

# SOCIOLOGY OF CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Course number: SC022

Fall 2005 Wednesday 3:00-5:30

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Office Hours: after class and by appointment

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## **Course Description:**

Sociology is a systematic, disciplined way of looking at society and our role in it. Since this is a core course in sociology, in addition to learning about crime and punishment, a goal of the course is to teach the sociological perspective. An important sociological premise is that individual behavior must be considered in relation to one's social environment. In order to develop an understanding of crime and punishment, we must also examine society's underlying structures and how social forces, consciously or unconsciously, shape our lives.

Through the discipline of sociology we will explore the issues surrounding crime and punishment in American society. Deviance and criminal behavior threaten the social order of every society. As a result, each society develops theories to explain deviance and crime. This course will address perennial questions concerning crime and punishment. What are the causes of deviant and criminal behavior? To what extent is criminal behavior "determined" and to what extent is it a result of individual "free will"? What are the social, economic, political, cultural, educational and environmental implications in relation to individual choice to violate society's norms and laws? What forms of social control does society use to respond to deviance and crime? Why is there this response? What is justice and what is just in a society where opportunities vary by race, class, and gender? Is punishment just?

In the first half of the course we will concentrate on the historical explanations of the causes of crime, ranging from 18th century Europe to 20th century America. Often when discussing theories of criminality women are subsumed within these theories, completely ignored. In this course, we will also examine theories regarding female criminality. In the latter part of the course we will turn our attention to the role of punishment in our society. Again, we will review various forms of punishment and social control for both women and men from the 17th and 18th centuries to 20th century America. Through readings and lectures students are exposed to the changing philosophies, theories and concepts which have significantly influenced the thinking and decision making policies concerning crime and punishment.

It is critical that students understand the implications of cultural diversity for crime and punishment. This course considers the extent to which deviant and criminal behavior is determined by a person's *social, cultural, racial, gendered and economic* positioning in society and how this impacts on crime, punishment and justice.

Issues concerning crime and punishment are presented in the media on a daily basis. Politicians, trying to appease an alarmed public, suggest various strategies for crime control that often have more to do with getting re-elected than they do with addressing the *root-* causes of crime and offering viable solutions. Throughout the semester students should be developing an appreciation for the complex nature of crime issues that go beyond the media representations and the political responses. Students will be encouraged to develop a personal philosophy by positioning themselves in relation to the social issues raised and the perennial questions stated. Consistency of thought, and not one's personal philosophy, is the emphasis.

A key factor in appreciating the richness of sociology is for the student to understand how sociologists study and "make sense" of the social world. A section of the course is devoted specially to understanding methods and theories about crime. To gain a better understanding, two writing assignments require the student to conduct a sociological analysis of issues regarding crime and punishment.

### **Required Readings:**

Gilligan, James. Violence: Our Deadly Epidemic and its Causes

Kappeler, V. The Mythology of Crime and Criminal Justice

Kozol, Jonathan. Amazing Grace: The Lives of Children and the Conscience of a Nation

Mauer, M. and Chesney-Lind, M. Invisible Punishment

Paluch, J. A Life for a Life

Vold, George. Theoretical Criminology (4th Edition)

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

**Attendance and participation** Students are expected to attend all class meetings. Additionally, students are expected to have completed the readings prior to the class for which they have been assigned. Questions and comments about the readings, movies, or lectures are strongly encouraged. Student participation generally makes the time spent in class more dynamic and appealing for everyone. Note that the exams will cover not only what is contained in the assigned readings, but will also include what is presented in lectures and the formal class discussions. Be advised the lectures will often contain material different from the readings.

**Writing component:** There is a strong writing component to this course. Students will be required to write two papers. The first paper is a five-page paper regarding crime and punishment in general. The student is asked to present their **viewpoint/opinion**, experience [if applicable], and offer solution(s) about *any aspect* of both crime and punishment. This is not a research paper, and therefore, secondary sources are not required.

**Research papers:** The second paper, which is a **research paper**, and must be **10—12 pages** in length, is about the specific issues of crime and punishment respectively. The student is to research an aspect of crime or a criminal offense and analyze it. The analysis **must** include one of

the theories discussed in class, or a theory not discussed, but of interest to the student. For the punishment component, the student may write about any aspect of the criminal justice system and punishment that interests you. This may include topics not covered in class such as sentencing, courts, probation, parole, women offenders, female delinquents, the juvenile justice system, etc. Secondary sources must be used to support the argument(s) you are making in these papers. This is a research paper and requires analysis, not your opinion. I **do not** consider the Internet to be an academic source. Any student who relies solely on the Internet for research will receive a **failing grade**. You must use academic journals and books located in the library or available online, not obscure web sites. Below, I have listed some federal government Internet sources that provide accurate statistics/information regarding crime you may find helpful to supplement your academic resources.

