OVERVIEW
This course will focus on the use of the arts and education as tools for criminal justice reform. The mass incarceration of people of color has spawned much debate and controversy. In recent years, the debate has shifted sharply in the direction of reform and alternatives as state and federal governments recognize the social and economic consequences of mass incarceration. The emerging bipartisan support for reform is in large part the result of more than a decade of grassroots social justice efforts to transform public opinion on prisons and criminal justice policy. Many of the groups at the helm of this movement against mass incarceration, incorporate multidisciplinary artistic expression to educate and organize communities in response to mass incarceration. Poetry (including spoken word & Hip-Hop), music, film, theatre, and visual arts are all tools that have been used to examine what mass incarceration is, how it affects society, and how organizers can act as change agents in this struggle. Students will learn how to use these tools and develop workshops with a clear educational objective. The course will feature guest lectures, film viewings, community events, and performances. Students will be required to participate in developing and facilitating an arts-based educational workshop, which they will facilitate with young people at Rikers Island Correctional Facility.

COURSE LEARNING GOALS:
In this course students will explore the following:

i. What is mass incarceration? What are the factors that contribute to it? Why is it a topic of controversy?

ii. What is Social Justice Education? What is the role of education in prevention and reducing recidivism amongst young people?

iii. How are the arts currently used in correctional facilities? What is the role of the arts in empowering “inside” populations?

iv. What are the current discussions surrounding criminal justice reform and alternatives to incarceration? Who are the individuals and groups organizing in response to these issues? What strategies are used to mobilize communities? What resources are available to educate people about these issues?

EXPECTATIONS
Attendance: Students are responsible for attending class weekly and being prepared having completed all assignments and readings as outlined in the syllabus. Attendance will be recorded
Lyrics on Lockdown

and will impact grades. Class participation is essential. **Students are allotted two excused absences. Failure to attend a third class will result in the drop of one letter grade.** Each class missed thereafter will result in the loss of one half a letter grade. Attendance and participation count for 20% of the overall final grade. Students are responsible for making up work missed in class by the following class. **This course requires a substantial amount of work outside of regular class time. Students are required to attend all scheduled Saturday sessions and Friday workshops at Rikers Island.**

**Evaluation:**
Grading will be based on in-class participation and the completion of 5 assignments – two individual and one group (see below). The grading will be determined as follows:

- **Class Participation** – 20%. This includes attendance and class participation, which includes discussion of readings and participation in class activities (**including ALL Saturday and Friday sessions**). Students will be expected to reference readings in class EVERY session.
- **Workshop Planning and Execution** – 40%. Includes preparation sessions, performance in the field, class analysis, and journals.
- **4 Journal Assignments** – 40%. Includes reading reflection, participation and collaboration on project and final analysis.

**Journal assignments must be printed and submitted at the start of class on the assigned due date.** Extensions will only be granted under extraordinary circumstances, and only when requested prior to the due date. **Late assignments will be penalized.**

**EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES:**
On occasion an event will occur at NYU or in the community that I will encourage you to attend. If you choose to attend a recommended event, you may write a 2-4 pages reflection paper about the event and the connection to your work in the class. Any other extra credits such as film screenings, relevant readings, or cultural events must be approved prior to completion. **Extra credit assignments are due within 14 days after attending the event. No extra credit will be accepted after December 8th.**

**ASSIGNMENTS:**
**Journal Assignments (40%) (Due Dates: October 6th, November 10th, and Dec 1st, December 15th):** There will be four journal papers assigned during this course. The first three journals should be between 4-5 pages, the final journal entry should be 8-10 pages. Journals must conform to all conventions of academic writing; written in MLA format with at least two course readings cited to support your analysis. **Plagiarism will not be tolerated.**

This course includes three core components: 1) Readings and in-class discussions of theory and research on the criminal justice system, education, arts, and youth. 2) Practical skill building in arts and education workshop facilitation. 3) The design and facilitation of workshop sessions with students at Rikers Island. You will be expected to reflect on your experiences in all three components of this course in your journal assignments.
Reflection Prompts for your Journal:

- Assess yourself, your participation in class, both your ability to contribute to discussion and to listen and learn from others. Similarly, during the group workshop design process, what is your contribution, how are you working with others?

- Speculate on how you might apply what you are learning to the design and facilitation of your session with the students.

- Form connections to readings (and cite them) during the practical sessions and while designing and leading Rikers workshops.

- Your responses to the readings drawing from your experiences with the students as well as past experience that you bring to this course (remember to cite the readings).

- Once you begin facilitating the workshops, record your observations of the group, what are they learning and how do you know? What was successful? What was challenging? What would you do differently, if you were to facilitate this session again?

- What are you learning from observing your peers facilitate sessions? About facilitation, structure, ways of engaging the group?

