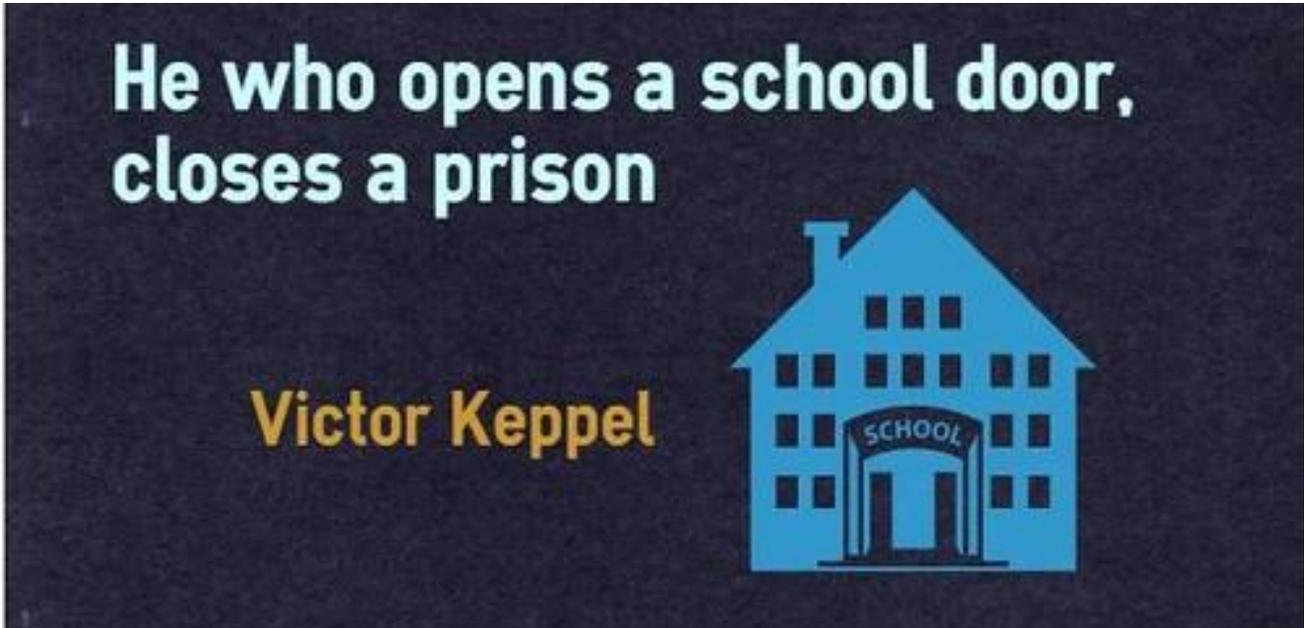


# PTI Matters

The Official Voice of the Prison Teaching Initiative @ Princeton University



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## An Unusual Semester...

Tara Ronda, Newsletter Editor

Hello, friends! We're glad to be back in your inbox. As you can imagine, this semester (year?) promises to be...unusual. While we know more about how classes will function, there's quite a bit we can't predict. If you're teaching with us this semester, thank you for your grace, patience, and passion for education. We expect the COVID classroom to be quite different from what we're accustomed to, but many people have spent many hours making the semester possible. So, as one of my mentors in the field of prison education is fond of saying, "Onward and upward!" There's simply nowhere else to go once you know what a difference prison education makes in the world.

