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Crime is one of the most pressing issues facing contemporary society. While the fear of crime is currently at an all-time high, uncertainty exists as to how the criminal justice system should deal with the offender. In recent years public institutions have increasingly embraced a punitive approach, as evidenced in higher incarceration rates and longer prison sentences. Yet little evidence exists to show that this approach improves the public's long-term safety. This book suggests that the way to reduce expenditures and decrease recidivism rates is through prison specialization, and a hybrid correctional system under which the public prison retains those offenders who warrant elevated levels of security, while the private sector houses and treats the more malleable offenders and shields them from the corrupting influence of prisoners who seek to disrupt treatment processes. Prisons, Penology and Penal Reform: An Introduction to Institutional Specialization is written for a wide-range of classroom settings. It is appropriate for students in introductory as well as upper-division criminal justice and sociology courses, and graduate courses that require student exploration, debate, and discussion. Each chapter is followed by a Highlights section that reiterates significant statements. Thought-provoking questions are found throughout that require students to evaluate current correctional practices, and to consider issues that have challenged penologists for decades. Keywords are plentiful and serve to familiarize students with a host of penal topics. Few texts surpass the ability of this one to spark classroom interaction.