

Solutions

Since the beginning of the semester we have studied the problems with our social and judicial system leading to mass incarceration and unfair sentencing.

We studied the history of incarceration and some of the reasons for putting people in prisons.

We have looked at artists, art and how art, particularly Social Practice Art, can help those who are incarcerated, (and others) including their families and even victims in various ways.



Some of you pointed out the educational intent of some of the artists in that they hoped their work would educate viewers with regards to the issues affecting democracy. Ashley Hunt comes to mind here but also Mel Chin, Pablo Helguera and others.

In this lecture I identify some important contemporary corrections theorists and their, sometimes radical ideas.

Our class website has many links to artists and projects. We have studied some in class.

But one thing many of these projects and artists have in common is an interest in making positive social change.



Cartoons by
Pablo
Helguera.

Helguera –Collaboration V

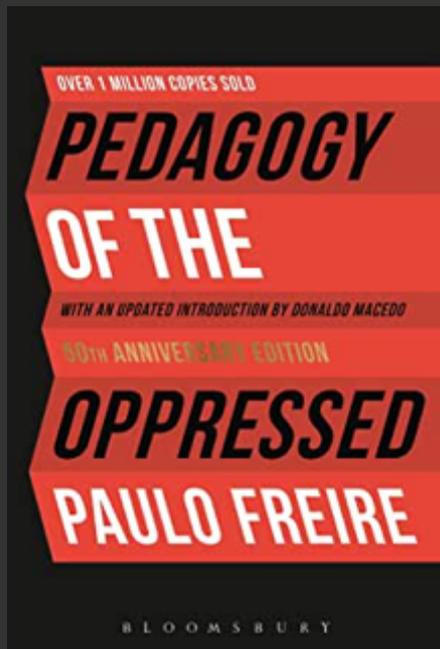
Since we first began looking at Socially Engaged Art the issue of collaboration is front and center.

Collaboration is all about people working together to create something new.

Helguera uses ideas initiated by the famous education theorist, Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy, to help frame notions of collaboration in Socially Engaged Art.

Freire was working in Brazil in the 1960's to help poor farmers learn to read and write. What he learned was that his role was more valuable if, rather than telling his students what they didn't know, (which is common in education) he helped them discover what they did know. More importantly, he wanted them to decide for themselves what they needed to know.

Rather than establish a pattern of dependency, this method gives responsibility for learning to the learner. It shifts power from educator to student.



Helguera –Collaboration V

With Friere's theories in mind, Helguera establishes ways an artist might engage with a community.

This is really about power, who has it and how is it used.

In most education situations is the instructor (teacher, professor) who has the power. Students tend to relegate power to them. We are actually taught to do this from first grade (and before).

In most traditional art, it is the artist who conceives of the work, makes the work and takes credit for it.

In Social Practice Art, (or Socially Engaged Art), all aspects must be shared with the community. While the artist may provide a framework for a project, real decision making power must be given to those the artist is collaborating with.

The goal is not to create 'feel-good' action but a "meaningful framework for reflection and critical exchange."

Helguera –Transpedagogy VIII

In this chapter, Helguera states what I have been referencing already, that he is faming Socially Engaged Art through the lens of pedagogy (or methods of teaching).

For art practice, he coined the term “Transpedagogy” to identify the differences between what artists (and communities) do and traditional art education.

