

Instructor: Brenden Beck, PhD (Brenden.Beck@ucdenver.edu)
Course meetings: Mondays, 2:00 - 4:30 p.m., North Classrooms 3202
Office hours: Mondays 11:00am – 12:00pm or by appointment
Office location: 1380 Lawrence Street, Suite 420

SOCY 4590/5590: Crime, Justice, and the City
University of Colorado Denver, Spring 2022



Course Description

In this course, we'll ask why inequality, crime, and police are unevenly spread across cities. We'll ask why crime varies by neighborhood, whether place-based policing is racially biased, and why prisons are filled with people from just a few zip codes. We'll study racial and economic segregation, gentrification, white flight, and suburbanization in the context of criminal justice. Spatial analysis is a growing field combining geography, sociology, and criminology. We'll study it by reading cutting-edge researchers who use mapping, interviews, statistical analysis, and ethnography. We'll conclude by suggesting ways to reform our cities and our criminal justice systems.

Course Materials

We will read two books in this course, Jessica Simes' *Punishing Places* and Ruth Wilson Gilmore's *Golden Gulag*. Though I recommend reading hard copies, I will provide a PDF of the Gilmore. You will need to buy the Simes. Be sure to order it soon because you will need your copy by February 14th. The bookstore also has copies. The rest of the course materials will be provided via Canvas.

Grading

10% of total grade – Attendance

You can miss one class with no penalty. If you miss a second class, your grade will be lowered by 5%, if you miss a third class, it will be lowered by another 5%. If you miss more than three classes, you will fail the course. If you miss no classes, you will receive 5% extra credit. If you cannot attend class in person for health or other reasons, notify me ahead of time and we will set up a Zoom link so you can attend virtually.

30% – Discussion contributions

This is a reading- and discussion-intensive course. Your close reading of the materials and active participation in class will be essential. Before coming to class, be sure to annotate all the readings. During class, I will often ask you to summarize a reading's main idea or share one question you have about the reading. The question could be something you didn't understand, something you want to discuss further, or a critique you have. You might want to write each reading's main idea and question down before class. To earn an "A" in this area you will need to be an active participant and be ready when called upon. Because there are no quizzes or exams, your discussion contributions are how I assess your mastery of the readings.

10% – Presentation(s) on a week's readings

Most weeks, one or two students will start the class discussion with a short presentation of the readings. These presentations should be 10-15 minutes and include handouts summarizing each reading separately. Brenden will provide a list of questions to guide your summaries and you can read Ashley Rubin's "Guide to Reading Non-Textbook Texts" for even more. You may include slides, pictures, activities, videos, etc. in your presentation. Each undergraduate student will present one class and each master's students will present two.

50% – Research paper and presentation

The largest portion of your grade will be to write and present a research paper in which you summarize the academic scholarship on a question of your choice. I do not expect you will do any original data collection for this paper. For undergraduates, the paper should be at least 8 pages, for master's students, at least 12. On the last day of class, each student will present their paper in a formal presentation with slides. Undergraduates' presentations should be 10 minutes and master's students' 15 minutes. I will provide details and a rubric later in the semester.

COVID Precautions

Our first class will be via Zoom. After that, we will be in person and wearing masks. If you are vaccinated, you can remove your mask when you are 10 feet or more from other people, for instance during presentations. Email me if you have any concerns or questions about our class COVID protocols. I am vaccinated and boosted, and I hope you will be, too.

Time Expectations

You are expected to work approximately 160 hours total to complete this class. Over 15 weeks, you will spend 2.5 hours per week in class (37.5 hours total). The required readings for each class are expected to take approximately 7 hours per week (90 hours). Preparing for an in-class presentation should take about 5 hours, and the final paper should take approximately 30 hours total.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism of any kind will result in you failing the course. For more information, review the definition of academic dishonesty [here](#) and the college's procedure for handling academic dishonesty [here](#). I will be using plagiarism detection software for your research papers.

Student Support and Students with Disabilities

See the link below if you need any career, academic, or mental health counseling

https://clas.ucdenver.edu/faculty-staff/sites/default/files/attached-files/student_services_and_calendar.pdf

If you have a disability and require accommodations in our class, register with the Disability Resource Center (their info is in that link above), and let me know early in the semester so we can work together to provide a supportive learning environment.

Schedule of Readings and Due Dates

January 24th – Introduction

Review the syllabus, introduce ourselves, preview the course.

January 31st – Theories of Crime and Place

Baldwin, James. 1963. "Fifth Avenue, Uptown." *Esquire*.

Muncie, John. 2009. "The Construction and Deconstruction of Crime" in *Key Readings in Criminology*.

