“It is said that no one truly knows a nation until one has been inside its jails. A nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens, but its lowest ones.” – Nelson Mandela

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**NOTE** This course will utilize CourseWeb (https://courseweb.pitt.edu/) for announcements, assignments, additional readings, and other materials pertinent to the course. You are expected to be familiar with CourseWeb and to check it regularly. If you have any questions about using CourseWeb, please see me.


This book is also available as an e-reader at http://www.coursesmart.com/IR/4513503/9781483372242?__hdv=6.8

*Other readings will be assigned throughout the course at the instructor’s discretion.

Course Description
This is an overview course on the systems and practices of American criminal corrections, including the historical development of correctional practices, contemporary correctional structures and treatment, the experience of prisoners, alternatives to incarceration, punishment philosophies, and some of the most pressing problems and controversies in modern corrections.

Course Expectations
Topics in corrections will inevitably touch on many controversial topics (such as the death penalty and prisoners’ rights). Therefore, you must be respectful of your classmates and open-minded at all times. To get a fuller understanding and appreciation for these issues, class attendance and participation are essential. Classes will be conducted using a combination of lecture and, when appropriate, class discussions. The purpose of this course is to discuss and think about correctional issues in a critical manner. In this sense, you will be challenged to support your opinions or beliefs with material from the text, the lectures, or any other appropriate source. You will be expected to participate and to interact with your classmates. As such, you will be expected to have read and thought about the assigned readings prior to the class for which they are assigned. This will facilitate discussion and make learning easier and more enjoyable. Because of the discussion-based nature of many classes, you are expected to attend class; many exam questions will come directly from class discussions.
Please remember that you are expected to respect your classmates at all times. There are no wrong opinions (as long as they can be defended), so when someone else is speaking, you are expected to listen, to wait until he or she is done before responding, and to respond courteously, politely, and thoughtfully. Derogatory, racist, sexist, and other offensive or insulting remarks or comments will not be tolerated.

**Course Grading**
Your grade in this course will be based out of 600 points, broken down as follows:

- 4 Exams (100 points each): 400 points
- *Shawshank Redemption* Reflection: 50 points
- In-Class and Writing Assignments: 50 points*
- Final Paper: 100 points

*The total number of in-class and writing assignments will be contingent on the amount of time, but will likely be in the range of 3-5 short activities or writing assignments. Your total grade on those assignments will be averaged out of 50 total points.

Grades will be calculated based on total points accumulated as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>555-600</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>519-536.5</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>459-476.5</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>399-416.5</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>0-356.5</td>
<td>F</td>
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<tr>
<td>537-554.5</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>495-518.5</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>435-458.5</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>375-398.5</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>477-494.5</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>417-434.5</td>
<td>C-</td>
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<tr>
<td>357-374.5</td>
<td>D-</td>
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**Note on Disabilities**
Students with disabilities who require special testing accommodations or other classroom modifications must notify the instructor and the Coordinator of Disability Services in writing no later than the second week in the term. Documentation of a disability may be needed to determine the appropriate accommodations or classroom modifications. For information or to schedule an evaluation-of-need appointment, call the Office of Health & Counseling Services in G10 Student Union, at (814) 269-7119.

**Academic Dishonesty**
Students are expected to be familiar with the University of Pittsburgh’s *Guidelines on Academic Integrity* ([http://www.as.pitt.edu/fac/policies/academic-integrity](http://www.as.pitt.edu/fac/policies/academic-integrity)) and abide by them. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Anyone caught plagiarizing, cheating, or helping anyone do so will be referred to the appropriate university authorities and, at the very least, receive a 0 on the assignment. Additional penalties may apply depending on the nature of the incident.

