

Curriculum Vitae

MICHAEL GIBSON-LIGHT

University of Denver  
Sociology & Criminology  
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PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT

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2019 – **Assistant Professor of Sociology & Criminology**, University of Denver

EDUCATION & TRAINING

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- 2019 **Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology**, University of Arizona  
*Title: “The Prison as Market: How Penal Labor Systems Reproduce Inequality”*  
♦ Honorable Mention: 2020 Law and Society Association Dissertation Prize
- 2013 **Master of Arts in Sociology**, University of Arizona
- 2009 **Bachelor of Arts in Sociology**, with honors, University of Missouri – St. Louis

PUBLICATIONS

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**Book**

Gibson-Light, Michael. *Forthcoming* (projected October 2022). *Orange-Collar Labor: Work & Inequality in Prison* [tentative title]. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

**Refereed Journal Articles**

- Gibson-Light, Michael. *Online first*. “Remote Control: Horizontal Surveillance and the Gendering of Carceral Punishment.” *Theoretical Criminology*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/13624806221082094>
- Davis, Andrew P., Michael Gibson-Light, Eric Bjorklund, and Teron Nunley. *Online first*. “Institutional Arrangements and Power Threat: Diversity, Democracy, and Punitive Attitudes.” *Justice Quarterly*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2022.2045343>
- Gibson-Light, Michael and Josh Seim. 2020. “Punishing Fieldwork: Penal Domination and Prison Ethnography.” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 49(5):666-690.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0891241620932982>
- Gibson-Light, Michael. 2020. “Sandpiles of Dignity: Labor Status and Boundary-Making in the Contemporary American Prison.” *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* 6(1):198-216. <https://doi.org/10.7758/RSF.2020.6.1.09>

- ◆ Winner: 2019 James D. Thompson Graduate Student Paper Award, Section on Organizations, Occupations, & Work, American Sociological Association
- ◆ Honorable Mention: 2019 Graduate Student Paper Award, Section on the Sociology of Law, American Sociological Association

Davis, Andrew P. and Michael Gibson-Light. 2020. "Difference & Punishment: Ethno-Political Exclusion, Colonial Institutional Legacies, and Incarceration." *Punishment & Society* 22(1):3-27. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1462474518816643>

- ◆ Winner: 2018 Graduate Student Paper Award, Division on International Criminology, American Society of Criminology

Gibson-Light, Michael. 2018. "Ramen Politics: Informal Money and Logics of Resistance in the Contemporary American Prison." *Qualitative Sociology* 41(2):199-220. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-018-9376-0>

- ◆ Winner: 2017 Graduate Student Paper Award, Division on Corrections & Sentencing, American Society of Criminology
- ◆ Winner: 2017 Graduate Student Paper Award, Division on Critical Criminology & Social Justice, American Society of Criminology
- ◆ Winner: 2017 Robert Dentler Award for Outstanding Student Achievement, Section on Sociological Practice & Public Sociology, American Sociological Association

Gibson-Light, Michael. 2017. "Classification Struggles in Semi-Formal and Precarious Work: Lessons from Inmate Labor and Cultural Production." *Research in the Sociology of Work* 31:61-90. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S0277-283320170000031002> / also available via [Google Books](#)

Rivas, Ricardo and Michael Gibson-Light. 2016. "Exploring Culture through In-Depth Interviews: Is it Useful to Ask People What They Think, Mean, and Do?" ["Explorando fenómenos culturales a través de entrevistas en profundidad: ¿de qué sirve preguntar a las personas acerca de lo que piensan, de lo que quieren decir y de lo que hacen?"] *Cinta de Moebio* 57:316-329. <https://dx.doi.org/10.4067/S0717-554X2016000300007>

Gibson, Michael. 2014. "'That's Hip-Hop to Me': Temporal Logics of Authenticity in Independent Cultural Production." *Poetics* 46:38-55. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2014.09.002>