Kleniewski & Thomas. 2010. "Theoretical Perspectives on the City" in *Cities, Change, and Conflict*.

February 7th – Crime and violence in their spatial context

Platt, Tony. 1978. "Street Crime' – A View from the Left." *Social Justice*.

Sampson, Robert. 2013. "The Place of Context: A Theory and Strategy for Criminology's Hard Problems." *Criminology*.

Serial. 2018. "A Bar Fight Walks into the Justice Center," Episode 1, Season 3 (52:00).

<https://serialpodcast.org/season-three/1/a-bar-fight-walks-into-the-justice-center>

Presenter: _____

February 14th – Punishing Places week 1

Simes, Jessica. 2021. *Punishing Places*. Preface, Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. xi-xiii, 1-55).

Presenter: _____

February 21st - Punishing Places week 2

Guest: Dr. Jessica Simes.

Simes, Jessica. 2021. *Punishing Places*. Chapters 3, 5, and 6 (pp. 56-82, 97-158). You can skim or skip pp. 61-79.

Due today: Your research question. Submit to Brenden via email and come ready to discuss it in class.

February 28th – Contagious Violence and Therapeutic Policing

Stuart, Forrest. 2016. "Introduction." from *Down and Out and Under Arrest*. (You can skim pp. 23 – 33).

Leovy, Jill. 2016. "Circle of Grief" from *Ghettoside*.

Lowery, Welsey et al. 2018. "Where Killings Go Unsolved." *The Washington Post*. Read online, desktop is best, you might need to use your Auraria Library access, at:
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2018/investigations/where-murders-go-unsolved/>

Woods & Soderberg. 2020. "Credible Messengers." *The Intercept*.

Presenter: _____

March 7th – From Cities to Suburbs

Goffman, Alice. 2009. "On the Run: Wanted Men in a Philadelphia Ghetto." *American Sociological Review*.

Singer & Drakulich. 2019. "Crime & Safety in Suburbia." *Annual Review of Criminology*.

Beck. 2022. "Police Killings and Municipal Reliance on Fine-and-Fee Revenue." Working Paper. (Skim or skip the "Research Design" section).

Presenter: _____

March 14th – Disorder and Broken Windows Policing

Bratton & Kelling. 2015. "Why We Need Broken Windows Policing."

Beckett & Herbert. 2008. "Dealing with Disorder." *Theoretical Criminology*.

Weaver, Vesla. 2018. "Why White People Keep Calling the Cops on Black Americans." *Vox*.

Optional: Sampson, Robert. 2012. "Broken Windows and the Meaning of Disorder" from *The Great American City*.

Presenter: _____

March 21st – Spring Break – No Class

March 28th – Police Brutality and Protest

Badger, Emily. 2020. "Beverly Hills, Buckhead, SoHo: The New Sites of Urban Unrest." *The New York Times*

Balko, Rodney. 2015. "How Municipalities in St. Louis County, Mo., Profit from Poverty." *Washington Post*.

Herbert, Steve. 2014. "The Policing of Space: New Realities, Old Dilemmas." *Oxford Handbook of Police and Policing*.

Presenter: _____

April 4th – Segregation, Gentrification, and Digital Space

Bell, Monica. 2020. "Anti-Segregation Policing." *The New York University Law Review*.

Beck, Brenden. 2020. "The Role of Police in Gentrification." *The Appeal*.

Kurwa, Rahim. 2019. "Building the Digital Gated Community." *Surveillance & Society*.

Explore a map of racial-ethnic segregation here:

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/07/08/us/census-race-map.html>

Presenter: _____

April 11th – Crisis and Incarceration in California

Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. 2007. *Golden Gulag*. Prologue, Introduction (Chapter 1), and Chapter 2 (pp. 1-86).

Presenter: _____

April 18th – Urban Neighborhoods and Rural Prison Towns

Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. 2007. *Golden Gulag*. Read Chapter 3 (pp. 87-127) and skim Chapter 4 (read the intro pp. 128-131 and the conclusion pp. 178-180).

Peer writing workshop

Due today: Research paper outline with six sources. Submit to Brenden via email.

April 25th – What is to Be Done?

Duffy Rice, Josie. 2020. "How to Defund the Police." *Vanity Fair*. (Starred Reading)

Sharkey, Patrick. 2020. "Why Do We Need the Police?" *Washington Post*.

Sachs, David. 2020. "As people protest for change, here's where ten years of massive Denver police and jail spending has gotten us." *Denverite*.

Simes, Jessica. 2021. *Punishing Places*. Chapter 7.

May 2nd – Student Presentations

Due today: Your research presentation

May 9th – Finals week, no class

Your research paper is due by 5pm on May 12th. Submit via Canvas.