

SOCY3378 / ADCJ3033 / APSY3378: Inside-Out: Perspectives on Crime, Corrections and Justice

Course Description

This Inside-Out course is an opportunity for a group of students from Boston College (“outside” students) and the Suffolk County House of Correction (“inside” students) to exchange ideas and perceptions about crime, corrections and justice. It is a chance for all participants to gain a deeper understanding of the United States criminal justice system through the marriage of theoretical knowledge and practical experience achieved in meetings throughout a semester. Topics include causes and definitions of crime, criminal justice institutions, myths and realities of prison life, experiences of crime victims, theories of punishment and rehabilitation, and the relationship between crime and community. **Due to the unique nature of the course, registration is by application only. Contact the course instructor listed in the course schedule to obtain an application.

What Inside-Out is NOT...

- It is **NOT an opportunity to do human subject research** on people who are incarcerated or to find out why they are incarcerated.
- It is **NOT service learning**. Students from Boston College campus are NOT going to the house of correction to serve, mentor or help students at the House of Correction. Both inside and outside students are expected to participate fully.
- It is **NOT a scared straight program**. It is not intended to give the outside students a fear-based experience that will cause them to rethink their life choices.
- It is **NOT a whistle-blowing program** that aims to draw public attention to problems inside the house of correction. The particular prison sponsoring the program is not the focus of the course. Larger systemic issues related to the criminal justice system, and the larger political, economic and social questions, are at the heart of what Inside-Out attempts to unearth in its exploration.
- Finally, and importantly: even though bonds between and amongst students inevitably form throughout the semester, **Inside-Out is NOT a vehicle for developing relationships that will exist outside the parameters of the program**. This requires avoiding all written, online, and in-person communication before, during or after the course. Please carefully consider this before accepting a seat in the course, as any violations of this policy may result in IMMEDIATE course dismissal/withdrawal/failure.

What is Inside-Out?

- It is an **academic course** where about 10 “inside” (incarcerated) and 10 “outside” (from a college campus) meet throughout the course of a semester to learn about crime and justice.
- It is an **international program** that involves hundreds of instructors, universities, and correctional facilities around the world— more than 30,000 students have participated (insideoutcenter.org).
- It is a **dialogue-focused** seminar-style course that centers on discussions around issues of crime, corrections and justice in the United States. This requires consistent participation from every student to create a teaching and learning community. It also requires the willingness to actively participate in discussions that may challenge your own perspective.
- It is **community-based**. Studying crime and justice inside a house of correction raises issues that are different from a course that takes place solely on campus. Throughout the course we will examine the significance of learning about crime and justice in a correctional setting.
- It is an **experiential course** that consistently asks participants to reflect on their own experience.
- It is a **project-based** course. The final portion of the course involves the completion of a final project related selected topics from the course. All students will be expected to take initiative to contribute constructively and creatively to this project.