

2018 Application Form for ASC Grants for New Service-Learning Course Proposals

Application Deadline: February 5, 2018

You MUST use this form to submit your proposal. Please send submission (form and supplementary materials) to Linda Hood (hood.82@osu.edu), Executive Assistant to Associate Executive Dean Steven Fink.

1. Working Title of Course Proposal

“Mass Incarceration in America”

2. Applicant Information

- Name: Hasan Kwame Jeffries
- Title: Associate Professor
- Department: History
- Address: 336 Dulles Hall, 230 Annie & John Glenn Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43210
- Phone: 614-688-4120
- E-mail: Jeffries.57@osu.edu

3. Course Description

- Provide general description of course goals of proposed undergraduate course.

The overarching aim of this course is to help students better understand the origins, evolution, and consequences of mass incarceration in America. At the end of the course, students will be able to explain the historical processes behind the criminalization of blackness and the reasons for the persistence of racial disparities in the criminal justice system. They will have a clear sense of the centrality of the war on drugs to the problem of mass incarceration, the social and fiscal costs of extreme imprisonment, and the challenges of re-entry for formerly incarcerated individuals. They will also gain a thorough understanding of how the criminal justice system works, from policing to prosecutions to parole. In addition, they will learn the mechanics of organizing a social justice campaign.

- Provide general description of content of proposed undergraduate course.

This course will be divided into four parts. Part 1 will focus on the war on drugs, examining its political roots during President Richard Nixon’s administration, maturation during President Ronald Reagan’s time in office, and acceleration during President Bill Clinton’s tenure. It will also focus on patterns and practices of policing, as well as real world issues related to addiction, including the changing nature of drug use, such as the reasons for the surge in opioid-based addiction over the last decade and a half. Part 2 will examine the courts and the criminal justice system, taking a hard look at prosecutorial conduct, especially plea bargaining, shortcomings within the bail system, challenges facing poor defenders, and the role of judges in sentencing and sentencing reform, including alternatives to incarceration. Part 3 shifts the focus to inside prisons themselves, examining everyday prison life and the cost and politics of prison privatization. This unit will challenge students to answer tough ethical questions related to crime and punishment. In Part IV, the course will focus on the challenges of reentry, from putative probation and parole restrictions to felon disenfranchisement.

- Provide general description of service-learning component of the course.

Mass incarceration is one of the leading social justice issues of the day. This course, therefore, will operate in partnership with a community-based organization at the forefront of the effort to end mass incarceration locally and nationally. Thus, there will be a component of the course that will focus on community engaged learning through immersive experiences. I envision the course meeting one day a week for three hours, with students visiting various course-related places during each course unit. During Part 1, for example, students would visit a drug rehabilitation center to meet and listen to individuals recovering from addiction, and/or sitting in on a legislative committee meeting on drug laws at the

statehouse. During Part 2, we would spend the day in state or federal court. During Part 3, we would visit a state prison (I'll be meeting with the warden at the state prison in Marion, Ohio in two weeks). And during Part 4, we would visit with individuals transitioning back into society after having served time in prison.

The service-learning component of this course will revolve around learning the mechanics of organizing a social justice campaign, from understanding a problem and creating and controlling narratives of change, to identifying, proposing, and implementing practical solutions. Students will work on personalizing the problem of mass incarceration by interviewing individuals and family members touched by imprisonment, documenting their stories, and creating human interest blogs and videos about the impact that mass incarceration has had on these individuals, their families, and their communities.

- Provide general explanation of how service-learning activities will contribute to the course goals.

Students will gain a more thorough understanding of the origin, evolution, and consequences of mass incarceration by interviewing people touched directly by the addiction, the war on drugs, and mass incarceration, and observing the criminal justice system at work. Assisting the community organization partner with its campaign to end mass incarceration through, in part, bail and sentencing reform efforts, will help students learn how to organize a social justice campaign.

