
Humanities Action Lab

States of Incarceration
Toolkit

2017



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Overview

The [Humanities Action Lab](#) (HAL) is a [collaboration of universities](#) working with issue organizations and public spaces to:

- Foster new public dialogue on contested, deadlocked social issues, through public humanities projects that explore the diverse local histories and current realities of shared global concerns.
- Open space for experimentation and innovation in how design and the humanities can help confront urgent social problems.
- Combine and connect the diverse local perspectives of communities around the world, to create widely applicable and flexible models.
- Create new public humanities prototypes that take on difficult issues and experiment with untested formats.

HAL partners create a major public project every three years that explores the history, memory, and current realities of a pressing social issue. Each project includes an exhibit, digital platform, oral histories, face-to-face community dialogues, and interactive media. Students and community partners in each participating locality contribute their local histories and perspectives to the international project, which then travels to each community that created it, opening a space to generate and exchange unique locally-grounded approaches to common global questions.

The first such project, [*States of Incarceration: A National Dialogue of Local Histories*](#) focuses on the past, present, and future of incarceration, exploring the explosion of prisons and incarcerated people in the US – including immigration detention centers -- and its global dimensions. The project includes a traveling exhibit created by students and others directly impacted by incarceration from 20 different communities around the country (and counting); a digital platform (www.statesofincarceration.org); public programs held in each local community the exhibit visits; and teaching resources. The exhibit opened at The New School in New York City in April 2016 and is now [traveling to at least 19 other cities](#).

Why States of Incarceration? The United States has the highest incarceration rates in the world, and by far. With approximately 1 in every 108 American adults currently in jail or prison,¹ the per capita rate of incarceration is 50% higher than Russia's (in second place) and over three times higher than China's. It is deeply divided by race: 1 in 15 African American men are currently incarcerated compared to 1 in 106 white men², and Hispanics are incarcerated at nearly twice the rate of whites.³ This happened fast: in 1972, there were only 300,000 people behind bars in the US; today, that number has skyrocketed seven times, to 2.3 million. And it's unique in US history: the country now has the most incarcerated people per capita and in absolute terms than ever before. Today's statistics not only describe a transformation of our prison system, but how its recent, rapid, and racialized growth has shaped society on a wider scale: labor and economic systems; racial power structures; landscapes and communities; and democratic practice. What happened? How is it rooted in much longer histories? And how can exploring the path to this point help us change course in the future?

Why not leave it to the experts? Local discovery, national dialogue: HAL projects are student- and community-driven, involving an ongoing dialogue among local student teams, their community partners (people outside the university directly impacted by incarceration in diverse ways), their faculty coordinators, and their counterparts across the country. HAL university partners offer courses, through which students collaborate with community partners to curate a history of a local site of incarceration as one piece of the national project. For instance, DePaul University co-created their piece with students in an Inside-Out class at Stateville Penitentiary; Brown University students debated issues of crime and punishment for that chapter of the exhibit with men from the Rhode Island Adult Correctional Institute. The team at the University of California Riverside collaborated with directly impacted youth activists involved in the Youth Justice Coalition in exploring the school-to-prison pipeline. Local pieces are compiled by a designer into a national exhibit that travels to each of the communities that created it.

Although the project is guided by historical advisors and policy experts, the curators' strength is their commitment, lived experience, and curiosity. Student curators may have no background in incarceration issues at all or have deep personal connections; they may have a strong intellectual foundation in one area but have much to learn in another. Community partners will always have strong direct experience and involvement in incarceration issues; they may have no historical perspective on incarceration, or they may be experienced non-university historians and policy-makers. In any case, the process of selecting stories, images, and questions in each locality involves powerful discovery and difficult dialogue among people with a wide range of knowledge and experience, a significant experiment in project-based, action-oriented learning. HAL projects hope to inspire deep engagement with project issues through this process of discovery, and to make that process transparent as an invitation for exhibit visitors to engage with the issue as well.

¹Lauren E. Glaze and Erinn J. Herberman, "Correctional Populations in the United States, 2012," United States Bureau of Justice Statistics (December 19, 2013) at <http://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=4843>

² <https://www.aclu.org/combatting-mass-incarceration-facts-0>

³ http://www.sentencingproject.org/doc/publications/inc_hispanicprisoners.pdf

What is the role of people directly impacted by incarceration in the national planning and leadership of SOI?

As described above, each local “chapter” is created through a collaboration among students and others directly impacted by incarceration in a variety of ways. In addition, men and women directly impacted by incarceration have been involved at every stage, including the national working group that framed the traveling exhibition's guiding questions and designed potential public interaction mechanisms allowing affected communities to create and share stories in an ongoing way as the exhibit grows and travels. Working group participants included staff and members of the Fortune Society, JustLeadershipUSA, the Sentencing Project, and other organizations.

Become an SOI partner: Add Your Community’s Story

States of Incarceration is designed to grow and change as new communities add their histories and contemporary experiences of mass incarceration. Here’s how your university can participate:

Partner obligations

Local partners:

- teach a course on the history of incarceration nationally/globally as well as in your local community, using SOI teaching resources;
- lead students to collaborate with others directly impacted by incarceration outside the college/university to curate a new “chapter” of SOI about a history of incarceration in your state/community, using SOI design template and workplan, for inclusion in physical and digital SOI exhibit;
- host exhibit at a local venue
- host public dialogues around exhibit
- pay digital and physical exhibit design/fabrication fee of:
 - \$6000 for exhibit panel to be integrated into [national traveling exhibit](#), plus new area on web platform with unlimited digital material (see examples [here](#))
 - \$5000 for local physical exhibit of up to 4 additional panels [Note: local exhibit panels can also be designed and fabricated locally using SOI templates]

HAL Resources and Obligations

HAL provides local partners:

- teaching resources on both subject and methodology, including readings and other media on incarceration histories, and guidelines and models for community collaboration/co-curation and dialogue facilitation;
- week-by-week curation work plan, providing guideline for how to work with your team to produce a “chapter” within a 13-week semester;
- design guidelines detailing number of images, amount of text, and options for media and formats for both physical and digital exhibits
- digital and physical exhibit design and production (physical design and production can also be done locally if local partner prefers)
- public program designs
- communications package and staff support for publicizing local events

- web platform for student reflections on States of Incarceration blog
- convenings with other national partners, with opportunities for students, faculty, and community partners to exchange work and experiences

Timeline

Months 1-3

- Identify and schedule course and/or local community curator partner group
- Work with local community partners to identify broad local theme/topic and map out collaboration agreement (describing how students and community partners will work together to curate “chapter,” what compensation will be offered, if any, under what terms, etc.)

Months 4-6

- Conduct preliminary research on local topic; gather sources

Months 7-9

- Teach course with community collaboration
- By end of course: finalize choices/editing of images, text, digital media for “chapter”; send to HAL or local designer
- Identify venue for hosting exhibit

Months 10-12

- HAL or local designer fabricates physical exhibit panel
- HAL integrates digital media into www.statesofincarceration.org

Months 13-15

- Exhibit chapter integrated into traveling exhibit
- Complete local exhibit, if choosing to create one

Months 16-on

- Host exhibit
- Host public programming


Current Humanities Action Lab University Partners (as of November 2017)

1. Allegany College of Maryland, Cumberland, MD
2. Antioch College, Antioch, OH
3. Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ
4. Brown University, Providence, RI
5. College of the Canyons, Santa Clarita, CA
6. DePaul University, Chicago, IL
7. Duke University, Durham, NC
8. Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, IN
9. Johnson C. Smith University, Charlotte, NC
10. Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids, IA
11. Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI
12. Northeastern University, Boston, MA
13. Parsons Paris, Paris, France
14. Perimeter College, Atlanta, GA
15. Rutgers University New Brunswick, New Brunswick, NJ
16. Rutgers University Newark, Newark, NJ
17. Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY
18. SUNY Plattsburgh, Plattsburgh, NY
19. The New School, New York, NY
20. University of California Riverside, Riverside, CA
21. University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT
22. University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA
23. University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL
24. University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN
25. University of Montana, Missoula, MT
26. University of New Orleans, New Orleans, LA
27. University of North Carolina, Greensboro
28. University of Texas, Austin, TX
29. Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN
30. Winston-Salem State University, Winston-Salem, NC

Researching Incarceration

HAL creates participatory public projects and research should be conducted to enrich that process and outcome, thinking in particular about visual and media-rich sources. The task for each university is to investigate a local site, develop a focus, and build a component of the exhibition. The first step is to look closely at the States of Incarceration website to see what has been done by other partners, as inspiration and also to avoid duplication. (The best way to navigate may be to look by state.) The HAL Hub has also pulled together key secondary readings on incarceration, by topic, which can be found on website [here](#).

