



TOURO UNIVERSITY
CALIFORNIA

The Intersection of Public Health and the Criminal Justice System:

An Introduction to a Concentration in the
Touro University California Public Health Program

PREPARING EFFECTIVE LEADERS TO BE AGENTS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

California Association of Collaborative Courts Conference 2021 Justice Reform

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- ▶ Contributions of academic and community partners:
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 - Elena Lingas, DrPH, MPH
 - Kevin Williams, JD, MPH
 - Matthew Green, MPH

Outline

- ▶ Topics to be covered:
 - Public Health and Mass Incarceration
 - What is Criminal Justice?
 - The State of Criminal Justice System in the U.S.
 - Impacts on Public Health
 - Master of Public Health Concentration Overview: Health Equity and Criminal Justice
 - Q & A

“Public Health and Mass Incarceration”

After watching the brief video at the link below, please feel free to respond to the questions below in the Zoom Chat box:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YYc0ZTiSofE>

- ▶ *What does the information in this video suggest or bring up for you?*
- ▶ ***How does** it resonate with you as a future health care or public health professional?*

What is Criminal Justice?

Race/ethnicity/SES/gender/mental health

Education

Policy

Criminal Justice

→ Mass Criminalization

Incarceration

Infectious diseases
Substance use
Mental Health



Families

Food insecurity, Poverty, Homelessness,
Stigma

Communities

Poverty, High unemployment, neglect of
public services and infrastructure

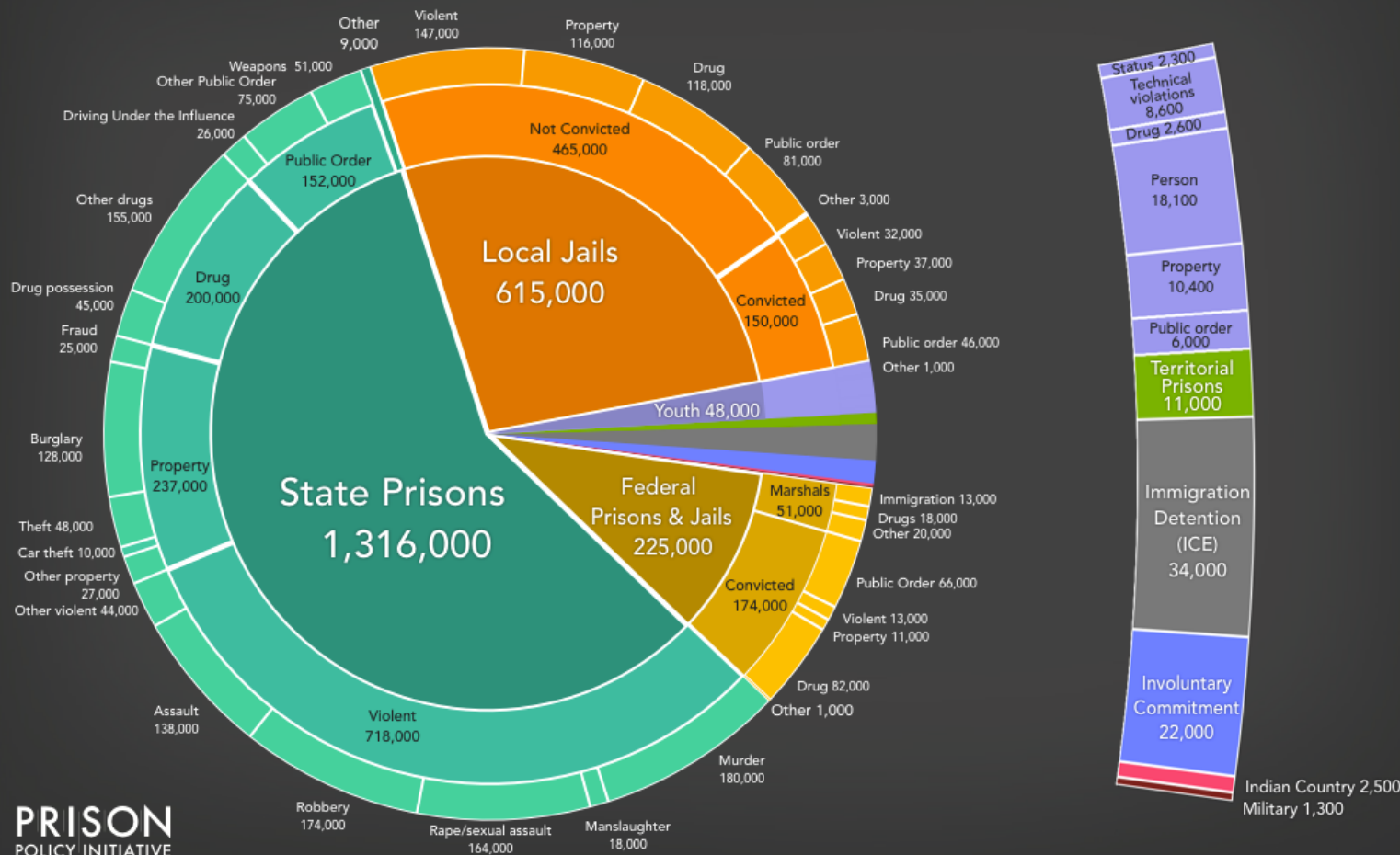
Reentry Population

Chronic Health Conditions
Substance use
Mental Health
Access to Health Care
Homelessness
Unemployment
SNAP/TANF

The State of the Criminal Justice System in the U.S.: A Brief Overview

How many people are locked up in the United States?

The United States locks up more people, per capita, than any other nation. But grappling with why requires us to first consider the many types of correctional facilities and the reasons that 2.3 million people are confined there.



PRISON
POLICY INITIATIVE

Sources and data notes: See <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2018.html>

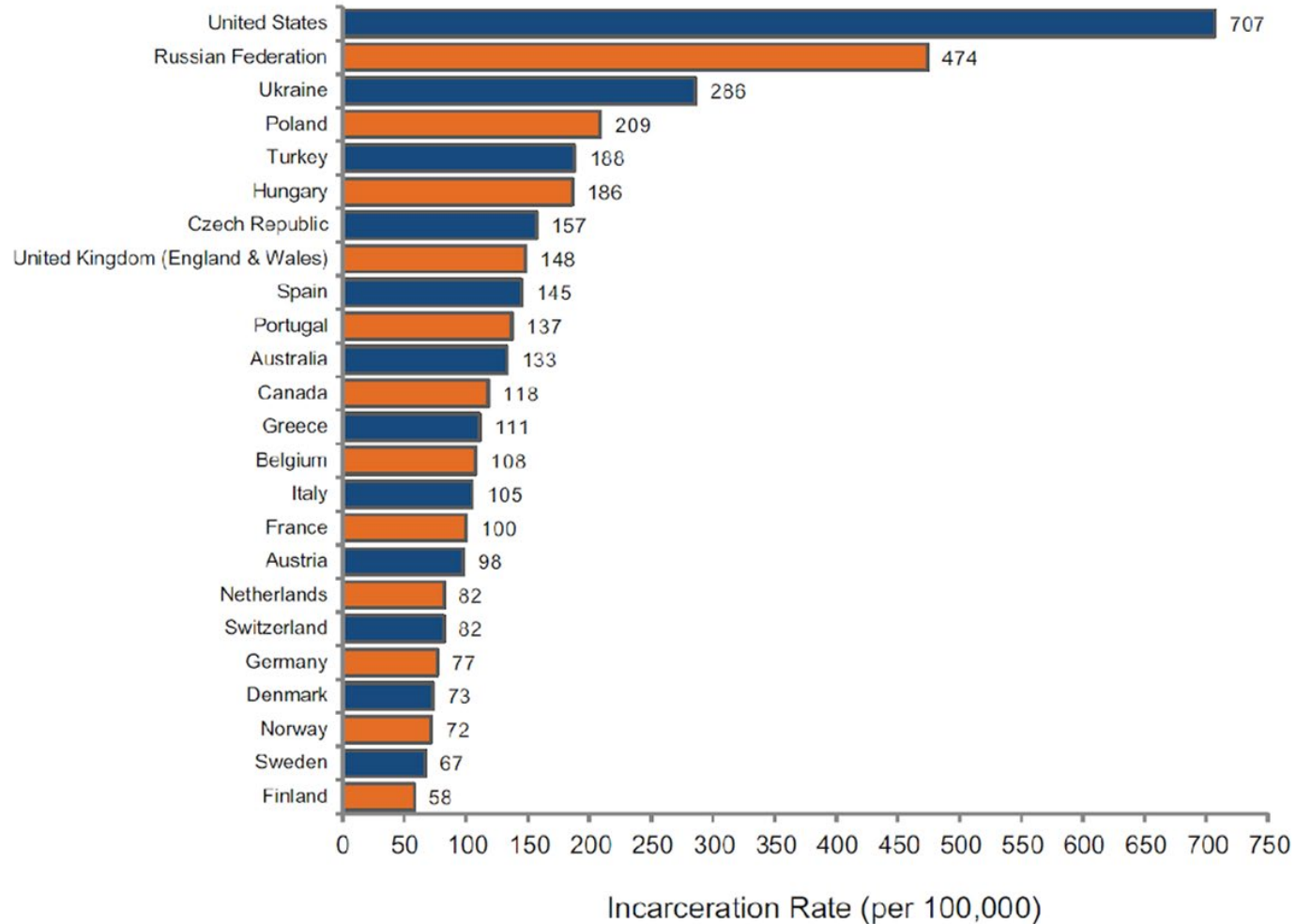
- ❖ 2.3 million people currently incarcerated
- ❖ 700% increase within the past 40 years

