday March 8, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. in Brightspace. TBA.

Learning Outcomes

- ❑ Arguments for and against Abolition
- ❑ The Dangerous Few
- ❑ Abolition and Violence Against Women
- ❑ Abolition and Sex Offenders/Sexual Assault
- ❑ Radical feminism and Abolition Movement

❑ **Assignment: Discussion Forum Post & Reply #7 due Sunday March 15 at 11:59 p.m. in Brightspace.**

Required Readings:

- Morris, Ruth (2000). "But What about the Dangerous Few?" *The Case for Penal Abolitionism*. Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press. Pp. 101-110.
- Snider, Laureen. (2000). "Towards Safer Societies: Punishment, Masculinities, and Violence Against Women." *The Case for Penal Abolitionism*. Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press.
- Ilea, Adina. "What About 'the Sex Offenders'? Addressing Sexual Harm from an Abolitionist Perspective." *Critical criminology (Richmond, B.C.)* 26.3 (2018): 357–372. Web.
- Taylor, Chloe. (2019). "Anti-carceral Feminism and Sexual Assault – A Defense: A Critique of the Critique of the Critique of Carceral Feminism." *Social Philosophy Today*. 34: 29-49. PDF available.

Video:

Video: Welsh, C. (2006). Finding Dawn. Montreal: Que. National Film Board of Canada. Acclaimed Métis filmmaker Christine Welsh brings us a compelling documentary that puts a human face on a national tragedy – the epidemic of missing or murdered Indigenous women in Canada. The film takes a journey into the heart of Indigenous women's experience, from Vancouver's skid row, down the Highway of Tears in northern BC, and on to Saskatoon, where the murders and disappearances of these women remain unsolved.

https://www.nfb.ca/film/finding_dawn/

Assignment:

Discussion Forum Post #7 & Reply due: Sunday March 15 at 11:59 p.m. in Brightspace.

What are feminist arguments for abolition? How can we address the issue of what to do with violent predators? What is the Abolitionist position on how to address this issue? How is it that we should respond to the 'dangerous few' according to Ruth Morris? How could an Abolitionist approach be used to address the issue of murdered and missing Indigenous women (See *Finding Dawn* Film).

PART II: ABOLITIONIST VISIONS OF WHAT IS TO BE BUILT AND HOW

Learning Outcomes

- ❑ Alternatives to Prison
- ❑ Radical feminism and Abolition
- ❑ Abolitionist Alternatives
- ❑ Transformative Justice

Assignment: Discussion Forum Post & Reply #8 due Sunday, March 22 at 11:59 p.m. in Brightspace.

Required Readings:

Prison Research Education Action Project. *Instead of Prisons: A Handbook for Abolitionists*, Oakland: Critical Resistance, pp. 62-136. Online: https://www.prisonpolicy.org/scans/instead_of_prisons/

Morris, Ruth. 2000. Chapter 1: What is Transformative Justice? Stories of Transformative Justice. Toronto: Canadian Scholar's Press.

Davis, Angela Y. "Abolitionist Alternatives. NY: Seven Stories Press, pp. 105-116.

Videos:

Video: Buis Michaux, Melissa. March 18, 2019. "Transformative Justice: Healing Garden in Prison." TEDx Salem. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QSNESGwdErY>

Video: Harrison, Emma. April 4, 2019. "From Reform to Abolition. The Future of the U.S. Prison System." TEDx. YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nvkb653FhIU>

Assignment:

Discussion Forum Post & Reply #8 due Sunday, March 22 at 11:59 p.m. in Brightspace. TBA.

Week 11: March 23-27, 2026 Critical Reflections on Abolitionism & Making a Pitch for Abolitionist Alternatives

Learning Outcomes

❑ Assessing Abolitionist Alternatives

❑ Alternatives to Punishment

❑ Take Home Exam **due in Brightspace Sunday March 29 at 11:59 p.m. on Brightspace.**

Required Readings:

Viviane Saleh-Hanna (2017) An abolitionist theory on crime: ending the abusive relationship with Racist-Imperialist-Patriarchy [R.I.P.], *Contemporary Justice Review*, 20:4, 419-441, DOI:

[10.1080/10282580.2017.1377056](https://doi.org/10.1080/10282580.2017.1377056)

Critical Resistance. (2012). The CR Abolition Organizing Toolkit. See sections: "Abolitionist Steps," "Alternative Practices," and "Seven Easy Steps". Online: <http://criticalresistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/CR-Abolitionist-Toolkit-online.pdf>

Pepinsky, Hal. 2000. "Empathy Works, Obedience Doesn't." *The Case for Penal Abolitionism*. pp 275-300.

