

Introduction to Legal Studies

Spring 2007

Discussion Questions for Tuesday, February 27th

How does law work to control society?

The techniques employed for enforcing laws are varied and complex, and have occupied scholars, policy-makers and politicians in intense debate in recent years. These debates have taken place against a backdrop of increasing levels of incarceration of young offenders (particularly among minorities) and the rise of the Prison Industrial Complex.

1. What happened in the 1960s and 70s that forced a re-evaluation of policing practices?
2. What are the differences between "community policing" and "problem-oriented" policing?
3. In the article "Walking the Beat Alone," what does the author mean by "petit apartheid"? What is the author's ultimate solution for dealing with the problem?
4. Think of an example in which you have heard or personally experienced "petit apartheid".
5. Levels of incarceration have dramatically risen in the United States over the past 20 years. Why? Has this resulted in lower crime rates?
6. Why does Bruner argue prison has become the acceptable solution to crime in the United States? According to him, how do politicians and citizens believe imprisonment will serve to compel obedience?