

Mass Incarceration Session

Objective: Mass incarceration has been described as the civil rights issue of our time. In this session, students will be introduced to the historical context of mass incarceration, the current statistics related to mass incarceration both in the United States and globally. We will also look at the landscape regarding mass incarceration in NYC and learn from LaGuardia students with justice experience about their transition to college.

Outline:

STAGE ONE: History of Mass Incarceration

Using materials from Brennan Center for Justice: <https://www.brennancenter.org/blog/history-mass-incarceration> describing the history of incarceration and from Eastern State Penitentiary <https://www.easternstate.org/> for original documents.

This work will be done outside the classroom prior to the session. Students will post their thoughts and questions regarding their readings and reviewing of original documents in a Discussion Board prompt.

STAGE TWO: Mass Incarceration Today - Globally and in the US

In class, students will identify discussion questions developed in their previous DB post to consider when exploring the current statistics of mass incarceration in the United States and globally. We will use the The World Prison Brief - www.prisonstudies.org/ an online data base to consider incarceration globally. Students may possibly select a project in the research and publication tab and analyze the research with regard to how it compares to US experience.

For the US, students will be using the Southern Poverty Law Center <https://www.splcenter.org/news/2014/12/22/18-things-you-should-know-about-mass-incarceration> and American Civil Liberties Union <https://www.aclu.org/issues/smart-justice/mass-incarceration/mass-incarceration-animated-series> with stories from individuals with justice experience around the US.

Discussion Board prompt: As you reviewed these sites and learned more about mass incarceration globally and in the US, what new information or understanding have you gleaned from these sites? After listening to the stories of individuals with justice experience in the animated series on the ACLU site, was there a particular story that resonated for you? If so, how and why? What connections can you make from the information in these sites and the course work we have been engaged in? Lastly, what questions remain for you regarding mass incarceration globally and in the US?

STAGE THREE: Mass Incarceration in NYC and Queens (Rikers)

For this portion of the session, students will look at the informatics developed and shared through the NYC Department of Corrections at a glance 2019 - https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doc/downloads/press-release/DOC_At%20a%20Glance-1st6_Months_FY2019_012919.pdf offering students information regarding average length of stay, average number of visitors daily, racial/ethnic breakdown, and average age of men and women admitted.

Students will also view Metro Focus Justice Week: The Future of Rikers <https://www.thirteen.org/metrofocus/2019/05/justice-week-the-future-of-rikers/> and Justice Week: Women In Incarceration. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Essxv3m5DKM>

This viewing of the Metro Focus will be done at home and students will post on Discussion Board. The Discussion Board prompt will be: Reflecting on the new information you have taken from these materials, think about your community/neighborhood, go to : and identify the arrest and incarceration rates for your community. Discuss if this information is consistent with your experience of your neighborhood/community or if this is in conflict with your sense of your neighborhood/community and explain.

Stage Four: Mass Incarceration and LaGuardia

View in class the Documentary: Counterstory... After viewing the documentary, there will be an individual writing prompt which will be used for a small group discussion and a larger group sharing on the connections between the documentary and all the materials used for our session on mass incarceration and the course objectives. We will discuss what it means to challenge injustices and how and why it is connected to our professional code of ethics. We will consider ways of responding.

The final Discussion Board prompt will task students with identifying a response to mass incarceration that they research and learn about. They will share their findings and analyze the approach identifying the strengths and challenges of such an approach. They will identify why they chose the approach they did and lastly, they will discuss how this session on mass incarceration will inform their practice as Human Service professionals.