

## Lived space – Everyday elements of Mass Incarceration

(Created by Lisa Guenther, Vanderbilt University)

If we live in a society that is structured by mass incarceration, then we should be able to see traces of these structures beyond the prison walls, and not just within them.

Take a walk around campus, in your neighborhood, or in another space that you inhabit in your everyday life. Observe this space through the lens of the texts we have read so far in class and with an eye toward our shared project, looking for traces of mass incarceration.

- 1) If you have a camera phone or digital camera, take photos of these traces; if not, describe them in words or draw what you see. (It doesn't have to be an artistic masterpiece!) **Digital images should be 300 dpi, preferably in the form of a .jpg.**
- 2) Choose your favorite image and post it on the Reading Notes Forum, along with a **short caption** (30 words maximum).
- 3) Write and post a more detailed reflection on the relevance of this image to the issues and texts we have studied in class so far (about 200 words).
- 4) Leave a comment on someone else's post.

Remember: Sometimes the traces of mass incarceration outside of prison resemble carceral spaces (for example, security cameras, guards, campus police and other forms of surveillance; doors that require swipe cards or ID cards; spaces that people of color, low-income, and/or gender non-conforming people find difficult to enter, or to which they feel confined; bureaucratic spaces that feel prison-like; gated communities where people voluntarily inhabit a securitized compound; and so on).

But other times, the traces of mass incarceration that we find in our everyday lives on the outside do not *resemble* the space of the prison so much as *complement* it. Think, for example, of spaces where (some) people are able to move fluidly through space without feeling controlled or unsafe; places where you feel like you can hang out without having to watch your back, or where you might leave your possessions unattended without concern; spaces that seem free of physical or emotional violence; and so on. To what extent are these spaces also shaped by structures of mass incarceration? Is the feeling of freedom here as simple and uncomplicated as it seems?