- State Prisons: >1.3 million
- Federal Prisons & Jails: 225,000
- Local Jails: >600,000 people **who have not been convicted of a crime**
- Juvenile Detention: 48,000
- ICE Detention: 44,000
- Mass Supervision: Majority of people under correctional control - **Estimated 4.5 million on parole or probation** (Prison Policy Initiative, 2019)

The State of the Criminal Justice System in the U.S.: A Brief Overview

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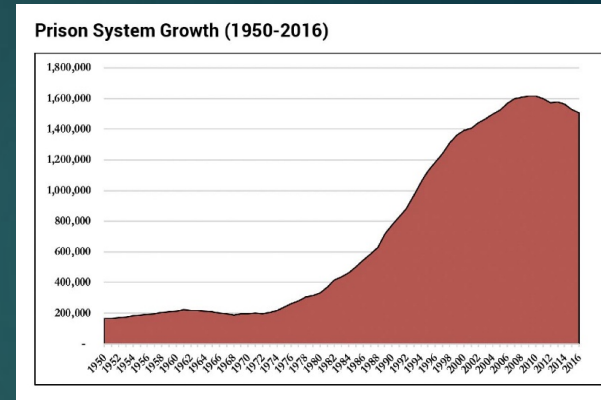
THE GROWTH OF INCARCERATION



- ▶ United States incarcerates more people per capita than every other nation in the world
- ▶ 5 times the incarceration rates of most industrialized nations despite similar crime rates
- ▶ Annual Cost of \$80 Billion (Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), 2019)
- ▶ 206, 268 people serving life (161,957) and virtual life (44,311) sentences (The Sentencing Project, 2017)
- ▶ 1 in 5 people in jail or prison was sentenced for a drug offense (PPI, 2020)

How did we get here?

- ▶ Rise of the “Prison Industrial Complex (PIC)” One-size-fits all solution to social economic, and political problems – over reliance on incarceration
- ▶ Criminal justice policies targeted in poor communities of color
- ▶ Incarcerated more people for longer periods of time
- ▶ 2 million people with mental illness are booked into jails each year. Nearly 15% of men and 30% of women booked into jails have a serious mental health condition.
- ▶ Prison Boom: California has built 23 prisons since 1980
- ▶ Private Prison Boom: In 2018, BJS reported a 47% increase from 87,369 inmates held in privately-run facilities since 2000, many of which serve as immigration detention centers

