

## REAP: Reforming Mass Incarceration and the Role of Business B8584 (Half Block Week Course)

### BIDDING SYLLABUS (Based on Fall 2019)

Monday, 08/31/20: Full Day

Tuesday, 09/01/20: Full Day

Wednesday, 09/02/20: Half Day

**This course will be taught online.**  
**The Fall 2020 syllabus is being updated. It will be similar to the syllabus shown here.**

#### INSTRUCTOR

Damon J. Phillips ([djphillips@columbia.edu](mailto:djphillips@columbia.edu)) is the Lambert Family Professor of Social Enterprise and the Co-Director of the Tamer Center for Social Enterprise at Columbia Business School. In addition to teaching this course, he also teaches entrepreneurship at the MBA and undergraduate level, PhD coursework, and executive education. His research includes work on career mobility and how one's background affects entrepreneurial success. His pre-academia experience includes working as an engineer, teaching GED math, and helping to lead a family high tech manufacturing business whose employees included people with criminal records. He has a BS from Morehouse, master's degrees from MIT and Stanford, and a PhD from Stanford.

#### COURSE TA

Kylie Hwang: PhD Candidate in Management, Columbia Business School [JHwang20@gsb.columbia.edu](mailto:JHwang20@gsb.columbia.edu)  
 Before graduate school she worked for Lexus Nexis with their criminal background check product. Her award winning research is on employment and entrepreneurship opportunities of people who have been incarcerated.

#### COURSE OVERVIEW:

Monday, August 31 <sup>st</sup> : Full Day	Tuesday, September 1 <sup>st</sup> : Full Day	Wednesday, Sept 2 <sup>nd</sup> : Half Day
Causes of Mass Incarceration & the Role of Poverty  Overview of the U.S. Criminal Justice System  The Societal Cost of Mass Incarceration & the Role of Profit	Reentry: What is it Like When You Get Out of Prison?  Transitioning Back to Society Exploring Challenges and Solutions	Understanding Employers, Entrepreneurship, and the Business Case Hiring People with Criminal Records

#### GRADING

	Weight	Notes
30% class participation	30%	Contributes to and improves the class discussion. While this is mainly in-class participation it also can include <a href="#">online discussions</a> through the Canvas course page.
10% reading/class discussion questions	10%	A set of one paragraph answers to 5 class discussion questions.
30% personal reflections	30%	Two 1-page reflections.
30% final take home	30%	A 5-page plan written to your future (or current) employer about what they can do to help with mass incarceration and reentry. The plan should be realistic and specific to that employer.

**Description of Monday, August 31<sup>st</sup>: Full Day**

This 1<sup>st</sup> day involves the most intensive preparation on your part, but it is an important investment that will pay off. We begin with a deep dive into the causes of mass incarceration in the U.S. and its relationship to poverty and race. To prepare you will need to watch a documentary (“13<sup>th</sup>”), read the most cited book in this area (“Just Mercy”), consider a 4-page counter-argument (“Why Ending Mass Incarceration Means Locking Up Fewer Violent Criminals”), read a 6-page report (“Prisons of Poverty”), a 2 page article on the health care costs in prison (“Steep Costs of Medical Co-Pays in Prison”) and read a guide on the importance of language when talking about people with criminal records. All of this is an investment that pays off: at the end of this morning session you will be more informed than at least 90% of the country on this particular issue.

After lunch we will educate ourselves on the criminal justice system, such as the difference between jails and prisons, as well as probation and parole. Each of these are important components of the criminal justice system. We will also discuss the First Step Act, the recent bipartisan attempt by the federal government at criminal justice reform.

The final session of the day, “The Societal Cost of Mass Incarceration and the Role of Profit,” continues by focusing on the financial aspects and human cost of mass incarceration. This will give you a sense of why a growing coalition is forming around the problem of mass incarceration, including members of the business community. We will also get a sense of one of the challenges: the fact that mass incarceration is interwoven into our economy. As members of the business community, this session will help prepare us to consider how we can promote solutions.

