

Sociology 423: The Sociology of Youth Crime

Fall 2012

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908 Social Sciences

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Office Hours, Fall 2012: Mondays and Wednesdays, 11:00-11:50 or by appointment

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This course concerns the history, etiology, and control of youth crime (or “juvenile delinquency”) in Canada and around the world. We will address definitions of "juvenile delinquency" in historical, cultural, and legal context, the extent of youth crime, theories of juvenile delinquency, the system of youth justice, empirical investigations of gangs and of girls' delinquency, and finally, policies and program evaluation for the treatment and prevention of youth crime.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Readings

There are three books required for this course, all available in the University Bookstore:

Bell, Sandra. 2006 (or most recent). *Young Offenders and Juvenile Justice: A Century After the Fact*. Toronto: ITP Nelson ("SB" in the syllabus)

Please note that this syllabus is provisional until I can confirm page numbers for a 2011 edition, if it's available for this semester.

Lundman, Richard. 2001. *Prevention and Control of Juvenile Delinquency*. Third Edition. New York: Oxford ("RL" in the syllabus)

Schissel, Bernard. 2006. *STILL Blaming Children: Youth Conduct and the Politics of Child Hating*. Halifax: Fernwood ("BS" in the syllabus)

I will be sending additional readings as links or as PDF attachments to students via BlackBoard, so it's imperative that I have a current, valid email address for all of you. Details concerning additional readings will be announced as the term progresses.

Term Work

Term work will consist of a book review, (15%) one midterm test (30%), an in-class presentation (15%), and a term paper (40%).

Your "Book Review" will entail responses to one of more questions that you will be assigned concerning the Schissel monograph. It is due on Monday, October 15. The paper should not exceed 500 words, or about two typed, double-spaced pages. It will be marked as per my standards for all papers (including the term paper), which will be addressed in my course website.

The midterm test will take place in class on Wednesday, November 14. It will comprise three short essay questions. By November 7 I will post to my website a study guide for it. The study guide will consist of questions from which the test items will be drawn.

Every student will give an oral presentation of not more than 10 minutes on his or her term paper topic. This exercise will constitute the In-Class Presentation portion of the course. I will discuss my expectations with respect to these in lecture as the dates for them draw nearer. Note that your attendance at all presentations is expected. Presentations are NOT group projects. At four presentations per lecture, we will require about ten lecture days for them. I will assign dates for these presentations at random, unless students wish to volunteer for early dates. Presentations will begin on Friday, November 16 and run through the end of the semester.

Your Term Paper is due on the last day of class, December 10. The term paper should be an independently-produced manuscript concerning a project of original research that will be assigned around the middle of the semester. The term paper should not exceed eight typed, double-spaced pages, not counting tables, endnotes or list of cited sources if used. The paper will be graded as per the standards that I discuss in lecture. These standards include considerations of sociological acumen, argument and reasoning as well as organization, grammar, spelling and style. Please note that the mark you receive on your presentation does not guarantee, in a good or a bad sense, the mark you receive on the term paper.

Grading Scale

Letter grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

A+ 96-100

A 90-95

A- 85-89

B+ 80-84

B 74-79

B- 70-73

C+ 67-69

C 63-66

C- 60-62

D 50-59

F 0-49

Policy on Missed Term Work

I expect that every student will complete all work for course but recognise that emergencies might prevent this. My policy on missed work varies with the assignment:

1. If you miss the midterm test due to unforeseeable OR foreseeable emergencies or other circumstances, you will write the midterm in a make-up session as per department practices.
2. Late written work will be assigned a penalty of five percent per day; in other words, a paper submitted two days late that would have received an 80 will instead receive a 70.
3. If you must be absent for your presentation date, I will give credit without penalty if and only if rescheduling is possible. If rescheduling is not possible, which is likely, I will have to assign a zero for that assignment.

Policy on Retrieving Assignments

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice having students retrieve assignments from a public place, eg. outside the instructor's office, the department office, etc. Term assignments must be returned to students, individually, during class or during the instructor's office hours; if a student is unable to pick up their assignment from the instructor, they may provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.

Policy on Cheating

Please don't cheat. Consult pp. 49-51 of the University Calendar.

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Required Readings

Please note that I have not assigned dates to these topics since I cannot know precisely when I will arrive at a specific topic. I will endeavour to apprise students "where we are" and what topics will be addressed on the tests.

1. Introduction: Film, Children Underground

Readings: None

2. Historical Considerations: The Discovery of Adolescence

Readings: SB, ch. 1

3. The Facts: The Incidence of Youth Crime and Public Perceptions of Youth Crime

Readings: SB, chs. 2 and 3; BS, chs. 1 and 6

4. Theorising Youth Crime

Readings: Bell, chs. 5 and 6

5. Contexts of Youth Crime: Family, Peers, Schools

Readings: SB, ch. 7

6. Gangs and Other Youth-Related Congregate Crime

Readings: TBA

7. Girls' Delinquency

Readings: TBA

8. The Juvenile Justice System in Canada I: The JDA, YOA and YCJA

Readings: SB, ch. 2

9. The Juvenile Justice System in Canada II: Policing

Readings: SB, ch. 8

10. The Juvenile Justice System in Canada III: Courts

Readings: SB, ch. 9

11. The Juvenile Justice System in Canada IV: Corrections

Readings: SB, ch. 10

12. Community-based Approaches

Readings: "'Community' Organizing," manuscript on course website.

13. What Works? Program Evaluations and Critiques

Readings: RL. You should endeavour to read the entire book but I will recommend some chapters to pay closer attention to.