INTRODUCTION: Welcome to the course. I want to make clear at the outset how and why this course is designed the way it is, and that means explaining what it is not, as well as what it is, intended to accomplish. This is not a course about the sociology of prisons, the field of criminology, or the profession of corrections; and neither is it a historical survey of the penitentiary. It is a course in American Studies, and like other American Studies courses, its objective is to provide a lens through which to view American culture. Often in American Studies, we seek some broad themes through which students and scholars can come to a clearer understanding of American history and culture. Thus, for example, we often organize courses around topics like slavery and race, freedom, the frontier, democracy, individualism, or constitutionalism. I am convinced that the theme of incarceration is every bit as revealing and useful for an understanding of the United States as are any of the other grand themes. We live in a carceral society. As is well known, the United States incarcerates its citizens at a rate that far exceeds any other nation in the world. Believe it or not, there are currently more than two million Americans behind bars as our course gets under way. If individualism, racial discrimination, religiosity, and democracy are distinguishing characteristics of American history and culture, so also is imprisonment.

In this course we make use of literature (fiction, poetry, autobiography), film, social and political history, sociology, psychology, and social theory in order to understand prisons as a distinctively American cultural phenomenon, as well as to see how imprisoned people have been depicted, how they have depicted themselves, and how prisons can
help us understand the carceral culture that surrounds us and which we so often take for granted. Just as important, we will do so while also performing community service. This is a service-learning course, and one of your course requirements is to spend 20 hours during the semester in preplanned, structured prison-related community service, followed by guided reflection.

So again—Welcome!

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Daily preparation; punctual attendance at every class as listed in the calendar below; three short papers; one mid-term; one final; 20 hours of community service.

GRADING:
Preparation and attendance: 15%
3 Papers: 10% each
Service learning component: 20%
Mid-term: 15%
Final: 20%

CLASSROOM PROCEDURE AND PROTOCOL: First, a rather traditional format—brief lectures followed by discussion based on readings. Second, an untraditional format—service learning. Service learning has three major components: serious academic work, community service, and guided reflection. Students will be placed with one of two organizations that provide service to individuals and families who are facing the problems of incarceration. Both organizations are well set up to incorporate student assistance into their programs. The service is well structured and the agencies are experienced. One organization is Girl Scouts—Beyond Bars. They assist children with incarcerated parents. Twice a month the children visit their parents in the prison in Vandalia, Illinois. The other is Prison Performing Arts. They provide structured arts experiences in a juvenile detention center, working with young people to improve their communication, socialization, and expression skills.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:
• Please do not eat or drink during class.
• I have tried to minimize expense by limiting book orders, so many of the assignments are available in the Reserve Room, second floor, Pius Library.
• Students who feel that they may need academic accommodations in order to meet the requirements of this course as outlined in the syllabus, due to presence of a disability, should contact the Office of Disabilities Services. Please telephone the office at 314-977-2930, or visit Room 131 in the Academic Resources Center, 3840 Lindell Blvd. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.
• Unfortunately, a word about cheating or plagiarism is necessary. Such actions, of course, violate the very principles of the university itself, which are based on free inquiry and the development of your intellect. A student who cheats or plagiarizes will flunk that portion of the course in which the violation occurs. However, based on the severity of any violation, I reserve the right to fail the student for the course, and notify the Academic Honesty Committee of the case.

Assignments:

Week One: Prisons are New
August 29: Introduction
August 31: Early American prisons—the humane vision of the Quakers
September 2: Same

Week Two: Prisons are Obsolete
September 5: Labor Day; no class
September 7 and September 9: Discussion
Week Three: Prisons are a Career; The Stanford Prison Experiment and After
September 12 and 14: Discussion.
September 16: First short paper due: What is the purpose of prison in the twenty-first century? Discussion of papers
and readings of first three weeks. Guided reflection on service learning project.
Chapter 5.
C. Haney and P. Zimbardo, “The Past and Future of U. S. Prison Policy, Twenty-Five Years after the Stanford
Additional assignment: Bring in one bibliographical citation for an article that discusses the 1973 Stanford Prison
Experiment.

Week Four: Prisons and Torture
September 19: Abu Ghraib: What Happened
September 21: Roots of Abu Ghraib
September 23: Same
Reading: Seymour Hersh, “The Gray Zone: How a secret Pentagon program came to Abu Ghraib,” The New
Additional assignment: Find Abu Ghraib images on the web. Print out and bring two images to class for discussion
on September 23.

Week Five: The Geneva Conventions
September 26: The Rules of War and The Geneva Conventions
September 28: Same
Readings: Third Geneva Convention on Prisoners of War
September 30: Open date: Dr. Mancini is out of town.

Week Six: The South: A Different History
October 3: Introduction: the legacy of slavery
October 5 and 7: Convict leasing
October 7: Guided reflection on service learning project.
Reading: Edward Ayers, Vengeance and Justice: Crime and Punishment in the Nineteenth-Century American South
Matthew Mancini, One Dies, Get Another: Convict Leasing in the American South, 1866-1928 (Columbia:
University of South Carolina Press, 1996), Chapter 3.

Week Seven: Women and Prison
October 10 and 12: Gender and imprisonment
Reading: Estelle Freedman, Their Sisters’ Keepers: Women’s Prison Reform in America, 1830-1930 (Ann Arbor:
October 14: Review and reflection.
Additional assignment: Bring in to class statistics for the number of women in prison from the Bureau of Justice

Week Eight: Mid-Term
October 17: Mid-term exam.
October 19: Exams returned and discussed.
October 21: Introduction to prison film. Choose one film for viewing and reporting on next week.

Week Nine: Prisons and the Movies
October 24: Fall break; no class.
October 26, 28: Two prison movies.
Film: *I Am a Fugitive From a Chain Gang* (Warner Brothers, 1932).
One other film in class.

Week Ten: *Prisons and Literature*
October 31: Wrap up second movie with discussion
Additional assignment: Second paper: A third film chosen by you, accompanied by a 800-1000-word historically informed review of the movie. Paper is due on MONDAY, November 7.
November 2: Begin discussion of prison poetry
November 4: Open. Dr. Mancini is at the Southern Historical Association.

Week Eleven: *Prisons and Literature*
November 7, 9, 11: Discussion of texts in Franklin, ed., *Prison Writing.*

Week Twelve: *Prisons as a Lever to Change Society*
November 14: Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from the Birmingham Jail.”
November 18: Additional testimony, selected by students.
Guided reflection on service learning projects

Week Thirteen: *Prisoners of War*
November 21: The Civil War Prison.

Week Fourteen: *Prisons as a Transformational Experience—Prison Autobiography*
November 28, 30, December 2: Autobiographies as assigned. Third short paper due on December 5: Prison autobiography.

Week Fifteen: *Prisons in America*
December 5: Autobiography papers due. Course overview: What have we learned?
December 7: Guided reflection on service learning projects.
December 9: Course wrap-up and review.