



UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Winter 2020

FACULTY OF ARTS

Department of Sociology

Department of Sociology Website: <https://soci.ucalgary.ca/>

The Sociology of Law			
Course Number	SOC 429		
Pre/Co-Requisites	SOC 327 and 313		
Instructor Name	Sasha Reid	Email	Sasha.reid@ucalgary.ca
Instructor Email Policy	Feel free to contact me over email at any time. Please put your course number and section in your email's subject line, and include a proper salutation, your full name, student ID, and a proper closing in the body of your email. All emails will be answered within two business days. I do not answer emails over the weekend. Please take that into account when emailing me questions pertaining assignments or exams. If you have a course-related question, please check the course outline first.		
Office Location	SS 912	Office Hours	Friday 12:00 – 1:00pm
Telephone No.			
TA Name	TBD	TA Email	TBD
TA Office Location	TBD	TA Office Hours	TBD
Class Dates	T/TR		
Class Times	11:00 – 12:15		
Class Location	EDC 388		

Course Description

Sociological problems regarding the origin, impact and definition of law, dispute resolution, and the relationship between law and social change. This course may not be repeated for credit. Sociology 327 and 313; or consent of the Department. Sociology 325, 331 and 333 are recommended.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes

This class takes a transdisciplinary approach to the study of law and society. Transdisciplinarity is embraced as a means through which to assist students gain deeper learning and, also, to help students

start thinking more critically about law and society. Through this course, students will learn to make connections across disciplines, creating an opportunity for greater depth and complexity of their legal knowledge. In addition to transdisciplinarity, this course selects an experiential case studies approach as its tool and adopts integrative learning strategies to encourage students to creatively approach several challenges; including collaboration and professional networking.

Required Textbooks, Readings, Materials, Electronic Resources

- There is no required textbook. Readings will be posted to D2L.

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

This class has been designed, pedagogically, around the experiential method. This method is immersive, fluid, collaborative, dynamic, and interactive. Students will be assigned a group project. Therefore, the ability to engage in group work is a requirement, as is active class participation and discussion. To help facilitate this, classes will be broken down as follows. Tuesdays, class will go from 11:00am – 12:15pm. Thursdays, class will go from 11:00am – 11:50am, at which time you will break into your groups. Group work goes from 11:50 am – 12:15 pm. The instructor retains the right to change this schedule if and when needed.

Week 1.. Welcome and Introduction to Your Case

■ **January 14th**

■ **January 16th**

Welcome to SOCI 429! This week we'll go over a few introductions I'll tell you a bit about this class, the content, structure, and assignments. Thursday is a dedicated workday where you will meet with your group and begin laying the foundation for your case/presentations.

Week 2. The Social Climate of the Late 1980's and Early 1990's

■ **January 21st**

■ **January 23rd**

This week we will continue our discussion on the social climate of the 1980's and 1990's. In particular we will examine how law enforcement officers were being trained in the age of Satanic Panic. We will come to see how the social fears and dynamics of the era contributed to prejudicial attitudes toward certain groups and the labelling of otherwise innocent people as "deviant."

Week 3. The Case Begins and Media Coverage

■ **January 28th**

■ **January 30th**

This week we will begin to explore the major facts of the case. We will examine the crime scene, use police training manuals to establish a motive, and approach the case as the investigators themselves did. We will also be introduced to the main investigators on this case and get a sense of how their social backgrounds and training may have shaped their understanding of this crime. Furthermore, we will examine the importance of the relationship between the media and law enforcement. Special attention will be paid to the way in which media portrayals of crime can and have led to wrongful convictions. We will also look at the topic of mob violence.

Week 4. Police Corruption and Organizational Structures

- **February 4th** This week we will explore the issue of police corruption. Specifically, we will
- **February 6th** examine several cases wherein viable suspects were disregarded in favor of innocent parties. We will also examine the case study of Serpico.

Week 5. A Suspect is Identified

- **February 11th** This week we will examine the initial suspect in the case. We will also
- **February 13th** examine laws pertaining to freedom of religion and the discrimination that people currently face as a result of belonging to a “non-traditional” religious faith. We will also explore several sociological perspectives on religion and analyze the intersections between religion and law. We will also discuss the Rwandan Genocide.

Week 6. Reading Break

- **February 18th** No classes will be held this week as it is the reading break. Enjoy!
- **February 20th** No classes will be held this week as it is the reading break. Enjoy!

Week 7. Interviewing Begins

- **February 25th** This week we will examine the history of police interactions with juveniles.
- **February 27th** We will study the history of juvenile rights, punishment, and will examine the issues related to the use of specific interrogation practices with minors. In addition, we will examine the evolving concept of evidence and what may be considered valid proof in the court of law. We will conclude this week by dissecting the evidence the police initially gathered to help support their case.

