

Dynamics of Working with Offenders
CE 350/CFM 550
Online
June 22 – August 14, 2009

Faculty: Dr. Tom Beckner
Dr. Karen Swanson

Contact Information:

Tom Beckner wtbeckner@att.net
Karen Swanson karen.k.swanson@wheaton.edu 630-752-7400

Course Description:

This course will examine the common characteristics of offenders, the specialized approaches to ministering within a correctional facility, and the Biblical corollaries for transformation as they pertain to offenders. Special attention will be given to the psycho-sociological factors that contribute to criminality, as well as to ways institutional conditions damage family structures, add to the pains of incarceration, and impair successful reentry. Students will examine possible solutions for overcoming these deficits and helping inmates prepare for a return to their communities.

Course Objectives:

- Describe inmate profiles and explain both their usefulness and limitations
- Assess the variables within the psychological make-up and sociological backgrounds of offenders and how the Gospel can best be used to intervene in these behavioral patterns
- Identify the “pains of imprisonment” that exacerbate healing and behavioral change
- Develop biblically based strategies that can positively impact offenders
- Describe the unique characteristics of a variety of offenders and propose compassionate ministry approaches
- Identify the various attitudes and behaviors exhibited by inmates that comprise the unique correctional culture

Texts:

Cornelius, Gary. *Art of a Con*. American Correctional Association, 2001.
ISBN: 1-56991-147-9 (amazon.com)

Mullinax, Wyatt. *Cognitive Renewal*. (Workbook provided by IPM)

Payne, Ruby K., Philip E. DeVol and Terie Dreussi Smith. *Bridges Out of Poverty: Strategies for Professionals and Communities*. Rev. Highlands, TX: aha! Process, Inc. 2006. ISBN: 13: 978-1-929229-69-7 (amazon.com)

Spinaris, Caterina. *Staying Well: Strategies for Corrections Staff*. Wheaton, IL: EMIS, 2008. (Provided by IPM)

Spitale, Lennie. *Prison Ministry: Understanding Prison Culture Inside and Out*. Nashville. Broadman & Holman Publishers. 2002 (amazon.com)

Spitale, Lennie. *Sentenced-Now What?* Wheaton, IL: EMIS 2007 (Provided by IPM)

Rollo, Ned. *99 Days and a Get Up*. (Provided by IPM)

Course Reader (Articles, Chapters and Government Documents)

Bureau of Justice Statistics

- Profile of Jail Inmates, 2002: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/pji02.pdf>
- Education and Correctional Populations: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/ecp.pdf>
- Alcohol and Crime: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/ac.pdf>

JRank.org Free Encyclopedia:

- <http://law.jrank.org/pages/795/Crime-Causation-Biological-Theories.html>
- <http://law.jrank.org/pages/813/Crime-Causation-Psychological-Theories.html>
- <http://law.jrank.org/pages/824/Crime-Causation-Sociological-Theories.html>

Motivating Offenders to Change: A Guide for Probation and Parole. National Institute of Corrections. NIC Accession Number 022253, June 2007. (Retrieved at www.nicic.org or Blackboard)

Brooks, L. Solomon, A., Kohl, R., Osborne, J., Reid, J., McDonald, S. & Hoover, H. *Reincarceration: The Experiences of Men Returning to Massachusetts Prisons.* Urban Institute, Justice Policy Center, April, 2008, sections III, V, VI.

REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS:

Follow the guidelines for writing assignments.

- 1. Readings, Class assignments, Discussion Board (200 points) DUE: See schedule**
Each week is worth 25 points. Journal responses and Discussion board entries will be graded on the quality of critical and reflective thinking, answering the guiding questions, questions posed, and support provided for responses.
- 2. Offender Profiles & Crime Causation Theories (150 points) DUE: Week 1**
Read each of the three introductory essays from the JRank Encyclopedia, as well as the four additional articles from the “See also” links found at the bottom of each of the three sites. Then write a 1 page word reaction paper for each of the three causation areas in which you point to Scripture that either supports or appears to contradict the expressed theory.
- 3. Prison Culture Paper (150 points) DUE: Week 2-3**
Read Spitale’s *Prison Ministry*. The book is divided into four sections: *Feelings, Perspectives, Dynamics, and Engaging the Culture*. Choose one chapter from each of these four areas and write a 1 page response for each selected chapter (a total of four papers) using the following process:
As you read the material, consider how the information contained in each chapter meets each of these three criteria:
 - How has it increased your understanding of inmates?
 - How has it increased your sensitivity to the inmate’s plight?
 - How might it affect your practical approach to ministry in the future?
- 4. Cognitive Renewal DVD and Workbook (150 points) DUE: Week 4**

