



Every year, Dillard University honors one of its most revered alumni, Justice Revius O. Ortique Jr., with the Ortique Lecture on Law and Society. This year, the Office of the President will host best-selling author and civil rights activist Michelle Alexander. The lecture will be held on **Wednesday, Nov. 28, 2012**, at 7 p.m. in the Georges Auditorium. This event is free and open to the public.

Michelle 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. Prior to joining the Kirwan Institute, Professor Alexander was an associate professor of law at Stanford Law School, where she directed the Civil Rights Clinics.

The author of *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (2010), Alexander will discuss the timely topic of mass incarceration and the African-American community. Her book challenges the conventional wisdom that with the election of Barack Obama as president, our nation has “triumphed over race.” Jim Crow laws were wiped off the

books decades ago, but today an astounding percentage of the African-American community is warehoused in prisons or trapped in a permanent, second-class status, much like their grandparents before them who lived under an explicit system of racial control. Alexander argues that the sudden and dramatic mass incarceration of African-American men, primarily through the War on Drugs, has created a new racial under caste – a group of people defined largely by race that is subject to legalized discrimination, scorn, and social exclusion.

The old forms of discrimination – discrimination in employment, housing, education, and public benefits; denial of the right to vote; and exclusion from jury service – are suddenly legal once you're labeled a felon. She challenges the civil rights community, and all of us, to place mass incarceration at the forefront of a new movement for racial justice in America.

The state of Louisiana now has one of the largest [privatized correctional facility](#) programs in the country. Mass incarceration is a topic Dillard University has visited before. Earlier this year, from March 20-22, Dillard hosted Crime and Punishment: African-Americans in a "Post-Racial" (?) United States, a symposium designed to explore problems of crime and incarceration in the U.S. today, their outsized impact on the black community, and the dubious concept of our society as "post-racial." Criminal justice in New Orleans was also addressed throughout three days of seminars and panel discussions. Professor Alan Colon hosted the event along with professor Carroll Wiltz.

For more information on the upcoming [Ortique Lecture on Law and Society](#), please contact the President's Office at (504) 816-4640.