MASS INCARCERATION

Individual cases like Walter Scott’s death have captured the attention of the mainstream media, but these cases are symptomatic of a fundamentally flawed legal system that has targeted—and continues to disproportionately target—African Americans and Latinos. Between 1972 and 2012, the U.S. prison population increased nearly sevenfold to an astonishing 2.23 million people, and the incarceration rate among African American men is more than six times that of white men. Convicted felons face discrimination in housing, social services, and employment, and many lose the right to vote even after they have served their sentences. Given these trends, mass incarceration is emerging as this generation’s civil rights issue. The imperative to reform the justice system is as real as it is immediate, for maintaining the status quo carries devastating consequences: the growth of economic inequalities, the erosion of the democratic process, persistent gendered and racialized violence, and the reification of insidious racial stereotypes.

“But there’s very little critique about why our police operate the way they operate in the first place because that critique ultimately comes back to Americans themselves.” – Ta-Nehisi Coates

OUR COMMITMENT

The African American Studies Program is confronting the urgency of this issue by making our theme for the 2015–2016 academic year “The (In)Justice System.” Our program is committed to not only bringing awareness to these issues in the classroom but also inspiring and empowering our students to engage in efforts to reform and restructure the justice system outside of the classroom. This theme and our programming remain consistent with the core values of the Black Studies Movement, a bottom-up social movement that sought to bridge the gap between social responsibility and scholarship.
SPRING 2016 EVENTS

Sarah Haley, “The Carceral Life of Gender” (lecture)
Tuesday, January 19 at 6:00 pm in Robert Scott Small 235

The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness (panel)
Thursday, February 11 at 6:00 pm in Stern Center Ballroom

Marian Wright Edelman, "A Conversation with Marian Wright Edelman" (lecture)
Tuesday, March 1 at 6:30 pm in Sottile Theatre

Bryan Stevenson, "American Injustice: Mercy, Humanity, and Making a Difference" (lecture)

Amaud Jamal Johnson, public lecture and reading from Darktown Follies
Wednesday, April 6th at 6:30pm in ECTR 118

SPRING 2016 COURSES

AAST 200: Introduction to African American Studies
AAST 290: Race and Class in Public History
AAST 300: Race and Sports in America
AAST 300: Mass Incarceration and Its Roots
AAST 300: Juvenile Justice Renaissance
AAST 300: Race, Gender, and the Environment
AAST 319: Constructions of Black Womanhood
AFST 101: Introduction to African Civilization
HIST 217: African American History 1865-Present
HIST 304: Civil War and Reconstruction, 1845-1877
PSYC 315: Psychology of Prejudice and Discrimination
SOCY 366: Race and Ethnic Relations
SOCY 369: Inequalities in Society and Education
THTR 316: African American Theatre

ALTERNATIVE SPRING BREAK
MARCH 6-12, 2016

Be a part of a historic journey through some of the most iconic locations where the fight for social justice took place. Explore the home of Martin Luther King, Jr.; walk the steps of the Edmund Pettus Bridge; and take a seat at the counter that sparked the student sit-in movement.

Contact Anthony Greene (greenead@cofc.edu) for details.