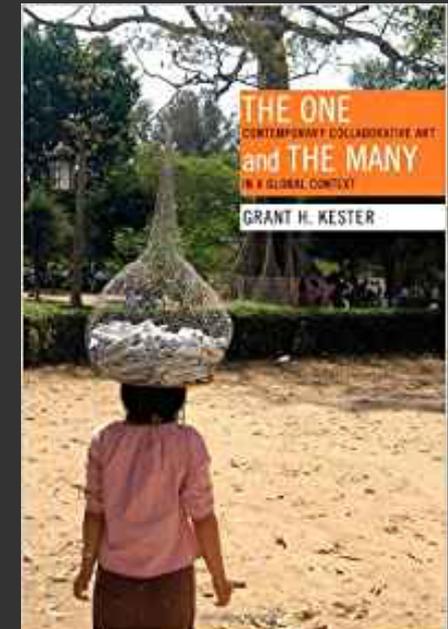
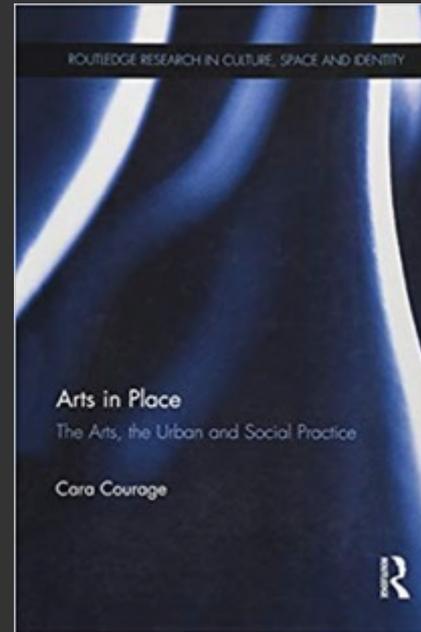
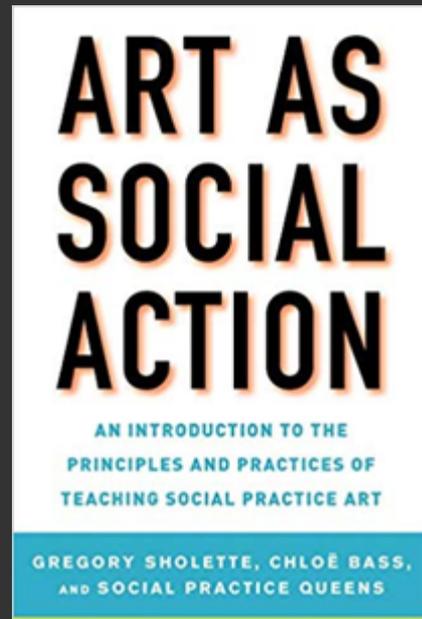
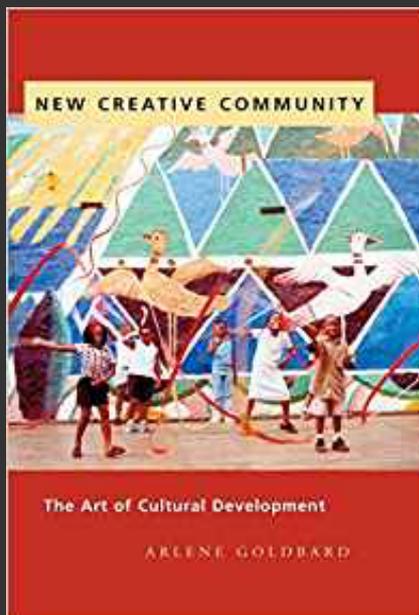
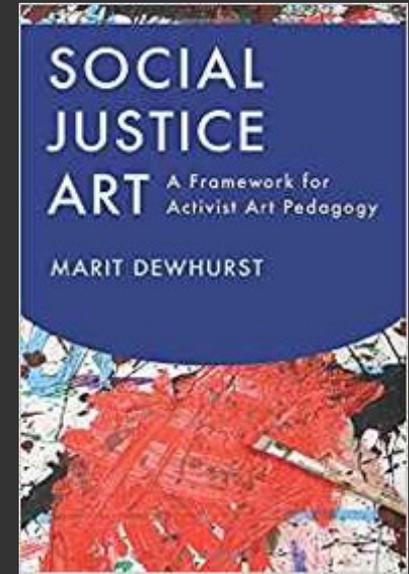
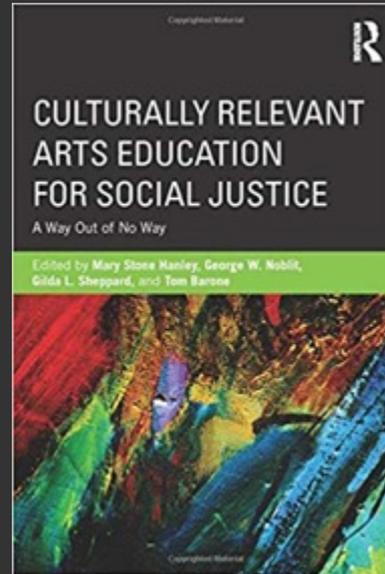
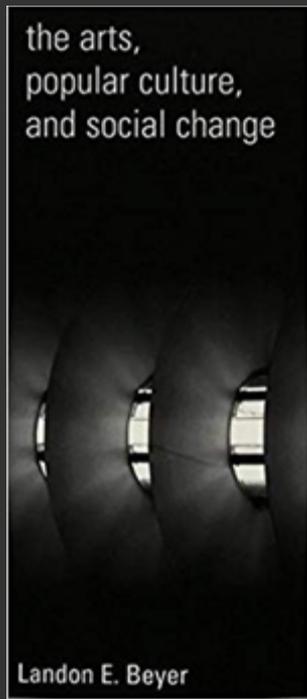
So, rather than focusing on teaching art skills, in Transpedagogy the process is the artwork.

This is important because it means a complete rethinking of education and of art– not just in theory but also in practice.

Helguera is interested in how art can function in democratic society as opposed to the more rarified, elitist one of the commercial art world.

He is also interested in how education theories that promote more inquiry based learning and creativity, benefit individuals and society. And then, where these two things intersect.

A few other authors looking at this issue:



Important Philosophers & Theorists -- Corrections

As we have already learned, most people in prisons today are either people of color or poor.

