

## Mass Incarceration Group Assignment 15 Points

**Final Portfolio Due: Thursday, October 22, 2015**

### Objectives

1. Create a snapshot for the instructor and students of the local criminal justice scene. What does the war on drugs look like in Tucson or Arizona?
2. Students should become mini-experts on a particular topic dealing with race/ethnicity and criminal justice.
3. Empirically test the main aspects of Michelle Alexander's book as well as Eugene Jarecki's and Matthew Pillischer's films. Are their theories supported by data from Tucson?
4. Improve information literacy skills, in particular the ability to work in groups to gather large amounts of data and distill it down to make a compelling presentation

### Sources for All Groups

- Alexander, Michelle. 2012. (Revised Ed.) *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York: The New Press.
- Forman, Jr., James. 2012. "Racial Critiques of Mass Incarceration: Beyond the New Jim Crow" *New York University Law Review* 87: 21ff
- Jarecki, Eugene. Director. 2012. *The House I Live In*. BBC.
- Pillischer, Matthew. Director, *Broken on All Sides*, 2012.
- Rafay, Atif. 2012. "Bleak Housing and Black Americans: Some Problems in the Use of Racial Disparities in Incarceration as a Reason for Reform" *Journal of Poverty* 16 (3): 353-362

### Schedule

- October 1: NO CLASS! Watch *The House I Live In* and/or *Broken On All Sides* on your own or via streaming on D2L.
- October 6: Narrow down to a subtopic or two that you will focus on.
- Tuesday, October 20: Student Presentations
- Thursday, October 22: Student Presentations
- Thursday, October 22: Final Portfolios Due**

### Assignment

- A. Each group should try to learn as much as possible about their topic in the next 3 weeks. Think of this as a scavenger hunt! Be sure to split up the assignment among all group members. Think of the *Paper Chase* example I will give in class!
- B. Each group should turn in a research portfolio with copies of articles, interview notes, a list of key stakeholders, etc.

C. Tuesday October 28 and Thursday October 30: Each group will make a 8-10 minute **compelling** presentation for the class using PowerPoint or Prezi. Be sure to include pictures, tables, graphs, audio, etc. Handouts should be used as well as participatory pedagogical techniques.

**Groups**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Group Topics**

1. Drugs and Crime in Tucson (cartels, high schools, campus, etc.)
2. Gangs and Crime in Tucson
3. Plea bargains, and sentencing, legal representation – the trial phase.
4. Prisons and Empowerment (Prison art, rodeos, inmate firefighters, Black Power movements, White Power movements)
5. Re-Entry, release, rehabilitation, stigma including the effects on the community writ large.
6. Clemency
7. Social movements against the drug war or prison culture – hip hop, resistance to “The Occupation”, Ban the Box Movement, etc.

NOTE: additional topics would have been immigration and “the border,” gender, and children, but alas we cannot cover everything.

**Instructions**

1. Read Michelle Alexander’s book, especially those sections pertaining to your group topic.
2. Read general reviews of Michelle Alexander’s book, including those of James Forman and Rafay and others on Academic Search Complete
3. What are her main points? Focus on the three or four most important or controversial points on your issue. Note, on some of your group topics, she may only refer to them in passing or tangentially.
4. Gather reports and other sources on the situation in Tucson or Southern Arizona.
5. Who are the key stakeholders in Tucson or Southern Arizona on your issue? Who should future students interview to learn about your topic?
6. Interview and/or hang out with key stakeholders. If possible try to interview both sides of an issue.
7. Ask the stakeholders who else you should talk to.

8. Participatory activities will be most educational and are **REQUIRED**. Try to arrange prison tours, sit in on trials, take part in ride-alongs, observe meetings, etc.
9. Talk to defendants, gang members, clients, parolees, professors, judges, etc.
10. How did those experiences correlate with Alexander's findings and from the films? How does the situation in Tucson differ from that in the film and the readings?