

**Race, Class, and Crime**  
**CRIM 548 Section # 701 Fall 2019**  
**August 26, 2019 – December 17, 2019**

*“How does it feel to be a problem?” W. E. B. DuBois (1903)*

*“The whole conception of ethnic groups is so complex and so vague that it might be good to abandon it altogether.” M. Weber (1922)*

**Professor: Pavel V. Vasiliev**  
**Office: Grise Hall 104**  
**Email: [pavel.vasiliev@wku.edu](mailto:pavel.vasiliev@wku.edu)**

**Class Meetings: Online**  
**Office Hours: Daily by email**  
**Phone: TBD**

**For Technical Assistance with BLACKBOARD: Contact the WKU IT Help Desk at 270-745-7000 or visit <https://www.wku.edu/it/helpdesk/> for live chat or consult Knowledge Base.**

**Course Description:** This course employs a variety of theoretical and research readings to examine how race, ethnicity, and social class pose differential risks for offending, victimization, and explores disparate processing by the criminal justice system. Criminological, sociological, and legal research is used to study the social construction of racial categories and identities, scrutinize class and ethnoracial differences in offending and victimization, as well as inspect consequences of class and race for justice outcomes. The emphasis of the course is on providing theoretical and evidentiary basis for a critical and systematic survey of these often controversial topics.

**Course Objectives:** The successful student will:

- 1) Examine the literature on socio-historic construction of race and racial stratification.
- 2) Understand major theoretical perspectives on race, class, and crime
- 3) Explore racial trends in offending and victimization.
- 4) Inspect impact of race on policing, courts and sentencing, corrections, and juvenile justice.
- 5) Have an opportunity for independent work – creating a presentation or writing a paper.

**Materials You Are Required to Read Prior to Each Class Period (see schedule for details):**

Gabbidon, Shaun and Helen Greene. 2016. *“Race and Crime.”* Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA.

Readings posted on the Blackboard course management page.

**Class Format:**

- 1) I will post my lectures as powerpoint files and readings as .pdf files on the Blackboard.
- 2) Study guides will be posted in advance prior to each exam.
- 3) Students have a lot of autonomy to pace themselves through the readings but are expected to take 3 exams on predetermined dates, and complete other tasks assigned by professor.

**Student Evaluation:**

Your final grade for the course will be figured according to the following method:

Exam #1	20%
Exam #2	20%

Exam #3	20%
Online Quizzes	20%
Research Paper / Presentation	20%

### **I. Exams:**

- 1) There will be three closed book exams consisting of primarily multiple choice questions.
- 2) Roughly a half of the questions will cover the assigned readings and another half will cover my lectures which I have posted on the Blackboard. Questions are going to be very straightforward and easy to those who read the material. Study guides will be provided in advance.
- 3) Exams will be available on the Blackboard from 11:00am to 11:30pm on days which will be specified in the forthcoming class schedule. Once you log in – you will have **90 minutes** to finish, and only **one attempt** (avoid unstable WIFI connections in coffee shops, “wire” based internet is best for exams).

**II. Online Quizzes:** There will be 5 quizzes posted on the Blackboard. Quizzes need to be finished by 11:45pm on the day they appear on the syllabus (see class schedule for details) and I will make them available on Blackboard 48 hours in advance. Quizzes will not be reopened unless a documented campus-wide Blackboard instability occurs.

**III. Research Paper / Presentation:** You will prepare a research paper or a presentation on a topic of your choosing (within the field of class, race, and crime). The goal of this assignment is to allow you to engage in independent research and to demonstrate your knowledge of the chosen topic to the class and the professor. Choose a topic that is **fun** or **relevant** for your professional life. Both the presentation and the paper should have no less than 10 academic sources (i.e. cite 10 articles from peer-reviewed academic journals in the fields of criminology or criminal justice). If you choose to create a presentation the substance and tone of the presentation have to be academic and constructive. Submit a topic, a brief outline of the research paper / presentation **no later than November 7** so I can approve it (put CRIM 548 as email subject for quicker response). Review of scholarly literature on a particular issue in criminal justice is a great option (say you cover the research findings on intersecting impact of class and race on processing of drug cases or on responses to juvenile delinquency in affluent and underprivileged areas or compare portrayal of “street” and “white collar” offenders in movies). I will provide additional guidelines for this assignment later in the semester and I reserve the right to weight the paper / presentation differently in terms of grading to ensure equal reward for equal student effort. If you do not **email me that assignment as an attachment** by noon on **December 10** you lose 20% of the grade.

**Tips for Success:** *following these steps will allow you to pass the class successfully.*

- 1) Read the assigned material prior to taking the exam, examine lecture powerpoints.
- 2) Be able to explain the key ideas in the readings. Find definitions in the textbook.
- 3) Fill in the study guide, provided in advance by the professor, to prepare for the exam.
- 4) Do not miss exams.

