

SOCIOLOGY OF DEVIANT BEHAVIOR 920: 304:01

*Professor Karen A. Cerulo
Department of Sociology*

*Class Time: Monday/Wednesday – 4th period 2:15-3:35PM
Class Location: Lor 020 – Douglass Campus*

Office: Davison Hall – Room 130
Soc. Dept. 848-932-7654 (to be used in emergencies only)
Email: cerulo@sociology.rutgers.edu
Office Hours: Mon./Wed.: 1:00-2:00PM ...and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What is deviance? Is it an objective quality or is it subjectively defined? Is deviant behavior “caused” or “constructed”? Does deviance serve a purpose for a society? Can any society eliminate deviance? During the semester, we will review a wide variety of theories that address these very questions. As part of that review, we will examine each theory in light of “real world” examples of deviance -- suicide, small group interactions, family violence, murder, race relations, etc.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to define deviance, summarize several theoretical perspectives that address deviance, use key theoretical concepts to explain deviant behavior, use critical thinking and writing to discuss deviant acts and their meanings, and discuss whether it is possible or desirable for societies to eliminate all deviant behavior.

BOOKS

1) The following book is required for this course:

Ruane, Janet M. and Karen A. Cerulo. 2015. *Second Thoughts: Sociology Challenges Conventional Wisdom*, 6th edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.

The book – in new and used forms – is available at the Barnes and Noble College Bookstore. You can also buy copies—hard copies or electronic versions—at Amazon.com

(https://www.amazon.com/Second-Thoughts-Sociology-Challenges-Conventional/dp/1452299498/ref=mt_paperback?encoding=UTF8&me=). Finally, I have put a copy on reserve at the Douglass Library. This can be used, *free of charge*, in the library.

2) Additional *required* readings will be posted on Sakai. To access them: a) Go to <https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal> and log in. b) Look at the bar on the left side of the screen and click on “Resources.” c) Look for the reading using the author’s last name. If I use an author more than once, I’ll have name *and* topic listed.¹

¹ **Note:** If you have trouble accessing the Sakai site, please contact them at sakai@rutgers.edu or 848.445.8721. Sakai Help Desk representatives are available **Monday through Friday 8:00AM-6:00PM.**

REQUIREMENTS

You will be graded according to a point system. The distribution is as follows:

To receive an A	-- accumulate 118-130 points
To receive a B+	-- accumulate 113-117 points
To receive a B	-- accumulate 104-112 points
To receive a C+	-- accumulate 99-103 points
To receive a C	-- accumulate 87- 99 points
To receive a D	-- accumulate 71- 86 points
To receive an F	-- accumulate 0- 70 points

How will you accumulate these points? Points are accumulated via course examinations. Specifically, this course includes two quizzes and two tests. (None are cumulative.) These exams will cover both the readings and the lectures. Each exam will be worth the following point values:

Quiz 1:	20 pts.
Test 1:	45 pts.
Test 2:	45 pts.
Quiz 2:	20 pts.

Several things to note:

- ✓ I reserve the right to add a limited number of points to a student's total in calculating her/his final grade. Such points might be added for consistent and meaningful class participation, or the dramatic improvement of quiz/test scores throughout the course. However, ***no "extra credit" assignments are provided in this course.***
- ✓ ***All readings should be completed prior to class.*** Most if not all classes will include discussion. Therefore, familiarity with the material is essential.
- ✓ Regarding tests -- Make-up exams will only be given in ***EMERGENCY*** cases. However, notification must occur ***PRIOR*** to the test date. If I do not hear from you, or receive a message via the sociology office prior to the scheduled test, no make-up will be permitted. Before sitting for a make-up, you must provide documentation for your absence. ***Take these rules seriously!*** ...And please be advised that make-up exams will never be the same test as the exam taken by the rest of the class.
- ✓ The Department of Sociology encourages the free exchange of ideas in a safe, supportive, and productive classroom environment. To facilitate such an environment, students and faculty must act with mutual respect and common courtesy. ***Behavior that distracts students and faculty is NOT acceptable. Such behavior includes cell phone use, texting, checking email, surfing the internet, listening to music, reading newspapers, sleeping, discourteous remarks, etc.***

Courteous and lawful expression of disagreement with the ideas of the instructor or fellow students is of course permitted. If a student engages in disruptive behavior, then your instructor, in compliance with the University Code of Student Conduct, is entitled to direct that student to leave class for the remainder of the class period. Serious verbal assaults, harassment, or defamation of the instructor or other students can lead to university disciplinary proceedings. Students are furthermore expected to comply with the University's policies on academic integrity, a statement of which may be found at the following url: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/files/documents/AI_Policy_9_01_2011.pdf

CLASS SCHEDULE

SEPT. 6: *Introduction to the Class.*

Assignment:

- ✓ If you have not yet secured the required texts for this course, do so immediately.
- ✓ Make sure you are registered on the Sakai site. If you cannot access the site, please contact Sakai personnel at sakai@rutgers.edu or **848.445.8721**. Sakai Help Desk representatives are available **Monday through Friday 8:00AM-6:00PM**.
- ✓ I urge you to **exchange phone numbers/email addresses with someone in this class today**. Provide yourself with a source for material missed if you must be absent from a class or late for a class.
- ✓ Consider organizing study groups that can meet prior to each exam.

