

SOCI 421.16
Advanced Topics in Deviance and Criminology:
Neighbourhoods and Crime
Fall 2010 Course Syllabus

Course Information:

Instructor:	Heather Rollwagen
Office:	SS 936
Office Hours:	TR 2:00 – 3:00pm or by appointment
Class Times:	TR 12:30 – 1:45pm
Class Location:	ES 054
Prerequisites:	SOCI 313 and SOCI 325 or consent of the department SOCI 331 and 333 are recommended

Course Description:

Crime is not distributed evenly across space: some places experience crime at much higher levels than others. In fact, some neighbourhoods are notorious for being “high crime,” and therefore undesirable places to live, work or even visit. As sociologists, we must question what makes a neighbourhood “safe” to live in? What are the social processes going on in a neighbourhood that make residents feel safe or unsafe? How do perceptions of safety within a neighbourhood relate to that neighbourhood’s level of criminal activity? This course considers these types of questions through an exploration of the sociological and criminological theories and relevant literature.

This course is an advanced sociology course. Therefore, it is expected that you are reasonably comfortable “thinking sociologically” and have a preliminary understanding of sociological theories of crime. As such, this class will not be a “lecture” style of class. Rather, the class will encourage critical thinking about the issues through small and large group discussion.

Required Reading

- Whyte, William F. *Street Corner Society*. University of Chicago Press.
- Anderson, Elijah. (1999) *Code of the Street*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Articles – available either through the U of C Library website or online.

Assessment

Assignment and Relevant Components		Due Date	Value
Paper: Street Corner Society		Tuesday, October 26 th IN CLASS	25%
Progress Report		Tuesday, November 9 th IN CLASS	5%
Group Neighbourhood Project	Group Presentation	Presentations will run from November 23 rd to December 9 th (schedule TBD)	30%
	Peer Assessment	One week after your presentation	5%
	Paper: Code of the Street	Tuesday, December 14 th by 2:00pm	35%

There is no final exam for this course

Grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

A+	96 – 100	B+	80 – 84	C+	67 – 69	D	50 – 59
A	90 – 95	B	74 – 79	C	63 – 66	F	0 – 49
A-	85 – 89	B-	70 – 73	C-	60 – 62		

Please note: The grades for a course component may be scaled to maintain equity among sections and to conform to departmental norms.

Assignment Details

Essay 1: Street Corner Society

For this paper, you will read the book *Street Corner Society*. You will then write a short paper that critically assesses how this ethnography relates to social disorganization theory. Papers must be between 5 and 6 pages, typed and double-spaced (12 point font and 1" margins). A grading rubric will be posted on Blackboard, and you are encouraged to consult this rubric when planning and writing your paper. This assignment is worth 25% of your final grade. Papers submitted after class on October 26th will be subject to a late penalty of 10% each day, including weekends. More information will be provided in class.

Group Neighbourhood Project

In groups of 4-5, you will conduct an in-depth study of a neighbourhood in Calgary. You must research this neighbourhood and use the concepts and theories discussed in class to analyze the experience of crime and disorder in the neighbourhood. In addition to a group presentation, you must submit a progress report in class on Tuesday, November 9, 2010. You will also complete a peer assessment, the results of which will be worth 5% of your final grade. More information on this project is provided on pages 6 and 7 of this syllabus.

Essay 2: Code of the Street

For this paper, you will read the book *Code of the Street*. You will select one general idea from class and provide an analysis of that idea as it applies to this ethnography. For example, you might consider how the two competing cultural perspectives on crime and community (subcultural theory and cultural attenuation) are portrayed in this ethnography. Papers will be between 8 and 10 pages, typed and double-spaced (12 point font and 1" margins). A grading rubric will be posted on Blackboard, and you are encouraged to consult this rubric when planning and writing your paper. Papers are due to my office by Tuesday, December 14th at 2:00pm. The assignment is worth 35% of your final grade. Papers submitted after this time are subject to a late penalty of 10% each day, including weekends. More information will be provided in class.

Some Important Policies

Classroom Conduct

I will do my best to create a classroom environment in which all students feel comfortable sharing ideas and participating in discussions. Inappropriate or disruptive behaviour, comments or language will not be tolerated. If you ever have any concerns about the classroom environment, I encourage you to come speak with me in person.