### **Book Chapters**

Gibson-Light, Michael. 2020. "Foreword." Pp. v-viii in *The Pawn*, by Gustavo "Goose" Alvarez. Seattle, WA: Amazon Publishing. [Amazon Books](#)

### **Book Reviews**

Gibson-Light, Michael. 2020. Book Review: "Erin Hatton, Coerced: Work Under Threat of Punishment." *Punishment & Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1462474520980812>

Gibson-Light, Michael. 2019. Book Review: "Bruce Western, Homeward: Life in the Year After Prison." *International Sociology* 34(5):639-641. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0268580919870742b>

### **Encyclopedia Entries**

Puetz, Kyle and Michael Gibson. 2015. "Authenticity." Pp. 160-161 in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Economics & Society*, edited by F. F. Wherry and J. Schor. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452206905.n68>

### **Other Publications**

Gibson, Michael. 2008. "Working for CHAMP after Hours: The Role of Volunteers in the CHAMP Program." Pp. 46-59 in *Research Report: An Evaluation of the CHAMP Service Dog Training Program at the Women's Eastern Reception, Diagnostic, & Correctional Center*, edited by Jody Miller. St. Louis, MO: University of Missouri – St. Louis.

### **TALKS & PRESENTATIONS**

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#### **Invited Talks**

Gibson-Light, Michael. 2022. "Horizontal Surveillance and the Gendering of Carceral Punishment." U of I Sociology Colloquium. February 18. University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Urbana, Illinois. (*Presented virtually*)

Gibson-Light, Michael. 2021. "'There's Rules in Prison': Penal Labor as Racialized and Racializing." USC Sociology Colloquium. April 14. University of Southern California. Los Angeles, CA. (*Presented virtually*)

Gibson-Light, Michael. 2020. "Dignity, Work, and Punishment Behind Bars." Exclusion and Extraction: A Symposium on Criminal Justice Contact and Labor Reallocation. April 17. University of Berkeley Institute for Research on Labor and Employment. Berkeley, CA. (*Event cancelled due to COVID-19 pandemic*)

Gibson-Light, Michael. 2020. "Punching the Jailhouse Clock: Investigating Inequality at Work in an American Prison." Sociology in Action Annual Lecture. February 18. University of Houston. Houston, TX.

Gibson-Light, Michael. 2017. "Prisoner Labor and the Production of an Underclass." March 15. University of Cambridge Prisons Research Centre. Cambridge, United Kingdom.

Gibson, Michael. 2013. "'That's Hip-Hop to Me': Temporal Logics of Authenticity in Independent Cultural Production." Arizona Culture Workshop. October 9. University of Arizona. Tucson, AZ.

#### **Conference Presentations**

Davis, Andrew P., Michael Gibson-Light, Jessica Pfaffendorf, and Christian Alberg. 2021. "Incarceration and Labor Power: The Prison as Neoliberal Labor Governance Institution in 36 OECD Countries, 1960-2017." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Society of Criminology. November 17. Chicago, IL.

Gibson-Light, Michael. 2020. "Resisting and Reframing: Prisoner Responses to (In)Dignity in