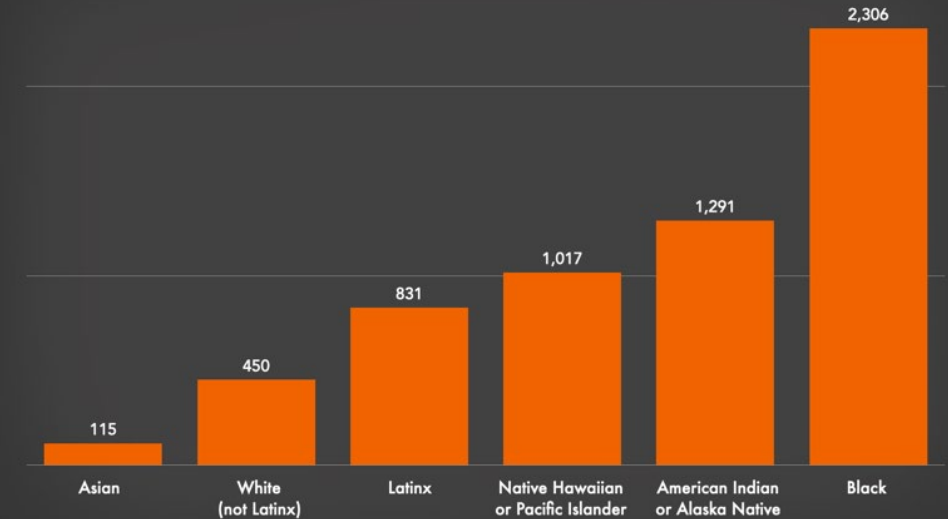


Disparities

- ▶ Overrepresentation of people of color comprising 67% of the total incarcerated population, while only accounting for 37% of the US population
- ▶ African American women 3 times as likely to be incarcerated as white women
- ▶ Imprisonment rate of African Americans for drug charges is almost 6 times that of whites.

U.S. incarceration rates by race and ethnicity, 2010

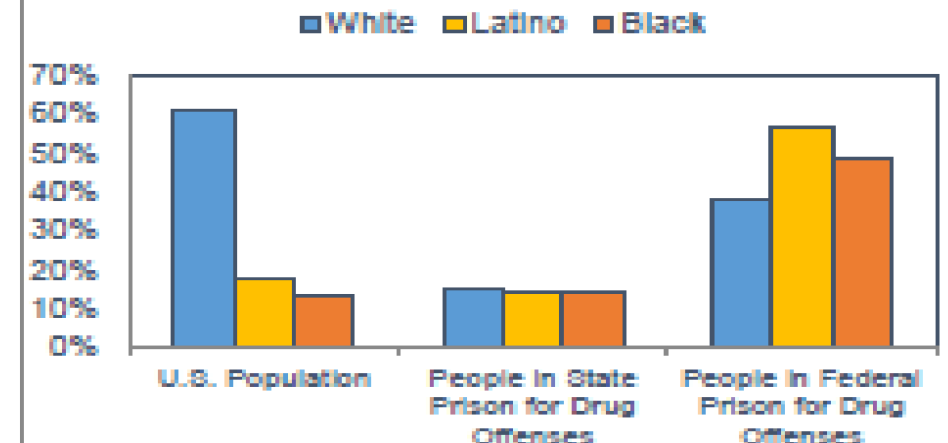
Number of people incarcerated per 100,000 people in each racial or ethnic category



PRISON
POLICY INITIATIVE

Calculated by the Prison Policy Initiative from U.S. Census 2010 Summary File 1. For the full data set and sourcing details, see www.prisonpolicy.org/data/race_ethnicity_gender_2010.xlsx

Disproportionate Impact of Drug Laws on Black and Latino Communities



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau; Bureau of Justice Statistics.¹⁸

Disparities

- The School to Prison Pipeline: A system of school discipline that funnels students from disadvantaged backgrounds out of schools for minor infractions into the criminal justice system before the age of 18.
- Black and Latinx Students are stereotyped as potential criminals before they start Kindergarten.
- Minor infractions are eating in class, violating dress code, using profanity or being “insubordinate.”
- African American and Native American students have the highest numbers for out-of-school suspensions.
- Students with disabilities are 2 times more likely to fall into the school to prison pipeline (U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, 2014).



Police Violence



- ▶ Excessive use of force by police - policing as a public health issue
- ▶ Disproportionate impact on communities of color
- ▶ In 2015, the total of people killed by US police officers showed rate of death for young black men was 5 times higher than white men of the same age
- ▶ Modern policing rooted in white supremacy
- ▶ Racism is detrimental to health in all its forms and is an underlying health issue as a driver of health inequity.

