



# **Seminary of Virtue: The Ideology and Practice of Inmate Reform at Eastern State Penitentiary, 1829-1971**

*Paul Kahan*

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*Seminary of Virtue* explores the history of penal education programs, demonstrating that America's prisons have historically been educational (as well as punitive) institutions. This volume argues that Eastern State Penitentiary's extensive and aggressive educational program reflected a general American belief that correctional institutions should educate inmates as a way of reducing recidivism and thereby «reforming» them. No mere case study, *Seminary of Virtue* demonstrates that for the last two hundred years penologists have believed that educational programming was one of the keys to lowering recidivism and «reforming» inmates. *Seminary of Virtue* also reveals the historical amnesia that hindered American penal reform over the same time period as each succeeding generation believed that their particular penal reforms were revolutionary.

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