

Sociology 423: The Sociology of Youth Crime Winter 2008

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908 Social Sciences
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Office Hours: Wednesdays, 1:00-3:00

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This course concerns the history, etiology, and control of youth crime (also known as juvenile delinquency) in Canada and around the world. We will address definitions of "juvenile delinquency" in historical, cultural, and legal context, the extent of youth crime, theories of juvenile delinquency, the system of youth justice, empirical investigations of gangs and of girls' delinquency, and finally, policies for the treatment and prevention of youth crime.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Readings

There are three books required for this course, all available in the University Bookstore:

Bell, Sandra. 2002 (**or most recent**). *Young Offenders and Juvenile Justice: A Century After the Fact*. Toronto: ITP Nelson ("SB" in the syllabus)

Tanner, Julian. 2001 (**or most recent**). *Teenage Troubles: Youth and Deviance in Canada*. Toronto: ITP Nelson ("JT" in the syllabus)

Please note that both Tanner and Bell have recently updated these monographs, and that this syllabus is provisional until I can confirm page numbers for new editions, if they are available.

Lundman, Richard. 2001. *Prevention and Control of Juvenile Delinquency*. Third Edition. New York: Oxford ("RL" in the syllabus)

Term Work

Term work will consist of a term paper proposal (15%) one midterm test (30%) an in-class presentation (15%), and a term paper (40%).

Your **Paper Proposal** is due by the beginning of class, **Thursday, February 14**. The proposal is for your term paper. In it, you will discuss the topic that you wish to address, why you wish to address it, and what contribution to the study of youth crime you believe your investigation will make. The proposal should not exceed 500 words, or about two typed, double-spaced pages. The proposal will be marked as per my standards for all papers (including the term paper), which are addressed in my course website.

The midterm test will take place in class on **Thursday, March 20**. It will comprise THREE essay questions. Not later than March 9 I will post to my website a study guide for it. The study guide will consist of questions from which the test items will be drawn.

Every student will give an oral presentation of **not more than 10 minutes** on his or her term paper topic. This exercise will constitute the **In-Class Presentation** portion of the course. I will discuss my expectations with respect to these in lecture as the dates for them draw nearer. **Note that your attendance at all presentations is expected.** Presentations are NOT group projects. At six presentations per lecture, we will require about seven lecture days for them. These will be the last 4 weeks of the semester. I will assign dates for these presentations at random, unless students wish to volunteer for early dates. **Presentations will begin on Tuesday, March 25 and run through the end of the semester.**

Your **Term Paper** is due on the last day of class, **Thursday, April 17**. The term paper must be an independently-produced manuscript. The term paper should not exceed ten typed, double-spaced pages, not counting tables, endnotes or the list of cited sources. The paper will be graded as per the standards that I discuss in lecture. These standards include considerations of argument and reasoning as well as organization, grammar, spelling and style. Please note that the mark you receive on your proposal or your presentation does not guarantee, in a good or a bad sense, the mark you receive on the term paper.

Grading Scale

Letter grades will be assigned based on the following scale:

A+	96-100
A	90-95
A-	85-89
B+	80-84
B	74-79
B-	70-73
C+	67-69
C	63-66
C-	60-62
D	50-59
F	0-49

Policy on Missed Term Work

I expect that every student will complete all work for course but recognise that emergencies might prevent this. My policy on missed work varies with the assignment:

1. If you miss a test due to *unforeseeable OR foreseeable* emergencies or other circumstances, you will write the midterm in a make-up session as per department practices.
2. Late written work will be assigned a penalty of five percent per day; in other words, a paper submitted two days late that would have received and 80 will instead receive a 70.
3. If you must be absent for your presentation date, I will give credit without penalty if and only if rescheduling is possible. If rescheduling is not possible, **which is likely**, I will have to assign a zero for that assignment.

Policy on Retrieving Assignments

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice having students retrieve assignments from a public place, eg, outside the 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.

Policy on Cheating

Please don't cheat. Consult pp. 49-51 of the University Calendar.

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Required Readings

Please note that I have not assigned dates to these topics since I cannot know precisely when I will arrive at a specific topic. I will endeavour to apprise students "where we are" and what topics will be addressed on the tests.

1. Introduction: Film, **Paradise Lost: The Child Murders of Robin Hood Hills.**

Readings: None

2. Historical Considerations: The Discovery of Adolescence

Readings: SB, ch. 1; JT, pp. 18-22

3. The Facts: The Incidence of Youth Crime and Public Perceptions of Youth Crime

Readings: SB, chs. 2 and 3, JT, pp. 4-18; "Free the West Memphis Three" website (www.wm3.org)

4. Contexts of Youth Crime: Family, Peers, Schools

Readings: SB, ch. 6

5. Gangs and Other Youth-Related Congregate Crime

Readings: JT, ch. 5

6. Girls' Delinquency

Readings: JT, ch. 6

7. The Juvenile Justice System in Canada I: The JDA, YOA and YCJA

Readings: SB, ch. 7

8. The Juvenile Justice System in Canada II: Policing

Readings: SB, ch. 8

9. The Juvenile Justice System in Canada III: Courts

Readings: SB, ch. 9

10. The Juvenile Justice System in Canada IV: Corrections

Readings: SB, ch. 10

11. Community-based Approaches

Readings: "'Community' Organizing," manuscript on course website.

12. What Works? Program Evaluations and Critiques

Readings: RL, chapters TBA, but you should endeavour to read the entire book.