- What questions are you formulating about this kind of work, the criminal justice system, issues of race, class, gender, and privilege? Dare to formulate provisional answers to these questions.

**Final Journal Assignment (DUE December 15):** The final journal assignment will include reflections of each workshop at Rikers Island and an analysis of your experience planning and executing your group’s workshop. Include information about group dynamics, planning strategies, challenges, strengths and your impression of the impact of your workshop (self-evaluation) as well as connections to readings, lectures and other materials presented in class. Each student must submit their analysis on the last day of class. **This final assignment should 8-10 pages.** The final paper must conform to all conventions of academic writing; written in MLA format with at least four course readings cited to support your analysis.

**Rikers Island Workshops (40%):** Students are expected to work in groups of 4-5 on a lesson plan that they will facilitate with a class of incarcerated students at the Rikers Island Correctional Facility. The workshop must be no more than 60-minutes. Students are expected to work collaboratively on the design of the workshop and the workshop facilitation. Each student will be expected to use their journals to reflect on their own contributions and that of their peers throughout the workshop planning and facilitation process. We will visit Rikers Island as a class for five weekly sessions beginning in November.

**A. Workshop Structure:**

Building a collaborative learning community with Rikers Island students will be a central focus of the course. University student-teachers will be responsible for planning and leading a series of
Lyrics on Lockdown

arts-based workshops with a clearly defined educational goal, and create a space in which incarcerated students can voice their perspectives on a wide range of issues affecting their lives. The class will seek to refine artistic and analytical skills through a series of critical literacy and arts-based activities that explore personal/familial experiences, community trends, and historical events/movements.

Given the high turnover rate of students on the Rikers Island campus, we will structure each class session (more or less) as an independent module that is not dependent on attendance to previous workshop. Each 60-minute workshop would involve the following components:

1. Introduction

2. Original Arts-based Educational Workshop, led by student-facilitators

3. Evaluation and large-group wrap-up discussion and/or student showcase during which the Rikers Island students share their artistic expressions with the entire class.

B. Workshop Planning:
During the initial eight-weeks of class, we will begin to finalize plans for the weekly Rikers Island workshops. Students will work in small groups of 4-5 students to devise a detailed plan of action for one workshop. A number of pedagogical approaches should be used. By week six, each small group will choose their focus and begin developing a workshop plan.

Students will attend two workshop preparation sessions on Saturdays. During these Saturday sessions students will be expected to “test run” their workshops with their classmates and receive critical feedback on content and facilitation.

Workshop Preparation Sessions:
Saturday, October 18th 10-5pm
Saturday, November 1st 10-5pm

Students will be required to meet outside of class to effectively complete the workshop planning.

C. Detailed Lesson Plan:
DUE: November 1st. Provide a printed copy to me prior to facilitating your workshop. Use the lesson planning template distributed to you at the first Saturday workshop.

The initial lesson plan is a preliminary plan. Your group will likely make changes to your plan after you’ve been to Rikers Island gotten to know the group. A final lesson should be emailed and a printed copy handed to me on the evening before your workshop session.

VERY IMPORTANT: *Please time each activity or discussion. Generally, no single activity should be over 10 minutes.

E. Workshop Execution
The Rikers Island class of approximately 15-20 adolescent (16-18 year old) students will be in attendance for each workshop. Each week, a different group of Student-Facilitators will be responsible for leading one workshop. Each workshop will be evaluated in class the Monday following the workshop at Riker’s. In evaluating the workshop execution, emphasis will be placed on the group’s preparedness, energy, and creativity in conveying ideas, facilitating activities and engagement of Rikers’ students in activities and discussions. Bear in mind that because of the nature of facilitating a workshop in a jail, facilitators must remain flexible and open to change. **BE PREPARED.** You will also be evaluated on how well you can deal with unexpected change. If things interfere with your plan, you must be ready to work around them. Have a plan B.

**Rikers Island Schedule: All visits will be on Fridays from 3-6pm**
November 7th, November 14th, November 21st, December 5th, December 12th.

All students are required to complete a Dept of Corrections Volunteer Application which does include a Criminal Background Check.