Consedine, Jim. 2000. "Towards a Theology of Transformative Justice." *The Case for Penal Abolitionism*. Pp 301-318.

Supplementary:

Cohen, Stanley. 1991. "Alternatives to Punishment – The Abolitionist Case." *Israel Law Review*. 25: 730-739.

Knopp, Fay Honey (1994) "On Radical Feminism and Abolition", *Peace Review*, 6(2): 203-208. PDF available online.

Mathiesen, Thomas (2015[1974]) "Book II. Chapter 1: The Unfinished", in *The Politics of Abolition Revisited*, London: Routledge, pp. 47-61.

Cohen, Stanley (1985) "The Master Patterns", in Alternatives *Visions of Social Control*, Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 13-39, 283-287.

Carrier, Nicholas and J. Piche'. 2015. "Blind spots of abolitionist thought in academia. On longstanding and emerging issues." Champ Penal. <https://journals.openedition.org/champenal/9162#tocto1n2>
Mathieson, T. 1974. "The Prison Movement in Scandinavia." *Crime and Social Justice*. 1:45-50.

Videos:

Video: Harrison, Emma. April 4, 2019. "From Reform to Abolition. The Future of the U.S. Prison System." TEDx. YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nvkb653FhIU>
Van Buren, Deanna. April 13, 2018. "What would a world without prisons look like?" TEDx. YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m6X1i8khmt8>
Canadian Friend's Service Committee. Penal Abolition and Restorative Justice. Quakers for Justice and Peace. <https://quakerservice.ca/our-work/justice/penal-abolition-restorative-justice/>
Sociology of Law. 201. "Thomas Mathieson, Professor of Law, University of Oslo. YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5vOhwMsWJI>

Assignments:

Hand in Take Home Exam on Brightspace Sunday, March 29, 2026 at 11:59 p.m.

FRIDAY April 3 – No Class – GOOD FRIDAY - UNIVERSITY CLOSED

Week 12: April 6 - 8, 2026. Critical Reflections on Abolitionism & Making a Pitch for Abolitionist Alternatives, Continued. Classes End April 8. No Friday In-Person Class.

Assignment:

Research Presentation PowerPoint Presentation due: Upload to Brightspace. Wednesday, April 8 at 11:59 p.m.

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COURSE INFORMATION

What Students Can Expect from the Instructor and TA: This is an in-person class, which means that all required material will be discussed in class during class time. Supplementary material will be posted in Brightspace and all assignments and exams will be due online in Brightspace. Students may meet with the instructor weekly to ask questions during class time or office hours. Any announcements or course updates will be made in class and online in Brightspace. Each class will include a short lecture and discussion and short videos to supplement the weekly assigned reading material. Your TA and instructor are available for office hours, as well as by appointment, and we can be contacted by email.

What we Expect from Students: As members of the Department of Sociology & Anthropology SOCI3410 students are expected to engage in respectful consideration and analysis of course topics,

and respectful discussion with our peers and with the teaching team. Students should allocate enough time each week to complete the assigned readings, attend the lecture, and engage in discussions about the weekly discussion forum content, and to complete the weekly discussion forum assignments; this should take approximately 3-4 hours per week. Some classes will involve more work, and should be allocated time accordingly: preparing the discussion forums should be estimated at a maximum of 1 hour; 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.

Late Assignments:

Students must ask the instructor for permission to submit late assignments before the assignment deadline. If permission is not granted, a penalty of 5% will be deducted for each day an assignment is late. Assignments more than three days late will not be accepted. Computer failure, conflicts with work schedules, or similar problems are not a valid excuse for failing to submit an assignment on time. Please refer to the “Academic Consideration for Coursework Form” which should be filled out by students in cases of illness. Students must notify me as soon as possible in the case of an emergency or see me in advance during office hours and after our meeting we will record (in written form) reasons for the extension and, if an extension is granted, the new due date. Students may be asked to fill out the Academic Consideration for Coursework Form:

<https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-consideration-coursework-form/>

Contact with the Professor:

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 Brightspace 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 Brightspace so all students in the class can benefit from the information.

If an email is required, please indicate the course name and number (SOCI2445) 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 TA to assist you.

During the week it may take up to 48-hours for the professor to respond to your email. The course instructor and TA 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 8-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 Brightspace course page. A response to your question will be provided within 48 hours (excluding weekends).

