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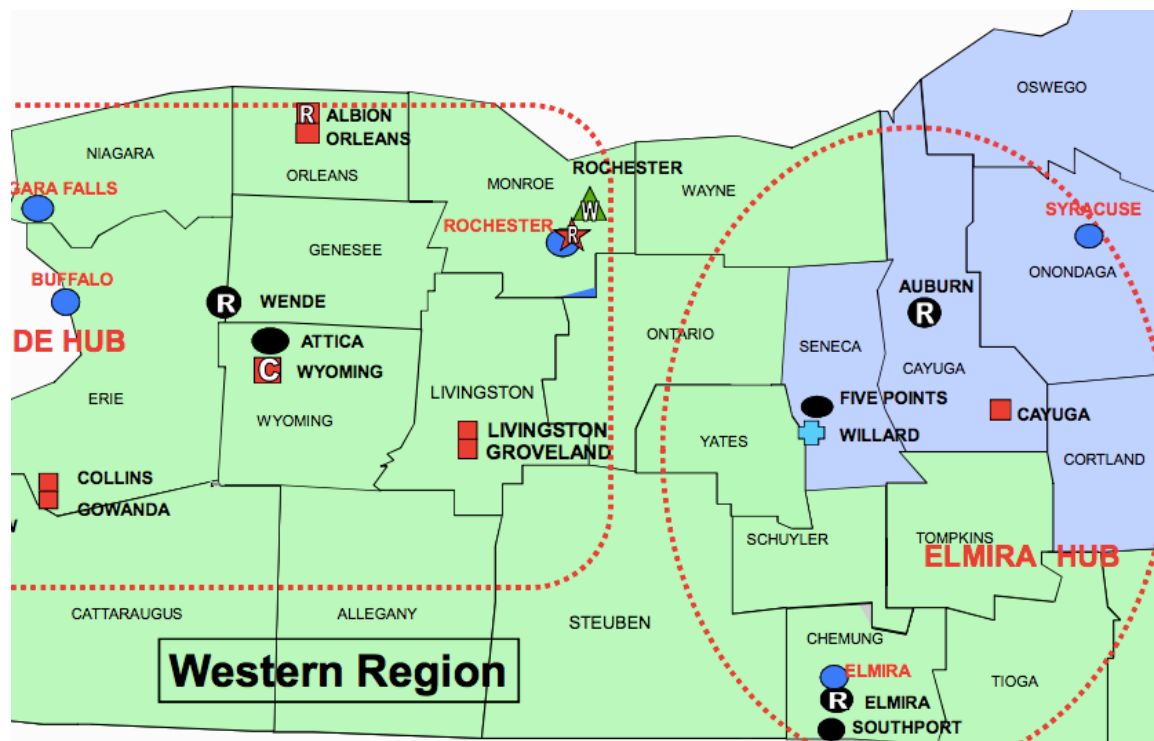
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### Course Description

Rochester is a town beset by hyper-incarceration and ringed with prisons and jails. This co-taught course is an ethnography lab. Funded with a grant from the National Science Foundation, this spring's course launches the fifth year of a collaborative ethnographic research project designed to examine how the presence of prisons in towns around Rochester reflects and shapes the political, economic, and cultural lives of those who live in the region. Students will be introduced to methods and practices of ethnography and conduct firsthand research on the cultural politics of our region's prison towns. Through assigned reading, students will learn about the history, sociology, and cultural logics of mass incarceration, in and beyond the Rochester region. What does the presence of a prison do and mean for a person living near one? In what ways do our local communities depend on prisons for their economic survival? How do prisons shape politics? How does the presence of a prison shape locals' notions of justice and citizenship, of how the world is and how the world must be? How do these nearby but largely invisible institutions shape the ways that we live in Rochester? And how might these themes most effectively be represented to an audience in a gallery exhibition?

Recommended prior courses: Introduction to Cultural Anthropology and/or Incarceration Nation



## Course Requirements and Grades

At its core, this class is a collaborative research project, *not* an individualized course of study. It only works if we work together. The research methods and outcomes are intentionally designed for us to learn from one another, through weekly group fieldwork visits, sharing our findings through fieldnotes and class discussions, and analyzing each other's emerging findings together. As such, your active, timely, consistent, ongoing participation is essential to the goals of the course, and to your own learning. In addition to coming to class, please manage your schedule so that you have time *each week* for *both* conducting research visits *and* writing up and submitting fieldnotes.

### Attendance and Class Participation (1/3 of final grade)

We expect to see you in class each week. You are entitled to one unexcused absence per semester, without explanation or apology. Any more than that, however, and we should be in touch. Please come to class prepared to discuss the assigned material, ready to share out about your research (orally and in writing), with questions for us and the class.

### Weekly Research and Writing Assignments (1/3 of final grade)

You will have weekly writing assignments that engage with classroom readings and/or are rooted in specific research tasks. It is essential that these assignments be turned in on time since they serve as the basis for the mutual learning in the course. Detailed guidelines for assignments will be on the class website.

