

Fall 2015

SOC 4954

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Fall 2015 UNO
MH 320 2-2:50 MWF

**Juvenile Delinquency
SOC 4954**

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Course Overview:

This course will provide an overview of juvenile delinquency in the United States from a sociological perspective. We will aim to think broadly about delinquency as a problem situated within different institutional contexts, including not just the juvenile justice system, but also the economy, education, mass media, and political policy. Overall, the course will offer you a critical sociological understanding of what delinquency is, the extent of the problem, and sociological explanations for why it happens. It will also help you begin to think about solutions to the problem on a structural level, always understanding the linkages between social institutions, culture, and social problems.

On the whole, Unit I is about learning about the social and historical processes through which a problem like juvenile delinquency has come to be defined, explained, and addressed, largely within the juvenile justice system itself. We begin in Unit I by grounding our understanding of the problem as socially constructed but still urgently ‘real.’ We will do this, in part, by situating delinquency in historical and social context as a way to critically explore dominant assumptions about childhood, deviance, and the relationship between these and race, class, and gender. Our goal will be to develop a critical, historically informed, sociological analysis of the U.S. juvenile justice system – one that considers how this social institution operates within an unequal society.

Unit II is intended to provide you with tools for ‘thinking structurally’ about juvenile delinquency. We will begin the unit by reviewing basic sociological frameworks on the issue and examining how these relate to political perspectives. From here, we will delve into an in-depth sociological study on education and juvenile delinquency. As we read this text – *Bad Boys* – our approach will emphasize the larger social and cultural forces that shape the issue of juvenile delinquency, in a way that will allow you to explore solutions that emphasize these causal factors. Overall, the course is set up so that you can leave with your own set of tools for reflecting upon, and ultimately addressing, this pressing social issue in a way that draws from sociological thought.

Learning Objectives:

After successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Offer definitions and explanations of core terms such as: juvenile delinquency, deviance, and childhood/adolescence, including an understanding of how these have been shaped by historical and social processes.
- 2) Offer structural, sociologically grounded understandings of the problem of delinquency and understand how these contrast to other disciplinary perspectives.

- 3) Elaborate on how the study of childhood/adolescence is situated within the study of delinquency and articulate how these perspectives inform our understanding of the problem.
- 4) Articulate how delinquency is related to structural, institutional forces such as the economy, education, public policy/government, the family, and the legal system and offer critical analyses of the role these institutions play in the problem of delinquency.
- 5) Understand the social and cultural processes that position certain kinds of 'subjects' as delinquent in our society, particularly in terms of race, class, gender, and sexuality, and how these social constructions shape the inequalities of the U.S. justice system in real, concrete ways.
- 6) Grasp the connection between the diagnosis of a social problem like juvenile delinquency and sound solutions, particularly diagnoses that draw from systematic social research and the sociological perspective.
- 7) Reflect on how sociological thought and data might challenge or give voice to your own 'common sense' theories and assumptions about the issue of juvenile delinquency.
- 8) Draw from your growing sociological perspective to develop your own critical political position and successfully analyze the institutional politics of juvenile delinquency.

Course Format:

This course will primarily be structured around daily open lectures intended to clarify and contextualize the assigned reading materials and topics for the day. By 'open lectures,' I refer to our time in the classroom as an open, generative conversation about the course material. I invite questions, discussion, and comments that are grounded in the readings and ideas and help us move the conversation forward in a way that broadens everyone's understanding of the key course themes. During lectures I invite people to ask questions, especially if you find the material particularly unclear or challenging.

Required Texts and Readings:

- 1) Shelden, Randall G. 2012. *Delinquency and Juvenile Justice in American Society*, 2nd Edition. Waveland Press, Long Grove, IL. ISBN # 9781577667070
- 2) Ferguson, Ann Arnett. 2001. *Bad Boys: Public Schools in the Making of Black Masculinity*. The University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, Michigan. ISBN # 978-0472088492
- 3) Supplemental required readings can be found on Moodle and are noted on the syllabus.

Your success in the class depends on you completing the required readings. Therefore, you must do the readings! Failing to purchase the books will get you into trouble. Luckily our textbook (Shelden) is available for digital rental at a relatively cheap price. It is also on reserve at the library. Additionally, you are responsible for accessing all supplemental readings on Moodle and reading these either digitally or printing hard copies if you find the latter easier.

I will provide study guides for all assigned course readings (starting in week 2). These are not a required assignment, but will help you read for key themes and arguments that you will need to learn from the readings and lectures in order to succeed on the exams. I highly recommend that you use these questions to establish strong reading comprehension. My assumption is that if you can answer these questions, then you have the level of understanding necessary to make an A on

course requirements (exams and final project). However, be aware that the study guides are not intended to be totally comprehensive – your success in the class depends on your holistic understanding of the material and your ability to synthesize ideas and analyze key concepts as you draw from your independent critical thinking skills.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Grading Scale: You will be graded on a 10-point scale.