**Description of Tuesday, September 1<sup>st</sup>: Full Day**

On this day we focus on the transition back home from prison. In the first session in the morning (“What is it like when you get out of prison?”), you will be put in the shoes of someone returning from prison to get a better sense of the complex challenges one can face. The afternoon will give us time to explore “Transitioning Back to Society” through the video and readings that you will have read before class, as well as a panel of formerly incarcerated people and “reentry organizations” who play a critical role in helping with some of the challenges. We will also consider some of the unique challenges that women face. The pre-readings in the afternoon session focus on reentry into society and the role of having a criminal record. We will also have a panel discussion will also serve as a transition to our last day with a discussion of employment and entrepreneurship for formerly incarcerated people.

**Description of Wednesday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>: Half Day**

This last day focuses on employment and entrepreneurship. We begin with examining the perspectives that employers have around hiring formerly incarcerated people, as well as the business case for hiring from this talent pool. This discussion will incorporate the perspective of reformers across the political spectrum. We will end with a panel of employers and entrepreneurs, then have a short wrap-up where we review the course, discuss the final assignment, and reflect on what we have learned.

**MONDAY, August 26<sup>th</sup>: Full Day** (~8 hrs 45 min of preparation needed)

**9:00a – noon**      **How Did We Get Here? – Causes of Mass Incarceration & the Role of Poverty**

- Watch Before Class (Allow 1 hr and 45 min to watch):
  - 13<sup>th</sup> 1hr 40 mins. (Ava DuVernay 2016). An award-winning documentary available on Netflix.
- Read Before Class (Allow ~6 hours to read):
  - Just Mercy 328 pages. (Bryan Stevenson 2015).
  - Why Ending Mass Incarceration Means Locking Up Fewer Violent Criminals: A Conversation with John Pfaff 4 pages. (Fisher 2017).
  - Prisons of Poverty: Uncovering the pre-incarceration incomes of the imprisoned. 6 pages. (Prison Policy Initiative 2015).
  - The Steep Costs of Medical Co-Pays in Prison. 2 pages. (Sawyer 2017)
  - We Are People: Resources for Humanizing Language 5 pages. (Osborne Association 2015).
- Speaker TBD

**Noon – 1:00p**      **BREAK FOR LUNCH**

**1:00p – 3:00p**      **An Overview of the U.S. Criminal Justice System**

- Read Before Class (Allow ~20 min to read):
  - Criminal Justice System Interactive Flowchart (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2019). This detailed chart has a lot of information. I would advise spending 5-10 minutes on it, and having it as a reference afterwards. Our focus is on the path associated with prison but few people, even US citizens, understand the complexities of our criminal justice system.
  - Definitions: Jail & Prison 2 pages. (John Jay College of Criminal Justice 2019)
  - Federal Laws versus State Laws 3 pages. (US Attorney’s Office, District of RI 2011)
- The First Step Act Overview. The document is 24 pages, but just read the one page Overview that precedes the table of contents.
- Why Justice Still Eludes Crack Offenders (Ryan 2020).
- Speaker TBD

**3:00 – 3:15p**      **Afternoon Break**

**3:15 – 4:45p**      **The Societal Cost of Mass Incarceration and the Role of Profit**

- Read Before Class (Allow ~30 min to read):
  - The High Costs of Over-Incarceration 2 pages. (Timothy Head and Grover Norquist 2015)
  - Following the Money of Mass Incarceration. 13 pages. (Prison Policy Initiative, 2017)
  - Health Costs
    - Incarceration Shortens Life Expectancy 1 page. (Widra 2017)
    - What to Expect as a New Correctional Officer 3 pages. (Whitehead 2018)
  - The Role of Profit
    - Making Profits on the Captive Prison Market 3 pages. (Markowitz 2016)
    - Prison Industrial Complex: Mapping Private Sector Players. (Worth Rises 2019). This is an overview of a much longer report. At least read the sections: (1) “About Work Rises”, (2) “Introduction”, and (3) “A Note From The Authors”. These three sections are about 2.5 pages of reading.