### Final Research Project (1/3 of final grade)

Each student will present preliminary findings in class and produce a final research project in the form of a scholarly paper, a multi-media presentation, a digital archive, website, podcast, or some other form to be determined. More information forthcoming.

### Notes on Digital Archive (Website) and Confidentiality

- The work we do in this course takes place in the classroom, in the field, and in our shared webspace accessible at <https://f21.prison towns.digitalscholar.rochester.edu/>
- This digital archive is where you will turn in your fieldnotes and other data you gather (photos, audio files, archival documents, etc), add tags/code to your fieldnotes, be able to access past students' materials, and give and receive comments on the work. We will provide more information.
- This digital archive is shared only among members of the class and requires password access. All material accessed and uploaded to this site should be considered confidential to this research project, and neither access nor materials should be shared outside our classroom, particularly in ways that identify individuals. This material is governed by the human subjects ethics of confidentiality and privacy at the heart of this research. That is: treat these fieldnotes and written work with the respect you want others to bring to your work.

### Notes on Fieldwork Research Visits

- Each student will conduct 8 research visits. Ideally these should be in person; however, if need be, some virtual "visits" may suffice.
- You must turn in fieldnotes for each visit, ideally within 24 hours of the visit but no more than one week after the visit. This is a collaborative research project and your notes are an essential contribution to the overall project. Fieldnotes should be 750-3000 words. See website for samples.
- All students must complete CITI certification to be eligible to conduct research.
- Share the Information Sheet, provided on course website, with people in fieldsites.
- Fieldwork visits will be reimbursed, with receipts. See website for detailed information.

### Research Groups

This is the fifth time we've taught this class. From the project's inception we have divided students into research groups. Some years these groups have been place-specific, based in Albion, Alden, Attica, Auburn,

Batavia, Elmira, Mt. Morris, and Rochester. Other years, the groups have been thematic: Covid, “Flight maps” (i.e. the movement of bodies in and out of prisons), Politics, Religion, Criminalization, Decarceration, Land, and Love. This year we will have you group yourselves in site-based research groups with the themes as possible focal points. The themes are elaborated more fully on the class website.

### Exhibit in Hartnett Gallery, March 15<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> 2023

This semester we will be mounting an exhibition concurrent with the class in the Hartnett Gallery in Wilson Commons (hours: 12-7, Wed – Sat). The exhibit will ask: What does the presence of a prison do and mean for people living alongside them? How does the saturation of prisons in our region shape life in the Rochester area, and on our campus? Might each of us living in the US today be living in a “prison town?” How might thinking through these questions help us to imagine alternative worlds? [More detailed description of the exhibit is on the class website.]

This exhibit will draw on student-generated materials from past sessions of the class, as well as work we produce as a class in the first half of the semester. We will ask for a core group of student volunteers to work with the TAs to focus on this exhibit.

### Further notes:

- The University of Rochester respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. In the event you encounter any barrier(s) to full participation in this course due to the impact of disability, please contact the **Office of Disability Resources**. The access coordinators in the Office of Disability Resources can meet with you to discuss the barriers you are experiencing and explain the eligibility process for establishing academic accommodations. You can reach the Office of Disability Resources at: [disability@rochester.edu](mailto:disability@rochester.edu); (585) 276-5075; Taylor Hall. Please also feel free to come talk to us at any point in the semester if you have concerns about accessibility of the materials or assignments.
- **Undocumented/DACA Student support contacts:**  
<http://rochester.edu/college/ccas/undergraduate/daca/index.html>
- **University of Rochester CARE network** <https://www.rochester.edu/care/>
- This course follows the College credit hour policy for four-credit courses. This course meets once weekly for three academic hours per week. The course also includes independent out-of-class assignments for one academic hour per week including ethnographic observation, films, supplementary reading, and attending lectures.
- All assignments and activities associated with this course must be performed in accordance with University of Rochester’s code of **Academic Honesty**. Ask us if you have questions or concerns.  
<http://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty>

## Course Schedule

### 1/11 **Introduction**

In class: Brett Story [dir.], *Prison in Twelve Landscapes* [film]

### 1/18 ***What is ethnography? What methodologically and analytically is the ethnography of prison towns?***

Readings:

Doughty and Dubler, 2023 “On Prison Towns and Ethnographic Entanglements”

Eason, 2017. “It’s like the city, only quieter: Making the Rural Ghetto” in *Big House on the Prairie*

Morrell, 2021. “Hometown Prison: Whiteness, Safety, and Prison Work in Upstate NY State”

Pearson, 2021. “Work without Labor, Life in the Surround of a Rural Prison Town”

Writing assignment: Analytics and Methods (~250 words)

Complete the online initial certification course, send Certificate to TAs:

“The Office for Human Subject Protection (OHSP) at the University of Rochester (UR) requires all study team members to successfully complete human subjects training through an on-line program called the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program) prior to conducting any human subject research.”