GUIDELINES AND SUGGESTIONS

1. Stay on top of the reading assignments in this course. As with most third year courses, there is a great deal of reading, and it can pile up very quickly and become overwhelming. Make time to do the required readings each week. Please ensure that you are capable of allocating time to study the assigned material for this course.
2. Students having difficulty with academic requirements should engage with the many resources available on campus to help students succeed.
3. The Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS) is a centralized collection of learning support services designed to help students achieve their goals and improve their learning both inside and outside the classroom. CSAS offers academic assistance with course content, academic writing and skills development. Visit CSAS online at: carleton.ca/csas
4. If you are having trouble understanding the material in the course, contact your professor or Teaching Assistant sooner rather than later. I am here to help you learn.

ACADEMIC REGULATIONS, ACCOMMODATIONS, PLAGIARISM, ETC.

University rules regarding registration, withdrawal, appealing marks, and most anything else you might need to know can be found on the university's website, here:

<https://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/regulations/academicregulationsoftheuniversity/>

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

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

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

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC: <https://carleton.ca/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 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*).

*The deadline for contacting the Paul Merton Centre regarding accommodation for February/March examinations is **February 1, 2026** and **March 15, 2026** for April examinations.

For Religious Obligations:

Please contact your instructor 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, visit the Equity Services website: www.carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

For Pregnancy:

Please contact your instructor 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, visit the Equity Services website: www.carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

For 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: www.carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support

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. Please contact your instructor 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>

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 failing to acknowledge sources with proper citations when using another's work and/or failing to use quotation marks.

What are the Penalties for Plagiarism?

A student found to have plagiarized an assignment may be subject to one of several penalties including but not limited to: a grade of zero, a failure or a reduced grade for the piece of academic work; reduction of final grade in the course; completion of a remediation process; resubmission of academic work; withdrawal from course(s); suspension from a program of study; a letter of reprimand.

Use of AI in the Course. Minimal Use – Basic Assistance Only

AI use in this course: Students may use AI tools for basic word processing and formatting functions, including:

- Grammar and spell checking (e.g., Grammarly, Microsoft Word Editor).
- Basic formatting and design suggestions (e.g., Microsoft Word's formatting tools, PowerPoint Design editor).

Documenting AI use: It is not necessary to document the use of AI for the permitted purposes listed above. If you have questions about a specific use of AI that isn't listed above, please consult your instructor.

Why have I adopted this policy? This policy ensures that student voices and ideas are prioritized and authentically represented, maintaining the integrity of the work produced by students while allowing basic support to enhance clarity, correctness, layout, and flow of ideas. The goal of adopting a limited use of AI is to help students develop foundational skills in writing and critical thinking by practicing substantive content creation without relying on AI support.

As our understanding of the uses of AI and its relationship to student work and academic integrity continue to evolve, students are required to discuss their use of AI in any circumstance not described here with the course instructor to ensure it supports the learning goals for the course.

Note: Students can also access resources related to citing Generative AI on the [MacOdrum Library website](#). Additional resources are also available on Carleton's [Artificial Intelligence Hub](#).

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, the Chicago reference style is required.
- The Chicago author-date citation style (17th edition) is to be used in the assignments and papers of this course. For more information, please see: https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide/citation-guide-2.html

Did you know there is a dedicated librarian for sociology, legal studies and criminology?

Find out more here:

Jamila Hastick, Arts and Social Sciences Librarian, jamila.hastick@carleton.ca

Julie Lavigne: Criminology Librarian, <https://library.carleton.ca/contact/staff-directory/julie-lavigne>

There is also a daily "Chat" virtual assistant available via the library during the week: <https://library.carleton.ca/>

Assistance for Students:

Academic and Career Development Services: <https://carleton.ca/career/>

Writing Services: <http://www.carleton.ca/csas/writing-services/>

Important Information:

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s). Students must always retain a hard copy of all work that is submitted. Carleton University is committed to protecting the privacy of those who study or work here (currently and formerly). To that end, Carleton's Privacy Office seeks to encourage the implementation of the privacy provisions of Ontario's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FIPPA) within the university. In accordance with FIPPA, please ensure all communication with staff/faculty is via your Carleton email account. To get your Carleton Email you will need to activate your [MyCarletonOne account](#) through Carleton Central. Once you have activated your MyCarletonOne account, log into the [MyCarleton Portal](#). Please note that you will be able to link your MyCarletonOne account to other non-MyCarletonOne accounts and receive emails from us. However, for us to respond to your emails, we need to see your full name, CU ID, and the email must be written from your valid MyCarletonOne address. Therefore, it would be easier to respond to your inquiries if you would send all email from your connect account. If you do not have or have yet to activate this account, you may wish to do so by visiting <https://students.carleton.ca/>.