**Title IX Misconduct / Assault Statement:** Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU’s Title IX Sexual Misconduct/Assault Policy (#0.2070) at

<https://wku.edu/eoo/documents/titleix/wkutitleixpolicyandgrievanceprocedure.pdf> and

Discrimination and Harassment Policy (#0.2040) at

[https://wku.edu/policies/hr\\_policies/2040\\_discrimination\\_harassment\\_policy.pdf](https://wku.edu/policies/hr_policies/2040_discrimination_harassment_policy.pdf). Under these

policies, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator, Andrea Anderson, 270-745-5398 or Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429 or Joshua Hayes, 270-745-5121. Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are “Responsible Employees” of the University and MUST report what you share to WKU’s Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU’s [Counseling and Testing Center](#) at 270-745-3159.

**Student Disabilities Statement:** In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, 1074. SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or via email at [sarc.connect@wku.edu](mailto:sarc.connect@wku.edu) . Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.

#### **Important Dates:**

Last day to add a class or to drop one with a full refund:	Tuesday, September 3
60% point:	Sunday, October 27
Last day to drop a class with a grade of W (fee applies):	Monday, November 4

Students who stop attending class before the 60% point will be assigned an FN rather than an F

#### **Resolving Complaints about Grades**

The first step in resolving a complaint about grades is for the student to attempt to resolve the problem directly with the course instructor. See the Student Handbook, available at <http://www.wku.edu/handbook/> for additional guidance.

### **READING LIST / \*RECOMMENDED CLASS SCHEDULE**

The schedule is “recommended” in a sense that you can choose to pace yourself faster or slower and read the materials on any days you desire. But the exam and quiz dates are set in stone for the class and non-negotiable (except for documented emergency situations). Quizzes are due on September 5, 10, 24, October 15, November 14 and November 26. Exams will be available on Blackboard on October 3, November 7, and December 12 from 9:00am till 11:45pm. Final project is due on December 10.

**Course Structure at a Glance (consult Class Schedule below for precise dates and activities)**

Week	Topics
1	Course introduction and discussion of social construction of race
2	Overview of race and crime
3	Extent of crime and victimization
4	Deeper look at race, ethnicity, and violence
5	Theoretical perspectives on race and crime
6	Exam #1
7	Policing
8	Policing, drug war, and gang formation

<b>9</b>	<b>Courts</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Prosecution</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Exam #2</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Sentencing</b>
<b>13</b>	<b>Death penalty</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>Corrections and juvenile justice</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>Final Exam</b>

## **Class Schedule: schedule is subject to change!**

### **August**

#### **T 27<sup>th</sup> Course Introduction**

Explore the syllabus and “welcome!” powerpoint presentation  
 Listen to “*Working Towards Whiteness*” NPR podcast with Dr. Roediger  
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4714309>

Or read the “*Inbetween Peoples: Race, Nationality, and the “New Immigrant” Working Class*”

#### **R 29<sup>th</sup> Racial Classifications and Social Construction of Race**

Spend 1 hour exploring “*Race: The Power of an Illusion*” site (complete “*Sorting People*” activity; explore each of 10 facts in “*What is Race?*” section; explore the “*Race Timeline*” focusing on “*Evolution of an Idea*,” “*Changing Definitions*,” and “*Race, Science and Social Policy*” ([http://www.pbs.org/race/001\\_WhatIsRace/001\\_00-home.htm](http://www.pbs.org/race/001_WhatIsRace/001_00-home.htm))

“*Racial Formation*”

“*The Historical Construction of Race and Citizenship in the U.S*” (p. 1-11)

“*Conceptualizing Race and Ethnicity in Studies of Crime and Criminal Justice*”

“*Race, Methodology, and Social Construction in the Genomic Era*” (read the abstract)

### **September**

#### **T 3<sup>rd</sup> Politics of Race and Crime**

“*White Trash: the Social Origins of a Stigmatype*”  
 “*Playing the Violence Card*”

#### **R 5<sup>th</sup> Overview of Race and Crime**

G&G Chapter 1  
 Quiz #1 is due

#### **T 10<sup>th</sup> Extent of Crime and Victimization**

G&G Chapter 2  
 Quiz #2 is due

#### **R 12<sup>th</sup> Race, Ethnicity, and Violence**

“*Reassessing Trends in Black Violent Crime 1980-2008*”  
 “*U.S. Latino Arrest: An Analysis of Risk by Nativity and Origin*”  
 “*Violence and Economic Conditions in the U.S., 1973-2011*”  
 “*Explaining Racial and Ethnic Differences in Serious Adolescent Violent Behavior*”  
 “*Urban Black Violence: Effect of male joblessness and family disruption*”  
 “*Race, Code of the Street, and Violent Delinquency*”  
 “*Race, Friendship Networks, and Violent Delinquency*”

