Criminal Justice and Neighborhoods
PADM: GP4401 (001)
Fall 2014, Tuesdays 4:55 pm to 6:35 pm
Bobst Library, Room: LL150

Instructor: Elise White, Adjunct Assistant Professor
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 6:40pm-7:40pm upon request
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Whenever and wherever societies have flourished and prospered rather than stagnated and decayed, creative and workable cities have been at the core of the phenomenon; they have pulled their weight and more. It is the same still. Decaying cities, declining economies, and mounting social troubles travel together. The combination is not coincidental.

Jane Jacobs
The Death and Life of Great American Cities

Synopsis: From the police, to the court system, to incarceration, to community supervision, criminal justice system practitioners and policymakers increasingly acknowledge that the community is both acutely affected by justice system policy and practice, as well as the critical partner in the generation of public safety and citizen quality of life. This interdisciplinary seminar juxtaposes conflicting narratives of community health and safety to examine and critically interrogate a wide range of criminal justice policy and practice. Students will leave this course able to articulate the relationships between theories of community and criminal justice policy, conduct cultural landscape analyses of neighborhoods to see how these policies play out “on the ground,” and use these analyses to make crucial criminal justice policy reform recommendations. This course pays particular attention to New York City’s neighborhoods and criminal justice system.

Prerequisites: Introduction to Public Policy; Statistical Methods for Public, Nonprofit, and Health Management. Wagner students of any major or concentration interested in community issues, policy analysis, or criminal justice with some background in criminal justice are encouraged to take this course; students at other NYU schools interested in criminal justice may also consider taking this course.

Class Grading and Assignments: The course grade will be based on regular attendance and participation, a group cultural landscapes project, a final policy white paper, and a short presentation of that final paper.

Given the limited number of meetings we have, preparation, attendance, and participation are essential for this course and the primary way students will demonstrate engagement with the material. Students are expected to read required texts in advance and be prepared to participate robustly in class discussions. There is both a speaking and listening component to participation, and classes will be structured in such a way that lack of preparation will be evident. If for any reason you need to miss a class, please inform me in advance and submit an abstract and response to the readings discussed that day.

The cultural landscapes project will involve applying the logic and analytic methods of geographers, ethnographers, public historians, ecologists and historic preservationists to a group project on a New
York City neighborhood characterized by high crime or delinquency rates. Working in small groups, students will observe neighborhood architecture, planning, land use, and the neighborhood inhabitants’ interactions with the space and one another to craft a deep analysis of your neighborhood. Students will turn these into one 8-10 page paper, double-spaced. Your analysis should respond in meaningful ways to all aspects of Jeremy Korr’s cultural landscape analysis model, including: (1) a description of the neighborhood’s dimensions; (2) identification of the neighborhood’s boundaries; (3) perception analysis; (4) consideration of the dynamic relationship among the three components of cultural landscapes; and (5) cultural analysis. Students will have opportunity to practice applying the method in class before being asked to do so for this project.

The final paper will build on the cultural landscape analysis your group conducted. You will be expected to take observations or interests from readings and class discussions and write an 8-10 page double-spaced “white paper” for an innovative criminal justice program or policy that will mitigate the harmful effects of the criminal justice system on the specific neighborhood your small group analyzed by (1) strengthening the capacity of that community to play a role in the criminal justice system; (2) increasing the mechanisms by which that community is meaningfully engaged by criminal justice institutions or policymakers; or (3) otherwise situating that community to respond to the impacts of criminal justice institutions.

The paper must include (1) a problem statement, (2) a brief review of relevant research, (3) a detailed description of the proposed policy or program, and (4) expected measurable intermediate and long-term outcomes. Students are encouraged to also consider (a) the fiscal cost implications, (b) political feasibility, (c) community impacts, and (d) scale-ability. Papers can be written individually or in groups of three or less. Please note all papers must include full citations and references for all cited sources.

The in-class presentation of your research and policy recommendations will be done on the last day of class. You will have 5-10 minutes to present (additional details will be provided in the weeks preceding this presentation). Students will present in alphabetical order.

Relative Weight of Assignments:
- Class Participation and Attendance 20%
- Cultural Landscapes Paper 30%
- Final Paper 40%
- Final Paper Presentation 10%

Late Policy: Extensions will be granted only in case of emergency. This is out of respect to those who have abided by deadlines, despite equally hectic schedules. Papers handed in late without extensions will be penalized one-third of a grade per day. Extensions must be approved prior to deadlines. There will be no allowances made for presentations that can’t be made due to granted paper extensions.

Academic Integrity and the Wagner Experience:
As members of the NYU Wagner community, we are all expected to adhere to the highest standards of intellectual and academic integrity. As one component of aiding our community in meeting these standards, this memo compiles a collection of resources for translating such expectations into practice in our academic work, and also provides information on Wagner’s expectations and associated procedures. Wagner, as a community, has recently adopted a new disciplinary process, which is available on our website: http://www.nyu.edu/wagner/current/policies/. It is important that all Wagner students are aware of both the type of activities that qualify as infractions and the consequences of academic dishonesty. We encourage you to review the academic code as soon as possible and to use it
as a resource to guide you academically and professionally. For more information on Wagner’s current
policies on academic integrity, please go to the following link:

All readings are available on NYU Classes unless otherwise indicated.

Class Outline:
I. Introduction to the Criminal Justice System in New York—October 28th
   • Course Overview
   • Introduction to the criminal justice system in NYC
   • Overview of cultural landscapes approach & practice

Learning Objective:
In this first session, we will sketch out, in broad terms, the criminal justice system in New York City and
New York State, and identify the primary government agencies with jurisdiction over the arrests, the
court process, incarceration, and community supervision. We will also explore cultural landscapes
analysis as a method for developing a rich and nuanced understanding of space and place. Students will
leave with a clearer understanding of how to apply this method, and with a key set of questions to guide
their group projects.

