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# University of Dayton, Ohio (url: <http://www.udayton.edu/index.php>)



## The New Jim Crow

**02.05.2013 | Hot Topics, Culture and Society, Campus and Community**

Michelle Alexander, *New York Times*' best-selling author of the provocative book, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Color Blindness*, will offer a free talk at the University of Dayton Feb. 12.

Alexander's 7:30 p.m. address in the Kennedy Union Ballroom is part of the University of Dayton Speaker Series and Black History Month activities on campus. It's free and open to the public, and a book signing will follow the talk. Parking is available in lots C and P.

"Dr. Alexander is as passionate about her work as she is brilliant, informed and articulate. She makes a compelling case for rethinking our approach to incarceration and the 'war on drugs' in *The New Jim Crow* — a perspective that is sure to prompt productive dialogue, particularly during Black History Month," said Sheila Hassell Hughes, chair of the University of Dayton's English department, who directs the series.

Alexander is a highly acclaimed civil rights lawyer, advocate and legal scholar who currently holds a joint appointment at the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity and the Moritz College of Law at The Ohio State University. Previously, she served as an associate professor of law at Stanford Law School, where she directed the Civil Rights Clinics.

Alexander's 2010 book challenges the conventional wisdom that with the election of Barack Obama, the nation has "triumphed over race." Her book draws attention to the racial disparity in the criminal justice system. She argues that the old forms of discrimination — from discrimination in employment to denial of the right to vote — become legal once a person is labeled a felon. Since African-Americans disproportionately make up the prison population in America, she contends, "We have not ended racial caste in America; we have merely redesigned it."

The book has captured the attention of scholars and the national media.

"Alexander's brave and bold new book paints a haunting picture in which dreary felon garb, post-prison joblessness and loss of voting rights now do the stigmatizing work once done by colored-only water fountains and legally segregated schools," said Lani Guinier, professor of law at Harvard Law School. "With dazzling candor, Alexander argues that we all pay the cost of the new Jim Crow."

In 2005, Alexander won a Soros Justice Fellowship, which supported the writing of the book. Considered one of the top African-American books of 2010, it won the NAACP Image Award for "outstanding literary work of non-fiction." The book has been featured on national radio and television, including NPR, "Bill Moyers Journal," "Tavis Smiley Show" and the "Washington Journal" on C-Span, among others.

Alexander says her work reflects lessons learned as a civil rights lawyer and advocate in the private and non-profit sectors. For several years, Alexander served as the director of the Racial Justice Project for the ACLU of Northern California, where she helped to lead a national campaign against racial profiling by law enforcement. While an associate at Saperstein, Goldstein, Demchak & Baller, she specialized in plaintiff-side class action lawsuits alleging race and gender discrimination.

Alexander is a graduate of Stanford Law School and Vanderbilt University. Following law school, she clerked for Justice Harry A. Blackmun on the United States Supreme Court and for Chief Judge Abner Mikva on the United States Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. Co-sponsors for the University of Dayton Speaker Series include the *Dayton Daily News*, WDAO-Radio, YWCA Dayton, the Bob Ross Auto Group and Markey's Audio Visual. For more on the University of Dayton Speaker Series, see [go.udayton.edu/speakerseries](http://go.udayton.edu/speakerseries). For more on Michelle Alexander, see <http://www.newjimcrow.com/> (url: <http://www.newjimcrow.com/>)

**For media interviews about the University of Dayton Speaker Series, contact Sheila Hassell Hughes at 937-229-3434 or Andrea Wade at 937-229-1723.**