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**SOC 4150: Special Topics**  
**"Women in Prison"**  
**MW 12:40 – 2:05**  
**Peck Hall 319**

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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesday 9 a.m. – 11 a.m.; Tuesdays and Thursdays 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.; and by appointment

**REQUIRED TEXT**

- Vernetta Young & Rebecca Reviere. 2006. *Women Behind Bars: Gender and Race in US Prisons*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Silja J.A. Talvi. 2007. *Women Behind Bars: The Crisis of Women in the U.S. Prison System*. Emeryville, CA: Seal Press.
- Additional required readings available on the D2L website for this course. (<https://elearn.mtsu.edu>).  
\*Use your MTSU login and password.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION & OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of this course is to expose students to the experiences of women in prison. Although the course will focus primarily on the experiences of women as inmates and as workers, it will also cover the collateral consequences of imprisonment for women in general (i.e., the effect of incarceration on women as daughters, mothers, and spouses/significant others). One important pedagogical feature of this course is a tour of the Tennessee Prison for Women (TPFW) located near Nashville.

The course encompasses a number of specific goals and objectives that integrate the experiences of women and challenge students to think critically about social issues related to gender, crime, and imprisonment. Specifically, this course will...

1. Introduce students to the variety of feminist theories on crime and crime control.
2. Apply feminist perspectives to issues related to mass incarceration.
3. Explore historical and contemporary perspectives on the experiences of women inmates and guards.
4. Debunk societal images of women inmates and guards.
5. Review current research on women inmates and guards, and the collateral consequences of imprisonment for women.
6. Utilize the correctional tour for student academic growth.

After taking this course, successful students will accomplish the following learning objectives.

1. Understand feminist perspectives in general and as applicable to crime and crime control, specifically mass incarceration.
2. Critically assess the impacts of mass incarceration for society and women in particular.
3. Critically evaluate societal images of women and women as inmates and guards.
4. Situate self within the larger social context (race, age, gender, social class, etc.).
5. Formulate own position on social issues including issues related to women in prison.

## **COURSE FORMAT**

This course will use a variety of formats including lectures, discussions, and in-class activities. On occasion we will view videos. The class, however, will rely heavily on discussion of readings and written assignments. Previous careful and critical consideration of the texts, readings, discussion questions, and written assignments will be vital to active participation in lectures/discussions. All opinions and viewpoints are welcome in this class and will enhance our discussion and understanding.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

There will be no "exams" in this course. Rather, students will be evaluated on their completion of several written assignments as well as their class participation and attendance. All written assignments should be posted to the designated D2L dropbox prior to the due date. The requirements include:

### A. Written Assignments (80%):

1. *Reflective Journal* (10%): For each reading or discussion question, students should post summaries, questions and comments, insights or confusion points, etc. to D2L prior to each class meeting that can be used for online and in-class discussion. A minimum of ten (10) journal entries is required over the course of the semester; however, the number of posts may exceed ten. Posts should be in paragraph format and approximately 200 words. Please be sure to use proper citations of source material when appropriate. While these posts will complete your reflective journal requirement, they may also be used to determine a portion of your class participation grade.
2. *Prison Tour Essays* (10%): Students will have the opportunity to tour the Tennessee Prison for Women (TPW) during the first week of March (depending on scheduling availability and student/instructor preferences). Students are expected to attend the tour and write two essays about this experience. Essays should be 2-3 pages in length (12 point font, double-spaced, 1" margins) and should demonstrate sincere thinking about the experience as it relates to topics discussed in class. Students who are unable to attend the tour for legitimate reasons will be given an alternative assignment solely based on the instructor's discretion.
  - i. Essay 1: Pre-prison expectations (due March 1 prior to tour). Prior to entering the facility, students will write about their expectations. For example, what do you think it will be like going into a prison? How do you anticipate feeling as you enter the prison? What do you think the prison will look like (i.e., physical structure, inmates, guards, etc.)?
  - ii. Essay 2: Post-prison reflection (due March 3 prior to class). Upon completion of the tour, students will write about their observations. For example, how did the experience compare with your expectations? What did you learn? What will you take away from this experience?
3. *Book Review* (20%): Students will be supplied a list of book options along with due dates and specific instructions. The purpose of the review is to analyze and describe the major findings, themes, and conclusions of the book/study; thus, the review is more than a summary of the book. One 5 page (maximum) review is required (12 point font, double-spaced, 1" margins) and should be posted on D2L by the due date indicated. See detailed instructions for this assignment provided by the instructor.
4. *Research Paper* (40%): This is a traditional type of research paper. Students will first select a topic/issue of interest that pertains to the experiences of women in prison, and then research the topic in academic journals and/or books. Students may choose the topic and type of research paper, but must have their topic approved by the instructor no later than the Feb. 10<sup>th</sup>. An abstract/outline of the paper including purpose and specific research thesis/question should be submitted no later than Mar. 22<sup>nd</sup>. The abstract/outline is worth 5 points. Final papers are due April 19<sup>th</sup> and should be 5-7 pages in length (12 point font, double-spaced, 1" margins) with at least 5-7 references. In

