



CRIM8023

Incarceration, Justice and Punishment

Session 2, In person-scheduled-weekday, North Ryde 2026

School of International Studies

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convenor and Lecturer

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Credit points

10

Prerequisites

Admission to MCTerrorism OR MCrim OR MCyberSecAnalysis OR MSecStrategicStud OR MIntell OR GradCertSecStudCr

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

Prisons are a standard response to crime, but incarceration raises pressing social, economic, and ethical questions about its effectiveness, equity, and sustainability for the future. As pressure mounts to find more effective and equitable responses to crime, the role of punishment has never been more critical. Through engagement with practitioners, case studies, and real-world policy initiatives, the unit takes a practice-oriented approach grounded in first-hand examinations of the role, purpose, and effectiveness of different forms of punishment and sentencing in contemporary Australian and international justice systems. The unit examines the purposes of punishment for victims, offenders, and communities, asking when prison is appropriate and when alternative responses are more effective. Students will explore how custodial and non-custodial sanctions are implemented, experienced, and challenged. Emphasis is placed on the ethical, political, and practical dimensions of punishment, and on evaluating policy arguments for and against incarceration. Students will develop the capacity to critically assess justice practices, evaluate alternatives to incarceration, and advocate for evidence-based, ethically grounded responses to crime. This unit challenges students to consider effective, just, and sustainable responses to crime.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

- ULO1:** Evaluate and compare the effectiveness and ethical implications of custodial and non-custodial punishment practices across national and international justice contexts.
- ULO2:** Analyse community-based, restorative, and transformative justice frameworks as alternatives to incarceration.
- ULO3:** Interpret sentencing policies and practices within their social, political, and institutional contexts.
- ULO4:** Assess the impact of justice responses on victims, offenders, and communities across different cultural and institutional settings.
- ULO5:** Design innovative, evidence-based responses to crime that prioritise equity, inclusion, and sustainable community outcomes.
- ULO6:** Communicate justice reform proposals effectively to professional, policy, and community audiences using appropriate formats and strategies.

General Assessment Information

- 1-Comparative Policy Brief: This assessment develops your ability to analyse custodial practices comparatively. Policy briefs are used by government departments and advocacy organisations to translate comparative research into actionable recommendations.
- 2-Applied Justice Framework Pitch: Students will develop a pitch and use video format to present it.
- 3-This assessment develops your ability to produce professional policy research reports of the kind commissioned by government departments, parliamentary committees, reform commissions, and advocacy organisations.
- *Note that short extension is available for Comparative Policy Brief and Advocacy Report. No short extension for Applied Justice Framework Pitch.*

LATE SUBMISSION OF ASSESSMENT TASKS

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, a 5% penalty (of the total possible mark) will be applied each day a written assessment is not submitted, up until the 7th day (including weekends). After the 7th day, a mark of '0' (zero) will be awarded even if the

assessment is submitted. Submission time for all written assessments is set at 11.55pm.

A 1-hour grace period is provided to students who experience a technical issue. This late penalty will apply to non-timed sensitive assessment (including essays, reports, posters, portfolios, journals, recordings etc). Late submission of time sensitive tasks (such as tests/exams, performance assessments/presentations, scheduled practical assessments/labs etc) will only be addressed by the unit convenor in a Special consideration application.

Special Consideration outcome may result in a new question or topic. The granting of extensions is subject to the university's Special Consideration Policy. Extensions will not be granted by unit conveners or tutors, but must be lodged through Special Consideration:

<https://students.mq.edu.au/study/assessment-exams/special-consideration>.

REASSESSMENT OF ASSIGNMENTS DURING THE SEMESTER:

Macquarie University operates a Grade Appeal Policy: <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/assessment-exams/appeals/grade-appeal>

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due	Groupwork/Individual	Short Extension	AI Approach
Comparative Policy Brief	30%	No	04/09/2026	Individual	Yes	Open
Applied Justice Framework Pitch	20%	No	09/10/2026	Individual	No	Observed
Advocacy Report	50%	No	06/11/2026	Individual	Yes	Open

Comparative Policy Brief

Assessment Type ¹: Written Submission

Indicative Time on Task ²: 30 hours

Due: **04/09/2026**

Weighting: **30%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

Students will critically evaluate and compare justice policies across national and international contexts. (1500 words)

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Evaluate and compare the effectiveness and ethical implications of custodial and non-custodial punishment practices across national and international justice contexts.

