

University of Toronto- St. George Campus
SOCIOLOGY 212H1F
Summer 2016
SOCIOLOGY OF CRIME AND DEVIANCE
Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:00pm-4:00pm, room SS1069

“After all...crime is only a left-handed form of human endeavor”. Alonzo D. Emmerich (Louis Calhern) in *The Asphalt Jungle* (1950).

Instructor Information

Instructor: Steven Hayle
Office location: Sociology Department- 725 Spadina Avenue, Room 397
Email address: steven.hayle@mail.utoronto.ca
Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays: 11:00am-1:00pm
Blackboard/Course web site: Portal

Teaching Assistants: TBD

Course Catalogue Description

This course provides an overview of the study of crime and deviance. We critically examine how scholars have gone about studying crime and deviance (the methods they use and the statistics they employ) as well as the major sociological explanations for crime and deviance. We also consider the empirical evidence as it relates to the validity of these explanations and some of the policy fallout from different theoretical approaches.

Course Description

The study of ‘crime’ and ‘deviance’ is a form of “human endeavor” that dates back to the beginning of time. This is of course because ‘deviance’ has existed for time immemorial and ‘crime’ (on record) dates back to the earliest written legal codes established in Mesopotamia and Egypt. If the study of crime and deviance has such an enormously long history, then how do we possibly hope to canvass such accomplishment in one course?

Although the study of crime and deviance date back to the beginning of time, the project of systematically analyzing crime and deviance using established social scientific methods is far more recent in its origin. While written records of theoretical thought on ‘crime’ and ‘deviance’ (and especially law and jurisprudence) can be traced back to the works of Plato and Aristotle, modern social scientific research of crime and deviance emerged in the late eighteenth century. Since then, such research has been drawn upon by politicians and other authorities to design and implement social policies designed to reduce or outright eliminate ‘crime’ and other forms of ‘deviant behaviour’. Hence, the findings of such research have, for centuries, had a considerable impact on societies and the people who live within them. Countless numbers of human lives (and livelihoods) have been gained, lost, spared, sacrificed, shortened, and/or significantly altered as a direct consequence of the implementation of social policies based upon criminological research.

The purpose of this course is not to canvass the entire corpus of social scientific literature devoted to the study of crime and deviance. This is an impossible feat even for someone who attains a PhD in criminology or the sociology of deviance. Rather, in this course, we will survey the *most* important and significant “explanations” of crime and deviance that have arisen from the social scientific study of the subject over the past three hundred years. The focus of this course will be on “sociological explanations”. This decision does not reflect a negative critical evaluation of such material, and indeed, there have been some significant policy developments based on theories that focus on biological and psychological factors. Nevertheless, this research and theory is covered extensively in Woodsworth College criminology courses taught by *qualified* criminal psychologists and biologists, which I am not. I strongly encourage interested students to explore these courses. Additionally, these topics are very nicely covered in the assigned textbook for this course. To be clear, however, these are not required readings for the course.

We will critically evaluate the theories, methods, and data use to derive research findings and analysis that have informed the major “sociological explanations” of crime and deviance. We will consider the historical context within which this research was carried out, and question how historical context might have played a role in shaping the course and trajectory of crime and deviance and research. As my research area is harm reduction drug policy, considerable discussion will focus around how crime and deviance research can be used to explain drug use. However, as seen in the outline below, a variety of different types of crime and deviance will be treated in depth, including robbery, panhandling, and domestic violence. Within these discussions, the experiences of minority individuals and groups, such as Indigenous Canadians, will be highlighted. We will investigate how sociological research has impacted policy development and we will explore some examples of social policies in considerable depth. The effectiveness of such policies will be critically evaluated, and their consequences (both positive and negative, intended and unintended) will be assessed. Particular attention will be paid to the impact of such policies have had on marginalised individuals including Aboriginal women in Canada.

Prerequisites and Exclusions

Prerequisites: SOC101Y1 or SOC102H1 or SOC103H1

Exclusions: SOC212Y1; SOC211H5

Note: Students without the prerequisites (or with the exclusions) will be removed from the course at any time without notice.

Learning Outcomes

My teaching philosophy is reflected by the three main learning goals I have for students in this course: academic discovery; career preparation; and communication mastery.

Discovery

The most basic learning goal that I have for students is to come away at the end of the semester learning something that they did not know before. However, this goes far beyond learning new terminology, theories or concepts, and memorizing some new statistics. These are important and will a role in this course. However, my primary aims for students are to a) gain fresh insight and new perspectives on a number of both familiar and und unfamiliar topics, problems and issues; and b) to come away from the course looking at crime/delinquency and criminal justice in a new light (ambitious I know, but certainly achievable).

We will also strive to **engage** the material we read/listen to/watch. Throughout the course, I will endeavor to provide ample opportunity in lectures for students to ask questions, raise concerns, voice criticisms, and engage the material. I will routinely invite participation from students in class (oral and written). Socrates would be the first to say that we learn and discover best through active discussion and dialogue.