- Optional: Should you happen to already have a tentative syllabus (with course number), please provide it.
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4. Community Focus and Reciprocity

- Identify and provide a brief profile of the intended community partner(s). (If a specific partnership has not yet been confirmed at the time of the grant proposal, provide a clear explanation of the kind of community partner(s) being sought and provide some examples of appropriate candidates for community partner(s.)
Community partners must be tax-exempt nonprofits or organizations with an easily identified public service component to their mission.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio (ACLU) has agreed to partner with me on a service-learning course on mass incarceration. The ACLU of Ohio is a non-partisan, statewide organization headquartered in Columbus that has been organizing to protect the civil liberties of Americans since the 1920s. In recent years, the ACLU of Ohio has been actively organizing to change state and federal drug laws, reform Ohio police and prison practices, and defend the constitutional rights of those tied up in the criminal justice system.

- Describe the community partners' participation in the development of the service project.

I have had several brainstorming sessions with the executive director of the ACLU of Ohio, Mr. Ben Guess, during which time we developed the broad outlines for the course (its four parts), identified individuals, including several Columbus criminal defense attorneys, judges, federal prosecutors, and parole officers, who would be willing to meet with the class, as well as drug rehabilitation and prisoner reentry organizations that could serve as secondary partners. Mr. Guess also agreed to let the class meet at the ACLU of Ohio's new office, which is located at 108 City Park Avenue in Columbus, just off of High Street (easily accessible by bus from Ohio State's campus) and a short distance from the statehouse and criminal justice district, providing easy access for guest speakers, and making it convenient for students to go to district itself.

- How does the service project reflect priorities and stated goals/needs of community partners and collaborative planning by all partners?

The ACLU of Ohio is committed to protecting the civil liberties of Americans and increasing awareness and understanding of the US Constitution and its applicability in everyday life. By focusing on mass incarceration, which in so many ways raises important questions about people's constitutional rights, this course speaks directly to the organization's core mission. More precisely, the students in the class would

not only be learning about the problem of mass incarceration, but would be helping the organization advance its efforts to reform the criminal justice system by interviewing individuals and family members touched by imprisonment, documenting their stories, and creating human interest blogs and videos about the impact of mass incarceration, which the organization will then be able to use in its advocacy work.

- Describe the anticipated community benefit and impact of the service project.

Mass incarceration is an issue that touches the lives of millions of Americans. At present, there are more than 2.2 million people in prison or jail and another 5 million on probation or parole. And many millions more are touched directly by mass incarceration because they are the parents, spouses, partners, and children of people under government supervision. By helping an organization committed to ending mass incarceration advance its organizing program, the students in this class will contribute to solving one of the most vexing social justice issues of the last quarter century.

5. Letter of Support from Department Chair

- Letter should provide departmental support for offering the service-learning course on a continuing basis once approved.
- Letter should also address how the course plays into the department's curriculum. For example, will course be an elective that will count toward the minor? Will it request General Education status?



February 5, 2018

Steven Fink
Associate Executive Dean for Curriculum and Instruction
College of Arts and Sciences
The Ohio State University
114 University Hall
230 N Oval Mall
CAMPUS MAIL

RE: Service-Learning Course Grant

Dear Steve:

It is my pleasure to endorse Associate Professor **Hasan Kwame Jeffries's** request for a Service-Learning Course Grant.

Hasan's course Mass Incarceration in America is proposed in partnership with the ACLU of Ohio. This course would qualify as a post-1750 and North American history course, chronologically and geographically. Thematically, it fits squarely in the following three constellations: 1) Race, Ethnicity, Nation (REN); 2) Power, Culture and Society (PCS); and 3) Women's, Gender and Sexuality history. Additionally, it could be a core component of a thematic minor in African American history, which Hasan hopes to be able to add to the books shortly. Hasan envisions this as a 3000 level course; however, it could be a 4000 level gateway capstone course.

The proposed course would fulfill the Diversity GE (Social Diversity in the United States), by providing students with a clear understanding of modern African American history and contemporary American race relations (1960s to the present). It would also fulfill the historical study GE requirement by helping students gain keen insight into an array of questions, sources and methods that historians have used to uncover the intersection between African American history and public policy, including oral history. It would help them to develop the skills necessary to critically analyze primary source material.

Based on Hasan's well thought out and detailed proposal, there is good reason for confidence that this project will achieve its goals.

I hope the committee can support this important project. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nathan Rosenstein", with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Nathan Rosenstein
Professor and Chair
rosenstein.1@osu.edu