The goal of the exhibition is to find new perspectives on incarceration, drawing from the past to understand the present and current debates about incarceration. Thus, this is not solely a historical project but one deeply connected to present concerns. The advantage of a historical perspective, though, is that we can move beyond common conceptions, including iconic images and stereotypes. We recommend constant consideration of this issue--challenging received notions--throughout your selection of site, focus, and materials.

People who are incarcerated are considered a vulnerable population targeted for protection under university Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines. You should check with your local institution's IRB to make sure that whatever research you conduct follows the guidelines recommended by them. HAL Hub carries no responsibility for each institution's research guidelines, whether those determined by IRB or not.

Picking Your Local Site and Focus

Figuring out the site and focus of your local component is the most important decision. You must weigh a number of factors, including originality of topic/question, specificity to place (whether local or state), and availability of materials. The impact of the national project depends upon distinct and specific local stories, avoiding duplication. Some possibilities to consider:

- 1) Choose a site with a long history, such as a particular correctional facility, so that there are a number of issues and materials that could be featured (e.g., Indiana's first mental hospital or Angola Prison in Louisiana);
- 2) Choose a site that is particularly contentious currently, such as a correctional facility (e.g., Rikers Island in NYC) or headquarters of a private prison company (e.g., Corrections Corporation of America in Nashville);
- 3) Pick a key moment, such as a protest, a legal change, a notable crime--one that signals a change (e.g., the Dakota Wars in Minnesota that resulted in the incarceration of Native Americans; the internment of Japanese-Americans whose labor was exploited at Seabrook Farms, NJ);
- 4) Focus on a particular issue within the criminal justice system, such as the experience of women or children, although this needs to tie to something unique to your locale (e.g., western Massachusetts hosts one of the newest and oldest of women's prisons).
- 5) Research your university's involvement in incarceration. Consult this Student Organizing [Toolkit](#) for Banning the Box for Higher Education by [Education from the Inside Out](#).

Possible questions:

- Does the institution ask about incarceration on its applications for admissions or employment? If so, when did this practice begin?
- Does the institution procure supplies that have been built with prison labor? Or use service providers that benefit from prison labor?
- Does the institution's endowment include investment in companies that are part of the prison/industrial complex?

Possible Sources

1) Archival Materials

- Check your state and local historical society and libraries for information on your local site, including a search of local newspapers.
- Conduct interviews and/or oral histories (see below for guidelines).
- Consider doing a site visit and observation, if appropriate and/or possible.

2) Statistics

- State incarceration rates can be found from The Sentencing Project [here](#).
- The federal [Bureau of Justice](#) gathers data on corrections, courts, crime type, victims, etc. Their website has a wealth of data and is worth looking at extensively.
- Check your city, town, or state websites as they should compile data on crime and incarceration (often called the Department of Corrections).
- US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) compiles annual reports on "removals" [here](#). (Since immigration is governed by federal law, there will not

- likely be statistics about current immigration detention at the local level.)
- Some census records have been digitized that include criminal case files, passenger lists of arriving vessels, etc. (list [here](#)). Local and state archives and libraries often have census records on microfilm or in book form.
- Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), one of the largest private prison companies, posts its annual reports to shareholders online [here](#); another, the GEO Group, is [here](#).
- For an international perspective, search the data pulled together by the World Prison Brief [here](#).

3) Visual Materials (see examples of visual media in the exhibition below)

- Check your local historical society and library for photographs, objects, local newspapers and/or clippings files that relate to your local site.
- Check online sources for photographs (keeping in mind the cost, process, and deadline in obtaining images; HAL provides a maximum of \$500 for image permissions), such as newspapers or archival databases. Some large collections include:

[Chicago Public Library Digital Collections](#)

[Getty Images](#) (which now includes the Corbis collection, with a great deal of historical photographs)

[Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas](#)

[Library of Congress Prints and Photographs](#)

[Life Magazine](#)

[National Archives Digital Photography Collections](#)

[New York Public Library Digital Collections](#)

[New York Times](#)

[Shutterstock](#)

[Time](#)

[United Press International](#)

University of Chicago Digital Collections

[University of Southern California Libraries Digital Library](#)

Wisconsin Historical Society

Storytelling

Another key challenge will be to figure out inventive ways to tell the story, particularly in featuring the voices of the people most impacted by incarceration. The common method for doing this is the interview, usually a student interviewing the person with expertise about incarceration. We encourage you to think of alternatives to this, such as:

- let the person interview the student/s;
- conduct a mutual interview, in which each asks questions;
- record a conversation between people with expertise about incarceration (whether two people or a group);
- record a conversation between a parent and child about incarceration;
- give a recorder to people and have them record moments, conversations, and

-
- commentary throughout their day or week;
 - begin a conversation between students and people incarcerated through letters or audio, which can be in the form of an interview (i.e., asking questions and receiving responses), but may likely extend beyond that to more informal dialogue.

All such interviews can be an excellent way to obtain personal stories and details missing in more conventional historical material or quantitative data. There are important ethical issues to consider, however, particularly when interviewing people involved in the criminal justice system. First and foremost, you must obtain informed consent—an agreement between you and the interviewee about the purpose of the interview and the possible uses of what the interviewee says. (A sample consent form is included in the appendix.) It is crucially important that the interviewee not disclose any incriminating information. In the sample consent form, for instance, there is a clause that states: “If information arises during the course of the interview that you or the interviewer believe could put you at risk, the interviewer will stop the interview, and erase that section from the recording device.”

More information on oral histories and interviewing techniques can be found at these links. (It is important to consider the technical aspects of recording as well that are a part of these resources and those in the Curatorial Guidelines):

[Indiana University, Center for the Study of History and Memory, Oral History Techniques](#)
[Oral History Association, Principles and Best Practices](#)
[University of CA, Berkeley, Oral History Center, Oral History Tips](#)
[Story Corps Justice Project](#)

Examples of Creative Media in the States of Incarceration Exhibition

A Day in the Life of the Rikers Island Bridge (The New School, NY)

Students at The New School collected research about people and goods that traffic to and from Rikers Island over the lone bridge that connects the island to Queens. They created a graphic of the island and bridge and then color-coded dots that reflected the travel over a 24-hour period of civilian employees; correctional officers; those going to and from court; new inmates; released inmates; and the only public bus that goes to the facility. Overlaid on top of the visualization are audio excerpts from interviews of men held at Rikers.

Stories from Prison/Honoring Ancestors (University of New Orleans, LA)

People held at the Louisiana State Penitentiary wrote stories about loved ones who passed away while they were locked up, and described how they would like them to be commemorated. Students went out and performed these commemorations and mailed pictures back to them. The online exhibition includes the letters, a map of where commemorations took place, and the pictures of the commemorations.

Boarding Schools and the School to Prison Pipeline (University of Minnesota, MN)

Students created a digital timeline anchored by archival images to detail the history of boarding schools for Native Americans that were not only a tactic of settler colonialism but set up a



channel to later incarceration.