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/crisis/emergency-numbers/>

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: (613) 238-3311 or TEXT: 343-306-5550, <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
- Mental Health Crisis Service: (613) 722-6914, 1-866-996-0991, <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- Empower Me: 1-844-741-6389, <https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/>
- Good2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: <https://walkincounselling.com>

Other Concerns:

(i) Diversity and Inclusion and Respect:

In this course, you are expected to learn from your texts, your teacher and from one another. This requires striving towards understanding each other but it does not imply striving towards finding agreement. Our class will be racially, religiously, politically, culturally, generationally, and economically diverse. We will be of different gender identifications and sexual orientations and our lived experiences and reactions to the course material will reflect this diversity. Sharing our perspectives and interpretations on the course material will enhance everyone's learning experience and you are encouraged to openly express any disagreements with the authors you will read, with your fellow classmates, or with the Professor in the different participation fora that are available for this course. However, you are expected to conduct yourself in such a way that shows the utmost respect to others who may – or may not – share your views. Derogatory comments and hateful behavior towards others (and their views) will not be tolerated.

Carleton University acknowledges the location of its campus on the traditional, unceded territories of the Algonquin nation. In doing so, Carleton acknowledges it has a responsibility to the Algonquin people and a responsibility to adhere to Algonquin cultural protocols.

(ii) Confidentiality

Treat any personal information that you hear about a peer or an instructor as strictly confidential.

(iii) Always keep copies of all your written work submitted. Retain for yourself more than one copy in alternate formats (hard copy, external hard drive, or USB in addition to your original on your primary computer) of all your written academic work.

LINK TO IMPORTANT DATES:

Academic Dates - Current Students : <https://students.carleton.ca/academic-dates/>

Did you know there is a dedicated librarian for sociology, legal studies and criminology? Find out more here:

Jamila Hastick, Arts and Social Sciences Librarian. Email: Jamila.hastick@carleton.ca

Julie Lavigne, Criminology and Legal Studies Librarian: <https://library.carleton.ca/contact/staff-directory/julie-lavigne>

There is also a daily “Chat” virtual assistant available via the library during the week:
<https://library.carleton.ca>

Additional Resources:

Collaborative Justice Program: <https://www.collaborativejustice.ca/en/resources>

Abolition in Canada Syllabus and Reading List (2019). Justice Exchange:
<https://justiceexchange.ca/about/>

Instead of Prisons: A Handbook for Abolitionists: https://www.prisonpolicy.org/scans/instead_of_prisons/

Critical Resistance. (2012). The CR Abolition Organizing Toolkit. See sections: “Abolitionist Steps,” “Alternative Practices,” and “Seven Easy Steps”. Online: <http://criticalresistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/CR-Abolitionist-Toolkit-online.pdf>

Abolitionism: Online Course. June 25, 2020 by Abolition Journal. <https://abolitionjournal.org/studyguide>. Study Group Guide:

<https://abolitionjournal.org/studyguide/?fbclid=IwAR1W2dKZWqaAlyTGHPkoJhF3GNoBf5exxz38fOR3W75aeEAOA2mkuyDss5Q>

The Marshal Project. Abolitionism. <https://www.themarshallproject.org/records/4766-prison-abolition>

Church Council on Justice and Corrections Ottawa:

<https://ccjc.ca/?fbclid=IwAR3LnB7uf0B8ThPF5jkBUTxMUbzasuS405wYhJElmMwaGNzx3MSI51QIxRs>

Justice Exchange: <https://justiceexchange.ca/>

CPEP - The Criminalization Education Project - University of Ottawa:
<https://cp-ep.org/>

Toronto Prisoner's Rights Project: <https://www.torontoprisonersrightsproject.org/>

Critical Resistance Videos Breaking Down the Prison Industrial Complex:
<http://criticalresistance.org/videoproject/>

Ruth Wilson Gilmore makes the case for Abolition: <https://theintercept.com/2020/06/10/ruth-wilson-gilmore-makes-the-case-for-abolition/>

Why Abolition?: <https://abolitionistfutures.com/>

Restorative Justice Resources: Department of Justice Canada.
Link: <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/rj-jr/res.html>

December 19, 2026