



Geographies of Mass Incarceration Mini-Conference

November 2-3
State College, Pennsylvania
Penn State University

“Borders and prisons—walls and cages—are global crises. Walls and cages are fundamental to managing the wealth, social inequalities, and opposition to harm created by capitalism and the present round of neocolonial dispossession.

But what is this moment, and what kind of crisis is this?
(Loyd et al 2012)

Mass incarceration—the removal of millions of people into a condition of social death and the infrastructure for this removal—is central to the functioning of global capitalism at our current moment. The U.S. alone imprisons over 2.3 million people and keeps over 7 million people either in prison or under some form of carceral supervision. While prison populations in some states have been declining, prompting state governments to close facilities as part of broader financial austerity measures, other states continue to build more and more cages. At the same time, immigrant detention rates have been steadily increasing. These dramatic processes prompt us to ask, what is the relationship between prisons and other social, economic, military, and political processes? What is the relationship between incarceration and militarization? And, how can geographers contribute to a critical examination of incarceration?

The goal of this meeting is to bring together graduate students examining questions related to mass incarceration, detention, policing, and militarization in the context of ongoing social and economic crisis. The small meeting will be structured so as to provide a forum for to share work related to prisons both within and beyond geography. The meeting will include: workshop sessions during which research may be presented and discussed, group discussion of methods in prison research, and discussion on critical directions for the study of prisons. A central focus will be to have meaningful discussions about how to develop this work as we think together about future directions for prison geographies.

We invite participants from geography and other fields to come join these discussions over the weekend of November 2nd. Relevant work may include, but isn't limited to, the political economy of prisons, policing, immigration detention, school-to-prison pipelines, militarization, criminalization, and the disciplining of subjects. To attend, please reply to the organizers with: Name, Institution, Department, a title and short abstract (if you have work to present), and whether or not you would like us to arrange a host for you to stay with while you are here. Space is limited so please register by Friday, October 18.

For any questions or to attend, please contact organizers: Jenna Christian, Penn State University, jmc5974@psu.edu or Jack Norton, CUNY Graduate Center, jnorton@gc.cuny.edu