Economics 170 – Crime, Class, and Capitalism: The Economics of Justice
Fall 2015

Time: Section FY13: MW 10:50am to 12:05pm
      Section FY14: MW 12:15pm to 1:30pm
Location: Section FY13: NB 3.81
          Section FY14: North Hall 3315
Instructor: Geert Dhondt
Office Hours: You can always drop by or make an appointment, but you can be reasonably sure to catch me on Mondays and Wednesdays between 9:30am and 10:30am.
Office Location: 3401N
Phone Number: (646) 557-4845.
E-mail Address: gdhondt@jjay.cuny.edu

Peer Mentors: Section FY13: Jessica McFadzean jessica.mcfadzean@jjay.cuny.edu
             Section FY14: Donovan Trinidad Donovan.trinidad@jjay.cuny.edu

1. Course Description

This course examines the connections between capitalism and the criminal justice system in the United States. It investigates the relationships among economic injustice, poverty, wealth, anti-social behavior, crime, and the criminal justice system. The course studies how the criminal justice system shapes the lives of individuals from a variety of socioeconomic classes.

2. Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

3. Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this class, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the way a modern capitalist economy operates.
- Demonstrate an understanding of Neoliberalism as one form of Capitalism.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the 2008 crisis and the Great Recession.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the economics of the criminal justice system.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the concept of Alienation, Exploitation, and the nature of work in a capitalist economy.
- Demonstrate an understanding of different perspectives of the role of the prison in capitalist society.
## First Year Seminar Objectives

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Year Seminar Objectives</th>
<th>How These Objectives are met in this course</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Describe one’s own relationship to significant issues of justice</td>
<td>The research paper requires students to reflect upon their relationship to justice after researching an important justice event.</td>
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<td>Identify problems and propose solutions through evidence-based inquiry</td>
<td>During exams students will write responses to questions bases on problems in economics and justice.</td>
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<td>Assess the effectiveness of one’s own role in collaborations with people of diverse backgrounds</td>
<td>Students will work in randomly assigned groups to present summaries and lead class discussion about important subjects in economics and justice. Students will submit an assessment of their group’s performance.</td>
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<td>Demonstrate effective planning and reflection to accomplish specific course outcomes</td>
<td>Students will be complete a research project with several intermediate due dates.</td>
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<td>Engage with co-curricular activities (i.e. clubs, student activities, lectures, tutoring, academic advisement, community service) to develop academic goals and personal growth</td>
<td>Students will be expected to attend the Economic Justice Lecture Series sponsored by the Economics Department and the Economics Student Club.</td>
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### 4. Evaluation and Assessment

**Class Participation (15%)**

- **Reading.** This is a seminar and not a lecture course. Everyone will be expected to come to class ready to discuss. It is impossible to discuss when you have not read.

- **Attendance** is mandatory. Your grade will suffer if you attend class inconsistently: after four absences your final grade will drop half a grade for every subsequent class missed.

- **Class discussions.** You are expected to be ready and participate in class discussions.

- **Online Participation.** You are expected to participate in our class Facebook Group.

**Quizzes, Response Papers, and Assignments (20%)**

There will be a variety of assignments. There will be response papers as well as quizzes on the readings. The purpose of the quizzes will be to encourage reading and thus facilitate in class discussion.

**Exams (35%)**

- There will be a take home Midterm exam (15%) as well as a take home final (20%).
**Group Presentation and Discussions (10%)**:  
Presentations are on assigned class readings and should highlight the main points and ask important questions for class discussion. Groups will be assigned randomly. At your presentation, you will hand me a sheet with the name of each person in your group and your evaluation of them (including yourselves). The material will be on in-class readings.

**Research Project (20%)**:  
Your research project for the semester is to research one of the riots below, write an essay in which you (1) describe the riot – emphasizing the economic causes and consequences, (2) describe how the riot changed society, (3) use economic analysis to explain the event, and (4) describe how researching this event has changed your thinking about justice and this event. The paper should be between 2400 and 2600 words.