The *Guidelines on Academic Integrity* forbid students from presenting “as one’s own, for academic evaluation, the ideas, representations, or words of another person or persons without customary and proper acknowledgment of sources.” Plagiarism is dishonest and illegal. Writers are indebted to authors from whom they borrow exact words, ideas, theories, opinions, statistics, illustrative material, or facts (beyond common knowledge). **Writers are also indebted if they summarize or paraphrase in their own words material from sources.** All quoted material
requires the acknowledgement of the source by the use of quotation marks or indentation (if exact wording is incorporated). In addition, both directly quoted and summarized material must be acknowledged by use of a note or parenthetical citation that indicates the author and/or date of publication and page number or numbers. If the writer indents a quotation, it must be clearly set off from the body of the text and must be documented in the aforesaid manner. Students are permitted to use any professionally recognized citation style, but to verify the various documentation procedures, writers should consult the style sheet for the particular citation format they are using (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.). (Note: Language of this paragraph was adapted from both the University of Pittsburgh’s Guidelines on Academic Integrity and the Indiana University of Pennsylvania’s Academic Integrity Policy.)

Cell Phones
You are expected to turn off your cell phones before coming to class. I reserve the right to answer any cell phone that rings during class or to complete any text message I catch you typing during class. Remember, you are expected to be respectful at all times. Interruptions during class, whether they are from cell phones or unnecessary conversations, are disrespectful. Failure to respect your classmates and the instructor may result in being asked to leave.

Exams and Make-up Exams
Exams are expected to be completed in class and may only be made up with documentation of an approved excused absence; please consult the university policy for more information. If you miss an exam due to either an emergency or an excused absence, you are expected to contact the instructor within 48 hours or as soon as reasonably possible. Barring extreme extenuating circumstances, failure to contact the instructor within 48 hours with an approved excuse and to schedule a make-up will result in a grade of 0 for the exam. Make-up exams will be given in a format to be determined by the instructor.

In Class and Writing Assignments
Throughout this course, there will be different videos, activities, and short (approx. 2 pages) writing assignments assigned in order to help illustrate different ideas and lessons being discussed in class. The exact number of these assignments will be determined as the semester progresses (approx., 3-5 assignments), and the student’s overall grade on these assignments will be averaged out of 50 points. For example, if the student achieves 80% of the possible points on these assignments, he or she will receive a score of 40 (out of 50) for the assignments.

Exact instructions for these assignments will be provided either in class or on CourseWeb.

Shawshank Redemption Reflection (Due: November 2)
You are to view the film The Shawshank Redemption (1994, Castle Rock Entertainment) starring Tim Robbins and Morgan Freeman on your own and offer a critical commentary on the film based upon what we have learned in this course about the history of corrections, prisons, parole, the philosophies of punishment, and sentencing. The paper should be a MINIMUM of 5 pages. You should approach this as a film critic, but with a scholarly eye—that means you should utilize scholarly sources to provide FACTUAL support to your arguments (students are required
to cite AT LEAST ONE academic source other than the textbook). This critical reflection should address at least the following questions:

- How accurate was the film’s portrayal of prison life?
- What were some of the characteristics or patterns of behavior of the prison subculture that emerge throughout the film? What are some of the reasons for the emergence of a subculture? Why do some of the prisoners join gangs? Do you find this aspect of the film realistic? Be sure to use specific examples from the film and relate them to class material.
- Do the characters accurately represent the inmate roles described by Sykes (see pp. 118-120 of the textbook)? Based upon the roles identified by Sykes, which role best describes Andy? Red? Brooks? Bogs? Support your answer with evidence from the film.
- How is the idea of the total institution and prisonization portrayed in the film? What does the film suggest about the effects of being institutionalized in prison, and how does it affect inmates who are later released into society? How accurate do you find this portrayal? Use specific examples from the film to support your answer. What does your answer suggest about releasing inmates after long periods of incarceration and what policy implications does your answer have?
- ANY OTHER PORTRAYALS IN THE FILM THAT YOU FEEL ARE WORTHY OF NOTING IN YOUR CRITICAL REFLECTION BASED UPON WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED AND READ SO FAR

Be sure to check CourseWeb for more detailed instructions.