Interviews with People Held at Eloy Detention Center (Arizona)

Video and audio interviews capture the human impact of incarceration and include discussion of the conditions of the facility and the difficulties for someone with an amputated leg at the facility.

Can Immigration Be a Game? (Rutgers/Newark, NJ)

A student investigation into the game “Grant Theft Auto V” features video clips and written analysis to understand the game as a critique of immigration policy. It also reconfigures the idea of responsibility for these issues on to the player—you.

To Classify, Control, and Correct (University of California, Riverside)

A slideshow that documents the history of juvenile offenders at Riverside’s Sherman Institute, which features historical photographs and eugenic records.

Photo Essay of Mr. Otis Johnson (The New School, NY)

Photography student Kari Bjorn created a photo essay of Otis Johnson, who served nearly 40 years in 13 New York state prisons for a crime he has never admitted to. Photographs document the struggle in building a life after prison.

Creating Community Partnerships

Partnerships and collaborative curation are a key element in creating a HAL exhibition. All content, whether in the traveling exhibition or on the web, is the result of university-community partnerships. These partnerships require a great deal of time and commitment to ensure that they are equitable and mutually beneficial.

Partnerships can take many forms and must be intentionally designed. The central question to consider is: **how will the decision-making be shared?** This can range widely, from partners serving as consultants to co-creators of the content itself.

You will want to decide early on whether you want students to work directly with people currently held at a correctional facility. Each facility has its own rules and challenges, and we recommend finding someone at the university or within your partner organization who already has established connections and relationships. You could also check to see if there is a chapter of [Inside/Out Prison Exchange Program](#) in your area. If so, it is important to incorporate this into your course planning. If you do not already have established relationships with an issue organization or a local community group, we recommend finding someone at your university who might have these connections. You could also check to see if there are local chapters of leading national organizations working on the issue in your area.

Principles for an Effective Partnership

- Faculty play a central role: partners are usually found through personal and professional networks of faculty and faculty are the key link to successful and sustainable partnerships. The time-consuming work of incubating partnerships, designing project-based syllabi, and teaching collaborative courses often goes unrecognized as faculty workload. HAL recommends that lead faculty seek a course release in recognition of the amount of work that goes far beyond the course itself.
- Partners have a central role: it is critical that the partner be given authority throughout the collaboration, particularly in defining goals and outcomes.
- Seek appropriate compensation for the partner organization, whether payment for consulting or provision of supplies.
- Start early: time is absolutely essential to building trust and collaboration. At least six months prior to interactions with students, conversations should begin to explore and agree upon goals, define how the partnership will operate, and plan how the project will proceed.
- Establish specific roles for faculty, students, and partners: structure engagement between classes and communities so that needs and capacities of each are recognized and utilized.
- Integrate reflection opportunities: schedule periodic moments of reflection throughout the partnership to identify problems, strengths, propose solutions, reconfigure work plan. There is a structural tension between the needs of partners and students and faculty. Sometimes this tension causes a shift in focus during the semester, as faculty may move from concern with the partners to learning outcomes for students.
- Prepare students for engagement: lay conceptual groundwork for a critical understanding of social justice issues and language at the start of the course; establish expectations, clearly stating that project-based courses require more fluidity because of changing relations with the partner, changing demands regarding the outcome, etc.
- Extend student and partner experience beyond the course: build in recognition to both students and partners into the exhibit, and supporting programs and events.

Additional resources for creating effective partnerships can be found at [Community Tool Box](#).

Partnership Interactions

There are a variety of ways to structure the interaction between the partner organization and students and each situation should be defined by the interests of the university and the partner. The process should follow these general steps and timeline:

- By week 2, the group of stakeholders (students, partners, administrators, etc.) come together around a shared vision and objective;
- During weeks 3-9, research conducted, which can include interviews, investigation of archival and visual material, etc.;
- By week 10, an initial proposal is developed and then shared with all stakeholders for feedback and concerns;
- During weeks 11-15, revision and improvement of the proposal;
- By week 15, final approval from each stakeholder;
- At the opening of the exhibition in your locale, a celebration of final product with all stakeholders!

Possible interactions include:

- 1) **Visit a Correctional Facility:** Project-based learning and public humanities courses are strengthened when students are given the opportunity to travel off campus. These visits should be scheduled weeks in advance and planned in collaboration with community partners. Visits can occur once or at regular intervals throughout the semester. They should be incorporated into the syllabus. When taking students off campus it is important to be aware of any risk (to students or to those who live or work in the facility). Consult with your partner in order to establish rules of engagement and make sure that students are made aware of these rules in advance.

Example: The University of Miami, for example, partnered with Friends of Miami-Dade Detainees, which aims to combat the isolation detainees feel and organized regular visits from students to people held in the Krome Detention Center. Conversations during these visits resulted in student reflections on the increasing criminalization of immigrants and the consequences of the privatization of federal detention centers.

- 2) **Collaborative teaching:** Partners can also work alongside university faculty. This should also be worked out in advance and incorporated into the course schedule. Partners can help to focus the local aspect of the course by providing history and context for their work in the community or instruct students about the theory and practice of the field, while faculty guide students through the methodology of public history/humanities. If you choose this kind of partnership it is important that the community partner also collaborate on the design of the syllabus, which benefits the students and the partnership. Community partners should also be compensated for their instructional labor, which may require additional budget lines/fundraising.

Example: The University of New Orleans collaborated with the Travis Hill School, a pre-secondary school located inside a juvenile detention facility. This partnership connected the university and local artists to incarcerated youth awaiting trial and provided a transformative experience for all involved.

- 3) **Work with an already existing exchange program:** Co-learning is a great way to ensure that partnerships are mutually beneficial. Seek out organizations and locations in your

area where community members are engaged in teaching and learning on the exhibition subject matter. For these kinds of interactions it is important to ensure that resources (course materials, information, technology, etc.) are accessible to everyone and equitably distributed. For an exchange program, archival research and oral history can be done by both traditional and nontraditional students.

Example: DePaul University's local contributions to States of Incarceration were the result of an inside/out course offered both at the university and inside a correctional facility. Students inside and outside worked simultaneously and in tandem in order to create their exhibition content.

- 4) **Consultation on content for the exhibition.** Several HAL partners invite community members/organizations to give feedback on student content for the exhibition. This might require 3-4 scheduled visits to the classroom so that partners can engage with exhibition content at different stages in the creation process. In order for this to be most effective, create an evaluation module or a common set of questions so that partners know exactly what kind of feedback you are looking for. This kind of partnership is one way to be accountable to those whose story you might be telling.
 - a) Examples: Faculty members at The New School scheduled regular check-ins with The Fortune Society, who served as consultants on their exhibition content. The University of New Orleans hosted a public program that invited community members to give feedback on their created content.
- 5) **Creation of content for the exhibition.** Remember that your exhibition content includes audiovisual materials such as photographs, audio interviews, artwork, etc. These can be created in collaboration with partners. Students can interview or photograph members of a community organization. Partners can contribute artwork or music to your digital content. Community participants should give informed consent for their image or work to be included in the exhibit. You may also need release forms and other kinds of permissions. These details should be worked out well in advance of the interview/photograph date.


Example: The New School worked with six men identified by the Fortune Society. Three class sessions were dedicated to conversations between students and these men and included discussion of primary themes, possible photographs, and stories to feature. Ultimately, students decided to feature audio interviews with the men and conducted those during the last session. Content from the interviews were used as captions to photographs and as audio to a data visualization.
- 6) **Community Dialogues/Public Programming.** You and your partner are leading a conversation on mass incarceration that may be the first of its kind in your community. The arrival of the exhibition in your city is an opportunity to create new and different kinds of partnerships. For examples of innovative and collaborative public programs, see the "Classroom and Community Dialogue" section of this toolkit.

