



*Total Incapacitation: The Emergence of an Exceptional
Penal Rationale and its Consequences for Imprisonment*

Professor Jonathan Simon

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Institute of Criminology Public Seminar Series

Thursday 24th February 2011, 5.30pm

Seminar Room B3, Institute of Criminology,
Sidgwick Avenue, Cambridge, CB3 9DA

A drinks reception in the basement foyer will follow this seminar for attendees

Penal rationales are often viewed as the realm of penal elites, in stark contrast to the penal populism that has reshaped policy in both the US and the UK. But this ignores that penal populism has in fact coalesced around a rather distinct penal rationale, i.e., incapacitation. This seminar elaborates the nature of this penal rationale and the very extreme form of it, which I call "total incapacitation," to distinguish it from the more elite version that continues to predominate in Europe. I argue that the historical origins of this rationale can be specified more precisely than the general notion of a "common sense of high crime societies". This rationale and its foundations in a distinctly postmodern experience of crime fear are crucial to understanding how hard it will be to reverse the tide of penal severity.

Jonathan Simon is the Adrian A. Kragen Professor of Law, UC Berkeley and this year a Leverhulme Visiting Professor at Edinburgh University School of Law. His most recent book, *Governing through Crime: How the War on Crime Transformed American Democracy and Created a Culture of Fear*, was the 2010 winner of the Michael Hindelang award of the American Society of Criminology.

This seminar is free, and is open to all interested in attending, with no ticket required.
If you wish to be added to the seminar mailing list, please contact: Joanne Garner, on: jf225@cam.ac.uk
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