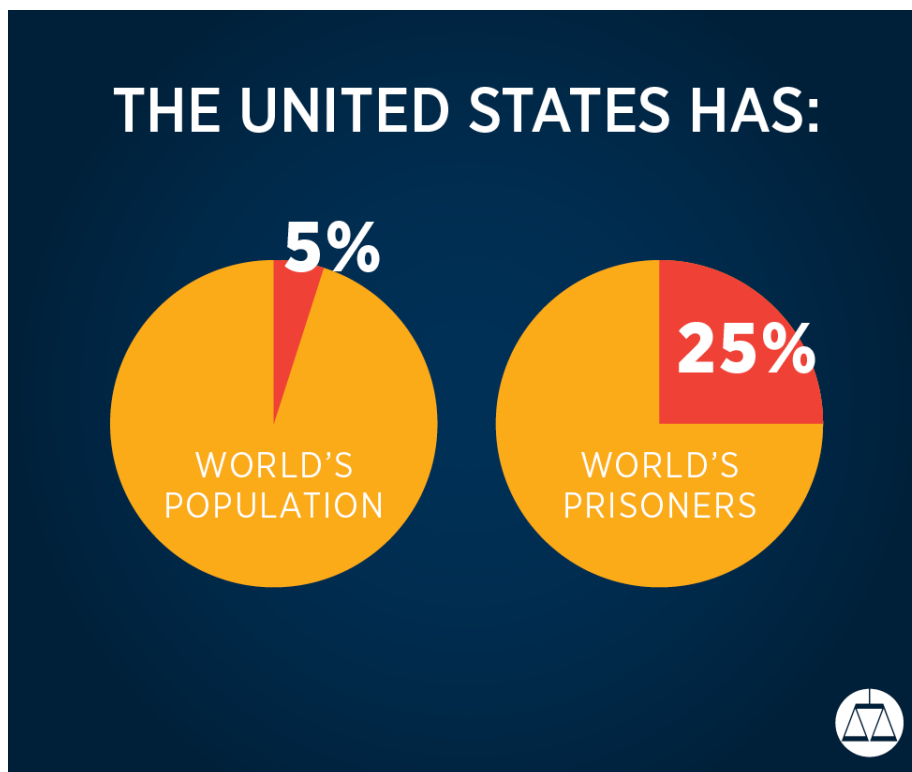


English 297: Writing in the Humanities

How can the humanities help us address structural, cultural, and direct violence? What critical perspectives can the humanities produce through various texts and media—texts and media that we will read and that you will create—on mass incarceration and the U.S. prison industrial complex?



Instructor: Carrie Matthews

Office Hours: W, 1-3 p.m. via Zoom: <https://washington.zoom.us/j/92421380953>
or by appointment
crmatthe@uw.edu

Feel free to text me at 206-351-0214 for quick questions

Texts

Most of three books are assigned in this course. You will only need to purchase two.

- Bryan Stevenson, *Just Mercy*. Spiegel & Grau, 2014. (Available at UW Bookstore on the Ave, at 43rd)
- Alec Karakatsanis. *The Usual Cruelty: The Complicity of Lawyers in the Criminal Injustice System*. The New Press, 2019. (I will provide, courtesy of the author & publisher)
- Angela Davis. *Are Prisons Obsolete?* New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003. (Available at UW Bookstore on the Ave, at 43rd)

The rest of the course texts are hyperlinked in this syllabus and available online or will be posted to our Canvas website under that week's Module as pdfs.

Course Overview: In this class we will foreground qualitative approaches from disciplines in the humanities to investigate how such approaches can help us address structural, cultural, and direct violence. We will encounter historical, interpretive, and philosophical approaches in the texts and media we will study together and produce, individually and collaboratively. I've chosen mass incarceration as the object of our analysis because it provides fertile ground for engaging structural, cultural, and direct violence, and because there is a school-to-prison pipeline that we should be aware of, as a higher education community at a U.S. public university.

Our Sequences

- Introduction: Why the Humanities?
- Part I: Critical Perspectives on Mass Incarceration and the U.S. Criminal Legal System
- Part II: Alternatives to the Current System: Restorative Justice, Transformative Justice, & Abolition

Goals

- To help you develop your abilities to read, view/listen, think, write, and create critically using approaches from the humanities
- To guide you in accurately assessing your own and your peers' work in relation to our specific writing criteria.
- To provide occasions for you to draw connections between some of the concepts, problems, and issues we will study and problems/concerns you care about.
- To practice collaborative, publicly-engaged composition in a time of social distancing

Hybrid Course

Due to ongoing uncertainties surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, this course will be taught as a hybrid course. Meeting less frequently will reduce our face-to-face contact and enables each of us to monitor our exposures and get tested prior to the next meeting, as necessary. It also enables us to pivot more easily to a fully remote course if necessary. The way our course will be structured is:

- All class sessions will be via Zoom through January 28th, per the UW administration's announcement. Use this link for **Tuesday** class sessions: <https://washington.zoom.us/j/96882943072> (Links to an external site.)
- All Thursday class meetings **for the entire quarter** will be held remotely via Zoom at <https://washington.zoom.us/j/95846259861> (Links to an external site.)
- Starting **Tuesday, February 8th** all Tuesday class sessions will be held in person. Let's all wear the highest quality masks we can get our hands on.
- During conference weeks all in-person meetings are canceled, and we will hold small group conferences in Zoom (to be scheduled).

