Schedule: Wednesday 10:00AM - 12:35PM  
Location: New Academic Building, Room 202

Professor: Richard Nisa  
Office: Mansion 38A  
Office Hours: Wednesdays—9:00-10:00AM  
Email: nisa@fdu.edu

Course Description:

Modern democratic states often rely on practices of detention and incarceration in order to demonstrate (and increasingly, to circumvent) the power of the rule of law. As a result, international and domestic detention spaces like refugee camps, jails and for-profit prisons, war prisons, black sites, migrant detention islands, border checkpoints, and protest camps are utilized in an ever-expanding number of spatial, legal, and political contexts. Through close reading, focused class discussion, writing, and interacting with assorted primary sources, we will explore these spaces and engage in a detailed historical and theoretical investigation of the complex and often-contradictory processes that produce them.

Course Outline:

The course is divided into two sections. The first—lasting the first seven weeks—is designed to introduce the class to the central themes and questions surrounding the history and development of the prison apparatus in the United States. We will trace a course through readings that deal with the origins incarceration and its rapid expansion, with the issues of race, property, and economy, and with the role of the state. Part two—the second half of the semester—will cover a range of issues pertaining to the uses of detainment and sequestration in a global context. We will wrestle with the issues of mobility and migration, with political asylum and refugee camps, with torture, and with the contradiction of detainment for punishment and detainment for security.
Course Objectives:
By the end of the semester, students should be able to:
• Analyze and critically engage with the diverse detainment spaces and practices at use within, beyond, and at the US border.
• Examine and interrogate the connections and distinctions between detainment for the purposes of punishment (prisons and jails), humanitarian reasons (refugee camps), and state security (internment and war prisons).
• Understand the historical, political, and economic conditions that produced such racial disparity in U.S. prison populations and led to the current mass incarceration crisis.
• Engage in informed debate about alternatives to incarceration.

Readings and Organization:
There is no “textbook” to purchase for this class. All readings are located on our class Blackboard site or available for download from the FDU library/e-library. Readings will be drawn from a range of sources: academic articles and book excerpts, newspapers and magazine reportage, and fiction. Some of the readings are quite dense, and will require careful reading and reflection. If you put in the effort, the reward for close reading extends far beyond the walls of our classroom. Reading assignments will be supplemented by a number of videos, lectures and discussions. Active participation is critical if the seminar-style discussion sessions are to work effectively. Attendance and participation are accordingly each worth a significant portion of your grade. BRING THE READINGS TO CLASS.

Writing Assignments:
I am a firm believer that writing is one of the keys to engaged, nuanced, critical thinking. To that end, in the class our writing assignments have an emphasis on process as well as product.

A. Reading Responses:
Please write a total of six (6) short reactions to the articles we’ve read for that day’s class (FORMAT: 250-350 words, double-spaced, Times New Roman in 12 point font, one inch margins on the top and bottom, 1.25 on the sides). I am looking for some sort of critical engagement with the readings: I DO NOT WANT A ‘BOOK REPORT’. Reaction papers will be evaluated based on five criteria. In other words, you will not get full credit for the assignment unless you meet these basic objectives:
1. One sentence that clearly identifies the author/s and the title of the piece you are writing about AND their central claim, assertion, or thesis.
2. One sentence that briefly explains how the author builds and/or supports this thesis.
3. Your CRITICAL thoughts on the reading/reads. Why was this piece written? What are its successes? Its flaws? How might it relate to other readings from the course? To other issues from other classes you are taking/have taken?
4. A short discussion question based on the text. These should not be yes or no questions, but questions that come out of your critical engagement with the readings. The best way to go about this is to think about your readings and generate a ‘how’ or a ‘why’ question. *ie: ‘How does this particular quote relate to the underlying aims of the antebellum South?’ ‘Why did California take this position relative to prison expansion?’*

5. PREPARE AND PROOFREAD: I will deduct points if responses are not printed on paper and turned in at the beginning of class; have not been checked for errors in grammar, composition, spelling and clarity. These deductions add up!