Students are required to attend a Security Briefing at the Dept of Corrections Headquarters on October 24th 3-5pm.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**
This course requires 6 textbooks: Available at the NYU Bookstore.
   - Readings for Diversity and Social Justice
   - The New Jim Crow
   - Beats, Rhymes, and Classroom Life
   - Pedagogy of the Oppressed
   - Upstate
   - Decoded
A course packet with additional readings is available online via the NYU Courses site.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**
As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating. Please consult the Gallatin Bulletin or Gallatin website ([http://gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/integrity.html](http://gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/integrity.html))

**COURSE/ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE**

**Week 1**
Mon– 9/8
**Topic: Introduction, Goals & Structure**
Objectives: Introductions and discussion and explanation of course goals, expectations, and create community guidelines.
READ:  
*RDSJ* Section 1 and Section 2 (Articles 8-10)  
Course Packet: “A Case For Reparations”  
The New Jim Crow pp. 1-57

**Week 2**  
**Mon– 9/15**  
Objectives:  
Discuss readings and analyze systemic oppression, power, and privilege in the United States. Origins of the Prison Industrial Complex

READ:  
*RDSJ* Section 3 (#26-31)  
*The New Jim Crow* pp. 58-136

**Week 3**  
**Mon– 9/22**  
**Topic: Root Causes of the PIC Part 2: The War On Drugs**  
View Documentary: *The House I Live In*  
Objectives:  
Understand the ‘War on Drugs’ and how it’s impact on communities of color.

READ:  
*RDSJ*: Section 9 (Intro, #115-118)  
*The New Jim Crow* pp.136-248  

**Week 4**  
**Mon – 9/29**  
**Topic: Policing and Criminalization of Youth of Color**  
Objectives:  
Analyze the history of police violence in the U.S and the current state of the movement for police accountability sparked by Ferguson.  
View: Uprising: Hip Hop and the LA Riots

READ:  
Course Pack: “Zero Tolerance”  
“Who Wants to Be Special”  
“Hip Hop and the Aesthetics of Criminalization”

**Week 5:**  
**Mon-10/6**  
**Topic: The School to Prison Pipeline**  
Objectives:  
Investigate the relationship between school discipline policies, race, and the criminalization of youth.  
**Guest Speaker:** Kyung Ji Rhee, Dir of Juvenile Justice Policy Reform, Center for Nu Leadership

READ:  
*Pedagogy of the Oppressed* pp.1-183  
Course Packet: “I Won’t Learn from You”  
Brave New Voices: “Introduction”
**NO CLASS 10/13 – MID-SEMESTER BREAK**

**Week 6**  
**Mon – 10/20**  
**Topic: Justice Centered Education**  
Objectives: Experience a justice centered curricular model and explore the questions: What is Justice-Centered Education? How does it serve to counter narratives of deviance placed upon young people of color?

READ:  
*Beats, Rhymes, and Classroom Life* pgs. 1-123  
Course Packet: “Six Steps to Engage Children’s Creativity”  
“U.S Inquiry Finds a ‘Culture of Violence’ Against Teenage Inmates at Rikers” (Follow Link to Read Full Report)

**Week 7**  
**Mon – 10/27**  
**Topic: Hip Hop Pedagogy**  
Objectives: What is Hip Hop Pedagogy? How is Hip Hop used as a tool for liberatory education?  
Guest Speaker: TBD

READ:  
*Beats, Rhymes, and Classroom Life* pgs. 123-149  
*Decoded* Part 1 & 2  

**Week 8**  
**Mon - 11/3**  
**Topic: Transformative Justice**  
Objectives: What is Transformative Justice? What alternatives to prisons and policing do Transformative Justice strategies offer?  
In class time to work on lesson plans and reflect on Saturday workshop demonstrations.

READ:  
*Decoded* Part 3 & 4

**Week 9**  
**Mon - 11/10**  
**Media Framing for Drug Policy Reform**  
Objectives: Reflect on Rikers workshop: discussion and analysis of experiences. In class time to work on lesson plans. Participate in a media training about framing the story and communicating the importance of drug policy reform.  
Guest: Sharda Sekaran, Managing Director of Communications Drug Policy Alliance

READ:  
*Upstate* pp. 1-123
Week 10
Mon – 11/17
Creative Approaches to Community Engagement
Objectives: Reflect on Rikers workshop: discussion and analysis of experiences. In class time to work on lesson plans. Meet at 651 Arts to participate in Community Inquiry Process: “Love In the Time of Brooklyn”.
READ: *Upstate* pp.123-247

>Week 11
Mon - 11/24
Rikers Island Work
Objectives: Discussion and analysis of experiences. In class time to work on Lesson Plans. Discuss themes such as youth incarceration, family violence, and intimacy as raised in *Upstate*.
READ: As assigned.

Week 12
Mon – 12/1
Rikers Island Work
Objectives: Discussion and analysis of experiences. In class time to work on Lesson Plans.
READ: As assigned.

Week 13
Mon – 12/8
Rikers Island Work
Objectives: Final reflections on Rikers workshops, preparation for final session at Rikers, last chance to turn in extra credit assignments.
READ: As assigned.

Week 14
Mon – 12/15
Final Class
Objectives: Debrief work at Rikers Island, complete course evaluations, and community appreciations over potluck.