SEPT. 11: *What Is Deviance?*

Today's lecture focuses on norms and the role they play in defining deviance.

Assignment:

- a) Ruane and Cerulo – “The Sociological Perspective,” pp. 1-8 in *Second Thoughts*
- b) Pfohl, Steven. 2009. “Images of Deviance.” Pp. 1-6 in *Images of Deviance and Social Control*. New York: McGraw Hill. **(This reading is on the Sakai site.)**

SEPT. 13 and 18: *Causal versus Interpretive Explanations of Deviance*

The first of these lectures highlights the formal differences between causal and interpretive approaches to deviance. (Read Thio for this lecture). In the second lecture, I focus on one specific form of deviance – suicide. I use suicide as a vehicle to illustrate concretely the very different ways in which causal versus interpretive theorists approach and study deviant behavior. (Read Jones for this lecture.)

Assignment:

- a) Thio, Alex. 2012. “What is Deviant Behavior,” Pp 3-15 in *Deviant Behavior*, 11th edit. New York: Pearson. **(This reading is on the Sakai Site.)**
- b) Jones, Robert Alun. 1986. “Suicide 1897.” Pp. 82-114 in *Emile Durkheim: An Introduction to Four Major Works*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. **(This reading is on the Sakai Site.)**

SEPT. 20: *Review for quiz*

SEPT. 25: *QUIZ 1*

CAUSAL THEORIES OF DEVIANCE

SEPT. 27: *Demons and Disease*

Today, we will examine and critique the earliest of the causal theories: *demonic theories* of deviance and *biological theories* of deviance. Both schools of thought locate the causes of deviance *within* the individual, a position that greatly influences strategies of social control.

(Note: A short film will be seen in today's class.)

Assignment:

- a) Pfohl, Stephen. 1994. "Discerning the Devil in Colonial America", Pp. 26-27 in *Images of Deviance and Social Control*. New York: McGraw Hill. **(This reading is on the Sakai Site.)**
- b) McCaghy, Capron, Jamieson and Carey. 2008. Pp. 27-34 in *Deviant Behavior: Crime, Conflict and Interest Groups*. (Boston: Pearson). **(This reading is on the Sakai Site.)**

OCT. 2: *Anomie Theory*

Today, we will examine the first of the socially oriented causal theories, *Anomie Theory*.

Assignment:

- a) Durkheim, Emile. 1951. "Anomic Suicide." From *Suicide*. New York: Free Press. **(This reading is on the Sakai Site.)**
- b) Merton, Robert K. 1938. "Social Structure and Anomie" *American Sociological Review* 3: 5: 672-682. **(This reading is on the Sakai Site.)**

OCT. 4 and 9: *Applying Anomie Theory*

We will view a film over the next two classes. In reflecting on the characters in the film, their small group relations, and their positions within the broader society, we will try to explain each character's deviance using concepts from Merton's Anomie theory.

Assignment:

- a) Be in class! A film will be shown and we will begin a class exercise. Test 1 will include an essay based on this exercise.

OCT. 11: Critiquing Anomie Theory I: Just What is Success?

This lecture explores cultural goals and means as they apply to physical appearance. In so doing, we question Merton's narrow definition of success goals, and the consequences of that narrowness.

(Note: Short films will be seen in today's class.)

Assignment:

- a) Ruane and Cerulo – “Beauty Is Only Skin Deep,” pp. 85-94 in *Second Thoughts*.
- b) Miller, D. P. et al. 2013. “Are Medical Students Aware of Their Obesity Bias?” *Academic Medicine* 88 (7): 1-5. **(This reading is on the Sakai Site.)**
- c) Fowler, L. A. and A. R. Moore. 2012. "Breast implants for graduation: A sociological examination of daughter and mother narratives." *Sociology* 2(1): 109-115. **(This reading is on the Sakai Site.)**

OCT. 16: Critiquing Anomie Theory II: When Conformity Threatens Social Stability

This lecture explores cultural goals and means as they apply to the family and the role of violence and control within it. Family violence becomes a case study that allows us to further explore the notion that conformity can sometimes generate socially destructive behaviors.

(Note: Short films will be seen in today's class.)

Assignment:

- a) Ruane and Cerulo – “The Nuclear Family is the Backbone of American Society,” pp. 183-190 in *Second Thoughts*.
- b) Ruane and Cerulo – “Children Are Our Most Precious Commodity,” pp. 29-42 in *Second Thoughts*.
- c) Devries, K. M. et al. 2013. “The Global Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence Against Women.” *Science* (June 20) **(This reading is on the Sakai Site.)**

OCT. 18: The Sociocultural Reply: Can Goals Really Be Universal?

In today's class, we will examine Socio-cultural theories of deviance. These ideas developed as a direct response to Anomie theory. While causal in nature, these theories bridge the way to the social constructionist approach to deviance.