There are significant disproportions in who we incarcerate – black men are penalized far more heavily than whites, producing lifetime consequences for opportunities, health of communities of color and stigma.

Racialization of prison, including the drug war and tough sentencing policies, exacerbated existing structural inequalities of race and class.

Philosophers like Angela Davis and those in the legal system like Michelle Alexander are likening the targeting of individuals of color to earlier legalized forms of social exclusion like “Jim Crow” laws, and even slavery.

Approaching their thesis from different points of view, each of these authors came to similar conclusions.

Motivated by recognizing the explosion of prison populations in recent years, Prison Theorists are examining reasons why this trend continues given research that indicates increased incarceration does not correlate with less crime.

Contemporary authors also focus on race and class as realities affecting who goes to prison. People who are wealthy and commit crimes we refer to as 'white collar' serve fewer sentences and fewer years if convicted. At the same time, the stigma attached to those with financial means is far less than those who are from low-income areas.

This issue of stigma for those who have been imprisoned including the legal exclusion from voting, denied employment, housing and public benefits relegate people to a subordinated life.

ANGELA DAVIS



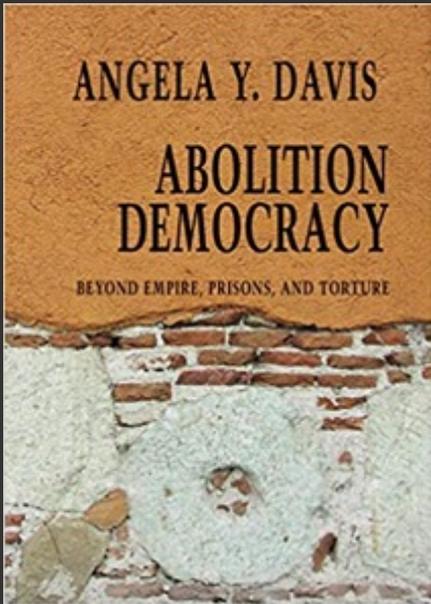
Angela Y. Davis is known internationally for her ongoing work to combat all forms of oppression in the U.S. and abroad. Over the years she has been active as a student, teacher, writer, scholar, and activist/organizer. She is a living witness to the historical struggles of the contemporary era.



In 1970 she was placed on the FBI's Ten Most Wanted List on false charges, and was the subject of an intense police search that drove her underground and culminated in one of the most famous trials in recent U.S. history. During her sixteen-month incarceration, a massive international "Free Angela Davis" campaign was organized, leading to her acquittal in 1972.

Davis's long-standing commitment to prisoners' rights dates back to her involvement in the campaign to free the Soledad Brothers, which led to her own arrest and imprisonment. Today she remains an advocate of prison abolition and has developed a powerful critique of racism in the criminal justice system.

Davis, then and now.

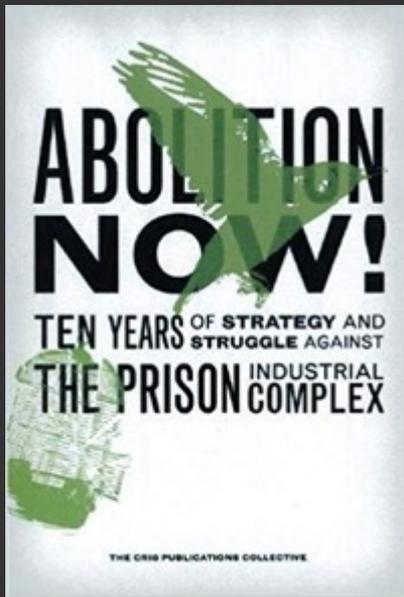


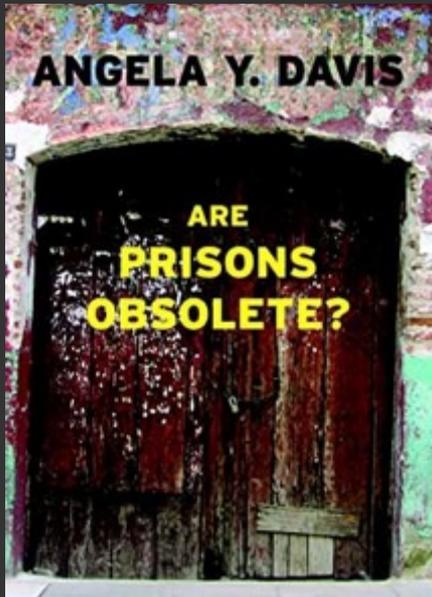
Angela Davis advocates for a 'world without prisons.' Whether or not this is something that can actually happen within society, she (and others) believes that imagining such a world at least moves us in that direction. Many of the theorists point to social reforms that could lessen significantly (if not eliminate) the need for crime.