- Interpret sentencing policies and practices within their social, political, and institutional contexts.
- Assess the impact of justice responses on victims, offenders, and communities across different cultural and institutional settings.

Applied Justice Framework Pitch

Assessment Type ¹: Presentation task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 20 hours

Due: **09/10/2026**

Weighting: **20%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: No

AI Approach: Observed

Students will propose the application of an existing justice model to address a specific social or justice-related problem. (5mins)

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Design innovative, evidence-based responses to crime that prioritise equity, inclusion, and sustainable community outcomes.
- Communicate justice reform proposals effectively to professional, policy, and community audiences using appropriate formats and strategies.

Advocacy Report

Assessment Type ¹: Professional task

Indicative Time on Task ²: 35 hours

Due: **06/11/2026**

Weighting: **50%**

Groupwork/Individual: Individual

Short extension ³: Yes

AI Approach: Open

A substantial written piece where students advocate for a justice reform, grounded in evidence and ethical reasoning. (2500 words)

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Evaluate and compare the effectiveness and ethical implications of custodial and non-custodial punishment practices across national and international justice contexts.
- Analyse community-based, restorative, and transformative justice frameworks as alternatives to incarceration.
- Assess the impact of justice responses on victims, offenders, and communities across

different cultural and institutional settings.

- Design innovative, evidence-based responses to crime that prioritise equity, inclusion, and sustainable community outcomes.
- Communicate justice reform proposals effectively to professional, policy, and community audiences using appropriate formats and strategies.

¹ If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this type of assessment
- [Academic Success](#) for academic skills support.

² Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation.

³ An automatic short extension is available for some assessments. Apply through the [Service Connect Portal](#).

Delivery and Resources

UNIT REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

- You should spend an average of 12 hours per week on this unit. This includes listening to lectures, reading weekly required materials as detailed in iLearn, participating in iLearn discussion forums and preparing assessments.
- Internal students are expected to attend all classes, and external students are expected to make significant contributions to on-line activities. Students are expected to attend lectures or listen to recordings of weekly lectures in ECHO360.
- In most cases students are required to attempt and submit all major assessment tasks in order to pass the unit.

REQUIRED READINGS

- The citations for all the required readings for this unit are available to enrolled students through the unit iLearn site, and electronic copies can be accessed through Leganto. Electronic copies can also be accessed through the library.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central](#) (<https://policies.mq.edu.au>). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)

- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Assessment Procedure](#)
- [Complaints Resolution Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#)

Students seeking more policy resources can visit [Student Policies](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/policies>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit [Policy Central](https://policies.mq.edu.au) (<https://policies.mq.edu.au>) and use the [search tool](#).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/student-conduct>

Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit connect.mq.edu.au or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Academic Integrity

At Macquarie, we believe [academic integrity](#) – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free [online writing and maths support](#), [academic skills development](#) and [wellbeing consultations](#).

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Academic Success

[Academic Success](#) provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- [Ask a Study Coach](#)
- [Access StudyWISE](#)
- [Upload an assignment to Studiosity](#)

- [Complete the Academic Integrity Module](#)

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- [Subject and Research Guides](#)
- [Ask a Librarian](#)

Student Services and Support

Macquarie University offers a range of [Student Support Services](#) including:

- [IT Support](#)
- [Accessibility and disability support](#) with study
- Mental health [support](#)
- [Safety support](#) to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault
- [Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues](#)
- [Student Advocacy](#) provides independent advice on MQ policies, procedures, and processes

Student Enquiries

Got a question? Ask us via the [Service Connect Portal](#), or contact [Service Connect](#).

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit <https://students.mq.edu.au/support/technology/service-desk>.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Unit information based on version 2026.05 of the [Handbook](#)