

**UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA  
Department of Sociology**

**Selected Topics in Criminology:  
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE: The Challenge of Transformation Through Justice**

**Sociology 077.374 L01  
(Term 1, 2003, 3 Credit Hours)  
Slot 6, 11:30 - 12:30 pm Monday, Wednesday and Friday  
214 Tier**

(‘Break-out’ discussion group room TBA, last names A-K, Friday only)

**Instructor:** Andrew Woolford

**Office:** 327 Isbister Building

**Office Hours:** Wednesday, 1:30 to 3:00, or by appointment

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**Course Objectives:**

This course focuses on community-based processes of ‘restorative justice.’ Restorative justice is said to be a new ‘paradigm’ in criminal dispute resolution. Its adherents claim that it heals rather than punishes crime, that it has the potential to transform human relationships, and that it can help build community capacities (e.g., establish helping networks). Currently, restorative practices are employed to deal with crimes ranging from minor shoplifting offenses to gross human rights violations; however, there exists a great deal of controversy surrounding these practices. Some critics suggest that restorative justice ‘widens the net’ of social control and brings the disciplinary force of the state deeper into communities. Others argue that the ideological underpinnings of restorative justice reflect a conservative, Judeo-Christian worldview. In this class, we will assess practices of restorative justice in order to gauge the promise and the perils of these popular justice processes. The broad question guiding our efforts will be: is a ‘transformative’ politics of criminal justice possible? In the second half of the course, we will turn our attention to the controversial application of restorative measures to family violence.

**Required Readings:**

Daniel Van Ness and Karen Heetderks Strong 2002. *Restoring Justice, Second Edition*, Cincinnati, Oh: Anderson Publishing Co.

Heather Strang and John Braithwaite (Eds.) 2002. *Restorative Justice and Family Violence*, London: Cambridge University Press.

## **Assignments and Grades:**

Participation: 15 %

Restorative Justice Program Evaluation or Critical Essay: 30%

Exam 1: 15%

Exam 2: 20%

Exam 3: 20%

**Class Participation (15%):** In our first class, each student will be assigned to a ‘community group’. Thereafter, students will be separated into their respective community groups every Friday (Discussion groups will begin near the end of September. On the Friday following an exam, students will meet in the regular classroom rather than their discussion group). During these sessions, students will role-play community members participating in a meeting to discuss how to deal with specific criminological issues that they collectively face (I will provide the topic for discussion prior to each community meeting). At every community meeting, one student will play the role of moderator and another will play the role of ‘minute-taker’. Minutes will be due either at the end of the discussion group or by the next class (after this point the minutes will not be accepted). For each set of minutes, all of the members of the respective ‘community group’ will receive the same mark. Evaluation of class minutes will be based upon the quality of the discussion and the involvement of multiple class members in the discussion surrounding an assigned issue(s). The cumulated grades for the minutes of the meetings will serve as the basis for your participation mark. However, I reserve the right to lower or increase grades based on my own assessment of your participation in the community meetings. Students who take this exercise seriously and are actively involved in the community meetings might receive a higher grade. Students who skip classes and do not participate will receive a lower grade.

**Restorative Justice Program Evaluation or Critical Essay (30%):** Students will have the option to complete an essay on **one** of two term projects.

- 1) A limited number (5 to 7) of students will be given the opportunity to conduct volunteer research for the John Howard Society of Manitoba. This research will involve a familiarization with the restorative justice goals of the JHS and activities related to the Society’s preparations for Restorative Justice Week (this may include the creation of posters, role play, and other such activities). Students may also receive opportunities to observe employees of ‘Restorative Resolutions’ (a JHS project) in their activities. At the end of the semester, students will be asked to produce a 7-10 page summary and assessment of their volunteer experience to be handed in no later than December 5th, 2003 (a later due date is provided to students who choose this option because it is expected that their volunteer activities will involve a larger time commitment than that required of those who select the essay option). Students wishing to choose this option will need to inform the professor no later than September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2003.

**OR**

2) A 10-12 page, research-based (a minimum of 10 citations), critical analysis of some aspect of restorative justice. Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Restorative Justice and the State: The Risk of Cooptation
- The Problem of Community
- Restorative Justice and Drug Use
- Restorative Justice and Juvenile Offenders
- Restorative Justice and Violent Crimes
- Restorative Justice and Traditional Forms of Aboriginal Justice
- Restorative Justice in Australia, New Zealand, the U.S., Canada, Britain or other Nation
- Restorative Justice and Domestic Violence
- Restorative Justice and Community Policing
- Restorative Release: Reintegrating Prisoners into the Community
- Restorative Justice and Social Capital
- Techniques of Restoration: Circles, Conferences and Mediation
- Restorative Justice after War Crimes or Crimes Against Humanity

Essays are due in-class on November 24. Late essays will be penalized three percentage points per day (weekends count as two days).

**In-Class Exams (15%, 20%, and 20%):** In-class exams will be held on September 29<sup>th</sup>, October 29<sup>th</sup>, and December 3<sup>rd</sup>. The first two exams will consist of multiple choice questions (approximately 50%) and short answer questions (approximately 50%). The final in-class exam will be comprised of two essay questions (worth 50% each). Exams are not cumulative.

(Note: Students are required to provide a medical note within one week if a test is missed and they require a make-up.)

**Academic Integrity:** Students should acquaint themselves with the University's policy on 'Examinations: Personations' (p. 28) and 'Plagiarism and Cheating' (p. 29) found in the University of Manitoba Undergraduate Calendar.

### **Grading:**

Cut-off points for converting percentage grades into letter grades:

|              |           |             |              |
|--------------|-----------|-------------|--------------|
| A+: 100- 90% | A: 89-80% | B+: 79-75%  | B: 74-70%    |
| C+: 69-65%   | C: 64-60% | D: 59 - 50% | F: below 50% |

### **Course Outline:**

#### Part One: The Idea of Restorative Justice

*Week One:* The Roots of Restorative Justice

Readings: Van Ness and Strong, Chapter 1

*Week Two:* Restorative Justice: A Values-Based Approach

Readings: Van Ness and Strong, Chapters 2 and 3

Part Two: Restorative Practices

*Week Three:* Restorative Forms and Results

Readings: Van Ness and Strong, Chapters 4 and 5

*Week Four:* Restoring Communities, Victims and Offenders

Readings: Van Ness and Strong, Chapters 6 and 7

Part Three: Restorative Justice On Trial

*Week Five:* Criticisms of Restorative Justice

Readings: Van Ness and Strong, Chapter 8 and 9

*Week Six:* Implementing Restorative Justice,

Readings: Van Ness and Strong, Chapter 10

*Week Seven:* Restoration and Transformation

Readings: Van Ness and Strong, Chapters 11 and 12

Part Four: Restorative Justice and Family Violence

*Week Eight:* The Argument for a Restorative Response to Family Violence

Readings: Strang and Braithwaite, Chapters 1 and 2

*Week Nine:* Feminist Challenges to Restorative Justice

Readings: Strang and Braithwaite, Chapters 3 and 7

*Week Ten:* Feminist Models of Restorative Justice?

Readings: Strang and Braithwaite, Chapters 4 and 6

*Week Eleven:* Indigenous Challenges to Restorative Justice

Readings: Strang and Braithwaite, Chapters 9 and 12

*Week Twelve:* Indigenous Justice or Restorative Justice?

Readings: Strang and Braithwaite, Chapters 10 and 11

*Week Thirteen:* Exam Review

Voluntary withdrawal deadline is November 12, 2003.