<a href="http://www.opj.usdoj.gov/BJA">www.opj.usdoj.gov/BJA</a>	Bureau of Justice Assistance
<a href="http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs">www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs</a>	Bureau of Justice Statistics
<a href="http://www.usdoj.gov">www.usdoj.gov</a>	Department of Justice
<a href="http://www.jrainfo.org">www.jrainfo.org</a>	Justice Research and Statistical Association
<a href="http://www.ncjrs.org">www.ncjrs.org</a>	National Criminal Justice Reference Service
<a href="http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij">www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij</a>	National Institute of Justice
<a href="http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org">www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org</a>	Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

**NOTE:** Late papers will have half a letter grade deducted for each day they are late. On time means the papers must be turned in before you leave the class in which they are due. The research paper must include references, citations, and bibliography. Make sure you proofread! Correct **grammar and spelling** are just as important as content, and will be included as part of your grade for both papers. Lower grades will be given if these requirements are not complied with.

### **Grading:**

1st [opinion] paper	10%
Sociological Research paper	25%
Midterm Exam	30%
Final exam	<u>35%</u>
	100%

### **Make-ups:**

Make-up exams will be given **ONLY** if (1) there is an emergency, (2) you have official documentation, and (3) you notify me in advance. Note that make-up exams are generally more difficult than the regular exams. Please note: the final exam will not be given early for students leaving prior to the scheduled final exam.

**Course Outline:** [Please be advised, the following course schedule is subject to change]

## Part I. WHAT IS CRIME AND WHO ARE THE CRIMINALS?

**wk 1 Sept. 7**      *Introduction to the Sociology of Crime and Punishment*  
*Defining Crime/Crime Patterns*  
**Kozol: Amazing Grace**  
 Mauer: Chapter 15  
 Kappeler: Chapter 15

**wk 2 Sept. 14**      *Defining Crime/Crime Patterns (con't)*  
*Age, Race and Gender in Crime*  
 Kappeler: Chapter 1, 2 & 8  
 Reiman: Chapter 1 & 2 (*course packet*)

## Part II. THEORIES OF CRIME AND DEVIANCE

**wk 3 Sept. 21**      *Defining Crime/Crime Patterns (con't)*

### **Opinion Paper Due**

**wk 4 Sept. 28**      *Classical Theory*  
 Vold: Chapter 1 & 2  
*Positivism*  
 Vold: Chapter 3

**wk 5 Oct. 5**      *Anomie Theory*  
 Vold: Chapter 6 & 8  
*Labeling Theory*  
 Vold: pg. 209-222  
 Rosenhan: On Being Sane in Insane Places (*course packet*)

**wk 6 Oct. 12**      *Critical Theory/Conflict Theory*  
 Vold: pg. 227-236; 246-248; 248-253; 259-266  
 Kappeler: Chapter 7  
*Social Disorganization Theory*  
 Vold: Chapter 7  
 Mauer: Chapter 11

**wk 7 Oct. 19**      **Mid-term Exam**

## Part III PUNISHMENT AND SOCIAL CONTROL

- wk 8 Oct 26**      *The History of Correctional Thought and Practice*  
 Mauer: Chapter 1 & 4  
 Kappeler: Chapter 12 & 13  
 Foucault: Discipline and Punish (*course packet*)  
     The Body of the Condemned pg. 3 - 31  
     Panopticism pg. 195 – 228  
 Adams: (*course packet*)  
 Concepts of Punishment (Chapter 1)  
 Histories of Punishment (Chapter 2)  
**Conover: Newjack: Guarding Sing Sing**
- wk 9 Nov. 2**      *History continued. . .*
- wk 10 Nov. 9**      *What is the Role of Corrections? Identifying the Goals and Philosophy*  
 Punishment of Offenders  
 Models of Incarceration  
 Classification of Prisons  
 Corrections as a Business Opportunity  
**Gilligan: Violence**  
 Mauer: Chapter 6  
 (*Course packet*): The Pathology of Imprisonment  
     The Uses of Shame  
     Adams: Punishment by Custody (pg.99-110)
- wk 11 Nov. 16**      *Role of Corrections (con't)*  
**RESEARCH PAPER DUE**
- wk 12 Nov. 23**      *Thanksgiving Holidays*
- wk 13 Nov. 30**      *The Prison Experience*  
**Paluch: A Life for a Life**  
 Mauer: Chapter 7  
 Jacoby: (*course packet*)  
     Prisonization  
     The Pains of Imprisonment  
     The Inmate Social System
- wk 14 Dec. 7**      *The Prison Experience (con't)*

**Final Exam December 14, 2005, 3:00 – 5:30 PM**