A 90-100% B 80-89% C 70-79% D 60-69% F Everything below 60%

There are a total of **400 possible points** for this course. The breakdown of assignments and grade points is below. Due dates and exam dates are noted on the course schedule and are subject to change based on the movement of our class.

1) Moodle Reading Quizzes 50 points total (12.5%)

As a system to help you keep up with scheduled readings, we will have regular reading quizzes administered on Moodle. These quizzes will draw from the study guides and will test you using a multiple choice format. The quizzes are intended to be simple reading comprehension assessments and therefore should be completed once you have finished the assigned readings.

There will be, on average, two reading questions per week (**25 total, 2 pts each**) and these will be posted in the weekly module on Moodle. You will have until midnight on Friday of each week to complete the reading questions for the previous week. After this time the quiz will close and you will not have an opportunity to make up the quiz. Keep in mind that the purpose of the reading quizzes is to provide a structure to help you keep up with the assigned readings.

2) In-Class Exercises 50 points total (12.5%)

Periodically throughout the semester, we will have in-class activities, discussion exercises, etc., that are central to the learning process. These are noted on the course schedule and are worth different point values, depending on the exercise. The individual point values are noted on the schedule.

In-Class exercises will be graded on a credit/no credit basis and scores will be recorded in the Moodle gradebook. I will take into consideration high-quality in-class work and strong participation when curving borderline grades.

If you miss an in-class exercise due to an absence you may make these up within one week of the original exercise date. You can find the instructions for all in-class exercise in the weekly Moodle modules. It is your responsibility to keep up with the in-class exercise dates as outlined on the course schedule and ensure that you have completed all course requirements.

3) Exam I 70 points (17.5%)

Exam I will cover Unit I and consist of multiple choice, true/false, and fill-in-the-blank questions. You will need to bring a scantron sheet and a number 2 pencil for the exam. Scantrons can be bought at the bookstore.

4) Midterm Take-Home Essay 60 points (15%)

The midterm take-home essay will be a 3-4 page essay (750-1000 words) that requires you to offer a sociological, historically informed analysis of the contemporary juvenile justice system drawing from the debates and lessons we explore in Unit I. I will distribute the essay questions one week before the essays are due and you will be able to choose which question you answer.

5) Exam II 70 points (17.5%)

Exam II will be an in-class exam covering material from Unit II, and will consist of multiple choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, and matching questions. You will need to bring a scantron sheet and a number 2 pencil for exam. Scantrons can be bought at the bookstore.

6) Final Project – Poster Session Workshop and Write-Up 100 points (25%)

The final project will involve two parts: a poster session to be held during the last week of class (50 points), and a corresponding reflective essay (50 points) that you will submit during final exam week. The final projects can be collaborative or individual; however, each student is required to submit his/her individual write-up.

A preliminary full description of the final project will be distributed on the first day of class and is available on Moodle under “Juvenile Delinquency Home.” We will also take steps toward this project in class as we enter Unit II (after the midterm break). As we move toward the due date, it is likely that the instructions will be updated based on your questions and necessary clarifications.

Posting of Grades

I will attempt to grade all assignments within one week after they are submitted. Students may view a list of their grades by clicking the Grades tab on Moodle.

Attendance Policy:

I will take attendance at the start of class each day. Attendance is required. If you cannot attend class for some reason, whether excused or unexcused, you are still responsible for understanding the material covered in class that day. Lectures are very important and cover material beyond what you will find in your reading. If you miss class, please make sure that you review what you missed by contacting another student and/or reviewing any class notes or PP slides posted to Moodle.

YOU ARE ALLOWED FOUR FREE ABSENCES FOR THE ENTIRE SEMESTER

WITHOUT PENALTY. I will begin taking attendance on Monday, August 24. **After that date, a FIVE point penalty for each additional unexcused absence will be deducted from your point total at the end of the semester before I average your final grade.** For example, if you end the semester with a raw score of 320/400, that's a B (80%). If you missed six classes, four of those would receive no penalty. However, the other two unexcused absences would result in 10 points being deducted from your score total before I average your final course grade. In this particular example, you would end up with a C for your final course grade instead of a B ($310/400 = 78\%$).

If you miss class for a medical reason or have another valid excuse, please provide appropriate documentation so I can consider your case. If a student receives more than six absences, whether excused or unexcused, that student is strongly encouraged to drop the class. If you have serious medical or other problems that result in your missing such a large amount of classes, please come see me about your situation. At the same time, unless you are concerned about your attendance rate, it is not necessary to email me every time you miss class.

