

**Sociology 255**  
**Research in Crime and Deviance**

Tuesday 6-9 PM, Spring 2009  
250 Amador Hall

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This is an advanced course on sociological examinations of crime, deviance, and justice. We will examine the complex relationships within human society in regards to issues of crime, crime control, courts, prisons and corrections, the media, government, and public policy. We will pay special attention to issues of injustice, bias, and error within the justice system.

There will be no exams: students will be given the opportunity to explore ideas and issues in a series of response papers—the emphasis of the course is on ideas, theories, and a rigorous understanding of the sociology of crime and deviance. Students you are expected to keep up with the readings and participate vigorously in discussion. There will be a weekly written assignment, a group project, and one final 20-page paper or four 6-page papers due over the semester. The 20 page seminar paper may be on a wide range of topics related to the course material: it might investigate an empirical criminal justice question, a specific governmental policy, or it may relate to a community issue. This option is best seen as directly relate to your thesis work. The shorter papers should focus on two or three texts and the course readings.

There are six required texts, available at the Hornet Bookstore, and one required reader, available on webCT. Make sure to purchase the correct editions (indicated below) as earlier editions are substantially different! A copy of the reader and all texts will also be on reserve at University Library. **Students are expected to keep up on the readings and come to attend class**, where we will discuss the readings and broad issues.

Required Texts:

*Discipline and Punish.* Michel Foucault. New York: Vintage. 1977 (**any edition**).  
*Crime Control as Industry.* Nils Christie. New York: Routledge. 2000 (**3<sup>rd</sup> edition**).  
*Malign Neglect: Race, Crime, and Punishment in America.* Michael Tonry. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1995.  
*Capital Crimes.* George Winslow. New York: Monthly Review Press. 1999.

## **I. Introduction**

1. 1/27/09 (SacCT: Reiman)

## **II. Criminological Theories I: disorganization, social learning, control, labeling theory**

2. 2/03/09 (SacCT theory part 1: 95-169, 219-261, 295-332)

## **III. Criminological Theories II: Structural Theories: anomie, conflict, feminist theory**

3. 2/10/09 (SacCT theory part 2: 171-217, 333-440)

**Deadline to decide on 6-page or research paper option**

## **IV. Criminological Theories III: Social Dominance and Rational Choice**

4. 2/17/09 (SacCT theory part 3: 263-293; SacCT: Wilson & Kelling, Sampson)

## **V. Race, Gender, Class**

5. 2/24/09 (Tonry: entire)

**First 6-page paper due/topic and bibliography for research paper due**

6. 3/03/09 (Reader: Sampson & Wilson; Bailey & Peterson; Mauer; Davis)

7. 3/10/09 (Winslow: entire)

## **VI. Discipline, Control, Surveillance**

8. 3/17/09 (Foucault: 1-131; Reader: the Foucault glossary)

**Second 6-page paper due/research paper outline due**

9. 3/24/09 (Foucault: 135-308)

10. 3/31/09 (spring break)

11. 4/07/09 (Reader: Staples; Parenti)

## **VII. Prison Industrial Complex**

12. 4/14/09 (Reader: Schlosser; Davis; review Reiman)

**Third 6-page paper due/research paper first draft due**

13. 4/21/09 (Reader: Bagdikian, McChesney, Dyer)

14. 4/28/09 (Reader: Kovandzic et al; Rose et al; preview Christie)

15. 5/05/09 (Christie: entire)

## **VIII. Alternatives and solutions**

16. 5/12/09 (Reader: Glaser, Miller, Davis)

**Last 6 page paper due/Research paper due**

## COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND FINAL GRADES:

In accordance with the emphasis of this course (on students as active and critical producers of knowledge rather than passive consumers of knowledge), evaluation is based entirely on written work. The reasons for this are manifold, based in part upon the inherent variability in student's abilities at taking exams, the difficulty in expressing critical engagement with a wide body of work in an exam format, and problems with assessing "correct" or "incorrect" responses to sociological queries. Exams are deeply problematic, but written responses to course materials can be as well. This is why our emphasis is to grapple with the ideas and concepts of the course as presented in the readings, the lectures, and the classroom discussions. Parallel to this, the coursework components give you an opportunity to respond to each of these levels of work. Because the focus is on ideas and because of the difficulty of "getting the right answer" to such a request (since there is, generally, no right answer), there are no grades given to the written work. Each portion of the components will be graded as either PASS or NO PASS. Outstanding work will be indicated with a STAR.

### **There are 4 distinct components of coursework in this course:**

15 WEEKLY READING REACTION PAPERS

1 TWENTY-PAGE SEMINAR PAPER *OR* 4 SIX PAGE PAPERS

1 GROUP PROJECT (topic to be determined)

SEMINAR PARTICIPATION

These coursework components are designed to give you credit for reading, thinking critically about the content of the course, and presenting your thoughts verbally and in written form. A **READING REACTION PAPER** is due each week. This is to be a simple one-page single spaced response to the readings for the week—it must be a serious critical engagement with the substance of the readings. You are to read the work carefully and consider the assumptions, biases, and lacunae in the author's argument. The **RESEARCH PAPER** assignment gives you an opportunity to engage in an in-depth project: either an empirical investigation of a criminological topic, a community-level justice problem, or an analysis of a governmental policy. You should consider writing a research paper if it can contribute to progress on your thesis work. The research paper is due at the last seminar meeting. You may choose instead to do four six page papers instead of the research paper to complete this component. These four papers must engage with several of the readings from the course and at least one outside source. This option is meant to provide you with a set of exercises in literature review. The 6 page papers are due every three weeks. The **GROUP PROJECT** is an endeavor that the entire class will engage with. I have a project in mind, but it is subject to the discussion and approval of the seminar participants. All assignments will be assessed as "PASS" or "NO PASS." ***It is difficult to get a "no pass" on an assignment, unless you clearly do not engage with the material or have another student complete an assignment for you.***

To earn a B, you must complete: all reaction papers, attend all class meetings (with one week *gratis*), and complete the research paper and group project. To earn an A, you must do all of the above and in addition your work be **CONSISTENTLY OUTSTANDING**, which is work that is thorough, creative, and critical. This is not difficult to achieve, but requires more effort than simply doing adequate work. Partial work and other circumstances will be always taken into consideration. **It is always to your advantage to turn in a partially completed assignment.**



**PLEASE NOTE:**

- **THERE IS NO NEED TO EXPLAIN YOUR ABSENCE FROM CLASS.**
- **I DO NOT ACCEPT LATE PAPERS, EMAILED PAPERS, PAPERS PUT IN MY MAILBOX, OR UNDER MY OFFICE DOOR.**
- **PLAGIARISM IS A VERY SERIOUS ISSUE AND WILL BE DEALT WITH FIRMLY. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH THE UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS ON THIS TOPIC.**

