

University of Calgary
Sociology 427: SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE
Winter 2014

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Course Prerequisite: Sociology 325 and 313 or the consent of Department. Sociology 331 and 333 are recommended.

Course Description: The best criminals are the ones who never get caught. What happens to most of the others is the topic of this course. This course is an overview of the various facets of the criminal justice system and is designed to introduce the student to the institutional responses to crime and criminal behaviour in Canada. We will address the sociological factors that influence events and outcomes of the administration of justice. We begin with the assumption that crime is a social construct. How is it that some actions are deemed criminal while others are not? Are certain behaviours always considered criminal? Who gets to decide? What is role of the police, the courts, corrections, probation and parole? All these questions will be explored and we will hear from practitioners from within the systems in an attempt to gain insights into the laws, policies, and procedures.

Course Objectives:

1. Explore the genesis of laws and criminal behavior in Canada.
2. To identify and analyze the key components of the criminal justice system.
3. To provide students with a factual basis on which to assess issues and situations regarding the handling of criminal behaviour in the criminal justice system.
4. To make students aware of the problems, potential injustices and ironies inherent in the Canadian criminal justice system.
5. To have students explore the circumstances under which a person can be wrongfully convicted.

Course Format: Class sessions will combine several formats: lectures; group discussions; text and reserve readings; guest lectures; videos; and class questions.

Required Texts:

- 1) Fleming, Thomas et al. 2006. *The Canadian Criminal Justice System*. 2nd Ed. Toronto: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- 2) Mewitt, Allan and Shaun Nakatsuru. (2000). *An Introduction to the Criminal Process in Canada, (Fourth Edition)* Toronto: Carswell Thompson.

The assigned readings will *generally (but not exactly)* correspond with the topics covered in the lectures. Thus lecture topics should serve as a tentative guide and may be adjusted by me. Students are also required to read articles placed on reserve at the library.

Evaluation:

NOTE: Receiving credit in all components of this evaluation is mandatory to obtain a passing grade in this course.

1. Examinations 70%

There will be 1 midterm examination and 1 final examination. The examinations will cover lectures, guest lectures, videos, class discussions, and assigned reading materials scheduled up to the exam. This means that students will also be responsible for readings and topics **not covered** in class.

Examinations will be a combination of any or all of the following: multiple choice, true/false, definition, short answer and essay questions. This allows the student to demonstrate varying methods of academic skill because I do not expect the student to rely solely on rote memory. I expect application, analysis, synthesis, and integration of course materials into reasoned answers.

The short answer and long answer questions require a reasonable standard of writing. Poor spelling, disjointed or incomplete sentences, poor grammar and punctuation, inadequate sentence and paragraph structure only detract from the ideas you are trying to express and will negatively impact your mark.

The exams are **non-cumulative**. This means that the mid-term will cover only materials from the first class to the mid-term exam. The final exam will cover materials from the mid-term to the last day of class. Although the exams are non-cumulative, students might find reviewing the mid-term exam valuable in preparation for the final.

The dates and assigned weights for exams are as follows:

Mid-term	February 14	35 %
Final Examination	Date set by Registrar	35 %

If you miss the mid-term for a documented, legitimate reason the weight and testable materials will be assigned to that exam will be applied to the final exam (a cumulative final). Otherwise you will receive a score of zero for the midterm. Your reason must be documented (a note from your doctor, etc. is required) and legitimate. **You must contact me within 48 hours** of the missed exam. **I will not give you a make-up exam.** If you miss the final exam for a valid reason, **contact the Sociology Department Office at the University of Calgary (220-6501) within 48 hours** to apply for a deferred exam no later than the deadline indicated in the 2013/2014 University of Calgary Calendar. Otherwise, again, University regulations require that you receive a score of zero on the final exam.

2. Research Project/Class Presentation 30%

i) Class Presentation

Our criminal justice system has glitches. One example of the system not delivering justice is the case of the wrongfully convicted individuals. The student can choose a research topic/individual from my list or can research another with my approval. Your research project/class presentation will consist of a 40 minute class presentation. Presenters must supply handouts for the class. The research project/class presentation should answer the following questions: Who was the individual? Were there elements of social inequality (race, class, gender, etc.) surrounding the arrest/conviction/sentencing of this person? What evidence led to the conviction? How and why was the verdict overturned? Where did the system go wrong? Presentations will take begin in the class after the midterm exam. I will allow class time for students to confer with each other. Class presentations begin March 10.