Unarmed People of Color Killed by Police, 1999-2014



Rich Juzwiak and Aleksander Chan

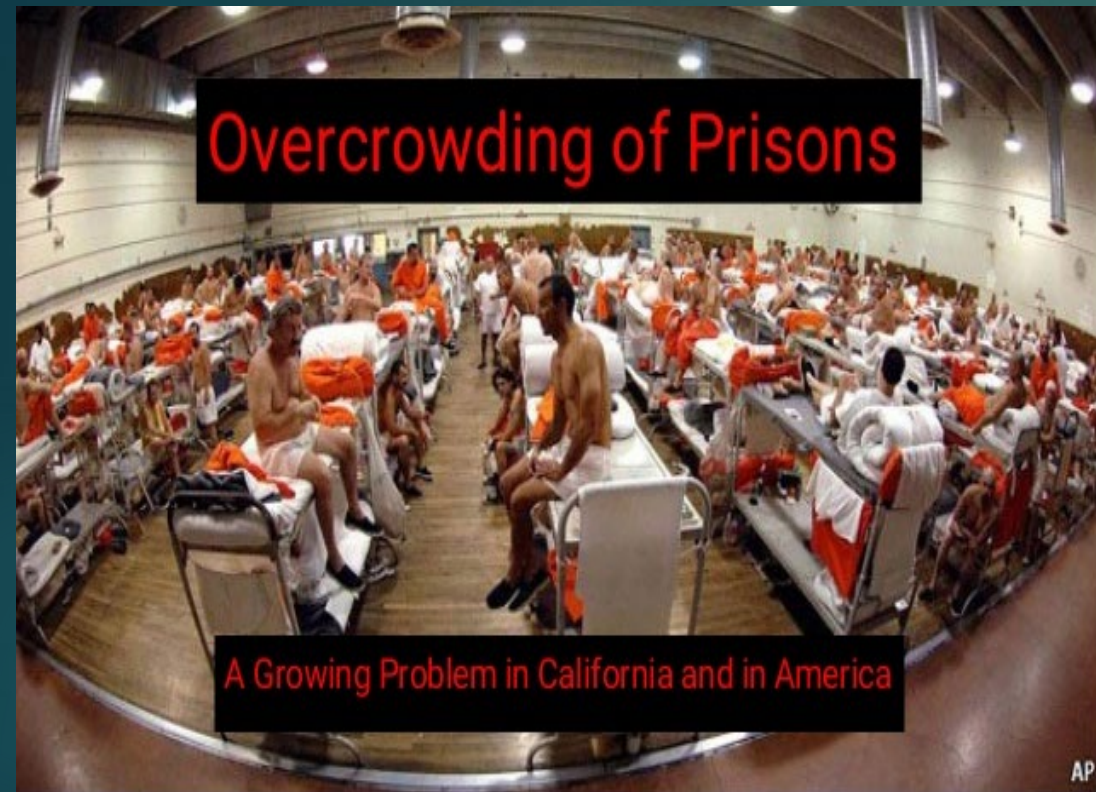
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Why is this a public health issue?



- Overcrowding
- No control over environment
- Violence
- Unhealthy diet
- Lack of opportunities to exercise



Why is this a public health issue?

- ▶ America's jails and prisons have become epicenters of the **coronavirus pandemic**.



And then they come home...

- 95% of inmates return to the community.
- High risk of death first 2 weeks after release: drug overdose, CVD, homicide, suicide

WHY?

- Lack of access to housing, banned from Section 8 housing
- Barred from receiving SNAP benefits, etc.
- Discrimination and barriers to employment
- Enforced abstinence as treatment, higher risk of overdose
- Lack of discharge planning and post-release programs
- Limited supply of medications—30 days max
- Until recently, difficulty obtaining health insurance
- Homelessness
- Lack of social capital



Collateral Consequences



- ▶ Lifelong impact: Limits opportunities, exposure to trauma, disease, chronic stress, social stigma and exclusion.
- ▶ More than 5 million children under 18 in the U.S. who have had at least one parent who has been incarcerated are likely to experience negative health outcomes.

