

HIST 585-003: Special Topics in History:

Topic: Punishment/Politics/Culture:US (OPUS title)
Punishment, Politics, and Culture in the United States: Past & Present (complete course title)

Instructor	Day(s)	Time(s)	Maximum Enrollment
LaChance	TU	4:15 – 7:15 pm	11

Semester Description:

“Other than war,” legal studies scholar Austin Sarat reminds us, “punishment is the most dramatic manifestation of state power. Whom a society punishes and how it punishes are key political questions as well as indicators of its character and the character of the people in whose name it acts.” This interdisciplinary graduate seminar will assess the role that technologies of power and poetics have played in shaping the political and cultural life of punishment in the United States, with a particular focus on the past forty years. We will begin by surveying the broader theoretical debates about the place of punishment in society, examining, in particular, tensions between the theories of Michel Foucault and Emile Durkheim. We will then move into historical and literary representations of punishment since the 1930s, asking how they support, qualify, and contest the claims of sociological theories of punishment. Equal attention will be given to work from sociological, historical, and cultural-critical perspectives.

Potential Textbooks, Articles, and Resources:

1. David Garland, *The Culture of Control*.
2. Michelle Brown, *The Culture of Punishment*
3. Philip Smith, *Punishment and Culture*.
4. Loic Wacquant, *Punishing the Poor*.
5. David Oshinsky, *Worse Than Slavery*.
6. Marie Gottschalk, *The Prison and the Gallows*.
7. Robert Perkinson, *Texas Tough*.
8. Naomi Murakawa, *The First Civil Right*.
9. Michael Fortner, *Black Silent Majority*.
10. Michael Hames-Garcia, *Fugitive Thought*.
11. Russell Banks, *Lost Memory of Skin*.