Make-Up Exams:

Make-up exams are only given with prior permission and with a valid medical (or comparable) excuse. All make-up exams must be taken within one week of the original exam date and will be administered in my office. **If you do not make up an exam within one week of the original exam date you will receive a score of zero.**

Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is fundamental to the process of learning and evaluating academic performance. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, turning in 'recycled' papers, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. For a full discussion of academic integrity, see the UNO Student Handbook:

<http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu/studentpolicies/policymanual/academicdishonesty.cfm>

Students are encouraged to work with others to learn the material, but all work that is graded (with the exception of any pre-determined group activities) is expected to be your own work. Direct all questions regarding proper citation practices and concerns about plagiarism to me.

Courses of Action for Violations of Academic Integrity: Academic dishonesty/plagiarism will not be tolerated. If I have any question about the integrity of your work, I will contact you to request an immediate face-to-face discussion. During our meeting, I will discuss the incident with you and decide on the proper course of action. This next step can include:

- a) Offering another chance to complete and resubmit the assignment, if the plagiarism case appears to be unintentional (or could be argued as such).
- b) Assigning a score of 'zero' and reporting the incident to administration.

If I contact you to meet about a possible violation and don't hear back from you within a week, you will receive a score of 'zero' on the assignment and I will report the incident to administration.

Students with Disabilities:

Students with documented disabilities can seek a variety of accommodations. If you have a disability, you must register with the Office for Disability Services and they will work with you to determine appropriate accommodations. Further information is available at:

http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu/studentpolicies/policymanual/disabilities_policy.cfm

If you need accommodations from me please discuss these at the beginning of the semester and include appropriate documentation from Disability Services.

General Classroom Expectations:

You are only in this classroom for 50 minutes at a time. I ask for your focused attention during this short period. Come prepared to listen, take notes, ask questions, and learn something. I will put forth my very best effort to ensure that you learn the material, and I have the highest expectations for you.

1. Please be on time to class. Put cell phones away, ringers off, as soon as you arrive. Also remove any other unnecessary devices/materials from your desk.
2. Refrain from non-classroom-related activities that impede your learning process or the ability of others around you to learn. The college classroom is not a space for leisure activities, and I promise you will enjoy your time here more thoroughly if you make the effort to focus.
3. Respect others in the classroom. We don't always agree with one another, but in order for us to have a productive learning environment, everyone needs to feel free to express his/her own viewpoints. At the same time, I urge everyone to take a humble approach to the learning process. The purpose of your education is not simply to recount your opinion in a classroom setting. Instead, work on engaging with the ideas we are learning, and using them to inform your arguments and position.

Communication and Moodle Access:

I will periodically communicate with you through your UNO email accounts. Please ensure that you regularly access your UNO email or forward your UNO mail to the address you most commonly use.

I expect you to regularly (around once a week) access the course on Moodle. IF YOU HAVE TROUBLE ACCESSING MOODLE PLEASE BE SURE TO RAISE YOUR QUESTIONS before it is too late.

Our Moodle page is organized in a weekly module format that mirrors the course schedule. Each weekly module will contain the study guide for that week, the reading quiz, and any supplemental readings that are not in your textbooks. I will also post any materials I use in lecture following each class period (e.g., PowerPoints, lecture note outlines, or audiovisual materials) all of which you can use as you study for your exams. Please note that these materials are not a substitute for good note-taking or class attendance.

You must follow the course schedule and ensure that you read the assigned materials in the textbook (which will not be noted on the Moodle site).

Course Schedule and Readings:

On the course schedule below the readings are noted under the date/theme for each class period. Please do your readings BEFORE coming to class so that you are prepared for lecture. Class periods designated for participation exercises are marked with an asterisk (*).

Note that this schedule is subject to change. If there are any changes these will be announced in class as well as in an email sent to your UNO email account. You can always find the most recently updated version of the syllabus on Moodle.

UNIT I A Sociological Perspective on the Juvenile Justice System

Week 1 Introductions

Wednesday, August 19: Introduction to the Class

Friday, August 21: Finish Introductions and Explore Class Assumptions

Week 2 The Framework and Early History of Juvenile Justice

Monday, August 24: Introducing the Framework

Read: a) Shelden, Introduction, pp. 1-7 only

b) “‘Burning Down the House’ Makes the Case Against Juvenile Incarceration” (on Moodle – read article *and* browse comments section; optional listen to radio story)

Wednesday, August 26: Childhood and The House of Refuge Movement

Read: Shelden pp. 21-43

Friday, August 28: The 19th Century and Progressive-Era Shifts

Read: Shelden pp. 43-49

Week 3 The Progressive Era

Monday, August 31: The Progressive Era

Read: Odem, “The ‘Delinquent Girl’ and Progressive Reform”