Week 8. Examining Other Suspects, Police Corruption, and Confirmation Bias

- **March 3rd** This week we will examine the other suspects that are involved in this case. We
- **March 5th** will see how this other evidence was disregarded in favor of a currently established working theory. We will also explore the importance of objectivity in the assessment and evaluation of evidence. Other topics to be explored include Sundown towns and the case study of Serpico.

Week 9. Questions About the Validity of Confessions

- **March 10th** This week we will explore the confession given by Jessie Misskelley. We will
- **March 12th** look at the history of confession evidence, the impact of developmental age on the reliability of confessions, and we will explore the current issues surrounding the use of the Reid Technique for interrogating minors. We will examine the The Wickersham Report and the Police and Criminal Evidence act 1984.

Week 10. The Trial and the Sentence

- **March 17th**
- **March 19th**

This week we will examine the trial of the WM3. We will study the arguments made by both the prosecution and the defense. And we will arrive at a verdict on the guilt of Jessie Misskelley, Damien Echols, and Jason Baldwin. We will also discuss the case of Omar Khadr and the topic of recording of custodial interviews. We will also examine MMIW initiatives, voir dire, and death qualified juries. This week we will also explore the sentences given to the defendants in this case. We will look at the history of juvenile sentencing and will ask questions about the ethics of certain sentences for juveniles. We will also examine the processes by which miscarriages of justice are addressed by the courts.

Week 11. The Role of the Media on Criminal Trials and the Lasting Impact of Wrongful Convictions

- **March 24th**
- **March 26th**

This week we will explore the importance of the media for helping to bring attention to legal injustices. We will trace the history of film in relation to advocacy efforts and will leave with a better appreciation of both the pros and cons of the media's coverage of criminal trials. We will also explore the concept of an Alford Plea. Additionally, we will come to appreciate the lasting effect a wrongful conviction has on those who have been convicted. Lastly, we will examine the way in which wrongful convictions undermine public trust in the justice system.

Week 12. Case Week

- **March 31st**
- **April 2nd**

Cases will commence this week. At the beginning of the semester students will choose a legal case. Each group will then form a team of investigative journalists. Students will study the case and will present on the following: (1) Opening Statement (2) The Social Climate at the Time of the Case (3) The Criminal Events that Comprise the Case (4) The Investigation (5) The Suspect (6) The Trial and The Evidence (7) The Verdict, the Sentence, the Final Outcome and (8) Closing Remarks. This opportunity was designed to introduce students to the intricacies of the law. This activity offers students the opportunity to refine their legal and logical reasoning, as well as the ability to work with a team to both build and argue their position.

Case Dates

Tuesday: Walter Mcmillian

Thursday: Kenneth Waters

Week 13. Case Week

- **April 7th**
- **April 9th**

Cases will continue this week.

Case Dates

Tuesday: James Richardson

Thursday: The San Antonio Four

Week 14. Case Week

- **April 14th** **Cases** will continue this week.
- **April 16th**

Case Dates

Tuesday: Kirk Bloodsworth

Thursday: Randall Dale Adams

Methods of Assessment and Grading Weights

All assignments will be submitted to D2L.

1. **Case Reflection (17%) | Due: January 28th**
After selecting their case, students will write a short personal reflection on why they chose that particular case and what they hope to learn in the process of investigating this case. Late submissions without approval will be reduced by 10%.
2. **Group Work Note (12%) | Due: Once Throughout the Semester**
At the end of any week, an assigned notetaker of the group's choosing will submit a one-page (single spaced) note detailing the progress that is being made on their case. All notes must be submitted by April 3rd. Students need only submit one group work note during the semester. Notes will be graded on the following: depth and detail of both the description and the reflection, ability to elaborate and provide examples, ability to identify and make use of outside sources, organization of document, grammar and punctuation, and the overall quality of the writing.
3. **Case Commentaries (2 x 20% each = 44%) Both Due by April 15th** Experiential activities will be embedded throughout the course of the semester. These activities are designed to get students thinking about the connections between sociology and the law. To complete the case commentaries students will reflect on the experience of the activity and will examine the real-world social, legal, policy, and/or ethical implications of the activities we engage in. Commentaries will be graded on the following: depth and detail of both the description and the reflection, ability to elaborate and provide examples, ability to identify and make use of outside sources, organization of document, grammar and punctuation, and the overall quality of the writing.
4. **Case Presentation (27%) | Due: During Presentation Week**
At the beginning of the semester students will choose a legal case. Each group will then form a team of investigative journalists. Students will study the case and will present on the following: (1) Opening Statement (2) The Social Climate at the Time of the Case (3) The Criminal Events that Comprise the Case (4) The Investigation (5) The Suspect (6) The Trial and The Evidence (7) The Verdict, the Sentence, the Final Outcome and (8) Closing Remarks. This opportunity was designed to introduce students to the intricacies of the law. This activity offers students the

opportunity to refine their legal and logical reasoning, as well as the ability to work with a team to both build and argue their position.

