

**Instructor:** Dr. Stephanie Hilwig

**Course:** Sociology 447, Correctional Systems (3 Credit Hours)

**Time:** W 2:00 – 4:30      **Room:** MCD 317

**Office Hours:** MWF 11:00-12:00  
TTH 1:00 – 2:00  
Or by appointment

**Phone Number:** 587-7845

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**REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:**

[Writing My Wrongs: Life, Death, and Redemption in an American Prison](#)  
Senghor, Shaka

[Handbook on Prisons](#)  
Jewkes, Yvonne

**PREREQUISITES:**

Soc 201  
Criminology 245  
Criminal Justice 346

**CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

This course will focus on corrections as one of the components of the American criminal justice system and its operation within a democratic form of government. The philosophical and historical underpinnings of punishment and corrections will be analyzed and compared (e.g., punishment vs. rehabilitation. The effects of "race," class, and gender will be considered.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

This course will focus on corrections as the third component of the American criminal justice system. This class is not only an introduction to the field of corrections but also larger issues of *penology* – the study of pain and punishment. In this class, we will discuss the correctional system – how it runs, what's it like to be in prison, what it does to people, who goes to prison, and why people go there. We will also discuss many of the issues that encompass the system of corrections, such as, the history and use of punishments, women in prison, community-based corrections, juveniles in prison, boot camps, probation and parole, the death penalty, and alternatives to prison. We will also discuss the impact of race and gender on the correctional system.

## **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

1. To be able to describe the major functions of the corrections systems (rehabilitation, incapacitation, deterrence, and retribution)
2. To be able compare the structure, culture, and daily operations of men's and women's prisons
3. To be able to assess the goals, difficulties, and obstacles of inmates leaving the prison environment
4. To be able to compare and contrast alternatives to the prison system (e.g. boot camps, probation, shaming, community corrections, rehabilitation facilities, etc.)
5. Develop effective writing skills

## **FORMAT OF THE COURSE**

1. This course will include a great deal of interesting and thought-provoking, informative, and discussion provoking reading. There will also be a good deal of writing conducted both in and out of class in response to the readings.
2. The class format will include a mixture of lectures, discussions, debates, films, guest speakers, and field trips. The more active the class, the better experience everyone will one will have, and consequently the more we will learn.
3. Because class meets only once a week, it is imperative that you attend every class. Missing a single class period is the equivalent of missing an entire week. If you must miss a class, it is your responsibility to get class notes and information from other students in the class. I suggest you get to know people your very first day. Get e-mails and phone numbers.

## **ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

### **Debates: (20% of grade)**

Because the topic of corrections is multifaceted with many controversial topics, we will explore many issues through a series of debates held in the classroom. Each student will be assigned a topic, and a position you are to argue for (or against). During class, the individual will present the argument to the class, listen to the other side presented by their opponent, and then present a rebuttal. Following the debate presentation, the class will be free to discuss the issues. The presentation will be graded on the quality of your argument and evidence

**Debate Research Paper: (20% of grade)**

Each individual is responsible for producing a research paper (12 to 15 pages in length) spelling out the argument in your debate. Papers will be due on the day of your debate presentation.

**Quizzes: (40% of grade)**

Ten quizzes will be given periodically throughout the semester each worth 5% of your grade. Your lowest 2 grades will be dropped, leaving only 8 quizzes counting towards your final grade (40% combined.) All questions come from both lectures and your readings. The quizzes will either be a short in-class reaction to the readings or a series of 5 to 10 questions about the readings and/or lecture from the previous weeks. I will not tell you in advance when the quizzes will be, but if you do the readings and stay up with class notes, you should have no problem with the quizzes.

**Make-Up Quizzes:** In the event you miss a quiz, I will let you make it up, although it will be different from the quiz given to the rest of the class. You can make up only one quiz during the semester.

**Essays: (20% of grade; 10% each paper)**

A good portion of what you will do in this class is designed to encourage you to make the most out of the material from the readings, presentations, and class fieldtrips. A secondary, but just as important goal, is to help with your writing and communication abilities, a skill useful in any occupation. To help facilitate this process, you will each be required to write three papers in response to the readings and field trips.

The journal should be about 3 pages in length and clearly describe your experience, what you learned, and how this could be applied to other material learned in the class, and experiences from your own life. Also describe, how it altered your consciousness about a particular issue.

1. ***Due Sept 13<sup>th</sup>***: How does our prison system either help or hinder rehabilitation of offenders? Are our prisons making people worse, or making people better?
2. ***Due Nov 1<sup>st</sup>***: Does our society make rehabilitation and adjustment into the community possible? What are some barriers to former prisoners adjusting to a “normal” life?

**Extra Credit:** There is one way to earn extra credit in this class.

Writing Lab: For each journal essay, if you utilize the writing lab you will earn an extra 5 percent increase on each assignment.