Wednesday, September 2: Progressive-Era Inequalities

Read: Miroslava Chavez-Garcia, “Intelligence Testing at Whittier School”

Friday, September 4: Into the 20th Century

Read: Shelden, pp. 49-51

Week 4 Historical Overview (Tuesday, September 8: Last Day to Drop w/out a ‘W’)

Monday, September 7: NO CLASS – Labor Day Holiday

***Wednesday, September 9: Begin Juvenile Justice System Timeline Exercise (15 points)**

Read/Listen: Arguments for *In re Gault* http://www.oyez.org/cases/1960-1969/1966/1966_116

Friday, September 11: Timeline Exercise Continued

Week 5 Delinquency Today

Monday, September 14: Delinquency Today (stats)

Read: Shelden, pp. 59-74 and pp. 80-83

Wednesday, September 16: Delinquency Today (behaviors)

Read: Shelden, pp. 89-100 (stop at “The Demographic Fallacy”) AND pp. 110-116

Friday, September 18: Juvenile Rights (Procedural)

Read: Shelden, pp. 353-358

Week 6 Today's Juvenile Justice System

Monday, September 21: The Courts (Procedures and Roles)

Read: Sheldon, pp. 364-379

Wednesday, September 23: The Courts (Issues and Inequalities)

Read: Sheldon, pp. 379-389

Friday, September 25: Punishment and the 8th Amendment Protection

Read: Sheldon, pp. 399-314 AND pp. 358-364

Week 7 Punishment or Rehabilitation?

Monday, September 28: The Culture of Punishment

Read: Sheldon, pp. 201-226

Wednesday, September 30: Attempts at Reform

***Friday, October 2: The Big Debates (In-Class Exercise 10 Points)**

Week 8 Exam I

Monday, October 5: Exam I Review and Distribute Take-Home Essay Prompt

Wednesday, October 7: Exam I

Friday, October 9: Review Exam I Results/Discuss Take-Home Essays

Week 9 In-Class Documentary

Monday, October 12: In-Class Documentary on Juvenile Incarceration

Take-Home Essay Due on Monday, October 12

Wednesday, October 14: In-Class Documentary on Juvenile Incarceration

Friday, October 16: No Class – Fall Break

Unit II Theories and Solutions from a Sociological Perspective

Week 10 Introduction to Unit II

Monday, October 19: Introduction to Unit II/Return Take-Home Essays

Wednesday, October 21: The Politics of Theory

Read: Sheldon, pp. 9-15

Friday, October 23: Critical/Marxist Foundations

Read: Sheldon, pp. 263-273

Week 11 Sociological Perspectives

Monday, October 26 The Family

Read: Sheldon, pp. 287-299

Wednesday, October 28: Sociological Theories (Social Ecology, Strain, Cultural Deviance)

Read: Sheldon, pp. 233-249

Friday, October 30: Social Bond, Social Learning, and Radical Approaches

Read: Sheldon, pp. 249-258

Week 12 Radical Approaches/Institutional Connections

Monday, November 2: The School to Prison Pipeline/Thinking Structurally

Read: Heitzeg, "Education or Incarceration"

Wednesday, November 4: Challenging Stereotypes

Read: Gorski, "The Trouble with the Culture of Poverty"

Friday, November 6: Introduction to *Bad Boys*

Read: Ferguson, pp. 1-23

Week 13 *Bad Boys*

Monday, November 9: Institutionalized Inequalities

Read: Ferguson pp. 29-47 AND pp. 77-96

Wednesday, November 11: Cultural Ideologies and their Effects (Media Analysis)

Read: Wade, "Two 7-Year-Old Boys, Two Dramatically Different News Stories"

***Friday, November 13 *Bad Boys* in Context/Agency (In-Class Exercise 10 points)**

Read: Ferguson, pp. 101-133

Week 14 Radical Solutions

Monday, November 16: Ferguson's Argument

Ferguson, pp. 227-235

Wednesday, November 18: Conclusion/Radical Solutions

Friday, November 20: Review for Exam II

Week 15 Exam II

Monday, November 23: Exam II

Wednesday, November 25: Review Exam II Results/Discuss Final Project

Friday, November 27: *NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Holiday*

Week 16 Poster Sessions

***In-class participation in the poster sessions will add 15 points toward your in-class exercise score.**

Monday, November 30: Poster Session Workshop

Wednesday, December 2: Poster Session Workshop

Friday, December 4: Poster Session and Course wrap-up

Final Project Write-Up due in the Moodle assignment drop box by Wednesday, December 9 at 5 p.m.