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She was the founding member of Critical Resistance, an international organization to end the Prison Industrial Complex and the belief that prisons make us safer.





Like many educators, Davis is especially concerned with the general tendency to devote more resources and attention to the prison system than to educational institutions. Having helped to popularize the notion of a “prison industrial complex,” she now urges her audiences to think seriously about the future possibility of a world without prisons and to help forge a 21st century abolitionist movement.

Some of you did research on the “Million Dollar Blocks.”

If you did not, please check this out.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/07/30/how-mass-incarceration-creates-million-dollar-blocks-in-poor-neighborhoods/>

This project simply maps different neighborhoods in New York, Chicago, New Orleans, LA, and others, to show how much money is spent on one block, incarcerating people (in some cases 2.2 million for one block). They ask the question— what would happen if that money was spent on education, summer jobs, addiction treatment, etc.

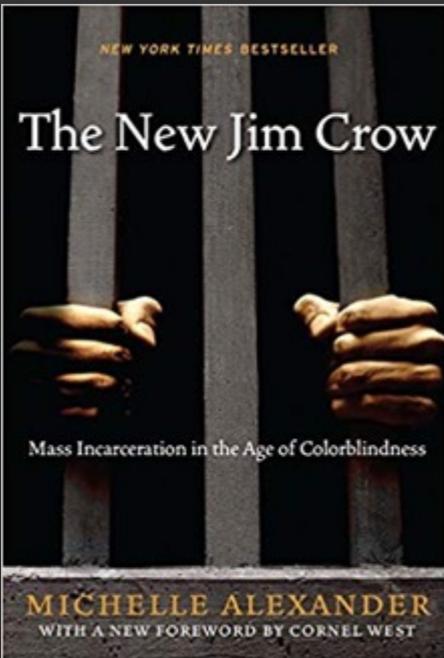


MICHELLE ALEXANDER -- is a civil rights lawyer, advocate and legal scholar. She currently teaches at Ohio State University. Prior to entering academia, Alexander served as the director of the Racial Justice Project for the ACLU of Northern California, where she coordinated the Project's media advocacy, grassroots organizing, coalition building, and litigation. The Project's priority areas were educational equity and criminal justice reform, and it was during those years at the ACLU that she began to awaken to the reality that our nation's criminal justice system functions more like a caste system than a system of crime prevention or control.

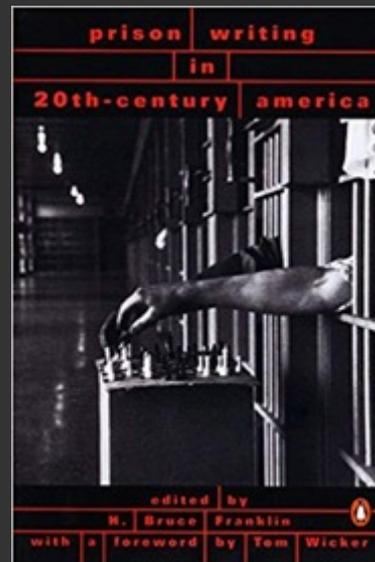
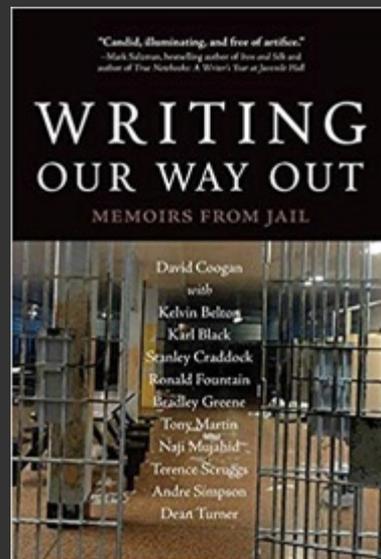
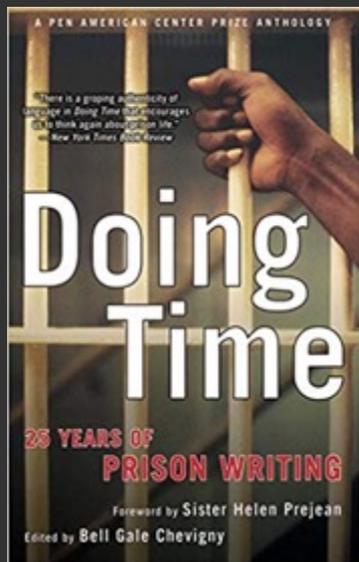
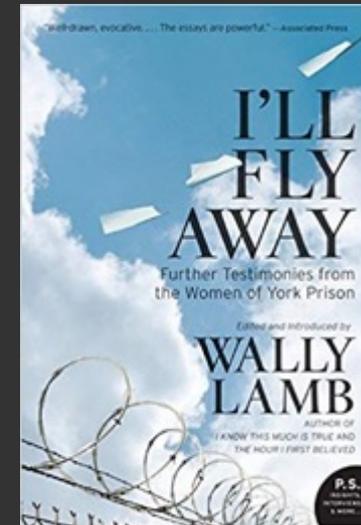
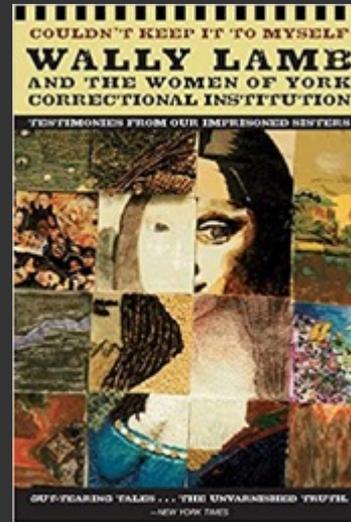
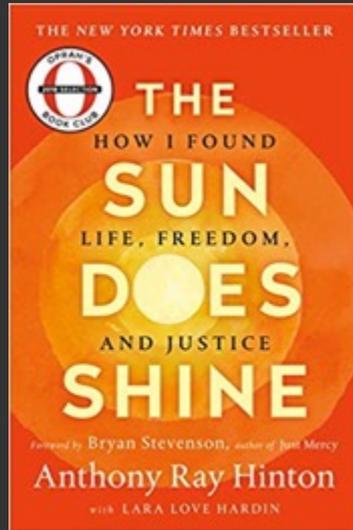
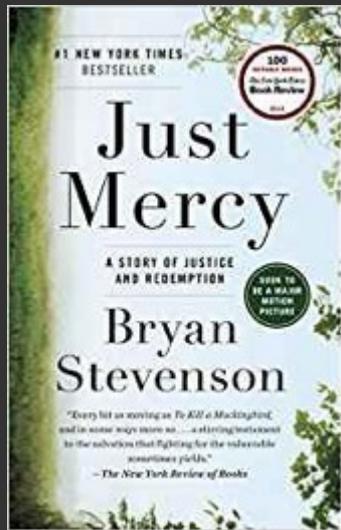
She recently wrote an influential book called, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*.