addition, students will give a brief presentation of their research during the last week of classes. See detailed instructions provided by the instructor for ideas, formatting guidelines, and additional information regarding the research paper.

- B. **Participation and Attendance (20%):** This course relies on the active participation of students. Therefore, students will be evaluated on their informed, thoughtful, and constructive quality (not quantity) participation in class discussion. Students should come to each class prepared for discussion of the assigned readings. Participation and attendance is worth a total of *20 possible points*. See attendance policy below. NOTE: Active participation throughout the semester may help boost a borderline final grade.

**COURSE GRADING**

Final grades will be based on the total points earned as a percentage of the total possible points (100 possible points). If you fail to complete any of the requirements for this class, you will receive zero points for that portion of the grade. Grades are computed as follows:

Written Assignments		
Reflective Journal		10 points
Prison Tour Essays (2)		10 points
Book Review		20 points
Research Paper & Presentation		40 points
Participation & Attendance		20 points
		100 possible points
100-90 points	≥ 90%	= A
89-80 points	≥ 80%	= B
79-70 points	≥ 70%	= C
69-60 points	≥ 60%	= D
below 60 points	< 60%	= F

Students are expected to keep track of their grades during the semester. Grades are posted on the D2L website, but are not regularly calculated for students or sent out until they are due to the Registrar’s Office after final exams. You will receive your final grade via PIPELINEMT. Students are expected to be able to gauge how well or poorly they are doing in the course based on grades already given throughout the semester. However, I will be happy to meet with you in person during my office hours to discuss your grade or your progress in the course.

**COURSE POLICIES**

1. *Attendance and Participation:* Regular class attendance is expected and required. All students are expected to arrive to class on time, to be up-to-date on all assignments, and to be prepared for class discussion. Each class meeting will begin with roll call. You will not receive participation points if you do not attend class or if you arrive late to class. If you do miss class, you are responsible for getting the notes from one of your classmates. Extensive absences will influence your grade in this course.

0-3 absences	no penalty
4-5 absences	5 point reduction
6-7 absences	7 point reduction
8 or more absences	10 point reduction

2. *Late assignments:* Assignments are expected to be submitted complete and by the indicated due date. Late assignments will not be accepted unless first approved by the instructor. In these exceptional cases late assignments may be penalized 1% for each day late. For example, a book review that is handed in 2 days after the due date will receive a grade no greater than 16/20 points.
3. *Class Climate and Conduct:* This class is organized to encourage open, respectful exchanges. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to the following: intentionally antagonizing the instructor, disrespecting divergent viewpoints of classmates or the instructor, talking while another individual is talking, leaving class early or coming to class late, sleeping in class, doing assignments for other classes during this class, and engaging in other activities that detract from the classroom learning experience. Students who disrupt the class will be asked to leave for the remainder of the class period and will be required to meet with the instructor prior to returning to class. Continued disruption will result in the recommendation to the Office of Judicial Affairs and Mediation Services that you be expelled from the class. **NOTE:** Please turn off all phones, laptops, and other electronics prior to class.
4. *Expectations for Graduate Students:* In addition to the course requirements, graduate students enrolled in SOC 5150 will be required to lead one class discussion. Students must meet with the instructor for further instructions and guidelines prior to the discussion date.

