

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
Sociology 427.01

The Social Organization of Criminal Justice
Winter, 2008
Course Outline

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Augustine Brannigan
TIME: MWF 11:00 -11:50 AM.
LECTURE ROOM: SH 274
OFFICE: SS 1037

Call 220-7466 to speak to the instructor or to make an appointment for consultation.
Website: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~criminal>

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course is designed to familiarize the student with the various institutional responses to criminal behaviour found in the system of criminal justice in Canada. We shall follow the various stages through which a case is processed in the system, and the roles of the various actors and their contributions to the outcome. We begin with an analysis of some of the social factors underlying the passage of laws. After laws are passed, the duty of enforcing them falls to the police. However, we shall see that the police role calls for a number of responses and behaviours in addition to the popular image of "fighting crime". We follow an analysis of the pressures on the police role with a look at the court systems and the factors that influence the preparation and outcome of criminal prosecutions. Here we analyze the roles of lawyers, judges and prosecutors, and the processes of plea bargaining, discovery, judge shopping, etc. We will focus our analysis here on actual Canadian cases as much as possible. Lastly, we shall look at the correctional field in Canada, the use and effects of imprisonment, recidivism, and non-prison options (probation, diversion, restorative justice, etc.).

In our treatment of the justice system we will stress the sociological factors which influence what happens in the institutions that administer justice. Also, we shall work as much as possible with materials that are relevant to the national context, and the actual experiences of actors in the field. Lastly, we shall explore these various topics with an eye to the real and potential injustices and ironies that occur in the system. In addition we shall deal with crucial issues such as civil rights, and class distortions in the crime funnel.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF TOPICS:

1. Laws and the Construction of Criminal Behaviours: External Factors in the Formation of Law
2. The Criteria of Criminal Behaviour from a Legal Perspective: The Internal Logic of Law
3. The Police: Occupational, Organizational versus Legal Determinants of Conduct

4. Civil Rights and Safeguards from Abuse: Limits to State Intervention
5. Two Metaphors--Justice As Crime Funnel versus Justice as Crime Net
6. Policing Deviance in Business: The Relative Immunity of Suite Crime
7. Criminal Justice in the Lower Courts: Plea Bargaining and Informal Case Disposition
8. Higher Court Justice
9. Deterrence of Crime through Fear of Punishment
10. Correctional Services in Canada
11. Alternative Control and Sentencing Strategies
12. Prospects for Change in Canadian Criminal Justice

REQUIRED READINGS

1. James Q. Wilson, Thinking About Crime, New York, Vintage, 1985.
2. Jeffrey Reiman, The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison, 8/e New York: Macmillan, 2006.
3. Stephen Williams, Karla: A Pact with the Devil, Toronto: Seal Books, 2004.

ASSIGNMENTS:

- (1) First Midterm: Friday 15 February 2008 in-class multiple choice/short answer. (30%)
- (2) Second Midterm: Monday 24 March in-class multiple choice/short answer. (30%)
- (3) Written essay on Williams book (Williams on Karla). Due on April 25th. Up to 10 pages discussing the book in terms of the themes raised in lectures and other readings. (30%)
- (4) Class presentations on Short Subjects in last 3 weeks of class. (10%)

Other Responsibilities of the Student:

1. A careful and punctual reading of the required material.
2. Regular attendance at lectures and participation in class discussions and questions.
3. Advance notice to the instructor or the Department of Sociology office (220-6501) if unable to comply with the schedule of assignments due to illness. Students who do not give this advance notice may be barred from retaking tests.
4. Students are asked to familiarize themselves with University Regulations covering plagiarism.
5. Students who are having difficulty with the course are advised to contact the Professor immediately to discuss the situation.

TENTATIVE READING SCHEDULE

1	14-16-18 January	Laws and the Construction of Criminal Behaviour	Wilson
2	21-23-25 January	Elements of Criminal Behaviour	Wilson
3	28-30 Jan -1 February	Policing	Wilson
4	4-6-8 February	Civil Rights	Wilson
5	11-13-15 February 15 Feb Quiz#1 (30%)	Criminal Justice: Crime Net or Crime Funnel	Wilson/Reiman
6	18-20-22 February	Reading Week	Reiman

7	25-27-29 February	Policing Upper World Deviance	
8	3-5-7 March		Reiman
9	10-12-14 March	Justice in the Lower Courts	Reiman
10	17-19 March 21 March Good Friday	Justice in the Higher Courts	Reiman
11	24-26-28 March 24 March Quiz 2 (30%)		Williams
12	31 March April 2-4	Student Presentations (10%)	Williams
13	7-9-11 April	Student Presentations (10%)	Williams
14	14-16-18 April	Student Presentations (10%)	Williams

Essay on Williams' book, *Karla: A Pact with the Devil* (2004) due on April 18th (30%).

Exam Policies: You must provide advance notice to the instructor if you are unable to take an exam. All requests for deferral of an examination due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the physical or emotional problem rather than after recovery. Deferred exams may be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. If you have missed an exam for a legitimate reason, you will be able to write a “make up” exam as close to the original exam as possible. The date and location will be at the convenience of the Sociology Department. Travel arrangements and misreading of the syllabus are not valid reasons for requesting a deferred exam. Deferred exams will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student.

Ethics Research: Students 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. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.

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) 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 the instructor's office hours; if a student is unable to pick up her/his assignment s/he may provide the instructor 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 a student's responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre and to request academic accommodation, if required.**