In the book Alexander argues that we are witnessing this rebirth of a caste-like system in the U.S. As a result, millions of African Americans have been relegated to second class citizens through correctional control.

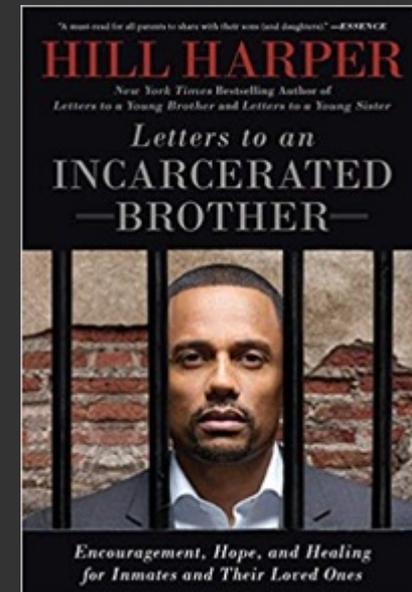
Alexander shows that by targeting black men, the U. S. Judicial System functions as a system of racial control even while denying racism.



From those incarcerated and/or formerly incarcerated:



While Harper was not formerly incarcerated, I included his book because of its relevance.



Some Organizations trying to help:

Some of you have researched these website. In case you missed it, I'm reiterating a few important organizations working to correct injustice within the judicial system.