**Final Paper (Due: December 7)**

For your final paper, you have two choices:

1. Participate in a service project to raise money to provide fathers incarcerated at SCI-Laurel Highlands recordable audio books to read to their children, interview an inmate receiving one of the books about their experience as a father in prison, and write a reflection paper about the project and the interview.
2. Write a research paper of at least 10 pages about a current controversy or problem in American corrections. This paper may be either informative or persuasive.

No matter which option you choose, the final paper will be due on December 7, but you should have your first draft completed by November 18 so that your paper can be reviewed by your peers prior to final submission. On this date, there will be no lecture; rather, you will meet with your classmates to review, edit, and revise each other’s papers, to offer suggestions and critiques, and to fine tune the paper for final submission.

**Option 1:**

Students choosing Option 1 will be expected to participate in raising funds to purchase recordable audio books (approximately $20 each at Hallmark). They will also be required to travel to SCI-Laurel Highlands on November 4 to help deliver the books to the inmates, to interview an inmate (in pairs), and to write a report about their experience and the interview. If you are choosing Option 1, you must notify the instructor by September 16* so I can give the prison a final count of the total number of students participating.
*If you want to participate in Option 1, but are not yet sure if you are available to do so, please inform the instructor as it is easier to remove a person from the list to than to add a person.

For your final report, you will provide your evaluation of the experience and relate those experiences to course material. In your final paper, you will be expected to:

1. Provide your reaction to the project. This should be an honest and critical evaluation of the entire project.
2. Discuss what you learned in the interview with the inmate about the inmate, his family, and the impact of incarceration on his family.
3. Relate this project to course material and make suggestions for improving the way society handles those who have broken its laws.

**Option 2:**
If you are unable or unwilling to participate in Option 1 for any reason (you do not need to provide a reason), you must write a research paper of at least 10 pages about a current controversy or problem in corrections. I have provided a list of topics below, but you are not bound by those topics; they are just suggestions. If you choose Option 2, you MUST get your topic approved by the instructor NO LATER THAN October 5. Please note, this is an absolute deadline; I highly recommend you get your topic approved prior to October 5 in case your topic gets rejected.

Possible Final Paper Topics (you are welcome to choose any corrections-related topic even if it does not appear on this list). Be sure to get your topic approved by October 5:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AIDS in prison</th>
<th>Elderly Inmates</th>
<th>Capital punishment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Appropriate punishment philosophy</td>
<td>Charging Inmates for their confinement</td>
<td>Mandatory minimums and Truth-in-Sentencing laws</td>
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<td>Drug Counseling/Treatment</td>
<td>Inmate Labor</td>
<td>Prison Privatization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monetary Bail</td>
<td>LGBT inmates</td>
<td>Prison violence/rape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prison Gangs</td>
<td>Providing Healthcare</td>
<td>Recidivism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mass Incarceration</td>
<td>Educational Opportunities</td>
<td>Mothers in prison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juveniles in Prison</td>
<td>Juvenile Death Penalty</td>
<td>Juvenile LWOP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abolishing Parole</td>
<td>Mentally Ill Inmates</td>
<td>Use of Intermediate Sanctions</td>
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<td>Intensive Supervision Probation</td>
<td>Executing the Mentally Challenged/Mentally Ill</td>
<td>Disproportionate Minority Confinement</td>
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<td>Furloughs</td>
<td>Work Release</td>
<td>Reintegrating Ex-Offenders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collateral Consequences (Felon disenfranchisement, offender registries)</td>
<td>Solitary Confinement</td>
<td>Super-max prisons (secure housing units)</td>
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<td>Conjugal visits</td>
<td>Restricting Contact Visits</td>
<td>Drugs in Prison</td>
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<td>Needle Exchange in Prison</td>
<td>Providing condoms to inmates</td>
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For Option 2, you may choose to write either an informative or a persuasive essay.

In either case, you **MUST:**
1. Explain the nature of the problem or controversy. Assume your audience knows nothing about corrections or the dilemmas it faces. Regardless of whether you are taking a position or not, you MUST inform your readers of the nature of the problem.