(Note: Short films will be seen in today's class.)

Assignment:

- a) Ruane and Cerulo – “Honesty is the Best Policy” pp. 173-180 in *Second Thoughts*.
- b) Sutherland, Edwin H and Donald R. Cressey. 1978. “The Theory Differential Association.” Pp. 77-83 in *Criminology*. New York: Harper and Row. **(This reading is on the Sakai Site.)**

OCT. 23: Review for the

OCT. 25: *TEST 1*

INTERPRETIVE THEORIES OF DEVIANCE

OCT. 30: Today we examine interpretive theorists' ideas concerning the nature of reality.

Assignment:

Review Thio, Alex. 2007. "What is Deviant Behavior," Pp 3-15 in *Deviant Behavior*, 9th edit. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. **(This reading is on the Sakai Site.)**

Thomas, W. I. 1923. "The Definition of the Situation" Pp. 42-44 and 49-50 in *Unadjusted Girl*. New York: Little, brown and Company. **(This reading is on the Sakai Site.)**

NOV. 1: Today, we visit the topic of murder to illustrate interpretive theorists' ideas on the social construction of reality.

(Note: *Short films will be seen in today's class.*)

Assignment:

a) Ruane and Cerulo – "Violence is on the Rise in the United States – No One is Safe," pp. 141-148 in *Second Thoughts*.

NOV. 6: Today, we will explore the role of the actor in the construction of deviance.

Assignment:

a) Becker, Howard. 1963. "Deviant Careers." Pp. 25-39 in *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press. **(This reading is on the Sakai Site.)**

b) Sykes, Gresham M. and Matza, David. 1957. "Techniques of Neutralization: A Theory of Delinquency" *American Sociological Review* 22: 6: 664-670. **(This reading is on the Sakai Site.)**

c) Shigihara, Amanda M. 2013. "It's Only Stealing a Little a Lot: Techniques of Neutralization for Theft Among Restaurant Workers." *Deviant Behavior* 34(6): 494-512. **(This reading is on the Sakai Site.)**

NOV. 8: Today, we take a bit of a diversion and consider the notion of actors in broader detail. Specifically – who is a social actor?

(**Note:** *A short film will be seen in this class.*)

Assignment:

- a) Cerulo, Karen A. “Social Interaction - Do Non-humans Count?” *Sociology Compass* 5: 9: 775-791 (**This reading is on the Sakai Site.**)

NOV. 13, 15, 20: In the next three lectures, we will explore the role of the audience in the construction of deviance. In the first lecture, we’ll look at macro and micro trend in audience labeling. (Read Ruane and Cerulo here.) In the second and third lectures, we will pay special attention to the medicalization of deviance. When and why are social behaviors defined as medical problems? When and why are medical problems defined as social issues? (Read Rafalovich here.)

(**Note:** *A short film will be seen in the Nov. 7th and Nov. 12th classes.*)

Assignment:

- a) Ruane and Cerulo – “What Is In A Name?”, pp. 79-88 in *Second Thoughts*.
- b) Rafalovich, A. (2013), Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder as the Medicalization of Childhood: Challenges from and for Sociology. *Sociology Compass* 7: 343–354 (**This reading is on the Sakai Site.**)

We will also review for the test in the 11/14 class.

No class on November 22th – Happy Thanksgiving

NOV. 27: TEST 2

DOES DEVIANCE SERVE A PURPOSE?

NOV. 29: In this class, we will review theorists who contend that deviance serves a purpose for the broader society.

Assignment:

- a) Durkheim, Emile. 1938. “The Normal and the Pathological.” Pp. 65-73 in *The Rules of Sociological Method*. New York: Free Press. (**This reading is on the Sakai Site.**)
- b) Dentler, Robert A. and Erikson, Kai T. 1959. “The Function of Deviance in Groups” *Social Problems* 7: 2: 98-102. (**This reading is on the Sakai Site.**)

DEC. 4 and DEC. 6: In these classes, we will review theorists who contend that deviance serves a purpose for the society's powerful.

(**Note:** *A short film will be shown in each class.*)

Assignment:

- a) Reiman, J. H and P. Leighton. 2012. "A Crime By Any Other Name." Pp. 76-86 in *The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison: Ideology, Class and Criminal Justice*, 10th edition. New York: Pearson (**This reading is on the Sakai Site.**)
- b) Ruane and Cerulo – "You've Come A Long Way, Baby," pp. 111-124 in *Second Thoughts*.
- c) Ruane and Cerulo – "America Is the Land of Equal Opportunity," pp. 125-138 in *Second Thoughts*.

DEC. 11: All semester, we have explored explanations for deviance. In our last class, we will ask the question: Why do people conform?

Assignment:

- a) Hirschi, Travis. 1969. "A Control Theory of Delinquency." Pp. 16-35 in *Causes of Delinquency*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (**This reading is on the Sakai Site.**)

Note: *In this class, we will have a short review for the quiz.*

DEC. 13: QUIZ 2