Course Outline

This course outline is meant to provide one possible path through the semester. Faculty can design syllabi however they see fit. Please also note that you should assign deadlines for each of the curatorial and partnership steps based on the time frame you are working with.

Week:

1. Intro to project
 - Optional Skype overview by HAL Hub
 - Consider a writing exercise about people's relation to incarceration (you may want to pair this with a reflection exercise at the end of the course)
2. National Theme 1 + intro to local focus
 - Begin work between partner organization and students
3. National Theme 2 + short reading/assignment re: local focus
 - Continue research and collaboration with partner
4. National Theme 3 + short reading/assignment re: local focus
 - Continue research and collaboration with partner
5. National theme 4 + short reading/assignment re: local focus
DEADLINE CURATORIAL STEP 1: Determine scope of story and media formats
Hub sends any questions/feedback prior to next class meeting time
6. National theme 5 + short reading/assignment re: local focus
 - Continue research and collaboration with partner
7. Local focus reading/research
 - Develop content with partner
8. Local focus reading/research
 - Develop content with partner
9. Local focus reading/research
 - Develop content with partner
10. **DEADLINE CURATORIAL STEP 2: Submit draft content to HAL Hub for review by scholars and designers**
Hub returns feedback before Week 13

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11. Discuss additional content for the website, continue work on developing content
 12. Discuss local programming/dialogue strategies; presentations at exhibit launch event
 13. Workshop ideas with partner for revisions based on feedback
 14. Finalize content; get final approval from partner
 15. **DEADLINE CURATORIAL STEP 3: Submit final content to HAL Hub**
 - Reflection on how students' understanding of incarceration has changed

Curatorial Guidelines

The following are a set of guidelines for conceptualizing and designing your local contribution to the exhibition. This consists of two distinct components:

1. Local elements of the traveling exhibit, including text, images, and multimedia in addition to a title, narrative, and framing question.
2. A digital version of this material for the exhibition's companion website

Note: Because you are completing these elements in a project-based course, it is important to adhere to a strict timeline.

Specs

- Visual images (up to 10) should be 300dpi, 2000x2000 aspect ratio. Photos can vary in size to highlight different content/storylines
- The preferred file format for photos is .tiff (preferred) or .jpg
- Visual images should include captions of 30 words or less and a photo credit (if applicable).
- Material components (i.e. flipbooks, albums, puzzles, board games, etc.) should not exceed twenty pages
- Audio clips should be less than three minutes. 90 seconds or less is preferred
- Video (preferably in HD format) should not exceed five minutes
- It is important to remember that video and slideshows will be displayed on small devices such as ipods or ipads, which requires high quality sound and images. These elements should also be user friendly and portray a cohesive story for visitors.

Curatorial Step #1: Determine the scope of your local story and media formats

Timeline: To be completed during the first five weeks of the course

First Draft of TITLE, SUBTITLE, and LOCAL QUESTION

The name of your state and up to (6) word project subtitle identifying your local TOPIC and/or SITE (e.g. former prison site)

EXAMPLES:

Louisiana | Windows on Angola Prison

New York | Closing a Prison Deferring a Dream

Minnesota | Carceral Colonialism: Imprisonment in Indian Country

First draft of LOCAL QUESTION: (Up to 8 words): A big question your local piece of the project is trying to wrestle with, and that you hope viewers will ask themselves. It can be rooted in your panel's content/history (which may give an example of how people in your state have grappled with the question over time) but be enduring and relevant today.

EXAMPLES:

Who is the death penalty for?

How have youth been criminalized?

How does architecture shape punishment?

Identify Exhibit Templates

Identify which template(s) you and your students will develop for the traveling exhibition. Content for the template will be submitted in Curatorial Step 2.

Template A

Title TK [19 Letters per Line] Title TK [19 Letters per Line] Title TK [19 Letters per Line]

