PRISON LIBRARIES

The Department of English organizes used book collections and delivers them to prison libraries in Arizona and New Mexico. The department facilitates donation of hundreds of books in shipments made several times a year.

SUPPORT FOR PRISON ENGLISH

Prison education work at the ASU Department of English draws on a community of support for expertise, advice, and development.

Advisory Group
Prof. Peter Goggin
Ms. Kristen LaRue
Ms. Ruby Macksoud
Prof. Keith Miller
Dr. Sherry Rankins-Robinson (Downtown)
Prof. William Simmons (West)
Prof. Kristin Valentine (emeritus)
Prof. Elly van Gelderen
Ms. Faye Verska
Dr. Cornelia Wells
Prof. Eric Wertheimer (West)

Community support also comes from a student organization, Prison Education Awareness Club, established by English 484 students, and a Prison Writing and Literature Group for coordination.

For further information on Prison English, please contact Prof. Joe Lockard: Joe.Lockard@asu.edu

For book collection and donation, please contact Kristen LaRue: Kristen.LaRue@asu.edu
480.965.7611
**prison english**

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH at Arizona State University has been involved for many years with prisons in Arizona and other states. Faculty and staff have collected books for prison libraries, taught in prisons as volunteers, and given readings and talks to prison inmates. This work represents one face of the department’s community engagement and commitment to educational service.

In 2010 the department expanded its work with prisons to include several courses that enable students to learn about the literature of prisons and to participate in prison education internships. Two internship courses draw on analytic, writing, and tutoring skills that English students learn and that enable them to contribute to prison education. These internships attract some of the best students and acceptance is highly competitive.

ENGLISH 394: PRISON LITERATURE (ONLINE)

Prison literature has been part of the American literary scene from its colonial period to the present day. This course considers prison literature as a vehicle for civil disobedience; as exposition of socially invisible worlds; as resistant autobiography; and as a genre for U.S. social self-comprehension. Readings have included Sansom Occum, Henry David Thoreau, Martin Luther King, John Cheever, Stanley ‘Tookie’ Williams, Jimmy Santiago Baca, Ken Lamberton, and women’s prison writings.

ENGLISH 484: THE PEN PROJECT (ONLINE)

This course is a supervised online internship organized in cooperation the New Mexico Corrections Department. Project interns read and critically comment upon writing—fiction, poetry, non-fiction prose—mostly produced by maximum-security inmates at the Penitentiary of New Mexico. These inmates cannot meet for classes. The online project provides a much-needed means for inmate writers to obtain critical comments on their writing. Currently ten advanced undergraduate interns provide intensive writing coaching for about 90 inmates per semester. English 484: The Pen Project has introduced a unique model into prison-university collaborations.

ENGLISH 584: FLORENCE STATE PRISON

In this experiential internship, a small group of advanced undergraduate and graduate students do supervised teaching at Florence State Prison. Interns teach once-weekly two-hour classes in a minimum-security unit. At present the ASU English department, in cooperation with the Arizona Department of Corrections, offers non-credit courses in American literature, Shakespeare, and creative writing.