

# HUMAN RELATIONS



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On the University of North Carolina Greensboro's (UNCG) campus, Jeffrey Kaplan is known as a dedicated assistant professor of philosophy. In addition to teaching philosophy courses, publishing original research and serving on various university committees, Kaplan creates educational lectures on philosophic principles on YouTube to share his knowledge with those who might not otherwise have the means to take a class. Additionally, Kaplan's work to create the UNCG Prison Education Program has impressively contributed to a better public image and positive public awareness of state government, North Carolina's prison systems, and UNCG in the eyes of many.

In 2018, Kaplan began contacting jails and prisons in the Triad, hoping to bring the expertise of UNCG faculty to those within the prison system. In September 2022, Kaplan's idea finally became a reality when he delivered a philosophy lecture to offenders within the Federal Correctional Complex in Butner. Since then, Kaplan has recruited faculty across UNCG's campus to present a monthly lecture at the facility. The lectures have introduced and educated Butner's incarcerated population in history, biology, sociology, music and more. Still, Butner residents aren't the only ones gaining educational experience through the program Kaplan developed. In November 2023, Kaplan expanded the program to find a way to benefit UNCG students too. As of June 2024, three UNCG students travel to Butner monthly to conduct writing workshops with incarcerated individuals. Focused on creative nonfiction, the students and offenders read one another's writing and collaboratively discuss how they can improve during each one-hour visit.



Jeffrey Kaplan's dedication to making the UNCG Prison Education Program beneficial for all involved goes far beyond the scope of his job as a professor and is done voluntarily. The program raises awareness of UNCG in a positive way and offers students a unique learning experience. Furthermore, it challenges its volunteers – students and professors alike – to reshape their perceptions of the prison system and those within it, thus leaving a long-lasting and immeasurable impact. Kaplan's commitment to improving the lives of the country's incarcerated population is commendable. The State of North Carolina thanks Kaplan for such inspiring service.