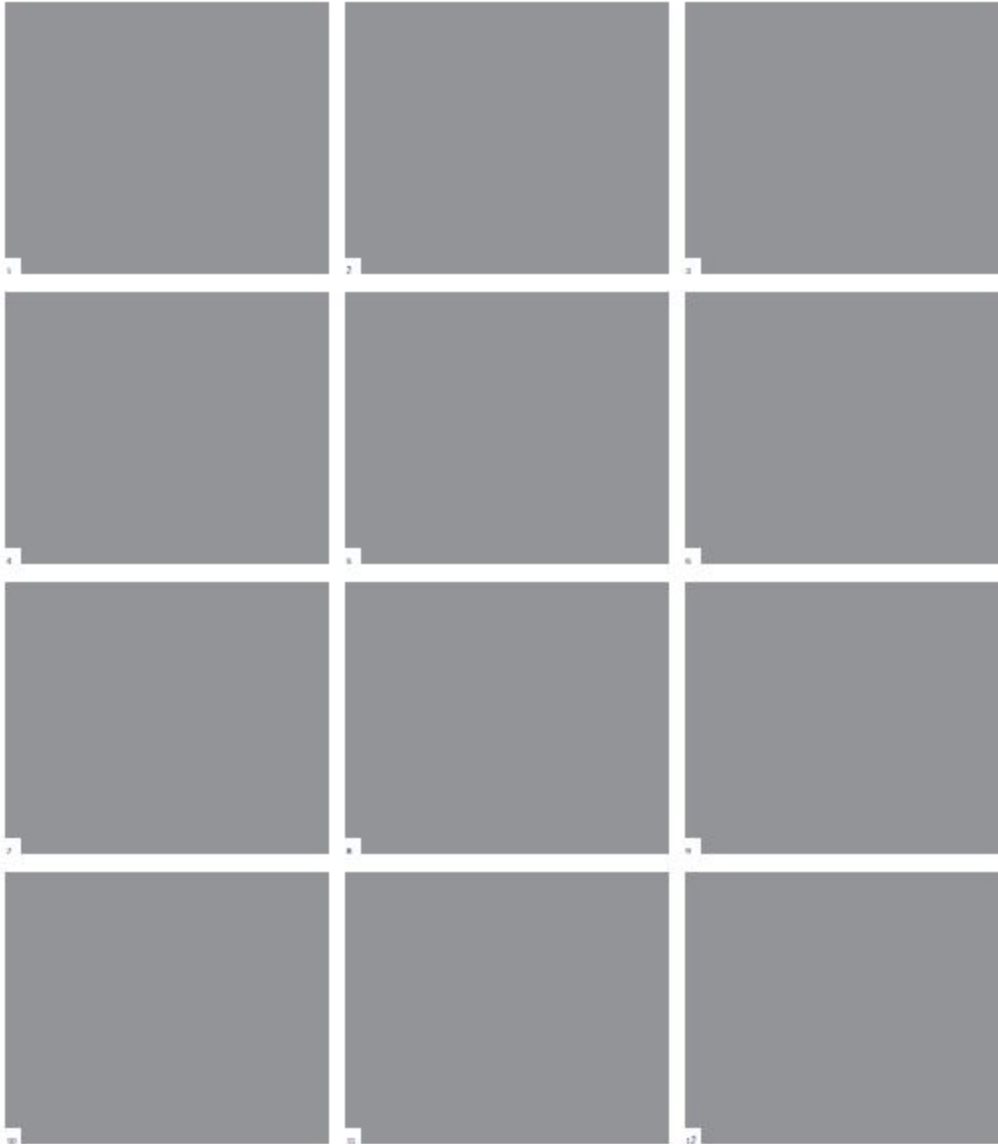
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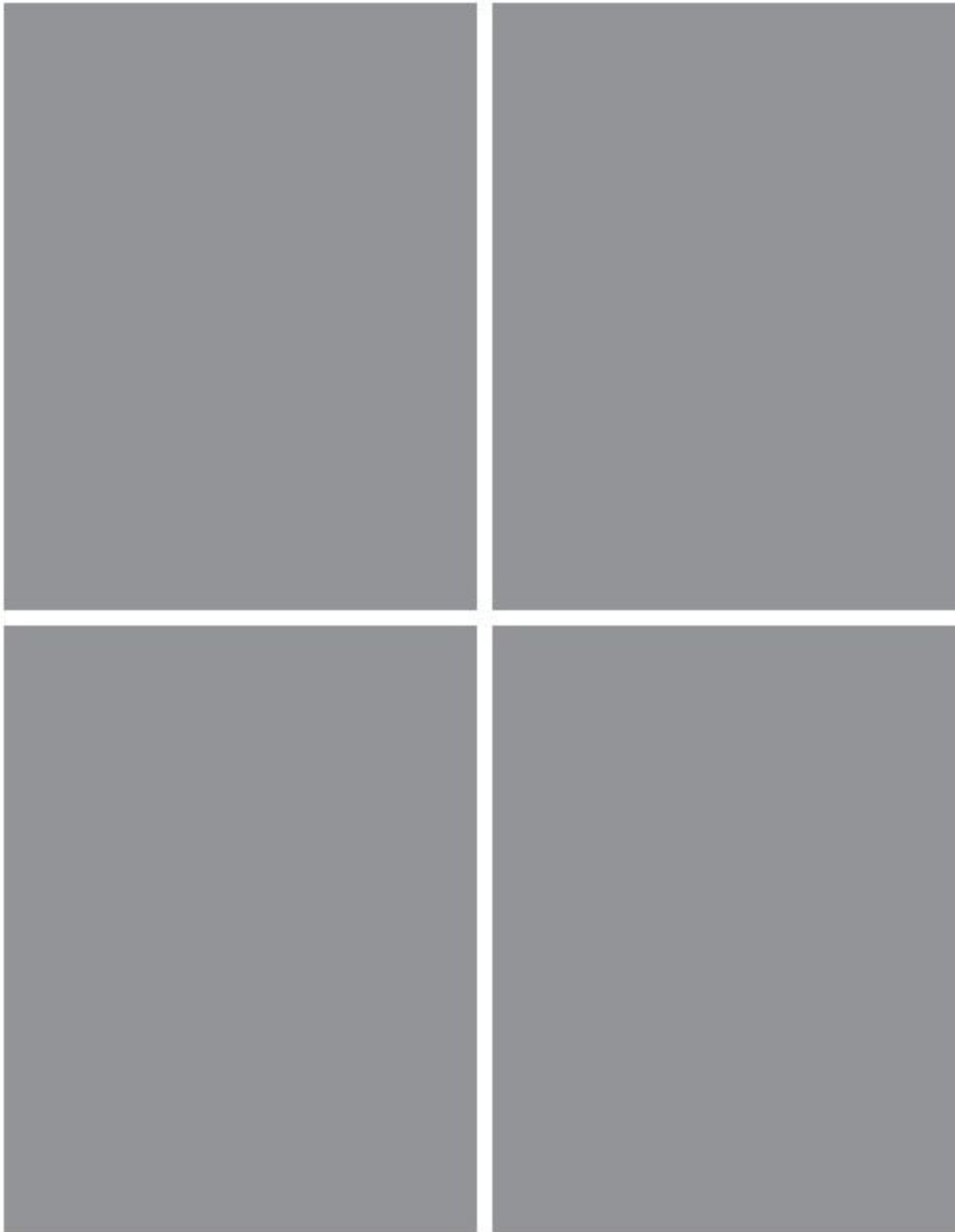
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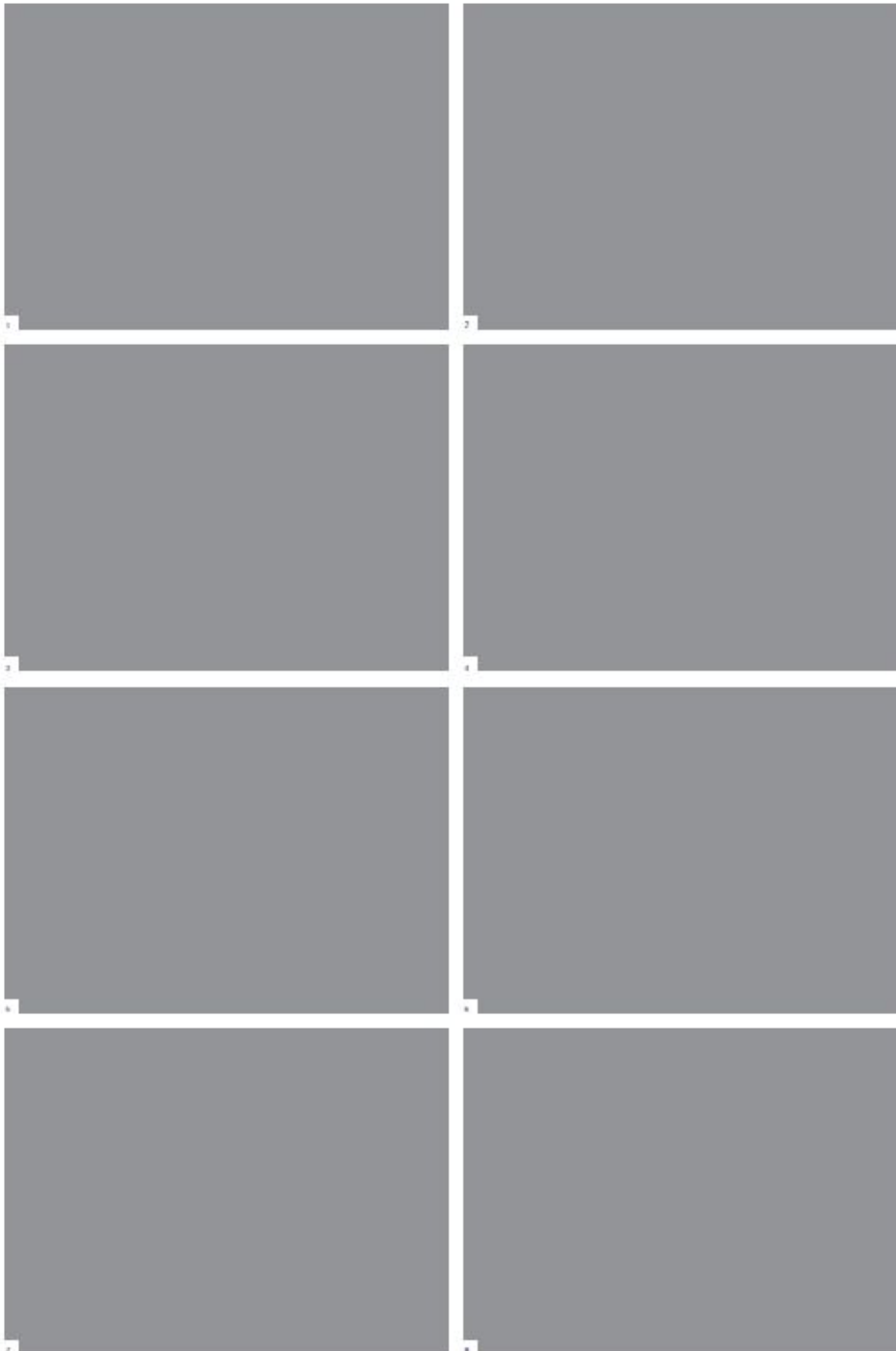
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Additional Local Content (Optional)

Begin brainstorming additional local content for when you host the exhibit.

Each partner has the opportunity to develop content for up to 4 additional exhibition modules, each of equivalent size to the traveling module, for inclusion in the exhibit when it travels locally to their community.

Partners can use this space (and the above templates) for elements such as interactive components or additional content around your local history. This content can be submitted as late as 4 months before the exhibit is scheduled to arrive at your local venue. However, you may want to finalize it during the semester so that your students can develop it. If so, this first deadline is a good time to begin thinking about it.