Final grades will be assigned according to the University of Calgary’s 4-point grading system based on the following percentage distributions:

Percentage	Grade	Meaning
95+	A+	Outstanding
89 - 94	A	
86 - 88	A-	Very Good
82 - 85	B+	
79 - 81	B	
76 - 78	B-	Good
72 - 75	C+	
68 - 71	C	
64 - 67	C-	
60 - 63	D+	Minimal Pass
55 - 59	D	
0 - 54	F	

The A+ grade became an official grade at the University of Calgary in Fall, 2002. The A+ grade is described as an honorific grade having the same grade point value as an A grade (4.0). It will

be used to indicate outstanding performance in a subject area but not have a higher grade point average.

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. 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. **Due to time constraints, course deadlines, and the length of time it takes to gain ethics certification, students are STRONGLY urged NOT to pursue primary data collection for this course.**

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP): The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having student's retrieve assignments from a public place, e.g., outside 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.

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.

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

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. 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. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology department. They are only available online.

Electronic Classroom Etiquette: Technology can be both a blessing and a curse. In recent years electronic devices have caused a tremendous amount of disturbance in the classroom. Please get the most of your (or your parents') hard-earned tuition dollars by devoting your class time exclusively to classroom activities. Please be courteous to your classmates and professor by ensuring that your cell phones, blackberries, pagers, or any other electronic devices are turned off and remain off for the duration of the class.

For those taking notes of a laptop, please be aware that your screen is visible to those both beside you and behind you. I have received many complaints from fellow classmates who have been forced to endure distracting, offensive and otherwise unsuitable images from others' laptops. Please remember that laptops are to be used exclusively for the purposes of taking notes during class.

Checking emails, text messaging, facebooking or MSNing, surfing the internet or engaging in any other type of internet/or electronic activity during this class is not permitted. Those who choose to ignore this rule **will be asked to leave my classroom immediately**. Students who have been asked to leave my classroom **must** meet with me before returning.

Students taking class notes on a laptop computer will be asked to close their laptops from time to time to answer questions and/or engage in classroom discussions.

My Teaching Philosophy: I love to teach and I hope it shows. I believe that learning is an active rather than a passive activity. I want to assist you in your learning journey. Although attendance is not mandatory, I urge you to attend class regularly. I will not post my lecture materials or give you my lecture notes if you are absent. Class discussions, issues raised in class and information obtained from videos, lectures and other class activities can be give you some valuable insights and help you with assignments and exams. You will not have access to that information unless you attend class. I strive to provide a safe and non-competitive learning environment but one that periodically takes students out of their comfort zone. I encourage class discussion as a means of exploring topics, ideas, and sometimes controversies. Your point of view is important but may be challenged by me or your fellow students during this course. We may be dealing with sensitive and sometimes contentious issues in class. Your opinion may differ from those of your classmates. So please, remain open-minded and remember to be respectful of opinions that differ from your own.

Proposed Course Schedule
Sociology 427: SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE
Winter 2013

Week	Week of:	Topic	Readings
1	January 6	Introduction	Fleming Ch 1
2	January 13	Criminal Justice in Canada	Mewett Ch 1 & 2
3	January 20	Presentation Preparation	Fleming 3
4	January 27	Crime as a Social Construction	Fleming Ch 4
5	February 3	Criminal Statistics and the Extent of Crime	Fleming 2 Mewett 3 – 5
6	February 10	The Justice Process Midterm on Friday	Mewett 6 – 8
7	February 17	Reading Week	No Readings
8	February 24	Law Enforcement in Canada	Fleming Ch 5 Mewett Ch 9 - 11
9	March 3	The Canadian Court System (Class Presentations begin this week)	Fleming Ch 6 Mewett Ch 12 - 14
10	March 10	Court Procedures and Sentencing	Fleming Ch 7 Mewett Ch 15-17
11	March 17	Correctional Institutions	Mewett Ch 18 - 19 Fleming 8
12	March 24	Probation and Parole	Fleming Ch 9
13	March 31	Critical Issues in Canadian Corrections	Fleming Ch 10
14	April 7	Where do we go from here?	Fleming Ch 11