Career Preparation

I am a strong believer that an undergraduate university education in sociology should serve as a strong preparation for paid employment both outside and inside academia. This means that the goals of this course are more than simply preparation for upper year sociology courses, graduate training in the social sciences, or careers in research and academia (though these are all wonderful and very rewarding pursuits). This also means that the goals of this course must transcend equipping students with transferrable skills such as critical thinking and written communication. From teaching this course previously, I know that many students aspire to enter professions in policing, social work, law, mental health, teaching, politics, journalism, business, medicine, corrections, and research/academia. As such, I will strive to focus on topics and issues pertinent to these areas throughout the course. In particular, lecture and reading material will focus on the role of police, social workers, scientists, academics, small and large business owners, mental health workers, journalists, and lawyers, and many others, in social control practices.

Also, I will expect students to be keeping up with both domestic and international current events on a week-to-week basis. I will also take time in class each week to go over and discuss current events related to the subject matter of this course.

Secondly, I will encourage students to approach this course and the material we cover from the perspective of their career/professional aspirations. This includes class discussions and written reflections. Along with engaging the material with the goal of discovery, it is equally important to engage the material and question how it can be usefully *applied* in practical settings. We will also regularly discuss the professional and policy applications/implications of the concepts and theories we discuss in class.

Finally, bearing in mind that many of you are seeking to enter research professions both within and outside the ivory towers (i.e. professorships, associate researchers, policy analysts, government researchers, and statisticians), a key aim of this course will be to aid in the development of strong analytical skills. Along with the goals and strategies discussed above, this will be accomplished through a strong focus on **rigorous** exposure to sociological theory and research methods.

Communication Mastery

An integral part of professional training is the **mastery** of oral and written communication skills. Clear, confident, and elegant speaking along with flawless writing skills are necessities in today's job market. As such, the perfection of these skills will be key learning goal for this course. In particular, the skills focused on will be free writing (examinations), public forum discussion (in class participation), oral argumentation (in class participation), and academic writing (term paper).

Textbook

Deviance and Social Control by Linda B. Deutschnmann (Fourth Edition)

Available through the University of Toronto bookstore

Evaluation Components and Grading Policies

Term Paper Proposal- Due May 18 at 2:00pm [10%]

Students will select the policy that they intend to study for their final term paper proposal. The proposal will entail a detailed overview of the policy, its origin, and the intended goals of the policy. Students are also welcome to provide some preliminary analysis and evaluation of the policy upon which they will receive feedback, however, this analysis is primarily intended for the final term paper.

Midterm Examination- May 30 (2 hours) [30%]

The midterm examination will cover material covered in lecture and readings right up to and including the lecture that occurs directly before the midterm. More information will be provided through black board and in class.

Final Term Paper- Due June 15 at 2:00pm [20%]

Students will select an official policy that is currently operating under Canada's current criminal justice system and critically analyse it. Such policies include criminal laws, criminal justice system practices and procedures, criminal justice expenditures, and criminal justice system goals. There is wide latitude in the type of policy you pick. You may choose something broad such like a primary mode of punishment or corrections such as imprisonment/community service/parole/probation/etc., or something more specific like a particular law (i.e. truth in sentencing legislation, the Respect for Communities Act, Bill C-51, etc.). They must provide a detailed overview of the policy, noting when the policy was first implemented and by which government or which federal/provincial/municipal authorities. They must outline the stated goals of the policy, if such information is available. They must provide information about the current administration of the policy (i.e. is it in wide practice, or is it sparingly used, where is it practiced most frequently, least frequently, how much does it cost?, etc.), whether or not the policy enjoys widespread public support, etc. Finally, drawing on criminological and sociological theory and research, students must discuss the policy within the wider context of the sociology of crime and deviance. What kind of societal reaction to crime and deviance does your chosen policy represent? What philosophical notions and beliefs regarding human behavior, crime, and deviance, underlie your chosen policy? Students must also draw on theory and research to advance an argument about whether or not they believe the policy is effective. In critically evaluating the effectiveness of the policy, they should draw on evidence from the Canadian context (i.e. available data on rates of crime, recidivism rates associated with the policy, etc.), as well as sociological theory and research.

Final Examination- Scheduled by the Registrar's office (3 hours) [40%]

The final examination will be CUMULATIVE and will cover material from BOTH lectures and readings introduced throughout the entire course. Students will be expected to **demonstrate mastery** of course content, themes, theories, and concepts. No aids are permitted, however, information regarding the structure of the exam and style of questions will be provided in class.

MAKEUP ASSIGNMENTS AND DEADLINE EXTENSION

Documentation from your Physician or College Registrar

If you miss a test or a paper deadline, **do not** contact the instructor or a TA unless you have followed the steps described here. Telling the professor or TA why you missed a deadline or a test will not be considered.

In case of **illness**, you must supply a duly completed **Verification of Student Illness** or Injury form (available at www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca). A doctor's note is not acceptable. **The form must be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to the instructor, and submitted with your work** at class or during my office hours.

If a **personal or family crisis** prevents you from meeting a deadline, you must get a letter from your college registrar (it is a good idea anyway to advise your college registrar if a crisis is interfering with your studies). **The letter must be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to the instructor, and submitted with your work** at class or during my office hours.

