

# **SOCIOLOGY 576(01) Crime and Society**

## **Course Syllabus**

Fall 2013  
Time: Thurs 9:30 a.m.-12:10 p.m.  
Location: Davison Hall, #128

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Davison Hall, Room 38, 848-932-7868

### **Purpose**

This course situates crime in relation to a wide variety of social forces and institutions including neighborhoods, schools, the media, gender, and criminal justice. Drawing upon criminological theory, students will deepen their understanding of how some of these institutions and forces contribute to crime. Conversely, we will also examine crime and reactions to crime as part of the fabric of social and institutional life within contemporary American society. In addition to these substantive considerations, we will also critically examine the links between theories and research designs and methods.

### **Learning Goals**

- Acquire a broad understanding of the theoretical and empirical approaches taken to understand the relationship between criminal behavior and social, cultural, and institutional forces.
- Learn about the current state of knowledge regarding social variation crime and reactions to crime and the social consequences of this variation.
- Critically analyze the conceptual and empirical underpinning of research on the above topics.
- Identify significant new research questions related to the study of crime in society.

Several methods will be used in this class to measure achievement of these objectives:

- Participating in in-depth weekly discussions of assigned readings
- Helping lead the discussion for a seminar
- Writing a synthetical, critical, and reflective responses assigned readings
- Writing a final research paper.

### **Required Readings**

Two books are required in this course. They should be available at the Douglass College Book Store and on-line.

Jody Miller. 2008. *Getting Played: African American Girls, Urban Inequality, and Gendered Violence*. New York University Press.

Clear, Todd. 2007. *Imprisoning Communities. How Incarceration makes Disadvantaged Neighborhoods Worse*. Oxford University Press.

Other readings, unless otherwise noted, will be available via Sakai (under Resources). When an abundance of reading material is assigned, I will try to convey to you which readings or portions of readings are most important. I will provide discussion questions in advance of the sessions on particular readings. My intent is not to overwhelm you with readings but rather to provide many resources for your papers and to supply a variety of perspectives to inform and enrich responses to discussion questions.

### **Course Format**

This course will be taught in a seminar format. As a seminar, the course emphasizes discussion and writing. To encourage independence of thought, students are required to be lead discussant for one class session and to determine the specific focus of their term paper. I will also provide short lectures on the material as necessary.

### **Course Grade**

Your grade for the course will be apportioned (100 point scale) in the following manner:

Participation:	30%
Commentaries:	30%
Final Paper:	40%

*Participation.* Thirty percent of your grade will be based on the quantity and quality of your classroom participation. Absences from class without a valid excuse count against your participation grade. I encourage students who have not done the applicable reading to let others respond to questions first. This helps keep class discussion pertinent and flowing. Classroom participation that detracts from focused, intellectual discourse and an open, congenial classroom atmosphere will not improve your grade. You will sign up for or be assigned a session in which you will be that session's designated "go-to" person (i.e. lead discussant), especially for the tougher questions. You should be prepared to both answer and ask discussion questions on that day. If you have a phobia about talking in class, please see me. We may agree upon a way to make up some of the lost points such as submitting additional commentaries (see below) or written responses to discussion questions. All students will be asked to give a short presentation about their final papers on the last day of class (December 5), which will count toward your participation grade.

The Rutgers Sociology Department strives to create an environment that supports and affirms diversity in all manifestations, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, social class, disability status, region/country of origin, and political orientation. We also celebrate diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives among our faculty and students and seek to create an atmosphere of respect and mutual dialogue. We have zero tolerance for violations of these principles and have instituted clear and respectful procedures for responding to such grievances

