

Epidemiology and Population Health Summer Institute at Columbia University



SYNCHRONOUS COURSE

JUNE 13-17; 1:30 - 5:30PM

Rethinking Criminal Justice as Public Health

DESCRIPTION

The health of the U.S. population is inextricably connected to the country's criminal-legal system, which physically confines millions of Americans, surveils and polices tens of millions more, and undermines the wellbeing of the population as a whole.

Instead of summoning the resources and ingenuity to solve substance addiction and mental illness, we exacerbate these thorny challenges by misconstruing them as 'crimes'. We struggle with a high prevalence of some infectious diseases—from hepatitis C to COVID-19—in part because we fail to manage them in the hotbeds of our jails and prisons. And our societal response to violence, which primarily takes the form of violence of its own, often perpetuates the problem it is meant to prevent.

In this course, we will consider the history of our society's conceptions of crime, the way they have shaped our societal responses to entrenched social ills, and how they differ from the values and practices of public health. We will examine the counterproductive harms that spring from this disconnect. Drawing on the instructor's reportage as well as extending beyond it, we will identify and explore public health interventions that could ultimately replace our architecture of punishment.

INSTRUCTOR

▪ **Ted Alcorn**

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, participants will be able to:

- Assess varying conceptions of crime, and the way they shape our society's response
- Describe the criminal-legal system including its history and constituent parts, and evaluate the evidence of its effectiveness
- Explain how the criminal-legal system perpetuates violence, mental illness, poverty, and infectious disease
- Examine the role that mental illness, addiction, environmental exposure, and other factors play in crime
- Evaluate public health measures for addressing crime, from drug courts to cognitive behavioral therapy to unarmed emergency responders to restorative justice

EARLY DISCOUNTS
AVAILABLE UNTIL
APRIL 1, 2022

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THROUGH MAY 1, 2022

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