Your project has several due dates each part will be submitted on Blackboard.  
**Friday 10/16** Outline and Annotated Bibliography (5%)  
**Tuesday 12/1** Final Paper (15%)

**Riots to choose from:**
- New York City Draft Riot (1863)  
- New York City Blackout Riot (1977)  
- Attica Prison Riot (1971)  
- Doctor Mob Riot (1788)  
- Anti-Abolitionist Riot (1832, 1834)  
- Anti-Rent Riots (1839)  
- Astor Place Riot (1849)  
- Tompkins Square Park Riot (1988)  
- Haymarket Riot (1886)  
- LA Rodney King Riot (1992)  
- Ferguson Riot (2014)  
- Oscar Grant Riot (2010)  
- Boston Tea Party (1773)  
- Detroit Riot (1967)  
- Chicago DNC Riot (1968)  
- Sports Riots: Aggieville Riots (1980s)  
- Lager Beer Riot (1855)  
- Portland Rum Riot (1855)  
- Know-Nothing Riots (1854-58, various)  
- Memphis Riot (1866)  
- LA Anti-Chinese Riot (1871)  
- Strikes (1877)  
- SF Riot of 1877  
- Mayday riots (1892)  
- Seattle General Strike (1917)  

- World Series Riot (2014)  
- Detroit Tigers Riot (1984)  
- 1966 Riots  
- 1967 Riots  
- 1968 MLK Riots.  
- 1980 Miami Riots  
- Shays Rebellion (1786)  
- Tompkins Square Riot (1874)  
- 1964 Riot: Harlem  
- 1964 Riot: Jersey City  
- New York City Orange Riot (1871)  
- New York Race Riot (1900)  
- Harlem Riot (1943)  
- Stonewall Riot (1969)  
- Peekskill Riots (1949)  
- Watts Riot (1965)  
- Flour Riot of 1837  
- Mayday Riots (1917)  
- Detroit Race Riot (1943)  
- Seattle WTO (1999)  
- Boston Busing Riots (1970s)  
- New Mexico State Penitentiary of NM Riot (1980)  
- Boston Bread Riot (1710-13)  
- Columbia University Riot (1968)
**Extra Credit: Economic Justice Speaker Series**

Throughout the semester different speakers will come to speak at John Jay during community hour. You will receive extra credit for going to these speaking events. All you need to do is attend and sign in. Hope you will enjoy the speakers. This semester we will have Suresh Naidu speak on Wednesday September 9, Sara Bernardo on Thursday September 24, Sarah Jaffe on Tuesday October 6th, Nina Banks on Thursday November 5th, Vicente Rubio on Monday November 9th, and Maliha Safri on Tuesday November 17th. These will be great events and I hope you will make sure to be there.

5. Grading

The grading scale will be the following (grades rounded to the nearest whole number):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100-93 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>92-90 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>89-87 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>86-83 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>82-80 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>79-77 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>76-73 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>72-70 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>69-67 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>66-63 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>63-60 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Less than 60 %</td>
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6. Disability Policy

Students with permanent or temporary disabilities who would like to discuss classroom or exam accommodations should come and see me as soon as possible. You can meet me after class or privately during office hours. For your information, the phone number for Student Accessibility Services is (212) 237-8031, if you want to call and register.

7. Writing Center

If you need help with written English, you may consider dropping by the writing centre, located in room 2450N. They provide free tutoring to students, helping them become more effective writers, from organising and structuring a paper, to writing and proofreading it. Being able to write well is a useful skill in many situations, a skill definitely worth honing while you have the wherewithal to do it.

8. Academic Honesty

Students should be cognizant of John Jay’s policy on academic honesty. It may be perused at [http://www.jjay.cuny.edu/web_images/Policyand_Procedures.pdf](http://www.jjay.cuny.edu/web_images/Policyand_Procedures.pdf)

9. Books

The following books are required for the class. They are available at the University bookstore.