The Innocence Project

<https://www.innocenceproject.org>

The Sentencing Project

<https://www.sentencingproject.org>

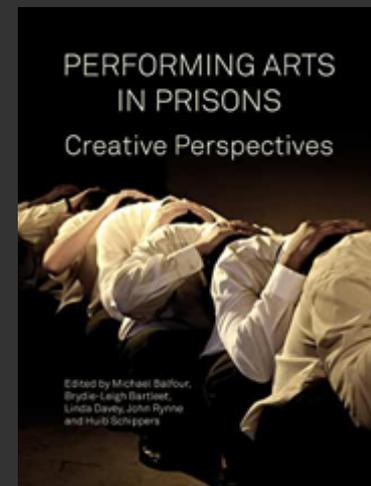
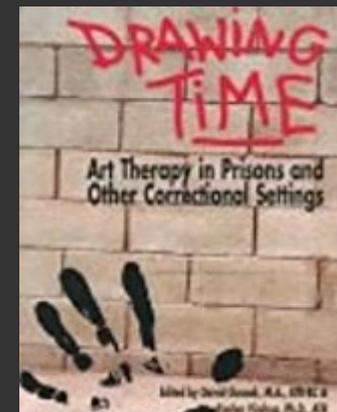
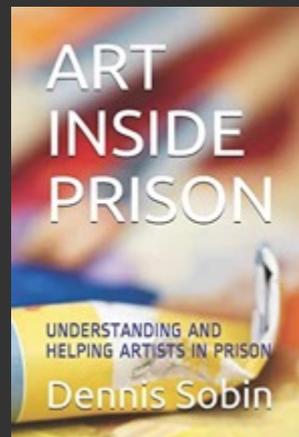
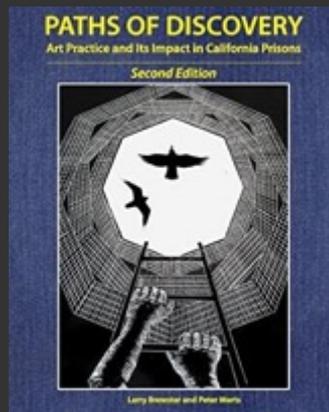
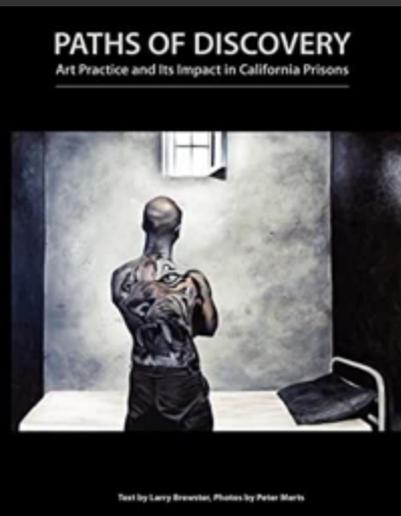
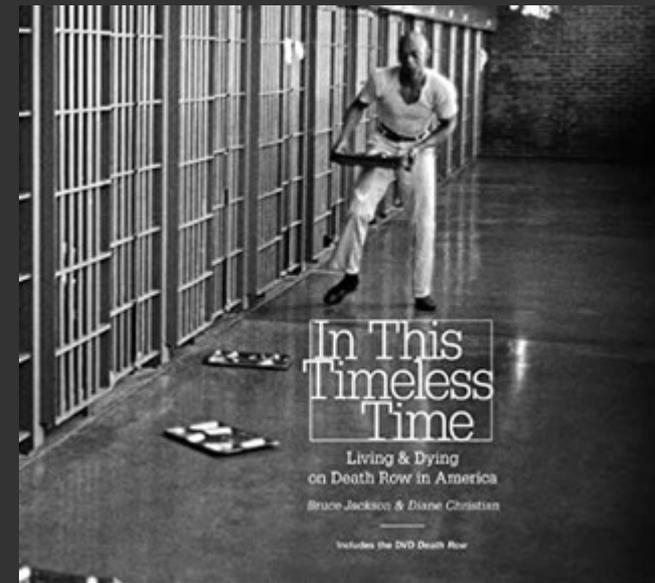
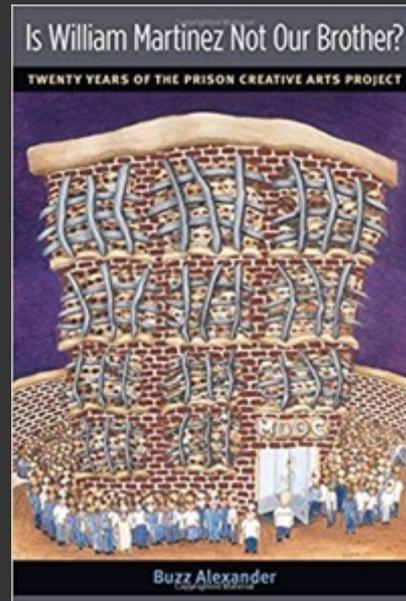
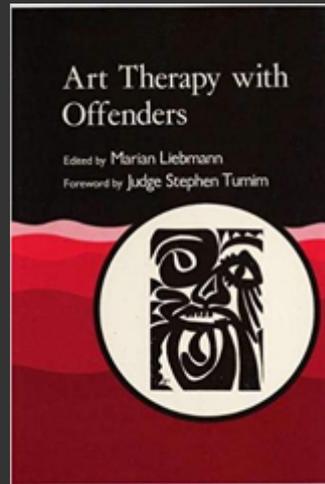
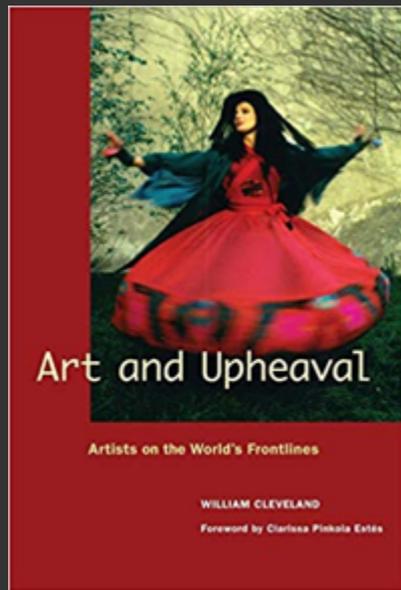
NAACP

<https://www.naacp.org/naacp-legal-team/>

The Southern Poverty Law Center

<https://www.splcenter.org/our-issues/immigrant-justice/southeast-immigrant-freedom-initiative-0>

As you have learned, there are numerous programs for those incarcerated and those affected by incarceration. Here are a few books on this subject.