### **OTHER POLICIES**

1. *Special Accommodations:* Any student with a documented disability (physical or cognitive) who requires academic accommodations should contact the Disabled Student Services (DSS) office. This office is established as the coordinating body responsible for serving as a liaison and an advocate for students with disabilities. The Disabled Student Services office is located in room 120 of the Keathley University Center; regular office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday; (615) 898-2783; email: dssemail@mtsu.edu. Students are encouraged to register with the DSS office and provide the appropriate documentation. Please contact me within the first few weeks of the semester to set up any accommodations that are required.
2. *Academic Misconduct and Scholastic Dishonesty:* Academic misconduct of any kind will not be tolerated and is subject to university policies and repercussions. Academic Misconduct includes plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, or facilitating any such act. For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:
  - a. Plagiarism. The adoption or reproduction of ideas, words, statements, images, or works of another person as one's own without proper acknowledgment.
  - b. Cheating. Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit or hours.
  - c. Fabrication. Unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
  - d. Facilitation. Helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of the institutional code of academic misconduct.

Any violation of these rules may result in a zero on a particular assignment, failure of the course, a report to Judicial Affairs and Mediation Services, and possible academic expulsion.

3. *Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship:* To retain Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship eligibility, you must earn a cumulative TELS GPA of 2.75 after 24 attempted hours and a cumulative TELS GPA of 3.0 thereafter. A grade of C, D, F, or I in this class may negatively impact TELS eligibility. Dropping a class after 14 days may also impact eligibility. If you withdraw from this class and it results in an enrollment status of less than full time, you may lose eligibility for your lottery scholarship. For additional lottery

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scholarship rules please refer to your Lottery Statement of Understanding form, review lottery scholarship requirements on the web at <http://scholarships.web.mtsu.edu/telsconteligibility.htm>, or contact the MTSU financial aid office at 898-2830.

4. *Drop-add/Withdrawal deadlines:* For the Spring 2009 semester, the following deadlines apply:
  - Jan. 20<sup>th</sup> -Last day to add a course.
  - Jan. 27<sup>th</sup> -Census day/Last day to drop without a grade
  - March 3<sup>rd</sup> -Last day to withdrawal with a grade of "W"

Full details, procedures, and dates on MTSU's drop and withdrawal policies are provided in this semester's schedule book. Assistance is available by contacting the Office of the University Withdrawals (898-2808).

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## **COURSE CALENDAR**

This course will follow the schedule outlined below. Specific details may be subject to change depending on our progress and students' interests. Important dates are indicated in bold. Note: Y&R indicates Young and Reviere text. Additional readings available on D2L.