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## Fall 2020 Update

As we long expected would be the case, all PTI classes will be held remotely this fall, which of course brings a whole new set of challenges to our students (who have VERY limited access to technology) and instructors. Nevertheless, we're moving forward in the most optimistic way we can, knowing our students will continue working hard to complete their courses and our instructors will adapt as they always do. PTI is teaching the following courses this semester:

- ENGL-226: Introduction to Poetry (with a social justice focus)
- HIST-101: World Civilizations I
- HIST-201: U.S. History from Beginnings to 1877
- WGST-110: Introduction to Women & Gender Studies



## NJ Legislative Update

On another note (one that will likely impact some of our students), New Jersey lawmakers have made some progress in mitigating the effects of COVID-19 in Department of Corrections facilities. Our friends at [SPEAR](#) gave us this update: "To alleviate overcrowding & improve conditions during one of the worst outbreaks of COVID-19 in a prison system in the country, bill S2519/A4235 could lead to the release of approximately 3,700 people, around 20% of New Jersey's incarcerated population. This bill applies a one-month credit to every 4 months served of time served during a public health emergency, up to 12 months, and will apply to anyone whose max-out date is in the next 8 months. This legislation will apply whenever there is a public health emergency. [...] The final floor vote is scheduled for August 27th, and it is expected to pass and to quickly be signed into law by the governor. The DOC has just begun preparing for implementation, and the first releases are anticipated in mid-September." Of course, the legislation is not without its problems, namely that it "does not currently include funding, which leaves many folks who will be released without housing, employment, and basic needs ready to go. In response, [NJ-CAIC](#) is coordinating a network of re-entry organizations to meet the basic needs of returning citizens."

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## Announcements from (and for) Our Friends

The Petey Greene Program is seeking instructors for a college-bridge writing and composition course that will be taught remotely to students incarcerated in the DC Jail. The course is scheduled to start on October 15 and it will be offered through a blended-learning model: Students in DC have access to secure tablets, which they can use to watch pre-recorded lessons, submit assignments, and chat (in writing only) with instructors and tutors. In addition to the interaction with the instructors, students will be paired with PGP tutors, who will help them complete the assignments and conduct weekly check-ins to ensure that they stay on track. Instructors will be responsible for recording 15 mini-lessons of 15-20 minutes each and for grading four short papers. We are also designing a new curriculum adapted to this blended-learning format, so instructors are welcome to contribute to the syllabus design as much (or as little) as they want. For more information, please contact Chiara Benetollo (a former PTI fellow!) at [cbenetollo@peteygreene.org](mailto:cbenetollo@peteygreene.org).



## Making Great Thesis Impressions Easy.

Now, if we can give a little shout-out to one of our beloved business partners...PRINCETON PRINTER has been helping us produce materials for years. They offer us great rates and have often bailed us out with large last-minute print jobs. But this is a tough time to be a small business, especially when you depend so much on the local university to keep running. Since classes went remote in mid-March, Princeton Printer has seen far less demand for thesis binding and course pack printing, and they could use our help. So consider calling them if you need marketing materials, business cards, invitations, course packs, or anything else that can be printed. They're quick, talented, and friendly folks. Give them a call at 609-455-1099. (And no, we don't get a commission - we just love our friends!)

## PTI Computer Science Team Has Some Fresh Talent ... But Could Still Use Yours!

The PTI computer science team recently added two new RISE (Recognizing Inequalities and Standing for Equality) scholars to the team: Alina Chen and Ekaterina (Kate) Ivshina. Welcome, Alina and Kate! If you're interested in helping, the PTI CS team is always recruiting folks. They've been actively working with Raritan Valley Community College for the past two years on the course and have completed about half of it. They're about 25% of the way through testing the material with people who have never coded. The course was intended to start in Spring 2020, though of course, that's a bit up in the air at the moment. When it finally *does* run, though, it will be the first computer science course in a New Jersey prison. The team needs coders to assist with curriculum development and non-coders to test out curriculum that has already been developed. If you're interested, contact Joe Abbate at [jabbate@princeton.edu](mailto:jabbate@princeton.edu) or Uthsav Chitra at [uchitra@princeton.edu](mailto:uchitra@princeton.edu).

## Alliance for Higher Education in Prison Opportunities

The Alliance for Higher Education in Prison (AHEP) "support[s] the expansion of quality higher education in prison, empower[s] students while in prison and after release, and shape[s] public discussion about education and incarceration." And they've got lots of opportunities for deeper involvement with college prison programs.

