"In my country we go to prison first and then become President." - Nelson Mandela

"He who opens a school door, closes a prison." - Victor Hugo

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course is part of the Marist Praxis Project for Public/Global Leadership, aimed at giving students an academic structure by which to integrate public work, scholarship and their higher aspirations for public good.

As such, this course will expose the students to the experience of imprisonment and investigate the possibility of a socio-spiritual reconfiguration of the prison concept. We will consider the personal, psychological, political and spiritual reality related to both prison and those imprisoned. We will look at the experience of both men and women in prison and the toll of separation from family and children for both mothers and fathers, and we will not forget the victims.

We will explore the issues of political prisoners, human rights, torture and the death penalty. The course will also explore current trends in corrections, including privatization of prisons as well as innovative rehabilitative and restorative justice efforts.

The course will use readings, film, documentaries and guest speakers with special experience from the prison world to engage the students in critical reflections on the imprisonment experience.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
The primary objective of this course is to offer students an opportunity to systematically reflect upon and critically evaluate age-old questions relating to the issues of imprisonment: punishment, deterrence, and incapacitation, as well as the long-standing punishment/rehabilitation debate, and issues of power and politics.

Through these efforts the students will gain practice in reading carefully, in thinking clearly and critically, and in developing the ability to argue logically and to evaluate and defend ideological positions, both orally and in writing.
ATTENDANCE:
Students are expected to attend every class. There is no specific number of “legal” absences allowed. Accepted absences are documented illness (with documentation from a medical professional - no notes from the infirmary, please) or a death in the family. If you must miss a class and it does not fall into one of these categories, please advise your instructor prior to class. Students not attending a class for whatever reason are expected to find out what has been missed. Students are fully responsible for all missed work. While even one unexcused absence can affect a student’s grade, three or more unexcused absences will seriously endanger a successful completion of the class.

PREPARATION/PARTICIPATION:
Students must be well prepared for every class and ready to participate in class activities. This means they must have read carefully the assigned text, be able to answer questions, as well as ask relevant and engaging questions of their own. NOTE: Attendance alone does not count as participation.

CLASS NOTES:
At the end of each class ten minutes will be reserved for each student to write and hand in a quick reflection on the evening’s class; what made an impact, stirred ideas and/or general comments on the class.

MIDTERM TEST:
A mid-term test will be administered on (TBA). Specific instruction will be issued well in advance.

CLASS PROJECT:
The students will be engaged in a Public Citizenship Praxis Project related to the themes of the course. This may include a visit to a local prison, jail or re-entry center for released prisoners.

FINAL PAPER:
The course will conclude with students writing a final paper, about 10 pages. Specific instructions will be issued regarding content well in advance. The final paper will be due in hard copy in no later than TBA. No late papers and no electronic submissions accepted.

GRADING:
Successful completion of this class and grading of individual students will be based upon:
  o Attendance and participation (Including reflection notes) (30%)
  o Midterm Test (30%)
  o Final Paper (40%)

INTELLECTUAL HONESTY
All written work submitted for this course is subject to the standards of intellectual honesty and integrity. Violation of these rules, which includes plagiarism (remember plagiarism software) and cheating, is by itself grounds for failure of this course,
regardless of the grades received for other course assignments and activities. If a student is found cheating or plagiarizing any assignment, judicial proceedings will be taken against the student.

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES
Each class will include a class discussion of the texts studied, a review of the key teachings in the material and lead-in to upcoming assignments. When appropriate and pending availability, a guest lecturer with specific experience may be introduced.

OUTCOMES
At the completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- Critically analyze and evaluate the material read
- Identify the major prison and imprisonment issues and realize the potential for alternatives
- Compare and contrast opposing arguments and interpretations
- Organize their thoughts and communicate them clearly and concisely in written and oral form

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT:

- Quizzes, debates and special assignments will be used to assess the student’s knowledge of concepts and content.
- Students will complete at least one major paper in which they demonstrate their understanding of the main issues in the field of imprisonment.

PHOTO ID.
To facilitate identification of individual students, the professor will take digital photos of individual students (pending approval by the students)

ASSIGNMENTS:
At the end of each class, readings and other homework assignments will be issued.

GENERAL CLASS RULES:
Class starts on time - Cell phones turned off - Mutual respect and civil conversation - No cross talk - Only one conversation at the time. Help keep classroom clean. We are here to learn, grow and have a productive time together. Enjoy!

"Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison." -Henry David Thoreau