ONE LAST THING...

Education and Reentry

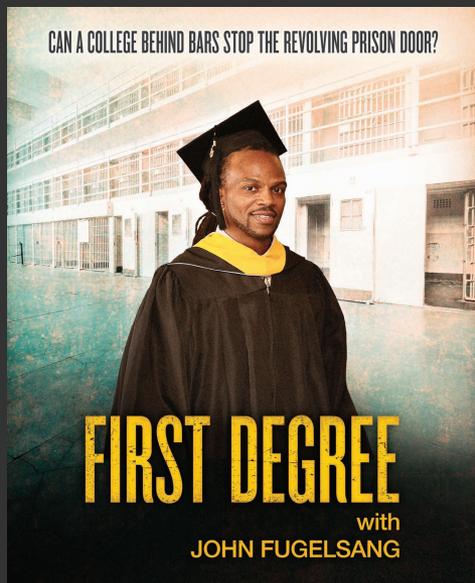


In 2016, a group of educators at St. Thomas Aquinas self-organized to investigate ways we could bring more real-life issues into the classroom, specifically related to social justice and the criminal justice system.

After much research and discussion, what emerged was a request from Hudson Link, a non-profit organization providing college degrees to those in New York Prisons, to provide a BS degree to the men at Sullivan Correctional Facility.

Hudson Link for Higher Education in Prison provides college education, life skills, and reentry support to incarcerated and formerly incarcerated men and women to help them make a positive impact on their own lives, their families and communities, resulting in lower rates of recidivism, incarceration, and poverty.

They do this by partnering with existing colleges and universities who establish degrees, provide faculty and registrar, and grant bachelor's degrees.



Education and Reentry



With support from our provost, president and board, St. Thomas Aquinas College began offering courses and a Bachelor's degree in Social Science at Sullivan Correctional Facility, a maximum security prison in New York state.

Some of you have done research on reentry. Please see the next several slides with information about the importance of education in breaking the cycle of reentry.



First group of students entering our program in Sullivan Correctional.

See video clips here about Hudson Link:

<http://www.hudsonlink.org/hudson-link-in-the-news/filmvideo/>

Education and Reentry



Before 1994, 9 out of 10 correctional systems had post-high school programs, enrolling 38,000 inmates.

But then, College degrees earned in NYS prisons declined from 1,078 in 1991 to 70 in 1999.

The reason is because: in 1994 Congress voted to **exclude inmates from Pell Grants**, which was the way they were able to afford college classes.

Other states followed federal lead (e.g. NY eliminates inmates from TAP)

In 1998 “Drug-Free Student Loan Act” – cuts loans and work for those incarcerated.



Non-profits and colleges began to fill the void.

Education and Reentry

- According to the research, higher education is one of the most powerful deterrents to crime and reincarceration.
- College transforms peoples sense of self and how they relate to family and community.
- Higher Education transforms the lives of students and their children and promotes lasting transitions out of prison.
- **NYS recidivism rate 42%**
- **Hudson link college educated recidivism 4%**
- **It costs New York State \$60,000 per year to incarcerate one person**
- **It costs Hudson Link \$5,000 per year to educate one**