2. Describe what the different sides of the controversy are or what the different proposed solutions to the problem are and what the arguments and evidence in favor of each side are. The evidence should be factual, empirical social science findings.

3. Explain why the issue is so pressing. That is, why does the controversy or problem need to be addressed and why should anyone care?

If you are taking a position and writing a persuasive essay, you MUST then explain what your position is and why. That is, what evidence leads you to your position and causes you to reject counter-arguments or opposing positions (you must do both).

If you are writing an informative essay, you should explain what solutions or sides of the issue seem the most likely to be implemented, have been discussed by policy makers, or seem to have the most support among policy makers and among the general public. You should explain WHY you believe this to be the case (that is, what evidence suggests there is more support for a particular solution or that a particular solution is more likely to be implemented?). Please note, you do not have to personally agree with this solution; you just have to explain why it is the more likely outcome (not necessarily the outcome you wish for or think to be correct).

For Option 2, you are REQUIRED to utilize AT LEAST FIVE SCHOLARLY SOURCES (other than the textbook) in writing your paper. You MUST get these sources approved by me NO LATER THAN November 6. You are permitted to use more than five scholarly sources, and you are permitted to use CREDIBLE non-scholarly sources in addition to your five scholarly sources, but ALL sources MUST be cited. You may use any ACADEMIC citation style you wish, but you MUST include both a works cited page AND in-text citations (unless you are using a citation style that utilizes footnotes or endnotes).

More detailed instructions will be provided on CourseWeb closer to the due date. Be sure to check CourseWeb regularly for updates.

**Course Schedule**

***Please note: the dates and assigned readings in this schedule are tentative and subject to change at the instructor’s discretion. Please check CourseWeb to get scheduling updates.***

August 31: Course Introduction, Distribution of Syllabus, What is Corrections?

September 2-4: Philosophies of Punishment

- Stohr & Walsh, chapter 1

September 7: NO CLASS—LABOR DAY

September 9-16: History of Corrections
- Stohr & Walsh, chapters 2 & 3

September 18-23: Sentencing
- Stohr & Walsh, chapter 5

**SEPTEMBER 25: EXAM 1 (date is subject to change)**

September 28-October 2: Jails
- Stohr & Walsh, chapter 6

October 5-9: Probation & Intermediate Sanctions
- Stohr & Walsh, chapter 7
  - **FINAL PAPER TOPICS DUE OCT. 5**

October 12-23: Prisons (Reminder: there is no class on October 19, but you will attend Monday classes on October 20)
- Stohr & Walsh, chapter 8, and pp. 295-297 and 329-332
- Braman, “Families and Incarceration”
- Clear, et al., pp. 144-147

**OCTOBER 26: EXAM 2 (date is subject to change)**

October 28-November 2: Parole and Re-entry
- Stohr & Walsh, chapter 10
  - **SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION REFLECTION ESSAYS DUE NOV. 2**

November 4: NO CLASS; CLASS PROJECT AT SCI-LAUREL HIGHLANDS

November 6-11: Women and Corrections
- Stohr & Walsh, chapter 11
- Sentencing Project, “Women in the Criminal Justice System,” pp. 3, 5-7
  - **FINAL PAPER SOURCES (OPTION #2 ONLY) DUE NOV. 6**

November 13, 16, and 20: Minorities and Corrections
- Stohr & Walsh, chapter 12

November 18: Peer Review of Term Papers

**November 23: EXAM 3 (date is subject to change)**

November 25-27: NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING
November 30: Correctional Treatment Programs
  • Stohr & Walsh, chapter 15

December 2-7: Legal Issues and Prisoner Rights
  • Stohr & Walsh, chapter 14
  • \textit{FINAL PAPERS DUE DEC. 7}

December 9-11: Death Penalty
  • Stohr & Walsh, chapter 16
  • Clear, et al., pp. 504-505
  • Sieter, pp. 460-464

\textbf{FINAL EXAM: AS DETERMINED BY THE FINAL EXAM SCHEDULE}