**Grading:**

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| A | 90 % and above |
| B | 80 – 89 %      |
| C | 70 – 79 %      |
| D | 60 – 69 %      |
| F | 59 % and below |

**FIELD TRIPS:**

San Luis Valley Community Corrections in Alamosa

Sage Youth Center, Alamosa

Cheyenne Reentry Program, Colorado Springs

**Some notes on guest speakers and field trips:**

1. We are fortunate to have people from the community taking time out to spend some time with us and share their experiences. This means we should encourage them to want to come back. The best way to make their experiences positive is to listen attentively and ask questions that encourage them to tell stories. Everybody loves when they feel people are interested in what they have to say.
2. During the field trips, it is also vitally important that we remain respectful, professional, and alert at all times. Remember, we want these facilities to believe that the Adams State Criminology program produces well-educated and responsible persons. It could help you get a job someday soon. Dress conservatively, do not chew gum, hats off, stay off your phones and ask thought-provoking and intelligent questions.
3. I understand that some students may not be able to make the field trips; consequently, alternative assignments will be available for any student not able to make a field trip.

**Course Adaptations or Accommodations:**

Adams State University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Adams State University is committed to achieving equal educational opportunities, providing students with documented disabilities access to all university programs, services and activities. In order for this course to be equally accessible to all students, different accommodations or adjustments may need to be implemented. The Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) is located in Richardson Hall 3-100, or available at OAS@adams.edu, and 719-587-7746. They are your primary resource on campus to discuss the qualifying disability, help you develop an accessibility plan, and achieve success in your courses this semester. They may provide you with letters of accommodation, which can be delivered in two ways. You may give them to me in person, or have the Office of Accessibility Services email them. Please make an appointment with their office as early as possible this semester so that we can discuss how potential accommodations can be provided and carried out for this course. If you have already

received letters of accommodation for this course from OAS, please provide me with that information privately so that we can review your accommodations together and discuss how best to help you achieve equal access in this course this semester.

**A Note About Due Dates:**

Due dates for this course are FIRM, and I expect you to turn in assignments and take the exams during the scheduled class period. This policy will be strictly enforced throughout the semester. Excuses for turning in late assignments or taking a make-up exams will be considered on an individual basis, and only when supported with the appropriate documentation. You bear the sole responsibility for turning your work in on time.

**Academic Freedom and Responsibility:**

Academic freedom is a cornerstone of the University. Within the scope and content of the course as defined by the instructor, it includes the freedom to discuss relevant matters in the classroom. Along with this freedom comes responsibility. Students are encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth. Students are free to take reasoned exception to the views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.

**CELL PHONE POLICY:**

Phones, notepads and computers will not be allowed in class. All students must silence them and put them out of sight during the duration of class. You may not leave them on your desk. Cellphones and other media are not only a distraction to you, but they distract my ability to teach and they also distract other students in class who can see your screen.

**LEAVING DURING CLASS:**

I understand that sometimes students must sometimes leave class, but I ask that if you do, please either let me know ahead of time, or come and apologize and explain why afterwards. Please go to the bathroom between your classes and check your cellphone after class. It is distracting to me and to other students and frankly, it is rude.

**Student Sexual Misconduct Policy**

Our school is committed to fostering a safe, productive learning environment. Title IX and our school policy prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, which regards sexual misconduct — including harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. We understand that sexual violence can undermine students' academic success and we encourage students who have experienced some form of sexual misconduct to talk to someone about their experience, so they can get the support they need.

Confidential support can be found at the Adams State University Counseling Center located in Richardson Hall 3100 and may be contacted at 719-587-7746. Students may also fill out an anonymous "concern form" at <https://www.adams.edu/students/ccc/>. Crisis support can be found in the San Luis Valley community 24/7 at San Luis Valley Comprehensive Mental Health Center: 719-589-3671 or Tu Casa: 719-589-2465. Tu Casa offers services for victims of sexual assault and domestic violence.

Alleged violations can be reported to the Adams State University Title IX Office, Director Ana Guevara, at 719-587-8213 or at [anaguevara@adams.edu](mailto:anaguevara@adams.edu). The ASU Title IX Office is located in the Student Union Building (SUB) room 327. Reports to law enforcement can be made to Adams State University Police Department at #1 Petteys Hall or contacted at 719-587-7901, 911, or 24 hour dispatch at 24 hour dispatch: 719-589-5807 (State Patrol).

### **Confidentiality and Mandatory Reporting**

As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. I also have a mandatory reporting responsibility related to my role as a responsible employee as designated under Title IX . It is my goal that you feel able to share information related to your life experiences in classroom discussions, in your written work, and in our one-on-one meetings. I will seek to keep information you share private to the greatest extent possible. However, I am required to share information regarding sexual misconduct or information about a crime that may have occurred on Adams State University Campus or that may be impacting an ASU student. Students may speak to someone confidentially by contacting Adams State University Counseling Center at the Adams State University Counseling Center located in Richardson Hall 3100 or contacted at 719-587-7746. You may also fill out an anonymous “concern form” at <https://www.adams.edu/students/ccc/>. Crisis support can be found in the San Luis Valley community 24/7 at San Luis Valley Comprehensive Mental Health Center: 719-589-3671 or Tu Casa: 719-589-2465. Tu Casa offers services for victims of sexual assault and domestic violence.