- Check out their Community Calendar.
- Submit a journal article for the first issue of the Journal of Higher Education in Prison (JHEP). Submissions are due Sept. 15, 2020.
- Take a look at some of their innovative toolkits.
- Read about people whose lives have been changed in the Story Center.

# New & Noteworthy

Did you know August is Black Business Month? Consider supporting your local Black-owned businesses now and all year long.

## READING LIST

- True notebooks: A writer's year at juvenile hall (by Mark Salzman)
- Taking care: Creating meaningful online learning (by John Warner for *Inside Higher Ed*, 6/3/2020)
- Wrongfully accused by an algorithm (by Kashmir Hill for the *New York Times*, 6/24/2020 & updated 8/3/2020)
- From the inside-out: Highlighting voices from those most affected by COVID-19 in the New Jersey state prisons (by American Friends Service Committee, Prison Watch Community Oversight Initiative, July 2020)
- The Warbler: An educational weekly [Issue 09, 6/9/2020] (by the Alabama Prison Arts + Education Project)
- COVID-19 cases and deaths in federal and state prisons (by Brendan Saloner et al. for *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 7/8/2020)
- How Ironbound Farm is working to restore and revive underserved populations (by Emily Bell for *New Jersey Monthly*, 7/14/2020)
- Beyond mass incarceration: New horizons of liberation and freedom [Vol. 5, Issue 2] (*Public: Imagining America*)
- Leaving gun towers and barbed wire for a healing house (by Patricia Leigh Brown for the *New York Times*, 8/7/2020)
- It's not just policing that needs reform. Prisons need it, too. (by Steve J. Martin for *The Washington Post*, 7/6/2020)
- Risks for the future we want (by Mekaelia Davis for *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 7/23/2020)
- Second Chance Studios: Turning ex-offenders into podcasting pros - and helping them stay out of prison (by Anne Field for *Forbes*, 7/17/2020)
- Toward co-designing a better criminal justice system (by Emily Herrick & Caroline Bauer for *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 6/26/2020)
- An update to "News you can use: Research roundup for re-entry advocates" (by Kenny Lo & Akua Amaning for *Center for American Progress*, 6/25/2020)

## PODCASTS & RECORDINGS

- **THIS WEEK!** Webinar: Implications of systemic racism on mass incarceration (Sponsored by Philadelphia FIGHT, 8/26/2020, 1-2:30pm)
- 1619 (from the *New York Times*)
- New podcasts on music & mass incarceration, failures in police accountability, & guns (from NPR)
- Civil Discord (Episode 40, 7/4/2020)
- Higher education in prison: Access and success [YouTube Video] (posted on 5/22/2020 by GlobalMindED 2020)
- Race, violence, and the failed American state with Lisa Miller [Video] (recorded as part of Rutgers University's Scarlet Speakers in the Heart of Your Home series, 6/30/2020)
- Uncovering the trauma of racism with Dr. Nathalie Edmond [Crowdcast videos] (Presented by Princeton Public Library & Not in Our Town Princeton, 7/13 & 7/20/2020)
- Black Minds Matter 5-part webinar series (by CORA, July & August 2020)
- Behind the bars: A week dedicated to music in, about, and from prisons (by Jeremy Young for Soundfly)

## MISCELLANY

- **Call for Applicants:** 2021/22 Nathan Cummings Foundation Fellowship for Climate Change & Inequality (applications due 9/1/2020)
- **Call for Proposals:** Higher Education in Prison Training Resources (from the Alliance for Higher Education in Prison) - Review begins 9/14/2020 and will continue on a rolling basis.
- **Website:** Join the Formerly Incarcerated College Graduates Network!
- **Open Position:** Academic Coordinator, Tennessee Higher Education in Prison Initiative (should be able to start before 10/1/2020)
- **Open Position:** Deputy Director, Northwestern University Prison Education Program (no deadline specified)
- **Website:** Mourning Our Losses
- **Website:** Compassion Prison Project