Go here: <http://www.rochester.edu/ohsp/education/certification/initialCertification.html>

Click “Instructions for Registering and Completing Human Subjects Training.” Register for a CITI account. Then follow the directions. Select Social/ Behavioral/Educational for the training module. Complete it until you have scored at least 85% to pass. Email your completion certificate to one of the TAs as evidence you have completed it.

**1/19                    Another World is Possible: Decarceral Organizers’ Roundtable**  
**5:00 pm                    Hawkins Carlson**

**1/25      *What is carceral geography? How do the specifics we see in our fieldsites relate to the general theoretical framework?***

Readings:

Davis. 2003. “The Prison Industrial Complex” in *Are Prisons Obsolete?*

Gilmore. 2007, “Introduction” in *Golden Gulag*

Gilmore, 2022. “What is to be Done?” in *Abolition Geography*

Simes. 2021. “A Spatial View of Punishment” in *Punishing Places*

Story, 2019, “Rural Extractions” *Prison Land*

Shange. 2022. “[Abolition in the Clutch: Shifting through the Gears with Anthropology](#)” (optional)

Fieldwork assignment 1: Attend “Another World is Possible” (or watch recording)

Writing Assignment:      Applying analytics in the field (~250 words)

**2/1      *How does ethnography outside relate to the life inside the prison itself?***

Readings:

Gant. 2020. [I was a Prison Hospice Aid. Then Came Coronavirus.](#)

Burton. 2015. “[Fieldnotes on the Gendered Labor of Prison Visitation.](#)” *Anthropolitea*

Comfort, “‘On-Line’ at San Quentin,” from *Doing Time Together*

Garcia. 2016. “The Blue Years: An Ethnography of a Prison Archive.”

Doughty, Bedell, N’Gambwa, 2023. “I really wanna put eyes on these guys”: Prisons, Protest, and Pandemic”

Burton, 2021. “Captivity, Kinship, and Black Masculine Care Work under Domestic Warfare” (optional)

Fieldwork assignment 2: Participant Observation

Writing assignment:      Fieldnotes

**2/8      *What can art, and a gallery exhibit, do to provoke conversation about incarceration and decarceration? What can our exhibit do?***

Readings:

Fleetwood. 2020. *Marking Time*, Introduction and Chapter 1

Leblanc-Roberge. 2017. “Wall + Paper”

Rowland. 2016. “91020000”

Dubler. 2016. “Can this machine kill mass incarceration?”

Fieldwork assignment 3: Found object / Document

Writing assignment:      Fieldnotes

2/15 ***What is particular about where we live? What ways are the stories of our towns unique in the American story of incarceration, versus generalizable?***

Readings:

Widra and Encalada-Malinowski. 2022. "Where People in Prison Come From: The Geography of Mass Incarceration in New York," *Prison Policy Initiative*

James. 2016, "[Roots of Black Incarceration](#)," *Boston Review*

Lewis. 1967. "The Development of the Auburn System" in *The Development of American Prisons and Prison Customs, 1776-1845*

Morrell. 2018. "Policing the Carceral State: Prisons and Panic in an Upstate New York Prison Town"

Thompson,. 2016. "Epilogue: Prisons and Power" in *Blood in the Water*

Fieldwork assignment 4: Ritual participant observation

Writing assignment: Fieldnotes/Transcript

2/22 ***What is the relationship between debt and carcerality?***

In Class: Guest Visit, Andrew Ross and Julie Livingston

Readings:

Livingston and Ross. 2022. *Cars and Jails: Freedom Dreams, Debt, and Carcerality*

Wang. 2018. "Carceral Capitalism" *The New Inquiry* (recommended)

Fieldwork assignment 5: Semi-structured interview

Writing assignment: Fieldnotes

3/1 **Final Exhibit preparation**

No readings. No required research visit (can do make-up visit as needed)

Install for Hartnett exhibit March 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>

3/8 **No Class, Spring break**

3/15 **In class: Launch of exhibit at Hartnett Gallery: March 15-25  
[Opening event details TBD]**

3/22

Fieldwork assignment 6: Social Drama

Writing assignment: Fieldnotes

Readings: TBD and/or specific to your project

Take-down of Hartnett exhibit between 7pm Sat March 25 through Mon March 27

3/29

Fieldwork assignment 7: Semi-structured interview

Writing assignment: Fieldnotes

Readings: TBD and/or specific to your project

4/5 Asynchronous Class Meeting (details to be provided)

Fieldwork assignment 8: Researcher's Choice

Writing assignment: Fieldnotes

Readings: TBD and/or specific to your project

4/12

Research assignment: Work on final project. Optional / make-up field visit.

Writing assignment: Fieldnotes

Readings: TBD and/or specific to your project

4/19 **In class: Final Project workshop**

Additional research trips as needed

4/26 **In class: Final project workshop**

Additional research trips as needed

*NOTE: Syllabus assignments are subject to amendment, particularly in response to emergent events. Please pay attention to notifications in class and to announcements on class website*