Course Calendar

Note: Please be sure to check your UW email account at least daily, as I will email you with any updates/changes. All readings are assigned to be read for the next class session; writing is due by the start of class that day unless I specify another time on that week's module.

Tuesday, January 4, 2022

Read the following three texts:

Infographic "The Humanities Matter." You will need to download the pdf via the red text on the document to see the full infographic. Link: <https://4humanities.org/2013/07/the-humanities-matter-infographic/> (Links to an external site.)

Leon Botstein on the liberal arts

at <https://www.aacu.org/liberaleducation/2018/fall/botstein> (Links to an external site.)

and Christopher Newfield, "The Trouble with Numerical Culture." *MLA Profession*. Fall 2019. <https://profession.mla.org/the-trouble-with-numerical-culture/> (Links to an external site.)

Thursday, January 6, 2022

Due by Monday, January 10th at 12 noon: Self-Introduction on the Discussion board

Read Johan Galtung, "Cultural Violence." *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 27, No. 3. (Aug., 1990), pp. 291-305.

Tuesday, January 11, 2022

Watch the documentary *13th* (1 hour and 40 minutes) at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=krfcq5pF8u8> (Links to an external site.)

Thursday, January 13, 2022

Due today: Discussion board post on Galtung: What, exactly, are structural, cultural, and direct violence, and what are some ways they intersect/interact in *13th*

Read *Just Mercy*, Chapters 1& 2

Tuesday, January 18, 2022

Due today: Discussion board post on initial impressions of *Just Mercy*

Read *Just Mercy*, Chapters 4, 6, & 8

Thursday, January 20, 2022

Due today: Post your project proposal for the Sequence 1 writing project to the discussion board

Read *Just Mercy*, Chapter 14

Read *Usual Cruelty*, Selections TBD

Tuesday, January 25, 2022

Due today: Annotated bibliography of at least two substantial outside sources for your Sequence 1 Project (submit via Canvas assignment)

Read *Usual Cruelty*, Selections TBD

Thursday, January 27, 2022

Due today: Rough draft of Sequence 1 writing project

Read and/or Listen: Truthout Movement Memos, “You Cannot Divorce Murder From Policing,” A Conversation Between Kelly Hayes and Alex Vitale. <https://truthout.org/audio/you-cannot-divorce-murder-from-policing/> (Links to an external site.) (This can be listened to as a podcast, or you can read the transcript, or do both. A heads-up: this is an hour long.)

Tuesday, February 1, 2022

Due anytime *before* your group’s conference: Peer reviews of group members’ projects

Class cancelled for conferences

Thursday, February 3, 2022

Class cancelled for conferences

Read Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* Chapters 1 & 2

Tuesday, February 8, 2022

Sequence 1 Projects due.

Read Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* Chapters 3 & 5

Thursday, February 10, 2022

Due today: Discussion board post on *Are Prisons Obsolete?*

Read Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* Chapter 6

Tuesday, February 15, 2022

Due today: Sequence 2 Project Proposals (via the Discussion Board)

On Restorative Justice: Read Zehr Institute for Restorative Justice. “Restorative or transformative justice?”

<https://emu.edu/now/restorative-justice/2011/03/10/restorative-or-transformative-justice/#:~:text=Restorative%20justice%20and%20transformative%20are%20two%20quite%20different,TJ%20are%20really%20the%20same%20things%2C%20properly%20understood> (Links to an external site.)

Thursday, February 17, 2022 Transformative Justice

Reading/Viewing TBD

Tuesday, February 22, 2022

Your homework is to finish your group’s your rough draft

Thursday, February 24, 2022

Due today: Rough draft of Sequence 2 Project

Read or/and listen to Beyond Prisons. “Dylan Rodríguez, Part I: Abolition Is Our Obligation.” July 30th, 2020. <https://www.beyond-prisons.com/home/dylan-rodriguez-part-i-abolition-is-our-obligation> (Links to an external site.) (This can be listened to as a podcast, or you can read the transcript, or do both.)

Tuesday, March 1, 2022

Due anytime **before** your group’s conference: Peer reviews of group members’ projects

Class cancelled for conferences

Thursday, March 3, 2022

Class cancelled for conferences

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

Class Presentations

Thursday, March 10, 2022

Transfer: What knowledge, skills, and experiences will you carry with you from this course to future learning, working, and community engagement situations?

Sequence 2 Projects due

Tuesday, March 15, 2022

Metacognitive Reflections & “Item 7” due