You choose the six weeks that you want to write a response for, but you are only to hand in one response per week, and it must **cite and engage** with at minimum one of the readings done for that week’s class.

**B. Reading Prompts:**

Occasionally I will begin class by posting a broad prompt on the board about the readings and ask for you to use the text to frame out a 5 – 10-minute handwritten response. These short exercises get us focused on the issues and the readings but they are still loose and open enough to wrestle with the complexities that come with many of these themes. I can also use them as a tool to assess whether you understand the major themes of the readings. These add up to 10% of your final grade.

**C. Research Paper:**

This semester we will work on writing one analytical essay, the final draft of which will be due on May 3 (the last day of class). Because research and writing are processes that take time, this single paper will take shape over the course of the entire semester, by way of a number of short assignments and peer review sessions. You will be writing a paper that critically analyzes one person, place or policy associated with detention. The final essay will be approximately 2,000 - 2,500 words long. We will be breaking the paper up into a number of small parts and working with each other to develop and improve the end result. Two printed copies of all assignments are to be passed in at the beginning of class. Late students and/or late assignments will earn a reduction of 25% off of their grade for that assignment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic/site selected on February 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 paper ‘ideas’ due on February 22</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annotated bibliography due March 8</td>
<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rough Draft (dropped in my dept mailbox by 3pm) <em>Monday, April 3</em></td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Draft due on May 3 (all earlier assts. stapled together)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>35%</strong></td>
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All papers should be written substantially in your own words. Please provide page numbers for all relevant references. Where quotations (or closely paraphrased passages) are drawn from print or on-line sources, they must be effectively marked as quotations and/or be supported with appropriate citations. Plagiarized assignments constitute a violation of the student code of conduct and typically result in zero credit and referral to academic deans for disciplinary action.

**5-10 Minute Oral and Visual Presentation of Case Study:**

Each of you will be responsible for one 5-to-10-minute presentation. These should include visual material (video, diagrams, maps, models, images – no text!) and a prepared and well-delivered oral presentation of information about a site or practice we will be exploring in that week’s class. We will assign these on the first day of class. For full credit, I must have all visual materials on my computer before the start of class. This presentation is worth 10% of your final grade.

**Attendance and Participation:**

Attendance and active participation are compulsory in this class. You are required to arrive on time, contribute to our discussions and in-class projects, and stay for the duration of the class. You are allowed one unexcused absence in the course (an excused absence is a documented medical or family emergency as determined by the Dean of Students Office). Each additional unexcused absence will result in the loss of 4 points from your attendance and participation grade (there are a total of 15). Late arrivals and early departures will count as 1/2 an absence. Three unexcused absences will result in the automatic failure of the course. You are responsible for finding out what you missed while absent and getting the notes from a classmate.

**Class protocols:**

The following protocols hold, without exception, for all students in this class:

1. Collegiality and common sense require that you turn off your cell phone in the classroom. If your cell phone rings in class, I will ask you to leave, and you will earn ½ absence for the day.
2. Unless otherwise stated, please do not bring laptops into class. I love digital and networked technology almost as much as you do, and use it in nearly all facets of my life. However, in my recent experience in the classroom, I’ve noticed that laptops primarily distract their users and those around them. Beyond the growing evidence suggesting that students who listen and take notes by hand actually learn more than those who use computers, I think that any classroom discussion would no doubt benefit from students looking at each other and not the back of a digital device. If you require the use of a laptop in class, please provide a note from the university.
3. Respect is paramount. We will be discussing and debating issues in this class that have no clear or inevitable ‘answers’ yet still generate impassioned and/or emotional responses. It is OK—even encouraged—to disagree, but please be mindful of others as we work to develop an open-yet-critical classroom culture.
4. I want all of us to feel comfortable having our voices heard in our discussions. Discussion-based learning requires the completion of the readings, but it also relies on listening and taking risks.
For the most vocal students, this might mean taking an occasional backseat, while for those who are more reticent, consider challenging yourself to speak up.