Note: The hub will need to know by the end of the semester:

- if you are going to submit additional content for the local exhibit;
- how many modules' worth (1-4); and
- which module template(s).

Identify formats for the website

Each partner's students can produce at least 2 of the following additional digital media components to appear on the web platform (see appendix for relevant examples and tips).

Please identify which components you will be developing and an estimate of how many (note: the recommended # to submit is for each team/class, not student.)

1. VIDEO or other TIME-BASED DIGITAL MEDIA: Video or other digital media such as photographs, scanned drawings, or audio, that are stitched together to be played back over a fixed duration of time (see appendix for examples).

Specifications:

- Recommended # to submit: 3-10 per semester (please indicate an estimate of how many you plan to do)
- Duration: 90 seconds- 3 minutes
- Format: HD format preferable

2. DIGITAL ESSAYS EXPANDING ON EXPLANATORY TEXT: The digital essays are an opportunity to expand on the 100-150 words of explanatory text in your piece of the physical exhibit, providing deeper exploration of your local history than the physical exhibit allows.

Specifications:

- Recommended # to submit: minimum 1; maximum 4
- Title/subtitle: Up to 15 words
- Word Count: 500-750 words
- Up to 10 images (minimum 1), with captions and credits
 - o Caption (10-15 words)
 - o Photo credit: "Courtesy of [individual or repository]."
 - o Image Resolution: minimum 3000x2000 and maximum 5120x2880 resolution @ 72 ppi
 - o Format: .jpg
- Essays should follow the Chicago Manual of Style
- Include bibliography and, if desired, resources for people to learn more (links to organizations, websites, etc.)

3. MINI MEDIA POSTS: These are short pieces providing multiple points of view on your LOCAL QUESTION(s); on additional questions your local story raises for you; or on another issue/question explored by another partner in another locality. They can be images with brief texts, short video or audio clips, or slide shows. They could be oriented around a historical date, for possible inclusion in a collective timeline that may appear on the site. In the aggregate, should include both historical and contemporary perspectives.

Specifications:

- Recommended # to submit: 10-20 per semester
- Title (try to avoid subtitles): Recommended 3-5 words; max 10
- Duration of time based: 30-90 seconds
- Word count if text/image based: 50-200 words
- Image Resolution: minimum 3000x2000 and maximum 5120x2880 resolution @ 72 ppi
- Format: .jpg

Curatorial Step #2: Submit draft content to designers and scholarly reviewers

Timeline: To be completed 10 weeks into the semester.

Refine Title, Subtitle, and Local Question

Full draft of Explanatory Text (100-150 words)

Explanatory text is the main section of your local story and the response to your local framing question. It does NOT need to include:

- National statistics or trends (these will be included in the exhibit's throughlines)
- Reflections from your students on their process and experiences (this content will be located in other sections of the exhibit)

EXAMPLE:

“Norfolk Prison Colony was founded as the nation's first "community prison" in 1929. It was built on the philosophy of keeping incarcerated people engaged with, rather than removed from, the world. It had dormitories, not cells, a school, a quad, an auditorium. According to the prison school's former principal Carlo Geromini, “Once you got inside the walls, you didn't even know you were in a prison.” In 1931, a group of "lifers" formed Norfolk Prison Debating Society. The Norfolk debaters went up against—and regularly defeated—top college and university teams. Malcolm X wrote that his time on the debate team gave him his first taste of public speaking: "I was gone on debating." Another debater, Bruce Geary (a.k.a Sayif) said, “Winning something other than a fight... felt good.” By the 1980s, the national shift to "tough on crime" policies meant most programs at Norfolk had been eliminated.”

Draft Text for OUR POINT OF VIEW section

The OUR POINT OF VIEW section (50-75 words) is meant to provide transparency about the authorship of the panel, insight into how social issues resonate differently in different local communities, and invite visitors into the tough debates students struggled with about how to “remember” these issues. This is NOT meant to be a summary of the historical arguments of the panel. It's a place to leave behind the authoritative voice students may have used in the rest of the panel, and be more personal and reflective.

EXAMPLE:

“Until recently there was hardly any public record of the Norfolk Prison Debating Society. Radio producer Natasha Haverty and writer Adam Bright, with support from Massachusetts Humanities, spent two years uncovering the story and interviewing former prison debaters, their college opponents, coaches, and corrections staff. As graduate students at Northeastern University in Boston, we looked at these stories to help us understand the rehabilitative approach of Norfolk and to explore why rehabilitation was largely abandoned.”

Identify possible quote(s) that relate to your Local Question/theme

For web platform only.

Quote(s) (Up to 30 words) should be contemporaneous first person perspectives that are engaging, easy to read, and communicate the tenor of the time or the emotional experience of your story. Should provide a strong contrast with the more didactic text you used for the explanatory text.

Specifications:

- Citation format: Speaker, identifying characteristic if necessary [e.g., author of xx; formerly incarcerated at xx], identifying context if necessary [e.g., speaking reporters in Jacksonville], year.”
- If within 30 word-limit, two quotations can be used together to show contrasting perspectives.

EXAMPLE:

“America's public enemy number one in the United States is drug abuse. In order to fight and defeat this enemy, it is necessary to wage a new, all-out offensive.”

- Richard Nixon, Remarks About an Intensified Program for Drug Abuse Prevention and Control, June 17, 1971

Identify potential materials for physical exhibit

Provide the following material as it applies to you based on which template your team selected:

- Send all potential images (more than will be used in the final version, in order to provide alternatives), with any specific curatorial directives that affect layout (example: priorities in terms of importance or size; pairings/sequence/adjacencies);
- Submit draft of audio, video, or flip book, in a consistent page size;
- Send up to 3 possibilities: 300 dpi, 36in x 96in., 2000x2000

IMPORTANT information about image selection:

- The hub will be responsible for researching and paying for image permissions
- Each team has an average of \$500 to spend on rights, and should keep that in mind when proposing images (images from commercial outfits like Getty or Magnum are going to be expensive)
- Submission should include a list of images with exact identification of image and repository contact information so we can research the costs of permissions.

Outline content of additional digital media components that will be produced for physical exhibit & web

Provide summary/description of additional digital media components (e.g. narratives, individual stories, historical themes) for additional physical exhibit modules or any video or other Time-Based Media and Mini Media Posts for the web platform.

Draft text for all (adhering to all word count limit specifications and in proper format):

- Image captions
- Image credits
- Digital essays expanding on explanatory text (for web)
- Text-based mini-media posts

Rough cut of video and other Time-based Media and Mini Media Posts

Provide rough cut of any video or other Time-Based Media and Mini Media Posts for:

- any video or other Time-Based Media for physical exhibit
- any video or other Time-Based Media and Mini Media posts for the web platform



Curatorial Step #3: Submit all final content to the HUB

Timeline: Due the final day of the course

Inform hub of your plans for creating optional local content to display when you host exhibit

The hub will need to know by the end of the semester:

- if you are going to submit additional content for the local exhibit;
- how many modules' worth (1-4); and
- which module template(s).

You may also submit all of the additional local content to the hub at this stage, if you want this group of students to develop it.