<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Topic</u></b>	<b><u>Reading</u></b>	<b><u>Due</u></b>
Jan. 20	Course Overview		
<b>INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN IN PRISON (WIP)</b>			
Jan. 25 & 27	Introduction	Y&R Ch. 1 Talvi Intro & Ch. 1	
	Key Concepts for Understanding WIP	Readings 1 & 2	
Feb. 1	History of Women's Prisons	Y&R Ch. 2 Talvi Ch. 10	
Feb. 3	Media Representations of WIP	Reading 3	
Feb. 8 & 10	Women's Prisons Today	Y&R Ch. 3 Talvi Ch. 7 Readings 4, 5 & 6	Paper Topic
Feb. 15 & 17	Pathways to Prison	Readings 7 & 8 *Girschick, "No Safe Haven"	Book Review
<b>SPECIAL ISSUES OF WOMEN IN PRISON</b>			
Feb. 22 & 24	Living in Prison	Talvi Chs. 8 & 9 Readings 9 – 12 *Owen, "In the Mix"	Book Review
Mar. 1 & 3	PRISON TOUR & DISCUSSION		Tour Essays
Mar. 8 & 10	SPRING BREAK		
Mar. 15	Drug Use, Abuse, & Treatment	Y&R Ch. 4 Talvi Ch. 2	
Mar. 17	Physical & Mental Health Care	Y&R Ch. 5 Talvi Chs. 4 & 5 Readings 13 & 14	
Mar. 22 & 24	Mothers and their Children	Y&R Ch. 6 Talvi Ch. 6 Reading 15 *Enos, "Mothering from the Inside"	Paper Abstract Book Review
Mar. 29 & 31	Aging and Dying in Prison	Y&R Ch. 7 Readings 16 & 17	
Apr. 5	Education and Work	Reading 18	
Apr. 7	Reentry	Y&R Ch. 8 Readings 19 & 20 *Gonnerman, "Life on the Outside" *O'Brien, "Making it..."	Book Review
<b>WORKING IN PRISON</b>			
Apr. 12 & 14	Guards' Experiences	Readings 21 – 24	
Apr. 19 & 21	Inmates' Reactions	Y&R pp. 185-186 Talvi Ch. 3	Final Paper
Apr. 26 & 28	Conclusions; Student Presentations	Y&R Ch. 9 Talvi Chs. 11, 12, & Afterword	

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**DETAILED CALENDAR OF WEEKLY TOPICS & READINGS**  
**(Note: All additional readings are available on D2L.)**  
**(Note: \* Denotes items due. Post to D2L)**

**INTRODUCTION TO WIP**

Jan. 25

Introduction to Women in Prison

Young and Reviere (Y&R), Chapter 1 "Equal Rights or Lost Opportunities"

Talvi, Introduction and Chapter 1

(Optional reading: Pollack, Chapter 1)

Jan. 27

Key concepts for understanding women in prison

Reading 1: Belknap, Chapter 1, focus on pages 8 – 24

Reading 2: Flavin 2001 article

Feb. 1

History of Women's Prisons, Punishment, and Treatment

Y&R, Chapter 2 "A Brief History of Punishment"

Talvi, Chapter 10

(Optional reading: Pollack, Chapters 2 and 4)

Feb. 3

Media Representations of Women in Prison

Reading 3: Cecil 2007 article

Feb. 8 & 10

Who are the Women in Prison?

Y&R, Chapter 3 "Evolving Prisons and the Changing Face of Female Prisoners"

Talvi, Chapter 7

Reading 4: Pollack and Davis 2005 article

Reading 5: Steffensmeier et al. 2006 article

Reading 6: Women Offenders 1999 BJS report

(Optional reading: Pollack, Chapter 3)

\*Research Paper topic due Feb. 10 (Post to D2L).

Feb. 15 & 17

Explanations for Women's Crime

(Traditional, Social/Cultural, Biological, Women's Liberation, \*Pathways to Prison)

Reading 7: Belknap, Chapter 2, focus on pages 70 – 80

Reading 8: Salisbury and Van Voorhis 2009 article

\*Girschick "No Safe Haven" book review due, if applicable (Post to D2L).

**SPECIAL ISSUES OF WIP**

Feb. 22 & 24

Living in Prison

Talvi, Chapters 8 and 9

Reading 9: Jones & Schmid Chapter 8 (Pages 155 – 181) in Zaitzow and Thomas 2003

Reading 10: Jiang & Winfree 2006 article (adjustment/rule infractions)

Reading 11: Belknap, Chapter 5 focus on pages 214 – 220

Reading 12: Huggins et al 2006 article (psuedofamilies and dyads)

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(Optional reading: Pollack, Chapter 6)

(Optional Reading: Girschick 1999, Chapter 5 "Doing Time")

\*Owen, "In the Mix" book review due, if applicable (Post to D2L).

Mar. 1 & 3

Prison tour

\*Tour Essays due Mar. 1 and Mar. 3. Post to D2L.

Visit the Tennessee Prison for Women's website to familiarize yourself with the institution prior to our tour.