Health Equity and Criminal Justice Concentration Overview



- Instructs students in the **first accredited graduate MPH program to offer an MPH concentration in this specialization**
- Examines the effects of determinants of health on criminal justice involvement, behaviors, and physical and mental health outcomes.
- Analyzes how criminal justice involvement and policies affect determinants of health, behaviors, and physical and mental health outcomes.
- Explores the connection between physical and mental health outcomes and criminal justice involvement and determinants of health.
- Contributes to the expansion of research and policy in the promotion of social justice and health equity
- Addresses and advocating for the needs of populations that are involved with the justice system.
- Provides knowledge and the skills set needed for MPH graduates with clinical training to effectively and efficiently provide medical care for both incarcerated and post-release populations.

What Attracts Students to this Concentration?



“I chose this concentration because it was the concentration that resonated most with me and I can see myself working as a future physician assistant and public health advocate for this population.”

“I wanted to help a group of people who unfairly treated by a system that is built to keep them away.”

“I am passionate about empowering those that have been convicted of a crime because I do not believe this should be considered the only thing that a person is judged for.”

Student Experiences



"The Health Equity & Criminal Justice (HECJ) Public Health track will open your eyes.I found it easy to see how each facet was closely linked with public health...The professors foster a safe environment for discussion and learning. The guest lecturers were absolutely outstanding... This class is one that defined my second semester and will stick with me. I hope to use what I learned to increase advocacy among my fellow students and colleagues, support policy change, and develop intervention programs. This track will prepare you for serving our diverse communities."

-Angela DuTremaine, Joint MSPAS/MPH Candidate, Class of 2021

"We were exposed to so many concepts, both new and old, from rehabilitation services, to exonerees, to lobbying, to health inequities in jails, to the school to prison pipeline, to name a few. I found that we each had some knowledge and some experience that we could all share and learn from...The unique mix of students, community members, professors, and community stakeholders are what made the class so dynamic and meaningful. Everyday after I would leave class, I felt more motivated than ever to be a social justice warrior in our community of Vallejo... I hope others have opportunity to learn and grow from this class, just as I did."

-Ashley-Anne Makaula, Joint MSPAS/MPH Candidate, Class of 2021

Student Experiences



“I learned that it is maybe the most overlooked section of public health yet it needs as much attention as any other public health matter.”

“It has significantly increased my awareness and understanding of the criminal justice system and how much work needs to be done to better advocate for victims of the system.”

“This course has broaden my knowledge of the criminal justice system and lets me know that this broken system is being exposed for the injustice that it brings.”

HECJ Concentration Courses

PBHC 633: Criminal Justice and Public Health (3 Units) Course Objectives:

- ▶ Demonstrate an understanding of the criminal justice system in the U.S. and how mass incarceration is a public health issue.
- ▶ Demonstrate an understanding of how institutional racism, social inequity, the history of punishment and incarceration impacts the health and welfare of individuals, families and communities.
- ▶ Discuss how current and historical policies and practices have coalesced to create mass incarceration and the prison industrial complex.
- ▶ Discuss alternatives to the current U.S. system, harm reduction, support for families and communities impacted by incarceration, and support for those reentering the community after incarceration.
- ❖ ***Students have the opportunity to take this class with community participants in the spring semesters (see photo above).***



***Inaugural PBHC 633 Class – Spring 2019
Students & Community Participants***

HECJ Concentration Courses

PBHC 634: Criminal Justice Law and Public Health Advocacy (3 Units) Course Objectives:

- ▶ Identify problems in the criminal justice system that adversely impact public health
- ▶ Identify decision makers and stakeholders
- ▶ Understand political considerations
- ▶ Understand legal authority for public health policies and interventions
- ▶ Analyze cost-benefits
- ▶ Develop options for mobilizing community partnerships and motivating people to support a cause
- ▶ Field Trip to State Capitol



Current Research

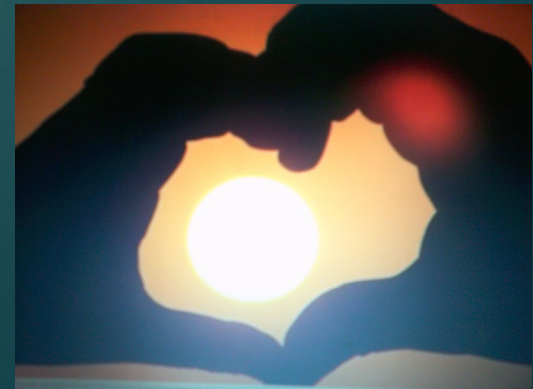
- ▶ HECJ Concentration Needs Assessment Study
- ▶ Program Evaluation - La Clinica Transitions Clinic