- Penal Labor.” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Law and Society Association. May 29. Denver, CO. (*Presented virtually*)
- Gibson-Light, Michael. 2020. “Data Transparency and Ethnography: A View from Inside a Paramilitary Organization.” Paper accepted to Arizona Methods Workshop / ASA Methods Section Mid-Year Meeting: Replication and Rigor in the Social Sciences. March 20. Tucson, AZ. (*Event cancelled due to COVID-19 pandemic*)
- Gibson-Light, Michael. 2019. “Diffuse Surveillance Structures in the Contemporary Prison: The Gendering of Discipline and the Shifting Burden of Rehabilitation Under Neoliberal Penology.” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Society of Criminology. November 15. San Francisco, CA.
- Gibson-Light, Michael. 2019. “Sandpiles of Dignity: Labor Status and Symbolic Boundary-Making in the Contemporary American Prison.” Paper presented at Russell Sage Foundation, The Criminal Justice System as a Labor Market Institution Conference. February 22. New York, NY.
- Gibson-Light, Michael. 2018. “The Prison as Segmented Labor Market: Ethnographic Insights into Penal Labor Structure and Practice.” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association. August 11. Philadelphia, PA.
- Gibson-Light, Michael. 2018. “The Dignity of Working Inmates: Prisoner Strategies and Workplace Games.” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Law and Society Association. June 7. Toronto, Ontario, Canada.
- Gibson-Light, Michael. 2017. “Hard Work, Harder Time: Penal Labor Structure and the Reproduction of the Underclass.” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Society of Criminology. November 15. Philadelphia, PA.
- Gibson-Light, Michael. 2017. “Class Difference behind Bars: Inmate Labor Stratification and Access to Formal and Informal Prison Markets.” Paper presented at Economic Sociology and Organizations, Occupations, & Work: Fellow Travelers on Different Roads, American Sociological Association Annual Meeting Preconference. August 11. Montreal, Quebec, Canada.
- Puetz, Kyle and Michael Gibson-Light. 2017. “Moral Rhetorics of Authenticity: A Repertoire-Theoretical Analysis of Authenticity within a Field of Restricted Production.” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association. August 12. Montreal, Quebec, Canada.
- Gibson-Light, Michael. 2016. “Labor, Power, and Inmate Consent: Work as an Apparatus of Control in an American Prison.” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Society of Criminology. November 16. New Orleans, LA.
- Gibson-Light, Michael. 2016. “Must Work for Food: The Politics of Nutrition and Informal Economy in an American Prison.” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association. August 22. Seattle, WA.
- Gibson, Michael. 2015. “What’s in a Name: Towards a Framework for Theorizing Boundary Categories of Work.” Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American

Sociological Association. August 23. Chicago, IL.

Davis, Andrew and Michael Gibson. 2015. "Stand Up and Cut Down: Authenticity and Validation in Comedy Production Venues." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southern Sociological Society. March 26. New Orleans, LA.

Puetz, Kyle and Michael Gibson. 2014. "Narrative Identity in Culture Industries: An Individualist Model of Authentic Action in Contemporary Hip-Hop." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association. August 18. San Francisco, CA.

Sallaz, Jeffrey and Michael Gibson. 2013. "What is Outsourcing? How the New Industrial Revolution has been Framed in Newspaper Editorials." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association. August 12. New York, NY.

Gibson, Michael. 2013. "Temporal Distinctions and Relation to Convention in Claims to Authenticity among Cultural Producers." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Chicago Ethnography Conference. March 2. Chicago, IL.

Gibson, Michael. 2009. "Willingness to Protest in the United States: Who Protests and Why." Paper presented at the University of Missouri – St. Louis Undergraduate Research Symposium. May 1. St. Louis, MO.

Gibson, Michael. 2008. "Working for CHAMP after Hours: The Role of Volunteers in a Prison-Based Service Dog Training Program." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Society of Criminology. November 14. St. Louis, MO.

### **Panel Participation**

Panel co-organizer and discussant. 2021 Annual Meeting of the Law and Society Association. Panel title: *Prison Economies: Exploitation, Predation, and Resistance inside Carceral Spaces*, CRN 27: Punishment and Society. May 28. Chicago, IL. (Panel presented virtually)

Panel presider. 2019 Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association. Panel title: *Ethnography / Ethnographic Studies*, Regular Session. August 10. New York, NY.

Panel convener. 2018 Annual Meeting of the American Society of Criminology. Panel title: *Social Organization of the Prison: Moving Past Classic Debates using New Qualitative Research*, Area VII: The Criminal Justice System. November 15. Atlanta, GA.