See <http://www.tennessee.gov/correction/institutions/tpfw.html>.

Mar. 8 & 10

Spring Break

Mar. 15 – Apr. 7

Gender Responsive Programs

(Optional Reading: Pollack, Chapter 5 overview)

Mar. 15

Drugs: use, abuse, and treatment

Y&R, Chapter 4

Talvi, Chapter 2

Mar. 17

Physical and Mental Health Care

Y&R, Chapter 5

Talvi, Chapters 4 and 5

Reading 13: Webb and Hubbard pages 32-46 in Braithwaite, Arriola, and Newkirk 2006

Reading 14: Fortenberry, Warren, and Clark pages 165 – 180 in in Braithwaite, Arriola, and Newkirk 2006

Mar. 22 & 24

Mothers and children

Y&R, Chapter 6

Talvi, Chapter 6

Reading 15: Sharp & Eriksen Chapter 6 (Pages 119 – 136) in Zaitzow and Thomas 2003

\* Enos 2001, "Mothering from the Inside" (net book) book review due, if applicable (Post to D2L).

\*Research Paper abstract due on Mar. 22. Post to D2L.

Mar. 29 & 31

Aging and Dying

Y&R, Chapter 7

Reading 16: Aday 2009

Reading 17: Chandler, Greenspan and Rotman pages 319 – 334 in Braithwaite, Arriola, and Newkirk 2006

Apr. 5

Educational and Vocational Programs

Reading 18: Schram 1998 article

Apr. 7

Reentry

Y&R, Chapter 8

Reading 19: Dodge and Pogrebin 2001 article

Reading 20: Boutwell, Kendrick, and Rich pages 310 – 318 in Braithwaite, Arriola, and Newkirk 2006

\*O'Brien 2001 "Making it in the Free World" (net book) book review due, if applicable (Post to D2L).

\*Gonnerman 2004 "Life on the Outside" book review due, if applicable (Post to D2L).

\*Schwartz 2009 "Dreams from the Monster Factory" book review due, if applicable (Post to D2L).



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## **WORKING IN PRISON**

Apr. 12 & 14

### Guards' Experiences

Reading 21: Pollack, Chapter 8

Reading 22: Britton 1997 article

Reading 23: Carlson, Anson, & Thomas 2003 article

Reading 24: Jurik & Martin 2001 excerpt

(Optional Reading: Britton 2001 "At Work in the Iron Cage" (net book)).

Apr. 19 & 21

### Inmates' Experiences

Y&R page 185 – 186

Talvi, Chapter 3 on abuse

(Optional Reading: Belknap, Chapter 9)

\*Research Paper due on April 19. Post to D2L.

Apr. 26 & 28

### Conclusions

Y&R, Chapter 9

Talvi, Chapters 11, 12 and Afterword

\*Student Presentations

## Writing a Critical Book Review

### Specific Instructions

You are required to read and write a review of one (1) of the following books:

- Lori Girschik. 1999. *No Safe Haven: Stories of Women in Prison*. Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press. **DUE: Feb. 17<sup>th</sup>**
- Barbara Owen. 1998. *In the Mix*. NY: State University of NY Press. (net book) **DUE: Feb. 22<sup>nd</sup>**
- Sandra Enos. 2001. *Mothering from the Inside*. NY: State University of NY Press. **DUE: March 22<sup>nd</sup>**
- Jennifer Gonnerman. 2004. *Life on the Outside: The Prison Odyssey of Elaine Bartlett*. NY: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux. **DUE: April 7<sup>th</sup>**
- Patricia O'Brien. 2001. *Making it in the "Free World"*. NY: State University of NY Press. (net book) **DUE: April 7<sup>th</sup>**
- Sunny Schwartz. 2009. *Dreams from the Monster Factory*. NY: Scribner. **DUE: April 7<sup>th</sup>**

Some of these titles are available at the James E. Walker Library for check-out or as net books. All are available for purchase online (e.g., Amazon.com).