Ethics

You are advised that any research with human subjects--including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation--must have the approval of the Departmental Ethics Committee. Interviewing and polling is not permitted in collecting data on neighbourhoods. Unobtrusive observation for the group neighbourhood project is permitted only if you have signed the waiver and if your observation plan has been approved by the instructor (see information on p.7-8 for more information).

Email

Email is a great way to contact me to make an appointment. Email is an *inappropriate* mode of contact if you have questions relating to substantive course content, questions about your grades, questions for which the answer is readily available on the course syllabus, or concerns regarding my teaching style. For these issues, please come see me in person during my office hours or make an appointment to meet with me. When you email me, please

include your full name. ***Please be aware that I have no access to the internet in the evenings or on weekends/holidays.***

Use of Laptop Computers in Class

Laptop computers are permitted in class for the sole purpose of taking notes. If it is discovered that you are using a laptop computer for any other reason, you will be asked to put the computer away and you will not be permitted to use a computer in class again.

Cell Phones

Please make every effort to remember to turn off cell phones and pagers while in class. If you need to keep a cell phone turned on, please come speak to me at the beginning of the semester.

Group work

A significant portion of your mark is based on a group project. Understandably, this may cause some anxiety among students. At the beginning of the semester, you will be asked to complete a group contract with your team members. This contract will outline the responsibilities and expectations for each group member, and will be used to mediate any concerns. In addition, you are encouraged to take notes during each meeting, and communicate with your team members very clearly and openly. If you are having an ongoing issue with a member (or members) of your group, please make an appointment to speak with me.

Writing

Two of the assignments in this course involve writing papers. Papers are assessed on content and writing style. If you need help with your writing, you may make an appointment to see me, or schedule an appointment with a tutor at the Effective Writing Centre (www.efwr.ucalgary.ca).

Reading

Given that there are no exams in this course, the material in the readings is not directly tested. The weekly readings provide the background for both class discussions and the assignments. Classroom discussions will help you “piece together” the different perspectives so that you may complete each assignment successfully. The two assigned books are used to write the papers. These books are not included in the weekly reading assignments; therefore, it is your responsibility to ensure that you allow enough time to read each of the books well before the assignment is due.

Exam Policies and Deferrals (Assignments and Exams)

You must provide me with advance notice if you are unable to pass in the final paper on time. All requests for deferral of a course component due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while you have the physical or emotional problem rather than after recovery. Deferrals may be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. Travel arrangements and misreading of the syllabus are not valid reasons for requesting a deferral. Deferrals will not be granted if it is determined that you have not shown just cause. Please note that requests to defer term work past the end of a term go through the Undergraduate Programs Office (UPO) and must be processed by the deadlines that are established in the U of C Calendar. You can find the forms you need online:

Deferred Term Work Form:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/defTW.pdf>

You must submit these deferral forms to the Social Sciences Associate Dean (Students) through the UPO office: Undergraduate Programs Office, 4th Floor, MacEwan Student Centre. Only the Associate Dean approves requests for deferrals which extend beyond the end of a term. Instructors are not involved in such decisions. To make an appointment with the Associate Dean, phone (403) 220-8155.

Academic Misconduct

Cheating is regarded as a serious academic offense. Students are advised to consult the University Calendar, which presents a Statement of Intellectual Honesty and definitions and penalties associated with cheating, plagiarism, and other academic misconduct.

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP)

This legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, e.g., outside an instructor's office or the Department main office. Term assignments must be returned to students individually, during class, or during my office hours; if you are unable to pick up your assignment you may provide me with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.

Safewalk

The University of Calgary provides a "safe walk" service to any location on Campus, including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones, and campus housing. For Campus Security/Safewalk call 220-5333. Campus Security can also be contacted from any of the "Help" phones located around Campus.

Academic Accommodation

Students with a disability, who require academic accommodation, need to register with the Disability Resource Centre (MC 295, telephone 220-8237). Academic accommodation letters need to be provided to course instructors no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of class. *It is your responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre and to request academic accommodation, if required.*

Handing in Papers Outside of Class, Return of Final Papers and Release of Final Grades

1. When students are unable to submit papers at class, they should make arrangements to hand in their papers directly to the instructor or teaching assistant rather than at the Sociology Department main office.
2. Final papers will not be returned through the Sociology Department main office. The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, (i.e., outside an instructor's office, the department office, etc.). Students who want their final papers returned by mail must attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with the paper. Otherwise final papers will only be available for pick-up during the instructor's office hours at the end of this term or the beginning of the next term.
3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology department. They are only available online.

