

Class Curriculum for Criminal Justice Reform Spring 2020

- March 11 Welcome, introductions, expectations, rules; review syllabus; discuss film “13th” by Ava DuVernay and multiple issues raised. Introduce the book, “The Nickel Boys” by Colson Whitehead, for future reading if interested.
- March 18 Criminal justice legislation being considered by Senators and Representatives at the State House this term impact R.I. adults and juveniles. Discussions on these issues will include workforce development, housing, pre-arrest diversion, Training School and more. (*Jordan Seaberry, artist/activist, Director of Public Policy & Advocacy, Nonviolence Institute.*)
- March 25 Do race, ethnicity, poverty and trauma determine who runs into trouble? Should juveniles receive special protection? What kinds of crimes would warrant alternatives, such as community service, home confinement, probation? How do parole and probation impact offender Reentry and the community? (*Heather Gaydos, Reentry Project Manager, Center for Prisoner Health & Human Rights & Professor Keith Morton, author, Providence College, Chair, Public & Community Service*)
- April 1 Is solitary confinement cruel and unusual? Should incarceration be punishment or an opportunity for corrections and treatment? What kind of programming should take place in prison? Is prison the new asylum for the mentally ill? Will Pell grants for the incarcerated be restored? What about mandatory sentencing? (*Chief Justice U.S. District Court for District of R.I. John J. McConnell, Jr. & Roberta Richman, artist, former Warden of Women’s Facilities & retired Assistant Director of Rehabilitative Services, R.I. Department of Corrections*)
- April 8 When is a crime against a woman (women) considered a hate crime? And why? What are the effects on their families and the community; are family members of incarcerated “hidden victims”? Discuss issues of victims’ compensation, complicity of lawyers in criminal justice system; should everyone have the right to a competent lawyer? (*Amy R. Romero, Assistant U.S. Attorney for District of R.I.*)
- April 22 How do we analyze the crisis that occurred during a peaceful protest at the Wyatt Detention Center? Should private prisons be allowed? Should incarceration of undocumented immigrants who have not committed a crime be allowed? (*Aaron Regunberg, organizer/activist, former State Representative & current student at Harvard Law*)
- April 29 How to stem gun violence? Prohibit the sale of high assault magazines and assault weapons? What strategies prevent school shootings and create nonviolence in class

rooms? How have police tactics changed by working with community services?
How treat drug users as the public health crisis?

(R.I. Attorney General Peter F. Neronha; Linda Finn, former State Representative & President, R.I. Coalition Against Gun Violence; Chief of Police Elwood M. Johnson, Jr., Town of Richmond)

May 6 Are the State of Rhode Island funds invested in manufacturers of certain guns? Should the State continue to invest in privately owned prisons? What are the resources the Treasurer's Office provides to compensate victims? Presentations on topics chosen by participants during the term may be explored. Lessons learned during the term may be discussed along with potential future actions to enact criminal justice reform. *(R.I. General Treasurer Seth Magaziner)*