

Back by popular demand for Spring 2009!

Crime, Punishment and the Politics of Prison

Ever been curious about the history of crime, punishment and prisons in the United States?

- What is crime? How is it counted? Why does it fluctuate? Are there important distinctions between crimes?
- Which is more effective, punishment or rehabilitation? How far should either go? Who should administer either?
- How has the administration of law and order, corrections, sentencing, parole, *etc.*, changed over time? Does region matter? Does race, gender and/or class matter?

Through primary and secondary source readings, as well as documentary film, this course will look closely at the history of crime and corrections in the modern United States. It will pay close attention to the importance of historical context and political moment when considering how the judicial system as well as prison system operates, and it will assess the ways in which race, gender and class shape both prison politics and populations. Finally it will explore the importance of regional difference *vis-à-vis* the administration of the nation's various correctional facilities, and will also grapple with some of the questions that Americans find most troubling today with regard to crime and punishment. These include: debates over the death penalty, the law regarding youth offenders, the ethics of drug laws, prisoner civil liberties vs. victims' rights, mandatory sentencing guidelines, and how the criminal justice system deals with the insane.

Advisory Prereq: Enrollment limited to junior and senior History concentrators by permission only. History concentrators are required to elect a HISTORY 396 or 397.

PROFESSOR HEATHER THOMPSON

HISTORY 396.101

TUESDAY/THURSDAY / 2:00-5:00 P.M.

G168 ANGELL HALL