



JOHN JAY COLLEGE  
THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK  
OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

**OBSERVATION OF TEACHING**

**Candidate: Myisha Cherry**  
**Department: Philosophy**  
**Rank: Instructor**  
**Date of Visit: 12/06/12**  
**Observer: Catherine Kemp**  
**Course & Section: PHI 310.09**

The course began with usual initial logistics, including a novel (for me) electronic sign-in sheet that was projected on the screen at the front of the room. Professor Cherry first followed up on the previous class meeting, which consisted of a visit to the public session organized around the visit to campus by Cornel West, Immortal Technique, and others. The session dovetailed well with the ongoing class discussion of the ethical dimensions and issues around punishment. Professor Cherry demonstrated a more than adequate command of the subject matter and of the proper analysis and inquiry surrounding the issue. On the syllabus for this class meeting were two items, a discussion of Angela Davis bumped by the West et al session and an article by one Jeremy Travis entitled "Invisible Punishment" (about 5 minutes into the discussion one of the students piped up and asked if this was not in fact John Jay's president). The article raises questions about the ethical implications of the lawful consequences of the criminal justice system especially those related to the shame and stigma associated with punishment in the system. Professor Cherry's presentation of the material was driven primarily by inquiry, in which students contributed a lion's share of the substance, but at the same time was highly systematic and well-organized. When students had questions, or when disputes developed among them, Professor Cherry took time to explain the broader and/or deeper ramifications of the question under discussion, and demonstrated a keen ability to explain the material. Professor Cherry's students were both extremely responsive and highly engaged, both effects of her remarkably dynamic approach to teaching. She is able to bring the subject matter and issues of PHI 310 into direct and compelling contact with students' lives, and can thus count on a high-stakes and continuing engagement with the material in her classes. She is a very gifted and compelling speaker and interlocutor for her students, both accessible and utterly in control. She handled student chatter in the back of the room, for example, with a lightness of touch and absolute authority enviable in any classroom instructor. Professor Cherry cares deeply about her students, and they know it. Her commitment to the seriousness of the inquiry, the importance of the issues, and above all the very high quality of her students' experience in class is manifest in every aspect of her teaching.

Catherine Kemp

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Observer's Signature

Date

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Chairperson's Signature

Date