5. Visit me during office hours. I am more than happy to review material and answer questions. If you cannot make posted hours, we can try to arrange an alternative appointment time.

**Grading criteria:**

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Case Study Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Response Papers (six @ 5% each)</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>Reading Prompts</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper project</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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**Grade determination:**

The numeric grades correspond to the following letter grades:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95 – 99%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 – 94%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 – 89%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83 – 86%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 – 82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 – 79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73 – 76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70 – 72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60 – 69%</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Less than 60%</td>
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**Academic Integrity:**

Cheating, plagiarism, or other violations of academic integrity will not be tolerated. To that end, if you haven’t already done so, please become familiar with FDU’s Academic Integrity Policy. Any and all students in violation of this policy will be subject to automatic failure of the course for a first offense, and will be suspended from the university for a second offense. The inability to prove authorship when questioned about your work’s authenticity could be grounds for the charge of plagiarism. It is entirely your responsibility to read the FDU Academic Integrity Policy carefully and abide by it.

**Disability Disclosure:**

Fairleigh Dickinson University – College at Florham, in accord with the policies underlying Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA), works to ensure that reasonable accommodations are implemented for enrolled students with documented disabilities to function in the academic environment. Any student with documented disabilities, who feels he/she may need academic accommodations while taking this course, should first contact the office of Disability Support Services at 973-443-8079 to discuss his/her specific needs. Once the disability is verified, pick-up your letters from the office of Disability Support Services, then make an appointment to see the professor.

Course Schedule:

January 25, 2017

Day 1: Why detain? Exploring the Spatialization of Punishment

Pre-circulated reading:
Angela Y. Davis, Are Prisons Obsolete? (Seven Stories Press, 2003), 9–21.

In-class reading:

February 1, 2017

Week 2: Spaces of Detention: Enclosure, Exclusion, and the Practices of Power


Michel Foucault, Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison (Vintage Books, 1979), 3–23; (pages 104-114 are also recommended).

February 8, 2017

Week 3: Jim Crow, Labor, and Early/Mid 20th Century Incarceration in the US


February 15, 2017

Week 4: Race, Mass Incarceration, and the Carceral State


Highly recommended:
February 22, 2017

**Week 5: Prisons, Profit, and Accumulation by Dispossession**


March 1, 2017

**Week 6: Beyond the Wire: Policing, Control, and Cultures of Mass Incarceration**


*Highly recommended:*


March 8, 2017

**Week 7: The Body in prison, the body as prison: Solitary Confinement, Labor, Hunger, and Death**


Highly recommended:

March 15, 2017: Spring Break

March 22, 2017
Week 8: Migrant Detention: Globalization, Mobility, and the Prison Planet


Nancy Hiemstra, “‘You Don’t Even Know Where You Are’: Chaotic Geographies of US Migrant Detention and Deportation,” in Carceral Spaces: Mobility and Agency in Imprisonment and Migrant Detention, ed. Dominique Moran, Nick Gill, and Deirdre Conlon (available on ebrary)

March 29, 2017
Week 9: Care and Custody: Borders, Human Rights, and the Refugee

Michel Agier, Managing the Undesirables: Refugee Camps and Humanitarian Government, 1st ed. (Polity, 2011); Chapter 2: Encampment Today: An Attempted Inventory (36-62)


April 5, 2017:
Week 10: No Class (I will be at a conference)

April 12, 2017
Week 11: The Camp, States of Exception, and Law (Reconsidered)


April 19, 2017
Week 12: Empire and Emergency


And: http://www.suyamaproject.org/

April 26, 2017
Week 13: War Prisons & Military Detention


Engage with this interactive site: https://saydnaya.amnesty.org/

May 3, 2017
Week 14: Alternatives and Abolition


May 10, 2017
Final Meeting: Papers retuned and film screening