### **Writing Assignments**

The course has one major writing assignment and several small ones. The small assignments are an attempt to advance your thought process and enhance classroom discussion rather than ends in themselves. Beginning on the first day of class, I ask that you, prior to class, record and submit via Sakai some reflections on the reading for that week in the equivalent of two to three double spaced pages. You may submit up to six commentaries, but your grade will be based only on the top three (10 points each). Feel free to focus your commentaries on some of the discussion questions that I distribute. Whereas my grading criteria for a typical paper include organization and style, I am interested only in the depth of coherent and rational thought that you are giving to the readings, both individually and comparatively. I personally do some of my clearest and deepest thinking in e-mails to friends and colleagues, and ethnographers often keep journals. Such styles of writing are perfectly acceptable and you should choose whatever format is most comfortable for you. In these papers, I especially encourage you to ask critical questions of the readings and to integrate prior readings, considering, as Paul Mclean puts it, “how one author might interrogate another.” You may also use these commentaries as a vehicle to test out, extend, and refine ideas for your final paper. Just be careful *not to focus your writing too narrowly*; it should be clear from the piece that you have done most of the reading for that week. References to recommended readings are also well received.

You are also required to write a final paper on a topic directly relevant to the course, 10-15 double-spaced pages long, which requires research and critical analysis. All papers will be judged on the depth and breadth of analysis, the quality of the writing, the sufficient and proper integration of course materials, and additional considerations specified later. Papers should reflect an understanding of both course readings and issues and topics raised in class discussion. Please discuss your choice of paper topic with me by e-mail or in person by November 28<sup>th</sup>. You are welcome to request feedback on paper outlines or summaries. However, I will not read and comment on rough drafts of papers.

Please submit your papers through Sakai. It saves paper, and I hand-write far fewer comments because of my poor handwriting. It is your responsibility to make sure that your papers transmit properly, on time, and without viruses or macros.

Clear violations of academic integrity will be forwarded to the Graduate Chair (or to the appropriate Dean if you are an undergraduate). For more information on the University's

uniform policies and procedures concerning academic integrity violations please see <http://teachx.rutgers.edu/integrity/policy.html>.

Late assignments will be deducted an additional half grade (a six-point penalty on a 100 point scale) for each additional day late beginning *immediately* after the time the assignment is due. Whenever possible, no-penalty extensions should be requested and approved in advance. If an extended illness or family situation prevents you from attending class and completing your assignments on time, you must receive a new paper due date, so your paper can be evaluated properly and fairly.

### **Communications**

*E-mails.* Although I encourage e-mail communication, please do not expect an immediate reply. Please first ask a classmate for information that I provided in a class that you missed.

*List-serve.* A course list-serve will automatically send messages to your official e-mail address on record with Rutgers University. The main purpose of the list-serve is for me to send you discussion questions as well as updates and reminders. Occasionally I may post items to the list-serve that are relevant to a pending assignment. It is your responsibility to check your e-mail regularly. As a rule, I plan to always give at least 2 days notice for any minor changes I make to the readings, papers etc., and to also make any important announcements in class. To contact the whole class, send a message to [crimeandsociety\\_fa13@rams.rutgers.edu](mailto:crimeandsociety_fa13@rams.rutgers.edu).

### **Discussion Topics and Required Readings**

#### **Week 1. Media Portrayals of Crime and Criminals (October 24).**

Beckett, Kathryn and Sasson, Theodore. 2000. "Crime in the News" from *The Politics of Injustice*

Hirschfield, Paul, & Simon, Daniella (2010). Legitimizing police violence: Newspaper narratives of deadly force. *Theoretical Criminology*, 14(2), 155-182.

Cavender, Gray, Kishonna Gray and Kenneth W. Miller. 2010 "Enron's perp walk: Status degradation ceremonies as narrative" *Crime Media Culture*, 6(3): 251-266.

Recommend Reading:

Entmann, Robert and Andrew Rojecki. 2001. "Violence, Stereotypes and African-Americans in the News," from *The Black Image in the White Mind*.

Gilliam, Franklin & Iyengar, Shanto. 2000. "Prime Suspects: The Influence of Local Television News on the Viewing Public" *American Journal of Political Science*, 44(3): 560-573.