Final Exam Information

There will be no final exam in this class.

Grading Scale

Letter grades will be assigned and submitted to the registrar based on the following scale:

Grade	Percent range	Grade Point Value	Description
A+	96 – 100%	4.0	Outstanding performance
A	90 – 95.99%	4.0	Excellent performance
A-	85 – 89.99%	3.7	Approaching excellent performance
B+	80 – 84.99%	3.3	Exceeding good performance
B	75 – 79.99%	3.0	Good performance
B-	70 – 74.99%	2.7	Approaching good performance
C+	67 – 69.99%	2.3	Exceeding satisfactory performance
C	63 – 66.99%	2.0	Satisfactory performance
C-	59 – 62.99%	1.7	Approaching satisfactory performance
D+	55 – 58.99%	1.3	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject
D	50 – 54.99%	1.0	Minimal Pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject.
F	<50%	0	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.

Grade Reappraisal

Within two weeks of the date the exam/assignment is returned, students seeking reappraisal of examinations or assignments must submit a written response to the instructor explaining the basis for reconsideration of one's mark. The instructor will reconsider the grade assigned and will then book a time with the student to discuss his or her work and rationale. It should be noted that a re-assessed grade may be raised, lowered, or remain the same.

Handing in Papers, Assignments

1. The main Sociology Department office does not deal with any course-related matters. Please speak directly to your instructor.
2. **Protection of Privacy:** The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPP) legislation does not allow students to retrieve any course material from public places. Anything that requires handing back will be returned directly during class or office hours. If students are unable to pick up their assignments from the instructor, they can provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard by the faculty at the University of Calgary
3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology Department. They are only available online.

Research Ethics

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 Faculty 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.

Copyright Legislation

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright.pdf>) and requirements of the Copyright Act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

Instructor Intellectual Property

Course materials created by professor(s) (including course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the professor(s). These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the professor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without

permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

Academic Misconduct

Please refer to the website listed below for information on University of Calgary policies on Plagiarism/Cheating/Other Academic Misconduct:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Absences and Deferrals

Students who are absent from class assessments (tests, participation activities, or other assignments) should inform their instructors as soon as possible. Instructors may request that evidence in the form of documentation be provided. If the reason provided for the absence is acceptable, instructors may decide that any arrangements made can take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test. For information on possible forms of documentation, including statutory declarations, please see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>

Deferred Final Exam Form: Please note that requests to defer a Registrar scheduled final exam are dealt with through the Registrar's Office. Further information can be found at:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/exams/deferred-exams>

Deferred Term Work Form: Deferral of term work past the end of a term also requires a form to be filled out. It's available at:

https://live-ucalgary.ucalgary.ca/sites/default/files/teams/1/deferred_termwork15_0.pdf

Once an extension date has been agreed between instructor and student, the form should be taken to the Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (SS 110) for approval by an Associate Dean (Students).

Academic Accommodation

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/. Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>

Students needing an Accommodation based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the course instructor.

Wellness and Mental Health Resources

The University of Calgary recognizes the pivotal role that mental health plays in physical health, social connectedness and academic success, and aspires to create a caring and supportive campus community where individuals can freely talk about mental health and receive support when needed. We encourage you to explore the excellent mental health resources available throughout the university community, such as counselling, self-help resources, peer support or skills-building available through Student Wellness Services (Room 370 MacEwan Student Centre, <https://www.ucalgary.ca/wellness-services/services/mental-health-services>) and the Campus Mental Health Strategy (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/mentalhealth/>).

Student Success Centre

The Student Success Centre provides services and programs to ensure students can make the most of their time at the University of Calgary. Our advisors, learning support staff, and writing support staff assist students in enhancing their skills and achieving their academic goals. They provide tailored learning support and advising programs, as well as one-on-one services, free of charge to all undergraduate and graduate students. For more information visit:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success>

Student Ombuds Office

The Student Ombuds Office supports and provides a safe, neutral space for students. For more information, please visit www.ucalgary.ca/ombuds/ or email ombuds@ucalgary.ca.

Student Union (SU) Information

The SU Vice-President Academic can be reached at (403) 220-3911 or suvpaca@ucalgary.ca; Information about the SU, including elected Faculty Representatives, can be found here:

<https://www.su.ucalgary.ca>.

Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points

Assembly points for emergencies have been identified across campus. Assembly points are designed to establish a location for information updates from the emergency responders to the evacuees; from the evacuated population to the emergency responders. For more information, see the University of Calgary's Emergency Management website:

<https://live-risk.ucalgary.ca/risk/emergency-management/evac-drills-assembly-points/assembly-points>

Safewalk

Campus security will escort individuals, day or night, anywhere on campus (including McMahon Stadium, Health Sciences Centre, Student Family Housing, the Alberta Children's Hospital and the University LRT station). Call 403-220-5333 or visit <http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk>. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot pay booths. Please ensure your personal safety by taking advantage of this service.