- Listen to Before Class (Allow ~11 min to listen):
  - [Who Benefits When A Private Prison Comes To Town?](#) 11 min. (NPR 2011)
- Speaker TBD

**4:45 – 5:00 WRAP-UP**

- Recap of the Day
  - *What have we learned thus far? What questions do we have?*
- Personal Reflections

**TUESDAY, August 27<sup>th</sup>: Full Day (~85 min of preparation needed)**

**9:00a – noon What is it Like When You Get Out of Prison?**

- Reentry Simulation

**Noon – 1:00p LUNCH**

**1:00p – 2:00p Reentry Simulation Debrief**

**2:00p – 3:00p Transitioning Back to Society (Part 1)**

- Watch Before Class (~30 min total of viewing):
  - [“Mother’s Day”](#) 8 min. (Lo 2017).
  - [The Outside: Episode 1](#) 4 min. (Dodson 2017).
  - [Life in the Year after Prison](#) – Vera Institute 15 min. (Western 2018).
- Read Before Class (Allow ~30 min to read):
  - [The Challenges of Prisoner Re-Entry into Society](#) 6 pages. (Simmons 2016).
  - [Women’s Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie.](#) 4 pages. (Prison Policy Initiative, 2017).
  - [Out of Prison and Out of Work](#) 4 pages. (Prison Policy Initiative, 2018)
  - The following readings are on criminal records and how they relate to background checks. This is key to understanding the employment of formerly incarcerated people.
    - [What is a Criminal Record?](#) 1 page. (Root and Rebound 2019)
    - [The Problem of Rap Sheet Errors](#) 7 pages. (Legal Action Center)
    - [How Does the Background Check Process Work?](#) You either read the text or watch the 5 min video. (Checkr 2019). Checkr is considered among the most reputable background check companies. Consider this a best practices approach.

**3:00p – 3:30p Coffee Break**

**3:30p – 4:30p Transitioning Back to Society (Part 2)**

- Read Before Class (Allow ~15 min to read/view):
  - [Barriers to Getting Work After Prison Remain](#) 1 page with 6 min embedded video. (Bussanich 2015).
  - [Inside Rikers Island: Getting out and staying out.](#) 1 page with 5 min embedded video. (Mannarino 2016)
- Expert Panel on the Challenges of Transitioning

**4:30 – 5:00 WRAP-UP**

- Recap of First Two Days
  - *What have we learned thus far? What questions do we have?*
- Personal Reflections

**WEDNESDAY, August 28<sup>th</sup>: Half Day (~75 min of preparation needed)**

**9:00a – 11:00a Understanding Employer Mindsets and the Business Case for Hiring People with Criminal Records**

- Read Before Class (Allow ~45 min to read):
  - Employer Surveys Regarding Employment of People with Criminal Histories 13 pages. (The IPS Employment Center at The Rockville Institute, Revised 8/17. Original 3/10)
  - Ban the Box and Racial Discrimination: A Review of the Evidence and Policy Recommendations 20 pages. (Stacey and Cohen 2017)
  - What CEOs Can Do to Advance Racial Justice: Begin by asking today what policies and practices are in place to hire citizens with criminal records. (Dwin, Lovegrove, and Rivoli 2020).
  -
- Speaker TBD

**11:00a – 12:00 Employer/Entrepreneurship Panel**

- Read Before Class (Allow 5-10 min to read and watch the embedded video):
  - Maryland Retail, Restaurant Industries Join National Push to Hire Former Inmates. 3 pages. (Maribella 2019)
- Listen to Before Class (Allow ~25 min to listen):
  - I Started a Catering Company After Prison 3 min. (BuzzFeed News 2017).
  - The Prisoner's Solution 17 min. (NPR's Planet Money 2015)
- Expert Panel: Employment and Entrepreneurship for Formerly Incarcerated People

**Noon – 12:30p WRAP-UP**

- Recap of Entire Course, Discuss Take Home Final Assignment (due on Friday Sept 13<sup>th</sup>), Final Housekeeping.