Emergency Evacuation

In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of the classroom, please proceed to the assembly point in the ICT Food Court.

Office of the Student Ombuds

The Office of the Student Ombuds provides independent, impartial and confidential support for students who require assistance and advice in addressing issues and concerns related to their academic careers. Please consult the website for more information: www.su.ucalgary.ca/services/student-services/student-rights

Schedule of Topics and Weekly Readings (subject to change)

Week 1: Introduction to the social ecology of crime

- Reiss, Albert J. Jr. (1986) "Why are Communities Important in Understanding Crime?" *Crime & Justice*, 8: 1-33.

Weeks 2 & 3: Sociological theories of crime and place

- Bursik, Robert J. Jr. 1988 "Social Disorganization and Theories of Crime and Delinquency: Problems and Prospects." *Criminology*, 26(4): 519-552.
- Sampson, Robert J. 2002 "Transcending Tradition: New Directions in Community Research, Chicago Style." *Criminology*, 40(2): 213-230.

Week 4: Neighbourhoods and Culture

- Sampson, Robert J. and Dawn Jeglum Bartusch. 1998 "Legal Cynicism and (Subcultural?) Tolerance of Deviance: The Neighborhood Context of Racial Differences." *Law & Society Review*, 32(4): 777-804.
- Warner, Barbara. 2003 "The Role of Attenuated Culture in Social Disorganization Theory." *Criminology*, 41(1): 73-98.

Week 5: Collective Efficacy and Informal Social Control

- Almgren, Gunnar. 2005 "The Ecological Context of Interpersonal Violence: From Culture to Collective Efficacy." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 20(2): 218-224.
- Sampson, Robert J. 2004 "Networks and Neighbourhoods: The Implications of Connectivity for Thinking about Crime in the Modern City." Access at: http://wjh1.wjh.harvard.edu/soc/faculty/sampson/articles/2004_NetworkLogic.pdf

Week 6: Neighbourhood Disorder and Fear of Crime

- Skogan, Wesley. 1986 "Fear of Crime and Neighborhood Change." *Crime & Justice*, 8: 203-229.
- Sparks, Richard, Evi Girling and Ian Loader. 2001 "Fear and Everyday Urban Lives." *Urban Studies*, 38(5-6): 885-898.

Week 7: Neighbourhood Disorder and Crime Prevention Policy

- Newman, Oscar. 1995 "Defensible Space: A New Physical Planning Tool for Urban Revitalization." *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 61(2):149-155.
- Novak, Kenneth J. And Charlotte L. Seiler. 2001 "Zoning Practices and Neighborhood Physical Disorder". *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 12 (2):140-163.

Week 8: Policing Neighbourhoods

- Nolan, James J. III, Norman Conti and Jack Mcdevitt. 2004 "Situational policing: neighbourhood development and crime control." *Policing & Society*, 14(2): 99-117.
- Kelling, George L. and James Q. Wilson. 1982 "Broken Windows." *The Atlantic Monthly*. Access at: http://www.manhattan-institute.org/pdf/_atlantic_monthly-broken_windows.pdf

Week 9: Neighbourhood action and change

- Skogan, Wesley G. 1989 "Communities, crime and neighborhood organization." *Crime & Delinquency*, 35(3): 437-457.
- Chaskin, Robert R. and Mark L. Joseph. 2010 "Building 'Community' in Mixed-Income Developments: Assumptions, Approaches and Early Experiences." *Urban Affairs Review*, 45(3): 299-335.

Week 10: Urban Planning

- Freeman, Lance. 2001 "The Effects of Sprawl on Neighborhood Social Ties: An Explanatory Analysis." *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 67(1):69-77.

Weeks 11-13: Group Neighbourhood Presentations

- No Reading 😊

Group Neighbourhood Project

Overview: This project will be completed in groups of 4-5. Your group members will be determined in the second class. Each group will be assigned a neighbourhood in Calgary. The assignment is to conduct an in-depth analysis of issues relating to crime and disorder in this neighbourhood, interpret this research in light of the theories and ideas discussed in class and readings, and prepare some recommendations for how these issues can be addressed.

