

SEX OFFENSES

GNDR_ST 321/HISTORY 300



At last count, there were 912,643 people on sex offender registries in the U.S., while between 10% and 20% of all state prisoners are doing time for sex offenses. This course examines the history of how the policing of sex offenses came to be such a significant part of the broader problem of mass incarceration in America. We will begin in the 1800s—when European psychiatrists wrote treatises theorizing different kinds of sexual “deviance”—and proceed from there to consider the creation of new sex laws and ways of policing sexual crime in the 20th-century U.S. Topics will include the politics of sexual assault and child sexual abuse—perhaps the most common crimes that come to mind when one thinks of the term “sex offense.” But the course will also consider how sex offender laws have criminalized many other kinds of sexual activity and gender expression, such as gay sex, underage sex, public sex, gender nonconformity, sex work, pornography, and sex involving STDs such as syphilis and HIV.

Scott De Orio

MW 3:30-4:50pm
Parkes 223