You must submit both forms within three days of the missed test or assignment. You are not entitled to write a make-up test if you wrote the regularly scheduled test. All requests will be screened and students eligible to write a make-up will be informed by e-mail.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Cheating and misrepresentation will not be tolerated. Students who commit an academic offence will face serious penalties. Prevent plagiarism by ensuring that all work is properly cited. Please see below for a list (not exhaustive) of academic offences. If you require more information, please visit the Code of Behaviours on Academic Matters at <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>.

“It shall be an offence for a student knowingly: (a) to forge or in any other way alter or falsify any document or evidence required by the University, or to utter, circulate or make use of any such forged, altered or falsified document, whether the record be in print or electronic form; (b) to use or possess an unauthorized aid or aids or obtain unauthorized assistance in any academic examination or term test or in connection with any other form of academic work; (c) to personate another person, or to have another person personate, at any academic examination or term test or in connection with any other form of academic work; (d) to represent as one's own any idea or expression of an idea or work of another in any academic examination or term test or in connection with any other form of academic work, i.e. to commit plagiarism (for a more detailed account of plagiarism, see Appendix "A") ; (e) to submit, without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere; (f) to submit any academic work containing a purported statement of fact or reference to a

If you cannot submit your paper in class, go to room 225 at 725 Spadina Avenue no later than 4:45 p.m. on the due date, use the date/time stamp on the top page of your paper, put it into the drop box for 200-level courses, **then notify your TA that your paper is there.**

ACCESSIBILITY

If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, please visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility> as soon as possible.

Class Format

This class will be taught using a traditional lecture format. Each class will begin with housekeeping topics, such as discussing assignments, the class schedule, office hours, etc. If possible, I will discuss a current event in the news that pertains to our course; however, this will not always be possible or

appropriate. I will then provide a lecture that **builds** on the week's assigned readings. While I will integrate material from the assigned readings into the lecture, please note that there often will **not** be a considerable amount of overlap between lecture material and reading content. Sometimes, for example, the readings will provide background information for the lecture that I will be giving. Alternatively, a lecture that I give might provide an *alternative, updated,* or even *opposing* perspective to what is found in that week's readings. Thus, in order to succeed in the course, it will be **essential** to attend **all** lectures **and** keep up with **all** assigned readings. While the class will be taught using a lecture format, the floor will always be open to questions discussion, and debate, permitted there is enough time. I will endeavor to adhere to the course schedule below, however, please be advised that we may, at any time, move ahead or fall behind in the schedule. The order of lectures might change, and lecture topics and/or assigned readings might change, be added or eliminated. With that said, however, if there are any changes to the assigned readings, you will be provided with at least a week's notice, and the reading (like all others) will be provided on black board.

Tentative Course Schedule

Please note that the lecture topics and readings are subject to change at any time throughout the semester. Advanced notice will be provided and changes will be reflected assignment and examination expectations. Any additional or changed readings will be provided to students on black board.

Lecture One (May 9)- Welcome to the Sociology of Crime and Deviance!

TOPICS: Introduction to the course

CASE STUDY: Serial Murder

ASSIGNED READINGS: None

Lecture Two (May 11)- “What are my odds?”

TOPIC: Rational Choice Explanations

CASE STUDY: Bank Robbery in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario

ASSIGNED READINGS: Chapter 4

Lecture Three (May 16)- Is it a “West Side Story?”

TOPIC: Social Disorganisation Theory

CASE STUDY: Crack Dealing in the City of Toronto

ASSIGNED READING: Chapter 7

Lecture Four (May 18)- What happened to the “American Dream?”

TOPICS: Strain Theories

CASE STUDY: Panhandling in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside

ASSIGNED READING: Chapters 8

May 23- Victoria Day (Classes Cancelled)

Lecture Five (May 25)- “Rebel *without* a Cause?”

TOPICS: Subcultural Theories and Social Learning Theories

CASE STUDY: Youth Gangs across Canada

ASSIGNED READING: Chapter 9

Midterm Examination (May 30)

Lecture Six (June 1) = Once a crook, always a crook

TOPIC: Interactionist Theories

CASE STUDY: Interpersonal Violence

ASSIGNED READINGS: Chapter 9

Lecture Seven (June 6)- Why?...Why Not?

TOPIC: Social Control Theories

CASE STUDY: Auto Theft

ASSIGNED READINGS: Chapter 9

Lecture Eight (June 8)- “A Matter of Perspective”

TOPIC: Social Constructionist Theories

CASE STUDY: Prostitution around the World

ASSIGNED READINGS: Joel Best’s “The Constructionist Stance”

Lecture Nine (June 13)- “Workers of the World Unite!”

TOPIC: Conflict Theories

CASE STUDY: Terrorism in the Middle East

ASSIGNED READINGS: Chapter 12

Lecture Ten (June 15)- “I approve this message!”

TOPIC: The Politics of Crime and Deviance

CASE STUDY: Domestic Sexual Assault on Aboriginal Reserves

ASSIGNED READING: None