### **Week 2. Crime and Fear in Neighborhoods (October 31)**

Sampson, Robert & Jeffrey Morenoff, and Thomas Gannon-Rowley. 2002. "Assessing 'Neighborhood Effects': Social Processes and New Directions in Research" *Annual Review of Sociology*. 28: 443-478.

Sharkey, Patrick and Robert J. Sampson 2010. "Destination Effects: Residential Mobility and Trajectories of Adolescent Violence in a Stratified Metropolis" *Criminology* 48(3), 639–681.

Quillian, Lincoln, and Devah Pager. 2010. Estimating Risk: Stereotype Amplification and the Perceived Risk of Criminal Victimization." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 73(1):79-104

Weitzer, Ronald and Charis Kubrin. 2004. "Breaking News: How Local TV News and Real World Conditions Affect Fear of Crime" *Justice Quarterly* 21(3), 497-520.

Recommend Reading:

Quillian, Lincoln, and Devah Pager (2001), "Black Neighbors, Higher Crime? The Role of Racial Stereotypes in Evaluations of Neighborhood Crime", *American Journal of Sociology*, 107: 717-767.

### **Week 3. Schools and Crime. (November 7)**

Brunson, Rod K. and Jody Miller. 2009. "Schools, Neighborhoods, and Adolescent Conflict: A Situational Examination of Reciprocal Dynamics." *Justice Quarterly*. 26: 183-210.

Gottfredson, G. D., Gottfredson, D. C., Payne, A. A., & Gottfredson, N. C. (2005). "School Climate Predictors of School Disorder: Results from a National Study Of Delinquency Prevention in Schools." *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 42: 412-444.

Crosnoe, Robert (2006). "The Connection between Academic Failure and Adolescent Drinking in Secondary School." *Sociology of Education*, 79: 44-60.

### **Week 4. Girls and Violence (November 14)**

Miller, Jody. *Getting Played: African American Girls, Urban Inequality, and Gendered Violence*. 2008. New York University Press.

We will not hold class on November 21<sup>st</sup> because of the annual American Society of Criminology meetings. Note that the reading load is heavier than usual, so start early!

**Week 6. Policing, Punishment, and Crime: Effects on Individuals (November 28)**

Gau, Jacinta M. and Brunson, Rod K.(2009) 'Procedural Justice and Order Maintenance Policing: A Study of Inner-City Young Men's Perceptions of Police Legitimacy', *Justice Quarterly*.

Tyler, Tom, "Procedural Justice and the Courts. " *Court Review*, Volume 44.

Dylan B. Jackson Carter Hay 2013 The Conditional Impact of Official Labeling on Subsequent Delinquency: Considering the Attenuating Role of Family Attachment . *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 50, 300-322.

Hirschfield, Paul. (2008). The declining significance of delinquent labels in disadvantaged urban communities. *Sociological Forum*, 23(3), 575-601.

Goffman, Alice (2009). On the run: Wanted men in a Philadelphia Ghetto. *American Sociological Review*, 74(3), 339-357

Recommended Reading:

Lopes, Giza Marvin D. Krohn Alan J. Lizotte Nicole M. Schmidt Bob Edward Vásquez Jón Gunnar Bernburg. 2011. "Labeling and Cumulative Disadvantage: The Impact of Formal Police Intervention on Life Chances and Crime During Emerging Adulthood." *Crime & Delinquency* 58(3): 456-488.

Kirk, David S. Mauri Matsuda 2011 Legal cynicism, collective efficacy, and the ecology of arrest. *Criminology* 49(2): 443

Kirk, David S. and Andrew V. Papachristos. Cultural Mechanisms and the Persistence of Neighborhood Violence *American Journal of Sociology* 116(4): 1190-1233.

**Week 7. Punishment and Crime: Effects on Communities (December 5)**

Clear, Todd. *Imprisoning Communities. How Incarceration makes Disadvantaged Neighborhoods Worse*. Oxford University Press

Students will also give brief presentations on their final papers on this day.

Recommended Reading: The Kirk articles from Week 6.

Final Papers will be due on Tuesday, Dec. 10.