CRI3146
Inequality and Criminal Justice
Tuesday and Thursday, 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM
Centre for Criminology and Socio-Legal Studies,
2nd Floor, Ericson Seminar Room
14 Queen’s Park Crescent West, Toronto, ON, M5S-3K9

Professor: Akwasi Owusu-Bempah
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Office Hours: By appointment

This course provides an advanced historical and critical socio-legal examination of the intersections of social inequality, crime, and criminal justice in Canada and beyond. Much of the focus of contemporary discussions about inequalities, crime and criminal justice centre on individual actors – police, judges, offenders, and so on. In this course we will move beyond simplistic notions about race, class, gender to examine how these identities come to be constructed and reconstructed, and how they inform and are informed by criminal justice policies, practices and outcomes. Students will be introduced to a range of practical and theoretical issues associated with state responses to marginalized groups and how these groups perceive and experience crime and criminal justice. Course readings will consist of a combination of theoretical and empirical materials from Canada and other Western nations. The course will interrogate how new technologies, such as the rise of big data analytics and predictive decision-making influence the administration of criminal justice. The goal of the course is to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the intersections between social inequalities, crime and criminal justice.

This course will be conducted in a seminar format. Seminars will be conducted based on an understanding that students have reviewed the required readings before class. Students are therefore expected to actively participate in class discussions and raise important issues with respect to the topics being reviewed.

Evaluation

Your evaluation in the course will be based on the following

1) Attendance and participation in class discussions (10%).
2) Submission of two reaction papers (10% each) for class sessions of your choice (total of 20%).
3) An in-class presentation on the topic of your major assignment. Students will present the main findings from their research/policy analysis to the class. Presentations will take place during the last sessions of the term (20%).
4) Submission of a major paper. Students will write a major paper of approximately 20 pages in length on a current issue related to criminal justice and inequality in the Canadian or global
contexts. A list of topics will be provided by the instructor. This list will include issues of both scholarly and policy relevance (50%).

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity
Plagiarism and other academic offences will not be tolerated at the University of Toronto. Academic discipline ranges from a mark of zero on an exam or assignment to dismissal from the University. For important information see U of T’s Academic Integrity website at: http://academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/.

See also these academic integrity websites:
  a) School of Graduate Studies at http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/facultyandstaff/Pages/Academic-Integrity.aspx
  b) Faculty of Arts and Science at http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai”.

Course Schedule and Readings

All readings have been placed on the course website under the Files tab. You are expected to come to seminar having read the required material and with several (2-4) questions prepared in order to facilitate meaningful discussion. Please note that “***” placed before a reading in the list below indicates that it is supplemental.

Meeting 1 (May 5) - Introduction and Course Overview

Meeting 2 (May 7) - Considering Diversity and Framing Difference

  • Perry Chapters 1 and 2

Meeting 3 (May 12) - The Creation of Difference

  • Perry Chapters 3 and 4


Meeting 4 (May 14) - Intersectionality in the Criminal Justice system

• Perry Chapter 11


Meeting 5 (May 19) - Colonialism and Criminal Justice: Past and Present


• ***Perry Chapter 5

Meeting 6 (May 21) - Immigration, Religion and Criminal Justice

• Perry Chapters 6 and 10


Meeting 7 (May 26) - Inequality in Policing


Meeting 8 (May 28) - Inequality in the Courts


Meeting 9 (June 2) - Inequality in Corrections and Re-entry


**Meeting 10 (June 4) Looking to the Future**

• Perry Chapters 18 and 19


**Meeting 11 (June 9) Project Presentations 1**

**Meeting 12 (June 11) Project Presentations 2**