IMPORTANT NOTE: If you wish to read and write a review of a book which is based on the experiences of women in prison, but is not listed here, please see the instructor for approval first. If you select this option, your review should be posted to D2L no later than March 17<sup>th</sup>.

Written reviews should be no more than 5 pages in length (12 point font, double-spaced, 1" margins) and should be posted to D2L in the appropriate dropbox by the date indicated. Late papers will not be accepted.

Written reviews will be evaluated for organization, clarity, & paper components. All reviews should include a summary and a critical evaluation. Please refer to the guidelines outlined below as you read and write your review.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If you are not pleased with your graded review, you may, with instructor approval, revise and resubmit your review in an effort to improve your grade. Revisions are due 48 hours from the time the initial grade is received and should also be posted on D2L.

### General Guidelines

The purpose of a critical review is twofold. First, the reviewer should inform the reader as to the nature and scope of the book. More importantly, the reviewer should present a critical evaluation of the book. The review should be objective; it should be an evaluation based upon evidence and examples presented in the review and not upon subjective criteria such as personal likes and dislikes.

### Reading the Book

- As you begin to read the book, think about the author. Why did the author write this book? What are his/her qualifications? What is the book's primary purpose or thesis? What is the author's attitude toward the subject? What does the title reveal about the subject?

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- Be sure to read the preface, introduction, acknowledgements, afterword, etc. Valuable clues about the author and his/her purpose may be found in these places.
- Read the body of the work carefully and note important passages you may want to reference later.
- While you are reading, identify the author's thesis, supporting evidence, research methods, findings, etc. and evaluate whether these are valid.

### Writing the Review

Once you have read the book, identified its purpose, and once you have evaluated it, you can write your review. Be sure to keep the book near to refer to as you write. All reviews should contain the following components.

Your introductory paragraph should include the title and author of the book, information about the author, a brief description of the book, and an indication of what your review will say/how it will be organized.

- Information about the author: Include a sentence or two about the author and his/her qualifications/background.
- General summary of the book: Briefly describe the book's contents, organization, and overall purpose/conclusions. Here, you should provide an initial statement on the general subject of the book.
- Outline of review: Include a sentence or two that outlines the major points of your review.

The body of your review should focus on the critical evaluation of the work and should include a statement of the author's argument, an evaluation of its validity, and your reaction to the author's views/findings.

- Statement of author's argument: What does the author say about the subject? Your summary should be organized by the author's main points (e.g., by chapter).
- Evaluation of validity: What kind of sources does the author use to support their argument? What is the relevance, importance, or contribution of the author's conclusions? What are the limitations or unanswered questions?
- Your reaction: Do you agree or disagree with the author's views? Why? (Even if you agree, you must elaborate on their conclusions using other readings and materials from class (including key concepts discussed) as well as relevant personal experience.) What are the most interesting ideas in the book? What have you learned from reading this book?

End your review with a concluding paragraph which includes a summary of your most important points. You may also provide general comments/recommendations about the book. For example, was the book well-written? Easy-to-read? Would you recommend this book? Why or why not and to whom?

Citations: Be sure to include a full citation for the book read at the top of the first page of your review along with your name. For quotes within the body of the review, be sure to include the page number after the quote or idea at the end of the sentence. Remember, to quote another person or to use someone else's ideas in a paper requires a citation. Otherwise, it is considered plagiarism. See American Sociological Association guidelines at <http://www.asanet.org/page.wv?name=Quick+Style+Guide&section=Sociology+Depts>.

Proofreading: Please proofread your papers carefully before submission. Papers will be graded for organization and clarity so please use proper spelling and grammar.

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### **Research paper**

Paper Due: April 19<sup>th</sup> (post to D2L)

This is a longer, traditional type of research paper. I expect a 5 -7 page paper that is well-referenced (at least 5 -7 references). References should include academic materials from journals or scholarly books rather than items from the Internet, newspapers, or magazines. The paper should address a theoretical or empirical question that concerns the experiences of women in prison. Outlined below are a few suggestions to guide you as you pick a topic, research that topic, and write your paper.