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**WEEKLY SCHEDULE: (Schedule is Tentative and likely to change)**

| Topic                                                                                            | Reading Assignment                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Week 1 History of Corrections</b><br><b>Wed, Aug 23<sup>rd</sup></b>                          | <i>Prison Histories (Chp 2)</i><br><i>by Helen Johnston</i>                                     |
| History of Punishment<br>Development of the Penitentiary                                         |                                                                                                 |
| <b>Week 2 Philosophy of Corrections</b><br><b>Wed, Aug 29<sup>th</sup></b>                       | <i>The aims of imprisonment (Chp 3)</i><br><i>by Ian O'Donnell</i>                              |
| Punishment or Rehabilitation: Philosophy of Prison<br>Segregation, isolation, and rehabilitation |                                                                                                 |
| <b>Week 3 Inmate Life in Prisons</b><br><b>Wed, Sept 6<sup>th</sup></b>                          | <i>Life, Death, and Redemption...</i><br><i>by Shaka Senghor</i><br><i>(Read through Chp 4)</i> |
| Gangs and Rape in Prisons<br>Women in Prison                                                     |                                                                                                 |
| <i>Essay 1 due next Week Sept 13<sup>th</sup></i>                                                |                                                                                                 |
| <b>Week 4 Correctional Officers</b><br><b>Wed, Sept 13<sup>th</sup></b>                          | <i>The Prison Officer (Chp15)</i><br><i>by Helen Arnold</i>                                     |
| Guard work                                                                                       |                                                                                                 |
| <b>Week 5 Legal Issues in Prison</b><br><b>Wed, Sept 20<sup>th</sup></b>                         | <i>Prisons and Human Rights (Chp 18)</i><br><i>by Peter Bennett</i>                             |
| Prisons and Human Rights?<br>Conditions in Prisons                                               |                                                                                                 |

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**Week 6 Medical Issues in Prison**  
**Wed, Sept 27<sup>th</sup>**

Drug use  
Suicide  
Hepatitis, HIV/AIDS, medical issues

*Drug Misuse in Prison (Chp 12)*  
by Michael Wheatley  
*Suicide and Distress (Chp 13)*  
By Alison Liebling and Ludlow

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**Week 7 The Economics of Prisons**  
**Wed, Oct 4<sup>th</sup>**

Privatization of Prisons  
Prison Labor

*Private Prisons (Chp 9)*  
by John Rynne and Harding

**Debate: Should we allow private prisons that operate on a for-profit basis?**

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**Week 8**  
**Cheyenne Mountain Re-entry Center 1:00**  
**Wed, Oct 11<sup>th</sup>**

*Life, Death, and Redemption*  
by Shaka Senghor  
(Read through Chp 11)

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**Week 9 Special populations in Prison**  
**Wed, Oct 18<sup>th</sup>**

Race and Class  
Elderly and the Mentally Ill

*Older Age, Harder Time (Chp 29)*  
by Natalie Mann  
*Mental Health in Prisons (Chp 11)*  
By Alice Mills and Kendall

**Debate: Is it practical to incarcerate the elderly offender?**

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**Week 10 What happens to people when they get out?**  
**Wed, Oct 25<sup>th</sup>**

Rehabilitation?  
Parole  
*Essay 2 due next Week Nov 1<sup>st</sup>*

*Life, Death and Redemption*  
By Shaka Senghor  
(Read through Chp 18)

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**Week 11 Families**

*Social Justice and Collateral  
Damage (Chp 35)*

**Wed, Nov 1<sup>st</sup>**

*by Rachel Condry, Kotova, Minson)*

**Debate: Should women be allowed to keep infants with them for a period of time  
prison?**

Families and children of prisoners

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**Week 12 Field Trip to Sage Youth Center (Kit Hunter)**

**Wed, Nov 8<sup>th</sup>**

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**Week 13 Juvenile Offenders**

**Wed, Nov 15<sup>th</sup>**

**Debate: Should we give minors life without parole sentences?**

Kids in prison

Juvenile corrections

Bootcamps

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**Week 14 Alternatives to prison**

**Wed, Nov 29<sup>th</sup>**

*Segregation and Supermax  
Confinement (Chp 10)  
By Derek Jeffreys*

**Debate: Should we continue to use solitary confinement?**

Community corrections

Probation

Electronic monitoring

Shaming

Drug Treatment Programs

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**Week 15 Death Penalty?**

**Wed, Dec 6<sup>th</sup>**

*Life, Death and Redemption  
by Shaka Senghor  
(Read through the end)*

**Debate: Should the United States continue to use the death penalty?**

Death Penalty

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***FINAL EXAM***