Panel presider. 2017 Annual Meeting of the American Society of Criminology. Panel title: *The Everyday Life and Subculture of Prison Inmates*, Area VII: Criminal Justice Policy & Practice, Corrections. November 15. Philadelphia, PA.

Panel presider. 2016 Annual Meeting of the American Society of Criminology. Panel title: *Correctional Programming*, Area VII: Criminal Justice Policy & Practice, Corrections. November 16. New Orleans, LA.

Panel presider. 2015 Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association. Panel title: *Job Insecurity and Precarious Employment*, Section on Organizations, Occupations, &

Work. August 23. Chicago, IL.

Assistant coordinator. 2013 The Poetics and Politics of Hip-Hop Cultures Symposium.  
University of Arizona Confluentcenter for Creative Inquiry. February 7-8. Tucson, AZ.

**Guest Lectures**

- 2021 Sociological Imagination and Inquiry – Part A, Professor Hava Gordon. University of Denver.
- 2020 Crime, Punishment, and Inequality, Professor Sarah Brayne. University of Texas at Austin (*Lecture delivered virtually*).
- 2020 Sociological Imagination and Inquiry – Part A, Professor Hava Gordon. University of Denver (*Lecture delivered virtually*).
- 2020 Methods of Sociological Inquiry, Professor Megan Henley. Colorado Mesa University (*Lecture delivered virtually*).
- 2019 Sociological Imagination and Inquiry – Part A, Professor Hava Gordon. University of Denver.
- 2017 Social Research Methods, Instructor Jessica Pfaffendorf. University of Arizona.
- 2016 Social Research Methods, Instructor Eric Bjorklund. University of Arizona.
- 2014 Sources of Sociological Theory, Professor Corey Abramson. University of Arizona.

PROFESSIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS

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**Journal Manuscript Reviewing**

- 2022 *Theoretical Criminology; Howard Journal of Crime and Justice; Journal of Prisoners on Prisons*
- 2021 *American Journal of Sociology; Criminology; Social Problems; Punishment & Society; Food & Foodways; Body & Society; Sociological Perspectives*
- 2020 *American Journal of Sociology; Sociological Perspectives; Social Forces; Theory & Society; Punishment & Society*
- 2018 *Punishment & Society; Social Problems; Qualitative Sociology*
- 2017 *Poetics*

**Book Reviewing**

- 2021 W. W. Norton
- 2020 Routledge
- 2018 University of California Press
- 2015 Taylor and Francis
- 2013 Routledge

**Grant Reviewing**

- 2022 National Science Foundation Law and Science Program (Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant)

RESEARCH GRANTS & FUNDING

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**External Funding**

2017            Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant, National Science Foundation, Award Number 1665067 (\$11,869)

**Internal University Funding**

2022            Faculty Research Fund, University of Denver (\$2,929)  
2016 – 2017    Fredrick A. and Margaret S. Conrad Fellow, University of Arizona School of Sociology (\$9,265)  
2012 – 2013    Peter Likins Fellow, University of Arizona (\$10,000)

**AWARDS & HONORS**

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**Professional Organization Awards & Honors**

2020            Honorable Mention, Law and Society Association Dissertation Prize (“The Prison as Market: How Penal Labor Systems Reproduce Inequality”)  
2019            James D. Thompson Graduate Student Paper Award, Section on Organizations, Occupations, & Work, American Sociological Association (“Sandpiles of Dignity: Labor Status and Boundary-Making in the Contemporary American Prison.”)  
2019            Honorable Mention, 2019 Graduate Student Paper Award, Section on Sociology of Law, American Sociological Association (“Sandpiles of Dignity: Labor Status and Boundary-Making in the Contemporary American Prison.”)  
2018            Graduate Student Paper Award, Division on International Criminology, American Society of Criminology (“Difference & Punishment: Ethno-Political Exclusion, Colonial Institutional Legacies, and Incarceration,” with Andrew P. Davis)  
2017            Graduate Student Paper Award, Division on Critical Criminology & Social Justice, American Society of Criminology (“Ramen Politics: Informal Money and Logics of Resistance in the Contemporary American Prison.”)  
2017            Graduate Student Paper Award, Division on Corrections & Sentencing, American Society of Criminology (“Ramen Politics: Informal Money and Logics of Resistance in the Contemporary American Prison.”)  
2017            Robert Dentler Award for Outstanding Student Achievement, Section on Sociological Practice & Public Sociology, American Sociological Association