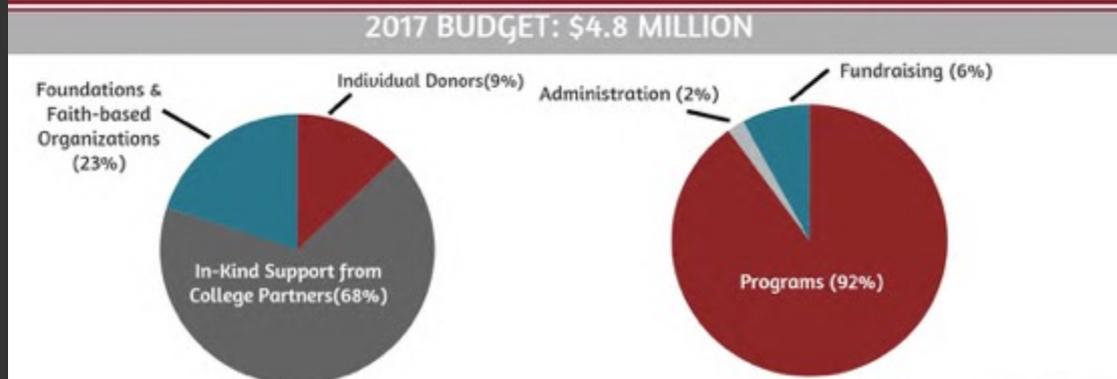
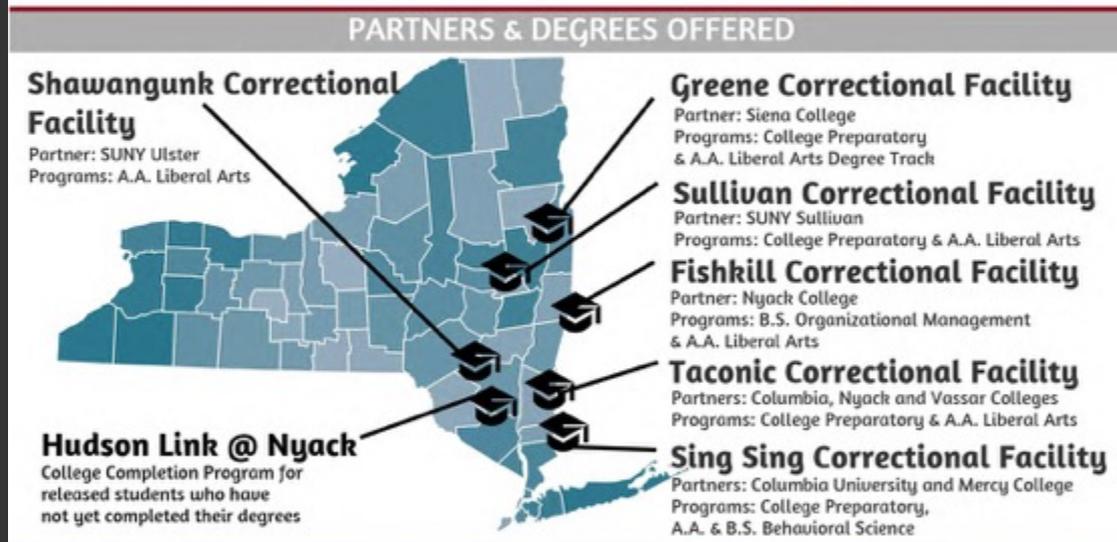
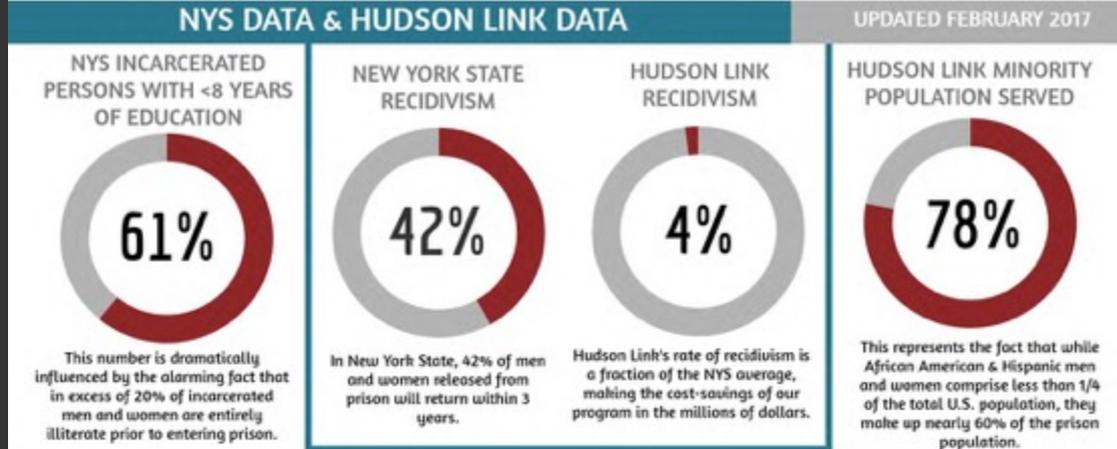


Education Matters

Based on evidence education transforms lives, reduces recidivism and creates a positive ripple effect in communities.

Also, Hudson Link is the only 501(c)3 non-profit in the US run by formerly incarcerated individuals to provide college degree-granting programs inside prisons. Now STAC is one of these colleges.

NOTE: reduced recidivism with college degrees.



As you have most likely noticed, there is much to learn on these topics; social practice art, prisons, and rehabilitation.

I have tried to provide an opportunity, best as I can, for you to follow your own curiosity with numerous projects, artists and concepts posted to the website.

This final lecture exists as a continuation of this pedagogical intention— expose some things, people and ideas, and then allow you to follow your own experience and interest, if you choose.

So, as you continue with your final paper and project, I hope you look to your own lives, your own interests, your own directions.

Then, we will share this work with each other, learn from each other, and know each other a bit better, while also expanding knowledge and ideas.