Research Using Secondary Sources: You will need to do some research in order to better understand this community's experience of crime and disorder. There are many sources of information on a neighbourhood: publicly available information (such as community newsletters) is often available on the internet, as is information about neighbourhood programs and initiatives. The City of Calgary has information on its website about the structural demographics of every neighbourhood in Calgary and basic crime rates, and the Calgary Police Service has a "crime mapping" program online that roughly shows the nature of crime and location of incidents in Calgary neighbourhoods.

Option to Collect Data Using Unobtrusive Observation: There is an option to conduct an unobtrusive observation as part of this project. **Observation is an option, and is not a required component of this project.** Individuals wishing to conduct an observation in a neighbourhood are subject to the ethical guidelines set forth by the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board. A class-based ethical application has been filed with the Department of Sociology Ethics Committee.

Observation in a neighbourhood will allow you to see "firsthand" what is going on. Observation is often used in qualitative research in order to uncover more complex phenomena in natural social settings. In the context of this research, observation of a neighbourhood may help to inform your understanding of issues such as the urban design of the neighbourhood, the types of businesses and services offered to residents, and the physical condition of the neighbourhood. Since this is *unobtrusive* observation, you may not approach any individuals for any

reason. You are simply observing (visually and audibly) the neighbourhood. If undertaken, observation can produce invaluable empirical data to inform your project.

Observation does not mean “hanging around” a neighbourhood; rather, you must collect data in a systematic and detailed manner. To learn more about how to collect data (using field notes are systematic collection procedures), you should consult research methods texts. Some preliminary reading that will help you plan and carry out observation are listed on page 8.

If your group wishes to conduct observation, you must submit an **observation plan** to me prior to undertaking the observation. This plan will ensure that I am aware who is undertaking the observation, and that you are prepared to undertake this observation. This plan will indicate the following:

1. Group members who will participate in the observation
2. Time(s) of the observation
3. The observation plan (what you plan to observe and how you will document the information)
4. A statement that you agree to all the guidelines (listed on p.8) and that you will comply with these guidelines. All individuals participating in the observation must sign this observation plan.

Conducting an observation outside of the classroom has risks associated with it. Therefore, all individuals participating in the observation must sign a **waiver** prepared by Risk Management at the University of Calgary. You are not permitted to participate in the observation unless you have submitted this waiver.

Once again, please be aware that observation is **NOT** a required part of this project. If you choose to conduct an observation, you must observe all the following rules:

- Neighbourhood observation is only permitted if you have signed the waiver AND if I have approved the observation plan
- Observation may only be conducted in public places
- You may not speak to anyone (other than your fellow group members) during the observation. Since you do not have ethical clearance to speak to individuals, this is strictly prohibited.
- Photography in (and of) public places is permitted. **Photography of individuals, private property (including residences, vehicles and other property belonging to an individual) is not permitted under any circumstance.**
- You must conduct observation in groups of 2 people (or more)
- Please use good judgement with respect to your personal safety.
 - Do not go anywhere by yourself
 - One individual must carry a cell phone for emergencies
 - Ensure you are aware of your surroundings
 - Do not conduct observation in remote areas
 - Ensure you have transportation to and from the neighbourhood
- You must respect the neighbourhood and neighbourhood residents by acting appropriately and respectfully to all individuals and property

Resources:

- Bailey, Kenneth D. 1994. *Methods of Social Research*, 4th ed. New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Denzin, Norman K. 1970. “Unobtrusive Measures: The Quest for Triangulated and Nonreactive Methods of Observation.” Pp. 260-293 in *The Research Act: A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods*, edited by Norman K. Denzin. Chicago, IL: Aldine.
- Maxfield, Michael and Earl Babbie. 2009. *Basics of Research Methods for Criminal Justice and Criminology*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Presentation: You will present the results of your research in a presentation to the class. The presentation must include all group members equally. You must demonstrate that you have done a substantial amount of research

on this neighbourhood, and that you have connected this neighbourhood's experience to the ideas and theories discussed in the course. A strong presentation will clearly identify the issues in the neighbourhood, the way in which these issues are being addressed, some of the unique challenges presented to residents of this neighbourhood, and some recommendations for how these issues could be more effectively addressed. The presentation should be engaging and visually appealing. The presentation should last between 25 and 30 minutes, and allow 10 minutes for questions and discussion. A grading rubric for the presentation will be posted on Blackboard, and this should be consulted when conducting the research and planning the presentation.