Optional: listen to “*Living and Dying While Black in America*” NPR podcast  
(<http://www.npr.org/books/titles/444978606/the-beast-side-living-and-dying-while-black-in-america>)

T 17<sup>th</sup> **Immigration and Crime**

“*The Connection between Immigration and Violent Crime Rates*”

“*Identifying the Effect of Immigration on Homicide Rates in U.S. Cities*”

“*Social Capital in Chinatown*” or “*Foreign Aid: Did Immigrants Help Turn the Tide?*”

R 19<sup>th</sup> **Contemporary Domestic Terrorism**

“*The Growing Right-Wing Terror Threat*”

“*The KKK: America’s Long History of Tolerating White Terrorist Organizations*”

“*Is Left-Wing Violence Rising?*”

Optional: listen to “*Armed Militias Face off with The ‘Antifa’ in the New Landscape of Political Protest*” NPR Podcast with Dr. Pitcavage (<http://www.npr.org/2017/08/23/545509627/armed-militias-face-off-with-the-antifa-in-the-new-landscape-of-political-protest>)

T 24<sup>th</sup> **Theoretical Perspectives on Race and Crime**

G&G Chapter 3

Quiz #3 is due

R 26<sup>th</sup> **Deeper Look at Socioeconomics and Race**

“*Invisible Men*”

“*The Truly Disadvantaged*”

“*The Local Concentration of Mass Incarceration*”

Watch “*The Truly Disadvantaged after 25 Years*” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NG2uh0YSPmc>

**October**

T 1<sup>st</sup> **Overview for Exam #1**

R 3<sup>rd</sup> **Exam #1**

T 8<sup>th</sup> **Overview of Disparities in Justice and Racial Perceptions of Criminal Justice**

“*Report of the Sentencing Project to the United Nations Human Rights Committee*”

“*Explaining the Great Racial Divide: Perceptions of Fairness in the US Justice System*”

T 15<sup>th</sup> **Policing**

G&G Chapter 4

Quiz #4 is due

R 17<sup>th</sup> **Policing and the Drug War**

“*Decades of Disparity*”

“*Race Differences in Drug Offending and Drug Distribution Arrests*”

“*Beyond the Ghetto: Police Power, Methamphetamine, and the Rural War on Drugs*”

“*In Heroine Crisis, White Families Seek a Gentler War on Drugs*”

T 22<sup>nd</sup> **Police, Minority Relations, Use of Force**

“*Trends in US Deaths Due to Legal Intervention by County Income, 1960-2010*”

“*Racial and Ethnic Bias in Decisions to Shoot Seen Through a Stronger Lens*”

“*Officer Risk Factors Associated with Police Shootings*”

“*Deaths Due to Use of Lethal Force by Law Enforcement*”

*“Bayesian Analysis of Racial Bias in Police Shootings”*  
*“Driving While Black”*

Try to find estimates of deaths in the US due to police intervention, there are at least 3 governmental official data collection efforts and at least 3 unofficial journalistic or crowd-sourced data collection efforts.

R 24<sup>th</sup> **Policing and Gangs**

*“ACLU Report Says SWAT Teams Treat Neighborhoods Like War Zones”*  
*“The Hammer and the Rock”*

Optional: find online or purchase and watch either *“Rubble Kings”* or *“Bastards of the Party”*

T 29<sup>th</sup> **Courts**

G&G Chapter 5

R 31<sup>st</sup> **Prosecution**

*“The Milwaukee Experiment”*  
*“How Bad Arrests Lead to Bad Prosecution: Impact of Prior Arrests on Plea Bargaining”*

**November**

T 5<sup>th</sup> **Overview for Exam #2**

R 7<sup>th</sup> **Exam #2 (final project topic is due!)**

T 12<sup>th</sup> **Sentencing**

G&G Chapter 6

R 14<sup>th</sup> **Sentencing**

G&G Chapter 6

*“Gender and Sentencing Outcomes: Interactions with Age, Race, and Offense Type”*

Quiz #5 is due

T 19<sup>th</sup> **Death Penalty**

G&G Chapter 7

*“Legal and Non-Legal Factors Associated With Exoneration for Wrongful Conviction”*

R 21<sup>st</sup> **Corrections**

G&G Chapter 8

*“The Potential and Limitations of Prison-Based Democratic Therapeutic Communities”*

*“The Influence of Race, Gender, and Offense Severity Interactions on Probation Outcomes”*

T 26<sup>th</sup> **Juvenile Justice**

G&G Chapter 9

Quiz #6 is due

**December**

T 3<sup>rd</sup> **Juvenile Justice**

*“Race, Gender, Crime Severity and Decision-Making in Juvenile Justice System”*

*“Juvenile Justice Outcomes among Foreign-born and Native-born Latinos in the US”*

R 5<sup>th</sup> **Overview for the Final Exam + Work on the Final Project**

T 10<sup>th</sup> Final Project is due @ noon

R 12<sup>th</sup> **FINAL EXAM**