**Internal University Awards & Honors**

2021 – 2022    Public Impact Fellow, University of Denver

**SELECT PROFESSIONAL SERVICE WORK**

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**Departmental Service**

2021            Search Committee Member, Critical Race and Ethnic Studies (CRES) Program  
Founding Director, University of Denver

**Divisional Service**

2020 – 2021 Faculty Mentor, College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences First-Gen Undergraduate Mentoring Pilot Program, University of Denver

**University Service**

2021 – 2022 Faculty Fellow, Public Impact Fellows Program, University of Denver

**Professional Association Service**

2020 American Sociological Association Section on Organizations, Occupations, & Work, Graduate Student Paper Award  
2019 American Society of Criminology Division on Critical Criminology & Social Justice, Book Award  
2018 American Society of Criminology Division on Critical Criminology & Social Justice, Student Paper Award  
2018 American Society of Criminology Division on Critical Criminology & Social Justice, Book Award

**STUDENT ADVISING & MENTORSHIP**

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**Graduate Thesis Committee Memberships**

2021 – 2022 Sloan Rucker, MA Thesis Committee, Department of Sociology, University of Houston (external member)

**Undergraduate Thesis Committee Memberships**

2022 Grace Gonzalez, Senior Thesis Committee, Department of Sociology & Criminology, University of Denver  
2022 Alexia Thompson, Senior Thesis Committee, Department of Sociology & Criminology, University of Denver  
2022 I Made “Ade” Wijaya, Senior Thesis Committee, Department of Sociology & Criminology, University of Denver  
2021 Devanae Allen, Senior Thesis Committee, Department of Sociology & Criminology, University of Denver  
2020 Aliyah Williams, Senior Thesis Committee, Department of Sociology & Criminology, University of Denver

**Other Mentorship & Advising**

2022 Rachel Gorman, Undergraduate Research Assistant, University of Denver  
2022 Grant Stansbury, Undergraduate Research Assistant, University of Denver  
2022 I Made “Ade” Wijaya, Undergraduate Research Assistant, University of Denver  
2020 – 2021 Anahi Quezada Villa, Mentee, College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences Mentorship Program, University of Denver  
2020 – 2021 Zoe Guill, Independent Study Research Advisee (Fall 2020, Winter 2021), University of Denver  
2017 – 2018 Korina Lopez, Undergraduate Research Assistant (National Science Foundation Award Number 1665067), University of Arizona  
2012 – 2013 Martin Forstrom, Undergraduate Research Assistant, University of Arizona



## PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY

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### **Public Writing & Materials**

- Forth. *Dead Theorists: A Card Game for Disillusioned Philosophers and Aspiring Academics*. Portland, OR: Microcosm Publishing.  
<https://microcosmpublishing.com/catalog/other/13354> “In this turn-based card game, the ghosts of Simone De Beauvoir, W.E.B. Du Bois, Michel Foucault, and Karl Marx have returned from beyond the grave to complete a bit of unfinished business. Become the specter of one of these four great (but deceased) thinkers as you seek to recruit your last great protégé from the ranks of students on one college campus. ... Satirical, educational, and a ton of fun for battle-hardened academics and philosophical novices alike.”
- 2020 “Foreword.” Pp. v-viii in *The Pawn*, by Gustavo “Goose” Alvarez. Seattle, WA: Amazon Publishing. [Amazon Books](#)
- 2018 “How Many Prisoners Work in the US Today? It's Hard to Say.” *Punishment & Society Blog*. <https://punishment-society.blogspot.com/2018/01/how-many-prisoners-work-in-us-today-its.html>
- 2017 “‘It’s Bigger than Christmas’: Thoughts on the Significance of the Super Bowl in Prison.” *Punishment & Society Blog*. <https://punishment-society.blogspot.com/2017/02/its-bigger-than-christmas-thoughts-on.html>

