

Speaker:

Dr. Baz Dreisinger of John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York

Seminar Title:

What Do Global Solutions to Mass Incarceration Look Like? An Introduction to the Incarceration Nations Network

Abstract:

There are some 10.35 million people worldwide are currently behind bars. This number is steadily increasing: Between 2008 and 2011, the prison population grew in 78 percent of all countries and between 2000 and 2016 it showed an increase of almost 20 percent. More than 3.2 of these 10.35 million people behind bars have not been convicted of anything—they are potentially innocent people awaiting trial. One in five of these 10.35 million is incarcerated for drug-related offenses, 83 percent of this number for simple drug possession. As a whole, people from minority groups and Indigenous communities are caught up in criminal justice systems at dramatically disproportionate levels.

This is not only a global human rights crisis. It is also a profound global threat to peace and community safety.

Join Dr. Baz Dreisinger of John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York, for a conversation about her Incarceration Nations Network and learn how countries around the world--from Ghana and Italy to Costa Rica and Norway--are taking on this crisis of mass incarceration in exciting, innovative ways.

Bio:

Dr. Baz Dreisinger is: professor, journalist, justice worker, film and radio producer, cultural critic and activist.

A professor of English at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City, she is the founder of the Prison-to-College Pipeline program, which offers college courses and reentry planning to incarcerated men throughout New York State, and broadly works to increase access to higher education for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals. She is the Executive Director of the Incarceration Nations Network (INN), a global network and think tank that supports, instigates and popularizes innovative prison reform efforts around the world; INN is currently building a global multimedia platform for innovative prison reimagining efforts and justice solutions.

Dr. Dreisinger's book "Incarceration Nations: A Journey to Justice in Prisons Around the World" (2016) --a first-person odyssey through prisons in nine countries, beginning in Africa and concluding in Europe--offers a poignant window into a world most never see, and offers a radical rethinking of one of America's most devastating exports and national experiments: the modern prison system. Named a Notable Book of 2016 by the Washington Post, it was also lauded by the New York Times, NPR, the LA Times and many more. Dr. Dreisinger was named a 2018 Global Fulbright Scholar for her international work promoting education-not-incarceration and restorative justice internationally, and her Prison-to-College Pipeline movement has gone international, as well; under its umbrella are programs or developing programs in South Africa, Ghana, Jamaica, Trinidad and the UK.

As a journalist and critic, Dr. Dreisinger writes about Caribbean culture, race-related issues, travel, music and pop culture for such outlets as the New York Times, Wall Street Journal and Forbes Life, and produces on-air segments about music and global culture for National Public Radio (NPR). Together with Oscar-nominated filmmaker Peter Spirer, Professor Dreisinger produced and wrote two documentaries about hip-hop and criminal justice, which aired on Showtime and BET.

Dr. Dreisinger earned her Ph.D. in English from Columbia University, where she specialized in African-American studies and critical race theory and was named a Whiting Fellow. Her first book "Near Black: White-to-Black Passing in American Culture" (2008), a cultural history of whites who pass as black, was featured in the New York Times Book Review and on NPR and CNN. She speaks to audiences and media around the world on an ongoing basis.

Venue: CSSR Seminar room, Room 4.29 Leslie Social Science Building, Upper Campus

Seminar start at 12:50 to 14:00

Lunch will be served from 12:30

Please: RSVP: Lameez Mota lameez.mota@uct.ac.za