Read:
Walker, Samuel. Sense and Nonsense about Crime, Drugs, and Communities, Stamford, CT:
Korr, Jeremy, “Cultural Landscape Analysis Fieldwork Model” Appendix A from Washington’s

II. Neighborhoods and Communities in Context—November 4th
   • Theories of neighborhood and community
   • Modern history of NYC and crime
   • Relationships between space, place, and criminal behavior

Learning Objective:
What do we mean when we say “neighborhood”? What do we mean when we say “community”? How
are these ideas infused into our perceptions of our everyday lives? How are these related to larger
economic, social, and cultural forces that underlie and inform urban policy? New York City is often
described as “a city of neighborhoods”—a phrase that is taken as a self-explanatory description of how
communities function in the city. In an age when “community-based” services are increasingly called for
by criminal justice reform advocates and lauded by government as a solution to broken systems, and
where the word “community” is increasingly part of private corporations’ marketing strategies, we will
critically interrogate what we mean by “community” and “neighborhood,” how these meanings have
shifted over time, and the central role government and increasingly private interests have played in
these shifts. Finally, we will begin to articulate the relationship between these larger economic, social,
and cultural changes of the last 40 years and crime.

Read:
Brint, Steven. “Gemeinschaft revisited: A Critique and Reconstruction of the Community

**Case Study:**

**III. Policing and Crime—November 11th**
- Theories and reforms that have shaped police responses to crime in the last 50 years
- Stop and Frisk, Community Policing, and Zero-Tolerance
- Police-Community Relations

**Learning Objective:**
Why has crime dropped so dramatically in the last 20 years, after a 30-year increase? How is policing related to that drop? We will examine how theories of crime and disorder influence policing strategies, how policing strategies impact public safety and the quality of life in urban communities, and the role of race, class, sexuality, and gender identity in policing theory and implementation. We will also explore effective policing strategies in other urban settings, and the implications for community quality of life and police-community relations.

**Read:**

Watch Vera Institute of Justice, Justice in Focus: Crime Bill @ 20, “Cops and Communities.” http://crimebill20.vera.org/justiceinfocus#chapter-120030

IV. The Criminal Court System—November 18th

- Cultural Landscapes Group Project DUE at beginning of class
- Understanding the basics of the NYS Unified Court System and its role in the criminal justice system
- Problems and opportunities in traditional courts
- Community Courts – their origins and current practice

Learning Objective:
This class examines the structure and functions of the New York State Unified Court system. We will also explore breakthrough work in NYC developing alternatives to traditional courts through partnerships with community-based organizations and other stakeholders. Specifically, we will discuss how the Center for Court Innovation, a nonprofit research and program development organization, partners with the New York State court system to address quality of life issues; provide alternatives to incarceration solve community problems.

Read:


Optional:
V. The Universe of “Corrections”—November 25th

- Understanding incarceration, reentry, probation, and parole.
- Correction primer: key issues in confinement including management, safety, constitutional rights and the challenges of corrections.
- Primary issues and associated barriers for reentry: housing, substance abuse, employment, family dynamics.
- New mayoral and governmental policy responses to these challenges
- Risk-need-responsivity models

Learning Objective:
What are the political forces at work behind mass incarceration? What are the implications of our reliance on incarceration for individuals, families and communities? In this class we'll explore the current state, and historical context, of “corrections” policy in the United States, and its implications for the reintegration of individuals into the communities they return to. In particular, how and why did the United States increase its incarceration rate five-fold over the last 30 years? What challenges does this pose for corrections administrators, officers, incarcerated individuals, and service providers? What are the political forces at work and what are the implications for incarcerated individuals, their families and communities? We will discuss the various needs of individuals returning from incarceration and examine models of reentry intended to address these needs, including: government-led, multi-sector collaborative approaches and pre-release transitional service models. We will review the research on community supervision’s effectiveness at reducing recidivism and increasing public safety. Finally, we will review promising models of reentry that operate post-release or are specifically designed to involve the community.

Read:
New York City Department of Probation. 2012 Strategic Plan.

Watch Vera Institute of Justice, *Justice in Focus: Crime Bill @ 20, “Perspectives on Punishment.”* 
http://crimebill20.vera.org/justiceinfocus#chapter-120029
Visit:

(New York information from 2006 is on the side bar on the right. Students should examine their own community district profiles and one or two traditionally “high crime” community districts. Note community district demographics, social indicators, industry mix, housing mix, etc.)

VI. Community and Neighborhood Alternatives—December 2nd
- Understanding the role of intergenerational individual and community trauma
- Primer on alternatives-to-incarceration
- Overview of community-based crime deterrence programming
- Contemporary neighborhood-based reform efforts
- New paradigms for community organizing against crime

Learning Objective:
In this final substantive class we will investigate some historical and contemporary local responses to crime, with a particular focus on responses to the cyclical relationship between violence and crime. We will have a critical discussion of those policies and programs in order to determine the most feasible, effective and innovative, identifying the promises and challenges for city and state government involvement in community-based crime prevention and anti-prison work.

Read:

Visit:
Windows from Prison Project: http://www.windowsfromprison.com/
The Medea Project: Theater for Incarcerated Women: http://themedeaproject.weebly.com/
Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program: http://www.insideoutcenter.org/
The Lineage Project: http://www.lineageproject.org/
Streetwise and Safe: http://www.streetwiseandsafe.org/
VII. Final Paper Presentations—December 9th

- Final papers DUE.
- Students will present, in alphabetical order, on their final papers.
- Wrap up.