- 5. Corrections Cautions (50 points) DUE: Week 5**
Read *The Art of a Con* and *Staying Well* reflect on ways you have been conned and describe training and prevention strategies. Write a 2 page paper that incorporates the following:
- Relate situations in which you have observed some of the specific ways of manipulation mentioned in the text. To what degree were you or someone you observed taken in by the “game?” What problems arose as a result of this? Using principles presented in the text, describe how the situation could have been handled more appropriately?
 - Discuss what new insights you have gained through your reading of this book and explain specifically what adjustments you can make in your interactions with inmates that will reduce the possibility that you might be manipulated by an inmate game.

Special Populations (50 points) DUE: Week 5
Select a special population and provide a one-page report that describes the characteristics and recommendations for working with that population. (Women, gangs, juvenile, addicts, mentally ill, mentally disabled, physically disabled, sex offenders, HIV, etc.). Use Turabian style for references. Include a list of additional resources.

- 6. Bridges Out of Poverty Paper (100 points) DUE: Week 6**
Read *Bridges Out of Poverty*. Choose one of the following and write a 2-3 page paper:
- Create a specific plan to implement the teachings of this book within your ministry/organization. Develop a staff training session. OR
 - Create a specific plan to implement the teachings of this book into your work with offenders or ex-offenders as chaplain, mentor, volunteer, etc. Describe the specific strategies you would use to help people transition out of poverty.
- 7. Motivational Interviewing (75 points) DUE: Week 7**
Read *Motivating Offenders to Change: A Guide for Probation and Parole* and view the video. Apply motivational interviewing with an individual. Describe the person and area they want to change. Reflect on your application of motivational interviewing. (1-2 pages)
- 8. Reentry (75 points) DUE: Week 8**
Read *99 Days and a Get Up* and *Reincarcerated: The Experiences of Men* (sections III, V, VI) prepare a description of the emotions of a newly released inmate and an overview of a plan that addresses issues raised in the readings for a soon-to-be-released offender. Assume you will have the opportunity to work with the offender six months prior to his/her release and your plan will form the basis of your interactions to prepare him/her for this step. (2 pages)

Schedule: (On Blackboard)

Expectations and Guidelines:

- Participation on the discussion board, preparedness, and diligent work are important for this to be a collaborative and effective learning experience.
- Grades:

A	94-100	A-	90-93	B+	87-89
B	84-86	B-	80-83	C+	77-79
C	74-76	C-	70-73	D+	67-69
D	64-66	D-	60-63	F	0-59

- **Writing Assignments:**
 Course work is due at the assigned due date unless prior arrangement have been made. Late papers will be assessed half a letter grade for each day late. Written work is expected to be college-level quality, spell checked, and proof read. Failure to do so will affect the grade on the paper. Use the Turabian style manual. Double space your work, use 12-point type, and 1” margins.
- **Academic Honesty:**
 As students and faculty of Wheaton College, we are members of an academic community with high scholarly standards, a commitment to pursuing truth, a recognition that our actions affect others in the community and a desire to follow Jesus’ example of integrity and truthfulness. Academic honesty is essential for establishing and maintaining the trust that is fundamental to the educational process. Examples of academic dishonesty, which will result in disciplinary action, include, but are not limited to . . .
Cheating: using unauthorized material or unauthorized help from another person in work or examination submitted for academic credit
Fabrication: inventing information, citations, reporting participation in activities never done, or inflating the effort put in and/or the effect of various self-reported activities
Facilitating academic dishonesty: providing unauthorized material or information to another person
Plagiarism: representing the work of another as one’s own without acknowledging the source
Misrepresentation: giving the impression of having done more significant work than you actually did (e.g., padding references with works not consulted, doing less than your fair share of a group project, or recycling one’s own work)

Disciplinary responses will be individualized to reflect the maturity of the student, the severity of the infraction and any evolving patterns.