Partnership with Exonerated Nation:

- ▶ California Exoneree Health and Well-Being Study
- ▶ Exploratory study on social support among wrongfully convicted

Student projects:

- ▶ Schweitzer Fellowship: Developing Mindfulness Curriculum for Formerly Incarcerated
- ▶ Photovoice Project - *Turning Walls into Doors - from incarceration to inspiration*



HECJ Capstone Opportunities

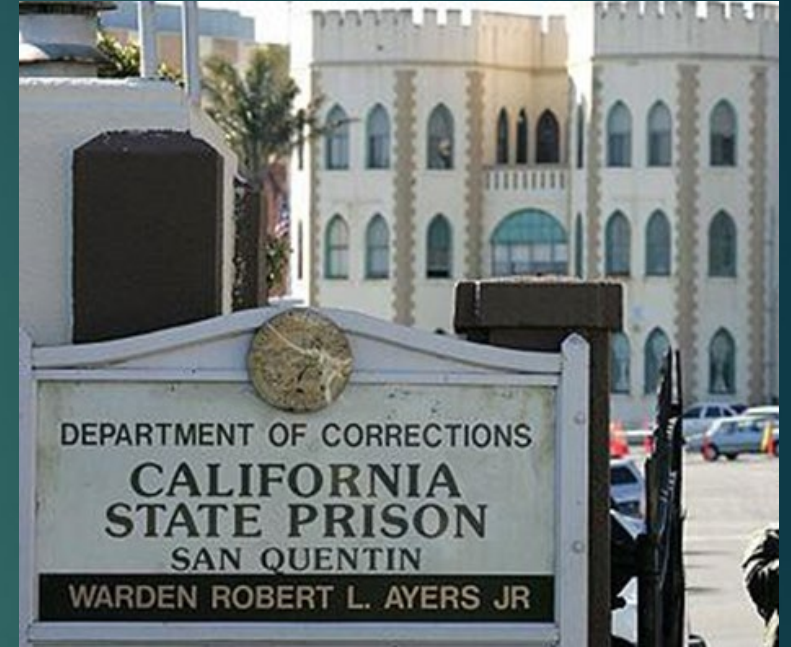
Capstone projects in planning stages by HECJ Concentration students:

- ▶ Policy analysis of syringe exchange programs in the carceral setting to reduce HIV and Hepatitis C infections.
- ▶ Ethics on the use of cadavers for medical schools: The unclaimed bodies of prisoners who die in prison.
- ▶ Breastfeeding and Incarceration: A policy analysis on California counties' written policies under the 2018 law requiring county jails to develop and implement an infant and toddler breast milk feeding policy.

HECJ Field Study

Field Study Sites:

- ▶ Alameda County Public Health
- ▶ Berkeley Youth Alternatives
- ▶ California Correctional Health Care Services
- ▶ Centerforce, Oakland, CA
- ▶ Drug Safe Solano, Vallejo, CA
- ▶ Health Education Council, Sacramento, CA
- ▶ La Clinica de La Raza Transitions Clinic, Vallejo, CA
- ▶ Life Learning Academy Charter High School, San Francisco, CA
- ▶ Solano County Jail Services, Fairfield, CA
- ▶ Roots Community Health Clinic, Oakland, CA



Potential Job Opportunities at the Intersection of Criminal Justice & Public Health

- ▶ Organizations supporting youth, families, and communities
- ▶ Youth detention facilities
- ▶ Learning centers for formerly incarcerated youth
- ▶ Community health clinics
- ▶ Community-based organizations
- ▶ Jails or prisons
- ▶ Governmental health agencies – Solano County
- ▶ Reentry health organizations
- ▶ Prisoner Reentry/Reintegration programs
- ▶ Policy and advocacy groups
- ▶ Exoneree Support Organizations
- ▶ Restorative Justice organizations
- ▶ Medically Assisted Treatment outpatient centers

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Questions?

Thank you!

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