Digital Content Examples and Tips

Examples using drawings + audio:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=468&v=UCoE-DD42c8>

https://youtu.be/x2i_9lh8KM

Examples using photo + audio:

<https://vimeo.com/album/1810366/video/27729467>

HOW TO LINKS

Shooting Video/ Interviews:

<http://michaelhyatt.com/how-to-record-a-video-interview-in-eight-steps.html>

<http://transom.org/2014/five-easy-ways-to-make-better-video/>

<http://nofilmschool.com/2013/02/short-film-non-profit-34-tips-examples>

<http://transom.org/2014/a-radio-producers-video-shooting-tips/>

Tips for Visuals for Audio Stories:

<http://transom.org/2014/photo-tips-for-radio-producers/>

Tips on how to record Audio interviews:

http://www.loc.gov/folklife/edresources/edcenter_files/interview-guide.pdf

<http://nationaldayoflistening.org/downloads/DIY-Instruction-Guide.pdf>

http://www.sagepub.com/salmons/study/general/91803_t4.pdf

Online software for video editing:

<http://www.wideo.co/>

Free Software for Audio Editing:

<http://sourceforge.net/projects/audacity/>

Classroom and Community Dialogues on Incarceration

Incarceration is a difficult and sensitive topic for many--and yet necessary to combating its extremely harmful effects. We recommend thinking carefully about how to approach the topic in different settings, including in the classroom, with your partner organization, and among the public. There are certain ground rules for discussion that are central to any setting, such as:

- all conversation is confidential
- one person talks at a time; don't cut people off
- assume good will
- allow no name calling or stereotyping
- speak for oneself, not others
- recognize that some words (e.g., inmate) are offensive; continually use referents that recognize personhood first rather than particular labels
- ask participants for additional ground rules.

Establishing ground rules can be an important beginning to a fruitful and productive conversation. Each setting also has distinctive challenges, discussed below.

Dialogue in the Classroom

The classroom offers an intimate space to talk about incarceration but safety and trust need to be established immediately and reinforced throughout the semester. It is important to stress that conversations in the classroom need to be respectful and confidential. Teachers need to recognize personal challenges (their own and those of their students) and attempt to channel emotions into productive discussion and project work. The primary aim is to do no (more) harm.

Students may have a variety of ties to incarceration, whether their own, their friends', or their family members'. Many may want to keep this information private. We recommend, however, addressing students' own relation to incarceration in the first class in a way that keeps privacy an option but also allows for a range of response if students so choose. This can be done through discussion and/or a writing response to questions, which can be answered openly or discreetly. Some examples are (others from the events section below could also be adapted to classroom use):

Describe a significant encounter you had with the police. (Or that of a friend or family member.)

Find a short story, poem, or editorial that discusses incarceration and ask students to respond to it.

What makes you feel safe? Do police and prisons make you feel safe?

It will be important to check in with students regularly throughout the semester regarding their thoughts about these issues. We recommend keeping track of responses, perhaps even looping back to the same questions at different points in the semester to gauge how students are

handling these difficult topics.

Dialogue between Students and Outside Partner

While the guidelines for creating community partnerships are outlined above, there are specific issues to think about in facilitating dialogue between students and partner organizations. The primary aim is to give space, time, and authority to the partners, and this should be true in establishing discussion as well. How to do this will need to be worked out directly with the partner organization, perhaps including a facilitator from that organization as well.

Students should also be prepped for conversation with the organization, starting with basic ground rules for dialogue. In addition, students should be careful about what they ask about a person's specific experience with incarceration. Most people who have been incarcerated are seeking to understand themselves and their lives beyond that experience and do not want to be judged or understood solely by the crime they may have committed or the time spent detained. Instead, students can develop questions that ask the partners to use their experience as expertise, such as "What do you think people should understand about the local site or issue under investigation?" or "What do you think is the most common misperception about local site or issue?" If possible, we recommend multiple conversations between students and partners throughout the semester so that trust can be built and allow for meaningful exchanges. Each encounter should end with demonstrable gratitude for what the partner organization has brought to the project.

Public Dialogues

Each host community – a collaboration of faculty, students, community stakeholders, and the local museum/gallery – creates unique programming and events at the time of the exhibition. The goal is to showcase students and partners' work, invite community engagement with *States of Incarceration's* local relevance, and make connections with the national project.

Dialogue is a primary goal of these programs and events. At base, dialogue is an exchange of ideas but, through HAL's exhibitions and programs, it activates the past on display to form the foundation for taking action on pressing issues in the present. Dialogue of this kind is charged with belief and opinion and it is crucial to agree upon ground rules for the conversation. But the dialogue should also be focused not on contesting truths but on solving problems that confront us now.

Dialogue is beneficial because it can:

- provide an opportunity for participants to feel agency in their own lives to create change around mass incarceration, whether it's talking to friends about the exhibit and the issue, or starting a community dialogue to change policing policies.
- help us build relationships, and see how we are all connected to this issue of mass incarceration. It encourages and allows us to hear from as many different perspectives as possible.
- require a commitment from its participants to engage in a process of transformation: to change the situation of the oppressed, and to create a new reality.

Raising awareness among people and communities who see themselves as not directly impacted by mass incarceration, and building capacity among people and communities who are, may seem like incompatible goals given limited resources, and different organizations may emphasize one over the other. But these activities can and should be complementary. All people are impacted by mass incarceration, and people with direct experience within the system exist everywhere, in every kind of institution, including in universities and classrooms. *States of Incarceration* challenges us to remember our nation's history of incarceration and to reflect on that history in order to shape what happens next.

Universities, however, are often not the ideal space for these conversations. Many institutions already exclude people that have been to prison (many do not admit returning citizens), and the rising cost of higher education makes those spaces not representative of the broader population. As a host, it's important to create a sensitive space for dialogue that does not humiliate participants, but encourages thoughtful inquiry and respectful discussion.

Audiences

Host communities can be specific and targeted in the audiences for programs, events, and dialogue. Perhaps in consultation with your partner, you should debate these two different perspectives on target audiences. What are the benefits of each?

- Affirming and activating allies: Offering different life experiences with a common problem around which there is shared understanding/agreement (e.g., people who have been incarcerated of different backgrounds -- women, trans people, youth -- or families of people who have been incarcerated)?
- Reaching different perspectives/creating new understanding: Offering different life stories of people that shape a different viewpoint on what the problem is and how to address it (e.g., people who have been incarcerated, people who work in corrections/law enforcement/probation)?

After deciding the audiences you'd like to participate, think about these principles:

- Identify barriers that might exist to people's participation (cost, distance, feelings of not belonging)
- Consider including social bonding activities, through music, food, etc.
- Be transparent about the results of your activities
- Emphasize personal stories
- Focus on the future: particularly for formerly incarcerated individuals, they want to be recognized for where they're going, not where they've been
- Let formerly incarcerated individuals lead the discussion and/or events. They should not be treated as accessories.

Establishing Principles

HAL partners can be explicit with everyone they invite into the dialogue about what we affirm and reject. Certain principles could be stated as founding beliefs for the conversation (for instance, that solitary confinement has adverse psychological impact) and will not be up for debate. From these basic beliefs, different questions arise that could be the basis for

conversation focused on action (e.g., how should violent behavior in prisons be addressed?). The purpose of defining principles and ground rules is to have a productive, meaningful conversation among people with differing political beliefs, opinions, or worldviews but without compromising our commitment to using documented evidence of injustice to work toward justice now.

Shape the Debate

The website StatesofIncarceration.org features a section entitled [Shape the Debate](#), a place to begin dialogue about the exhibition. There are opinion polls on each of the primary questions of the exhibitions (e.g., for What is a Crime? Who is a Criminal?, the question is Do prisons make you feel safe?). We encourage you to create questions specific to your local site and topic prior to the showing of the exhibition. The questions can be structured as yes/no, multiple choice, or word cloud. Shape the Debate can also be used in live events, projecting real-time answers and opinions that provide additional points of conversation. Sample local questions include:

Remembering lessons from Rikers Island, what should New York City's future detention facilities look like?

California has approved \$2 billion for jail construction. How could the funds be used to keep people out of jails instead?

Dialogue Exercises

Reality Check

Ask participants to fill out the questionnaires regarding pertinent facts presented in the exhibition. Bring them together in a large group circle after the exhibit. Ask each to share a fact that stood out to them. Once each participant shares a fact, open the circle up for dialogue and ask:

- What facts do you wish were represented in the exhibit that you didn't see?
- What do you think needs to happen to change these facts for the better?
- How can we as individuals start to make that change happen?

