Course Description

This course will explore the concept of deviance as it is used in the social sciences, especially in the fields of sociology and social psychology. Major perspectives on deviance will be discussed and analyzed through readings involving both theoretical and empirically based research. The course will progress from general theoretical viewpoints, to specific behaviors that are considered deviant. Along the way we will examine the relationships between deviance, crime, and social control, and how power shapes the deviance-defining process. The substantive areas of sexual deviance, drug and alcohol use, mental illness, and common and white-collar crime will be examined as well as the political issues that theorists have raised in regard to the scientific study of deviant behavior. We will also view selected documentaries that illustrate theories and concepts from the lectures and readings, which will lead us to discuss how the theoretical study of deviance can lead to a better understanding of diversity in the real world. Our discussion of theories of deviance and deviant behaviors will be augmented with two documentary films; Mr. Death (an Errol Morris film), and Grass (narrated by Woody Harrelson).

Course Requirements

There will be two exams (midterm and final) that will each count for 50 percent of the final grade. The exams will cover materials from both lectures and readings. The final will be comprehensive, and about two-thirds of it will cover materials from the midterm on.

The midterm will be held on **TUESDAY, Oct. 30th.** A shown on the course outline, everything through conflict theory (Theories, #7) will be included on the midterm.

The final will be held during finals week **(TBA)** in the same room as the class.

**Every student must bring a RED scantron and a #2 pencil to each exam.**
Readings

There is one required text. It contains classic and contemporary works on deviance that provide all the readings for the course. They are relatively short (almost all have been condensed). Exams will contain questions specific to each assigned reading. Doing the reading well in advance of the exams (i.e., during the time the topics are discussed in lecture) and taking notes is highly advised if you wish to receive a good grade. Also, at the end of each section of the book there are two critical thinking questions that put the readings in perspective, and allow you to consider what you have read. It is highly recommended that you spend time with these, as they will allow you to better understand the significance and purpose of the readings, which will in turn allow you to be better prepared to answer exam questions about them.

The course outline below specifies the order of readings under each topic that will be covered in lectures. Times to cover topics may vary which is why there is no particular class days listed, but each class lecture will cover the topics in the order below. Readings may or may not be fully discussed in lecture, but having done them at the time of the lecture will make it much easier for understanding materials and also give you an opportunity to ask informed questions about them as the topics are discussed.


(Note: Earlier editions of this book published by Prentice Hall do not contain all of the readings for this course, thus you should use this edition only. Also, the book may be listed with a 2010 copyright date on Amazon and other online sites, but this is simply an advertising error that is apparently difficult for them to fix now. It is the same book, so if you would like to purchase it online, whether it says 2010 or 2011, it is the same exact book published by McGraw Hill, and the one we are using for the course.

Course Outline

Topics and Readings

WEEK 1 (Sept. 27th, Oct. 2nd & 4th)

1. Introduction: What is Deviance?
   1. Definitions
   2. What Deviance is not
   3. Absolutist, Normative, and Reactive Perspectives
4. Audiences and Relativity Issues

Readings:

Becker, Moral Entrepreneurs
Marx, Ironies of Social Control
Pfohl, Discovery of Child Abuse
Pontell, Fraud and Financial Crisis

II. Deviance, Social Control, Crime, and Social Problems

1. Social Control: The Other Side of Deviance

2. Objectivist and Constructionist Perspectives on Social Problems

WEEK 2 (Oct. 9th & 11th)

III. Theories

1. Functionalism, Anomie, and Strain

Readings: Durkheim, Normal and Pathological
Merton, Social Structure and Anomie
Cloward and Ohlin, Illegitimate Means
Agnew, A General Strain Theory
Martinez, Latinos and Lethal Violence

2. Symbolic Interaction/Labeling

Readings: Cooley, Social Self
Lemert, Primary and Secondary Deviance
Goffman, Stigma and Social Identity
Goode, On Behalf of Labeling

WEEK 3 – Oct. 16th -- Movie, (Biography, Jean Nidetch, Founder of Weight Watchers)

Week 3 – Oct. 18th

3. Learning

Readings: Sykes and Matza, Techniques of Neutralization

Becker, Becoming a Marijuana User

Sutherland, Differential Association

Glaser, Differential Identification

Week 4 – Oct. 23rd & 25th

4. Self-Control

Readings: Gottfredson and Hirschi, Self-Control Theory

Geis, On the Absence of Self-Control

5. Feminism

Readings: Chesney-Lind, Girls’ Crime

Jolin, Working Prostitutes

Rosenbaum and Chesney-Lind, Appearance and Delinquency

Gagne, Identity, Strategy, and Feminist Politics

6. Controlology

(no assigned readings; lecture only)

7. Conflict
Readings:  
Sellin, Conflict of Conduct Norms  
Spitzer, Toward a Marxian Theory of Deviance  
Liazos, Poverty of the Sociology of Deviance  
Rosoff, Pontell and Tillman, Governmental and State Crime

MIDTERM—  
Week 5 – Oct.30th

Week 5 (Nov. 1) Movie Documentary (Grass)

Week 6 (Nov. 6th & 8th)

IV. Deviant Behaviors

1. Alcohol and Drug Use

Readings:  
Gusfield, Moral Passage  
Becker, Marijuana Use and Social Control  
Orcutt, Deviance as a Situated Phenomenon

2. Sexual Deviance

Readings:  
Humphreys, Tearoom Trade  
Scully and Marolla, Convicted Rapists’ Vocabulary of Motive  
Lewis, Learning to Strip  
Jenness, From Sex as Sin to Sex as Work  
Wonders and Michalowski, Bodies, Borders, and Sex Tourism
Week 7 (Nov. 13th and 15th) Documentary film by Errol Morris and class analysis and discussion; *Mr. Death*

Week 8 (Nov. 20th).

3. Mental Disorder

*Readings:*

- Rosenhan, *On Being Sane in Insane Places*
- Goffman, *Moral Career of the Mental Patient*
- Lemert, *Paranoia and the Dynamics of Exclusion*

Week 8 (Nov. 22nd; No class, Thanksgiving holiday)

Week 9 (Nov. 27th) Academy Award-Winning Documentary Movie, *Bowling for Columbine*

Week 9 (Nov. 29th)

4. Common Crime and Social Control

*Readings:*

- Pontell and Welsh, *Incarceration as a Deviant Form of Social Control*
- Lemert, *The Behavior of the Systematic Check Forger*
- Sudnow, *Normal Crimes*

Week 10 (Dec. 4th & 6th)

5. White-Collar, Corporate, and Organized Crime

*Readings:*

- Jesilow, Pontell and Geis, *Medical Criminals*
- Pontell and Calavita, *White-Collar Crime in the S&L Scandal*
- Benson, *Denying the Guilty Mind*
- Cressey, *From Mafia to Cosa Nostra*

**FINAL EXAM –**

**FINALS WEEK, TBA**