10. Schedule of classes
The Course Schedule is subject to change with prior announcement from the instructor.

Section 1: Introduction

Monday 8/31: Introduction to the course: College Success; Great Recession; Syllabus
Read: none.

Wednesday 9/2: The Economic State of the Union: Broad Trends
Read: Taibbi, Introduction; Kotz, Preface and Introduction.

Section 2: Understanding American Capitalism

Wednesday 9/9: American Capitalism and Neoliberalism
Read: Kotz, What is Neoliberalism?

Thursday 9/10: American Capitalism and Neoliberalism
Read: Kotz, The Rise of Neoliberalism

Wednesday 9/16: American Capitalism and Neoliberalism
Read: Kotz, How Has Neoliberalism worked?

Monday 9/21: Capitalism and Crisis
Read: Kotz, Crisis

Monday 9/28: Understanding American Capitalism
Read: Kotz, Lessons of History

Wednesday 9/30: Understanding American Capitalism
Read: Kotz, Possible Future Paths

Section 3: The Divide: Capitalism, Inequality, Crime, and Punishment.

Monday 10/5: Holder and Unintended Consequences
Read: Taibbi, Chapter 1: Unintended Consequences
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Read</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>10/7</td>
<td>Understanding Poverty and Inequality</td>
<td>none</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>10/14</td>
<td>Justice by Attrition and Settlements</td>
<td>Taibbi, Chapter 2: Frisk and Stop and Chapter 3: The Man who couldn’t stand up.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>10/19</td>
<td>Takeovers</td>
<td>Taibbi, Chapter 4: Greatest Bank Robbery You Never Heard Of</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>10/21</td>
<td>Group Presentation, Discussion and Debate 1 on Taibbi, Border Trouble</td>
<td>Taibbi, Chapter 5: Border Trouble part 1 and Chapter 6: Border Trouble part 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>10/26</td>
<td>Group Presentation, Discussion, and Debate 2 on Little and Big Frauds</td>
<td>Taibbi, Chapter 7: Little Frauds, Chapter 8: Big Frauds.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>10/28</td>
<td>Neoliberalism, Crisis, and Criminal Justice.</td>
<td>Taibbi, Chapter 9: Collateral Consequences.</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
<td>10/30</td>
<td>TAKE HOME MIDTERM DUE at midnight on Blackboard</td>
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<td>Section 4</td>
<td>Crime, Criminalization, and Incarceration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>11/2</td>
<td>Crime and Prison: An Overview</td>
<td>none</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>11/4</td>
<td>Crime, Prison, and Poverty</td>
<td>Reed (Blackboard)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>11/11</td>
<td>Rational Choice and Cost and Benefits</td>
<td>Levitt (Blackboard)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>11/16</td>
<td>The social costs of Mass Incarceration</td>
<td>Ahrens, <em>the Real Cost of Prisons</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>11/18</td>
<td>Group Presentation, Discussion and Debate 3 on Costs of Prisons.</td>
<td>none</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>11/23</td>
<td>Crime and Criminalization</td>
<td>King, <em>From the Bottom of the Heap</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>11/25</td>
<td>Crime and Criminalization</td>
<td>King, <em>From the Bottom of the Heap</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>11/30</td>
<td>Group Presentation, Discussion and Debate 4 on Crime and Criminalization</td>
<td>None.</td>
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12/1 Research Paper Due on Blackboard.

Wednesday 12/2 Mass Incarceration as the New Jim Crow? Read: Alexander, and Wacquant (Blackboard)

Monday 12/7 Mass Incarceration, Ideology, and Class. Read: Reiman, Introduction, Chapter 1, and Chapter 2.

Wednesday 12/9 Mass Incarceration, Ideology, and Class. Read: Reiman, Chapter 3, and 4.

Monday 12/14 Group Presentation, Discussion and Debate 5 on Mass Incarceration Read: Parenti (Blackboard)


Take Home Final Due TBA (During Final Exam Week)