Quotes

Pick some quotes from the exhibit to use as a starting point. Copy down the quotes on large paper and hang them around a room where all the participants can see them. Invite participants to read each quote and choose one quote that they had a strong reaction to. They should "vote with their feet" by standing next to the quote they choose. First, they will have a small conversation with the others that chose the same quote.

Participants answer the following questions in their small groups to get the conversation going:

- What was your reaction to this quote?
- When you first came to the exhibit, what did you know about mass incarceration? What was your opinion about it? Do you have experience with mass incarceration?
- How might that have affected your reaction?

Everyone can then come together, sitting in a large circle. Pose the following prompts to the group, allowing participants to answer each one before moving on.

- In your small groups, did people generally have knowledge about mass incarceration prior to coming to the exhibit?
- Did the quote you chose reinforce what you previously thought/understood about mass incarceration, or did it make you question what you thought?
- What purpose do these panels serve in the exhibit?
- What is the importance of different perspectives in an exhibit like this?

Morality in the Law

When someone commits a crime what should happen? How do we determine what's an appropriate consequence, and in what ways do these consequences help rehabilitate a person and a community? Further, when, if ever, does a punishment become unhelpful in deterring crime and healing wrongdoing?

Instruct participants to read the article "Is Breaking the Law Bad? Practical vs. Moral Approaches to the Law" and then fill out the accompanying handout. Once done, participants should come together into small groups and discuss their choices. After 15 minutes, bring the small groups back together into a large group circle.

To begin the large group discussion, you can provide the following prompts:

- Do you agree that these listed consequences help rehabilitate criminal behavior? Why or why not?
- Did any of you choose "none" as a consequence? If so why?
- Every single one of the crimes listed carry the possible consequence of prison and loss of federal benefits, as well as loss of opportunity to find employment or enroll in higher education; why do you think this happens? Is it fair?

On the Line

Have enough room for a long line in a space and ask people to place themselves physically on a spectrum with abolition of prisons on one end and endorsement of the criminal justice system as it now exists on the other. Have people speak to their neighbor on the spectrum and articulate why they had picked that position. After a few minutes have each pair present their neighbor's view on the position on the spectrum. Then give people the opportunity to move if they have changed their perspective. Ask those who move why they changed their position.

Questions to consider at the end, if these have not already come up:

- What makes you feel safe?
- What resources exist or need to exist to create safety in a community?
- Can we create safety without prisons and police?

Imagine a World...

On a wall create four distinct sections, each designated to one of the below titles:

- When you imagine feeling safe and supported, what do you see?
- Can you draw a picture of a safe and nurturing world?
- If we had no prisons, what would it look like to solve problems?
- What might a system look like that helps people heal and learn new skills when they make mistakes or hurt others?

Provide writing utensils and a comfortable place for participants to write or draw. Invite participants to take a moment to imagine a world without prisons. Then invite them to write their thoughts down as they consider the different aspects of the world they imagine: what is good; what is bad; how the good and bad can exist together. Thoughts can be written directly onto a writing space mounted on the wall, or participants can be provided post it notes to be placed under the appropriate section. Participants should be welcomed to convey the message in however many or few words they feel necessary, and should feel free to draw their answers if they'd like. When the activity closes, consider the gathered answers as a group. Explore the common themes and questions/comments that are striking.

Additional resources:

National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation's [Best-of-the-Best Resources](#)

National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation's [5 More Ways to Overcome Barriers to Youth Engagement](#)

National Park Service Interpretive [Facilitator's Toolkit](#)

Public Conversations Project's [Fostering Dialogue Across Divides](#) (free with registration)

Public Conversations Project's [Dialogue Tool Box](#)

Programs and Events

When the exhibition is shown in your locale, programming and events can greatly expand the impact. HAL can recommend [national speakers](#) but we encourage you to develop events with your partner organization that speak to local issues and go beyond the speaker/panel model. If you do offer a speaker/panel event, you could add break-out discussion sections, live polling, or interactive workshops such as those mentioned above

Dialogue Models

Mass Story Lab

Mass Story Lab is a community storytelling and design project that makes stories an instrument of justice. Mass Story Labs center those who are most affected, while inviting multiple stakeholders to participate in a dialogue centered on direct action for creating change within local communities. The three hour-community conversation begins with 4-6 five-minute, first-person stories told by those most affected by a particular issue. Following this, community members participate in a series of guided small-group discussions facilitated by educator, cultural organizer, and performance studies scholar, Piper Anderson.

To date, seven HAL partners have hosted Mass Story Labs in their communities. Each dialogue was carefully organized to meet the specific needs of the local community. In New York, participants considered the current discourse on closing Rikers Island. In Texas, a multilingual dialogue engaged with the expanding system of immigration detention and mass deportation in the state. At the end of each dialogue, participants outlined a collective plan of action that would lead to positive social change on the local level.

Interactive Installation: How Close Are You to Incarceration?

The interactive installation invites visitors to identify their connections to and experience with the criminal justice system. Visitors write stories of their experience on tags, and place their stories on the interactive, which has prompts inviting people to connect with the content; visitors can locate their tags closest to the prompts which resonate most with their personal experiences.

The questions are open-ended and intended to serve as a mechanism for people to connect with and reflect on their relationship to issues. It also provides an opportunity to visualize how these issues impact people differently across regions. Visitors mount their tags on the interactive with stickers labelled with the state they are in. The installation preserves anonymity while creating a national interactive sourced from communities across the country. At the conclusion of the exhibition's run in each city, tags are returned to the HAL Hub and archived. Stickers remain on the traveling exhibition and become a part of the collaborative visualization.



Dialogues on Community/Institutional Change

A number of HAL partners used the arrival of the exhibit as a vehicle for an in-depth dialogue or series of dialogues in the interest of systemic change at their institutions or in their communities. This is an opportunity to invite issue experts, advocates, and scholars from various parts of the country in the interest of adding discursive breadth to the local conversation about mass incarceration to stimulate positive change. This can also serve as a professional development opportunity for students, faculty, curators, public historians, advocates, and practitioners. This kind of programming is also an opportunity to sustain the work around the exhibition.

Brown University used the exhibition to advocate for prison education at the university. They hosted a half-day conference entitled “The Prison Education Movement: Does Brown Have a Role?” The conference centered on the question of what Brown (as an institution) can do to make a difference as it relates to mass incarceration and it was the result of a collaboration across departments at the university. The conference itself is documented on Brown’s website and resulted in a formal proposal presented to the university’s administration with the support of faculty and students to begin a prison education program at Brown.

New Orleans and Riverside, California both hosted community-wide summits that addressed the problem of youth incarceration. In New Orleans the summit was led by young people and centered the voices of those most affected. Together participants used art to imagine a world without prisons and developed a set of principles for prison reform.

Teach-ins/Community Education

Teach-ins, historically, have been used as a form of consciousness raising and education empowerment. They provide a contemporary mode for grappling with contested issues. Teach-ins can, and often do, involve a combination of forums, discussion panels, lectures, and public dialogues. This kind of programming minimizes the use of jargon and highly specialized language to make discourses accessible. Teach-ins are ideal for large groups and are designed to promote collaboration between community organizations, institutions of higher education, and public spaces. Length can vary from a couple hours or a full day depending on community needs. Community education can also be achieved by designing events in a series.

There are several models used by HAL partners that demonstrate the ways that the exhibition can be used to build collective community efficacy. In Massachusetts, HAL partners collaborated with Hampton and Holyoke Read to host a series of book discussions (over the course of two months), or “community read-ins” dedicated to gender and mass incarceration. In Indianapolis, mental health first aid training and certification was offered as a practical skill that related to their local story concerning mass incarceration and mental health. In Louisiana, local artists gave workshops in conjunction with their programming related to using art as a means of helping young people imagine a world without prisons.