### **Public Use of Research**

- 2020 Research cited and consultation offered for research report, *Eating Behind Bars: Enduring the Hidden Punishment of Food in Prison*, by Impact Justice nonprofit research center. <https://impactjustice.org/impact/food-in-prison/#report>
- 2018 Research cited in Brief of *Amici Curiae* filed by the ACLU of Ohio Foundation, The ACLU Foundation, The Southern Poverty Law Center, and The Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. Supreme Court of Ohio, Case No. 2017-0186. [https://www.acluohio.org/sites/default/files/Ohio.v.Dunson-ACLUOfOhioAmicusBrief-2018\\_0206.pdf](https://www.acluohio.org/sites/default/files/Ohio.v.Dunson-ACLUOfOhioAmicusBrief-2018_0206.pdf)

### **Select Media Interviews & Consultations**

- 2022 Arizona Republic  
2021 NPR Marketplace, Arizona Republic  
2020 Top of Mind with Julie Rose  
2019 The Philadelphia Inquirer, The Nation  
2018 BBC, AP, The Young Turks, The Outline, Prison Legal News, ThirtyK  
2017 The Guardian  
2016 NPR, El Mundo, The Guardian, Christian Science Monitor, Gizmodo

### **Select Media Coverage & Portrayals**

- 2021 History Extra, CoinGeek  
2020 Business Insider, Fox Business  
2019 Ellen’s Game of Games (NBC), Pocono Record  
2018 Prison Legal News, Oxygen, Vox

2017 The Sun Herald, Brooklyn Nine-Nine (Fox)  
2016 USA Today, BBC, Time, The Atlantic, Washington Post, NPR, Fortune, US News  
& World Report, The Telegraph, ABC, Harper's Magazine, Huffington Post, Vice  
News, Business Insider

## TEACHING

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### **Courses Currently Offered**

#### Prison Labor

*Exploring work and employment within and surrounding US prisons as well as what prison labor can reveal about the nature of punishment and work in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

#### Sociological Imagination and Inquiry – Part A

*Introduction to qualitative research methods, providing training in methodologies including ethnography, in-depth interviewing, and qualitative content analysis*

#### Discipline and Punishment

*Exploring theoretical and empirical traditions in the study of punishment, institutional mechanisms of discipline, and pervasive systems of social control*

#### Sociology of Popular Culture

*Exploring the structure and impacts of the contemporary popular culture industry, emphasizing inequalities in production and representation*

#### Criminology

*Introduction to the study of criminology, exploring core questions and theories, social definitions of criminality, and institutional responses to crime*

#### Independent Study

*Student-directed independent research*

### **Courses Previously Offered**

#### Explaining Deviance

*Exploring explanatory factors surrounding deviance and participation in deviant subcultures, as well as the role of state and other institutions in these phenomena*

#### Work and Society

*Exploring the structure and practice of labor in the contemporary US, emphasizing inequalities in labor market access, participation, and outcomes*

## PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

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#### American Sociological Association

Section on Crime, Law, & Deviance; Section on Organizations, Occupations, & Work;  
Section on Labor & Labor Movements; Section on Methodology

#### American Society of Criminology

Division on Critical Criminology & Social Justice; Division on Convict Criminology;  
Division on People of Color and Crime; Division on Corrections & Sentencing

#### Law and Society Association

CRN 27 Punishment & Society

**REFERENCES**

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Available upon request