

**Occasional Series on Reentry Research  
Sponsored by the Prisoner Reentry Institute  
at John Jay College of Criminal Justice**

***“The People Prisons Make: Effects of Incarceration on Criminal Psychology”***

**Panelist Biographies  
April 30, 2010**

**Amy E. Lerman** is an Assistant Professor of Politics and Public Affairs at Princeton University. Her research focuses on political psychology and political behavior. Dr. Lerman writes on issues related to race and income inequality, voting behavior and political participation, social identity and civil society, and the American criminal justice system. Her recent work can be found in *Perspectives on Politics*, as well as in edited volumes published by Oxford University Press and the Russell Sage Foundation. She is currently completing a book examining the effects of incarceration on social integration and civic attitudes.

In addition to writing and teaching, Dr. Lerman was also the Director of the 2006 California Correctional Officer Survey Project, a state-wide survey of custody staff in the California Prison System. She served as the Vice President of Policy Studies for the political consulting firm, Attention America. She was also an adjunct faculty member and research consultant of the Prison University Project and the college program at San Quentin State Prison.

Dr. Lerman received her PhD and her Master’s degree from the University of California at Berkeley. She earned her Bachelor of Arts from New York University.

**Brian Fischer** has served as the Commissioner of the New York State Department of Correctional Services since 2007. In this capacity, Commissioner Fischer leads the nation’s fourth-largest state prison system while overseeing an agency that employs nearly 30,000 workers and houses approximately 59,000 prisoners in 67 correctional facilities plus a 916-bed Drug Treatment Campus.

Previously, Commissioner Fischer was the Superintendent of Sing Sing Correctional Facility and served as the New York City region Supervising Superintendent. While at Sing Sing he implemented, along with the Office of Mental Health, a comprehensive transitional pre-release program for inmates with serious mental health needs. In addition, he championed several non-traditional programs, some of which have become models for other prisons: college, theater, and domestic violence and parenting skills for men. Before his appointment at Sing Sing Correctional Facility, he was the Superintendent of the Queensboro Correctional Facility. Commissioner Fischer has also held positions in the New York State Narcotic Addiction Control Commission and the Aftercare (Parole) Officer. Commissioner Fischer has also been an adjunct professor at both Pace University and John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

Commissioner Fischer currently sits on the board of two non-profit organizations: Hudson Link for Higher Education that provides college education degrees to individuals incarcerated in prison; and Puppies Behind Bars which allows inmates to raise puppies that are then trained to be seeing eye dogs and, most recently, as special service dogs for disabled veterans. Commissioner Fischer also sits on the Standards Committee of the American Correctional Association, a national accreditation body that sets performance standards for prisons and jails across the country.

Commissioner Fischer holds Master's degrees in Guidance & Counseling and Professional Studies. He also holds a Bachelor's degree in Psychology.

**Eric McCalvin** has served as Counselor's Aide for several years and has spent 14 years facilitating programs in Aggression Replacement Training (ART) and the Transitional Services. He has helped individuals transition from being free to being incarcerated to help them use their time while incarcerated productively. Mr. McCalvin has also provided support to individuals attempting to successfully transition back into society. While Mr. McCalvin was incarcerated, he invested his time into his personal and professional development while earning a range of certificates in the areas of Ministry and Human Services, Legal Research and Law Library Management.

**Merrill Rotter** is a forensic psychiatrist at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University. He is also the Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry and Director of the Division of Law and Psychiatry for the College's Department of Psychiatry. In 2009, Dr. Rotter received the Award for Outstanding Teacher in a Forensic Fellowship Program from the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law. Dr. Rotter leads a program of teaching, research and clinical service for the Albert Einstein College as well as the New York State Office of Mental Health. Within the Office of Mental Health, Dr. Rotter is the Director of the Division of Forensic Services at Bronx Psychiatric Center and Senior Consultant to the Division of Forensic Services. In addition, Dr. Rotter is the Medical Director of the clinical arm of the Queens and Bronx Mental Health Courts, as well as the Brooklyn TASC Mental Health Diversion and Reentry Programs. Dr. Rotter is the Project Director of SPECTRM, a nationally-recognized research, training and treatment program aimed at helping to meet the needs of individuals with mental illnesses and have a history of incarceration. Dr. Rotter received his B.A. and M.D. from Boston University's Six-Year Combined Liberal Arts Medical Education Program. He was trained in Clinical Psychiatry at Columbia University and in Forensic Psychiatry at Yale University.