#### Picking a topic

You should pick a topic that interests you. The topic must be related to the experiences of women in prison. It could be something you saw on television, a new policy, law, or program, etc. The list of potential topics is almost limitless. However, experience writing and reading research papers has taught me that the best papers are those that begin with a specific research question. It is fairly difficult to write a paper on a broad topic, but much easier to write a paper that addresses a specific question about that topic. In other words, I expect papers to be tightly focused and organized around a specific question or set of questions. A paper topic and description should be submitted and approved by Feb. 10<sup>th</sup>.

After choosing your topic, you have several options for how you address your topic. A few suggestions include...

1. A typical research paper that is a review, analysis, and synthesis of the existent literature on a particular question.
2. A theoretical piece that takes a question and looks at it from a theoretical perspective.
3. A cross-cultural comparative paper that examines and compares the experiences of women in prison across cultures and offers an explanation as to their similarities and/or differences.
4. A research proposal that briefly reviews the literature on a question and then proposes (but does not actually perform) a way to study that question, including hypotheses and an abbreviated methodology section.
5. A proposal for an effectiveness study where you would propose to evaluate an existent law, policy, or program.

#### Researching the topic

Students are expected to search online databases for articles that related to their topic. You can access these databases via the James E. Walker library website or use search engines such as Google Scholar. If you need help researching your topic, please see me or a reference librarian early in the semester. Do not wait until the end of the semester to begin looking for sources. Again, I expect you to reference 5 -7 works from academic journals or scholarly books. Examples of journals include *Feminist Criminology*, *Women and Criminal Justice*, *The Prison Journal*, *Criminology*, *Journal of Criminal Justice*, etc. If you have questions about a particular source, please ask.

#### Writing the paper

Your first step in writing the paper will be to develop an abstract. An abstract is a brief description that outlines your entire paper and should include 1) an explicit statement of the paper's purpose, research question, or major thesis; 2) a statement of the paper's important/contribution; and 3) a roadmap for you paper, which includes what you will do, how you will do it, and what you expect to find. An abstract should be submitted to and approved by the instructor no later than March 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Final papers (5 -7 pages in length) are due April 19<sup>th</sup>. All students are required to give a brief in-class presentation of their papers the last week of classes (April 26<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>).

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Papers will be evaluated for organization and clarity as well as content. Keep the following writing tips in mind as you write your papers:

1. Avoid using weak constructions such as "There are/is..." "It is/are..." Instead rearrange sentences to avoid beginning them in this way. This makes for stronger, more definitive statements.
2. Avoid using weak words such as "feel," "very," or "so". Substitute more forceful verbs like "I argue/contend/think/claim" for "I feel" and avoid "very" and "so" whenever possible.
3. Avoid contractions in formal writing. Change "can't" to "cannot," "won't" to "will not," and "isn't" to "in not," for example.
4. Avoid the pronoun "you" in formal writing.
5. Pay close attention to the use of easily confused words such as "affect" and "effect," and "their," "there," and "they're". ("They're" should be changed to "they are".)
6. Include an introductory paragraph and conclusion in your papers. Begin paragraphs with topic sentences and organize, organize, organize.
7. Include an explicit statement of your paper's purpose and/or research questions, preferably in or following the introductory paragraph.
8. Properly cite all quotes and ideas. See American Sociological Association guidelines at <http://www.asanet.org/page.wv?name=Quick+Style+Guide&section=Sociology+Depts>.
9. PROOFREAD.

For other helpful writing tips, you may want to consult Strunk and White's *Elements of Style*, Truss' *Eats, Shoots, & Leaves*, Fogarty's *Grammar Girl's Quick and Dirty Tips for Better Writing*, or another style guide. Many are available online. For an example see <http://www.bartleby.com/141/strunk.html>. The university writing center is another good option when seeking help.

**IMPORTANT DATES: Feb. 10<sup>th</sup> (topic); March 22<sup>nd</sup> (abstract); April 19<sup>th</sup> (final paper); April 26<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> (presentation)**