

**Deviance and Social Control**  
**(Honors Seminar in Social Science)**  
**ISS2937 Section 3, Fall 2007**  
Tuesday 2:15-5:00 PM  
Bellamy 517



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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In this course, we conceptualize deviance as individual behaviors and attributes that deviate from social norms. The course will provide a sociological understanding of: (1) what increases and decreases deviant behaviors; (2) how certain behaviors and attributes come to be labeled as deviant; and (3) how people respond to their and others' deviant labels.

We will discuss various types of behaviors and attributes as forms of deviance (e.g., domestic violence, corporate crimes, mental disorders, obesity). Whether a given behavior or attribute is considered as deviant depends on historical, spatial, and cultural contexts because social norms vary across those contexts. In a diverse society like ours, deviance labels are often contested across social groups and subgroups. Some substantive topics are included to demonstrate this point.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Upon successful completion of this course, you will obtain the following skills:

1. Explain how sociologists define deviance.
2. Explain how various sociological theories explain deviance.
3. Describe major research findings in subfields of the deviance literature.

In addition, you are expected to develop and improve general skills in social science including:

1. Conduct literature search using electronic database.
2. Use public media as data source for social science research.
3. Evaluate empirical studies from methodological and theoretical standpoints.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS**

1. Thio, Alex, Thomas Calhoun, and Addrain Conyers. 2007. *Readings in Deviant Behavior*. 5th ed. Allyn & Bacon. ISBN: 0205503721.
2. FSU online documents for human subjects review (readings for the second week)  
Introduction  
<http://www.research.fsu.edu/humansubjects/index.html>  
Review process demonstrated in flow chart (PDF)  
<http://www.research.fsu.edu/humansubjects/documents/reviewprocess.pdf>  
Online application form (PDF)  
<http://www.research.fsu.edu/humansubjects/applications/documents/onlineapplication.pdf>
3. Other reading materials will be posted on Blackboard. My announcements will specify whether each online material is required or optional.

Please note that text chapters are only starting points of class discussions and research activities. As explained below, you are expected to spend additional time reading journal articles and online materials which you choose for your chapter research and final project.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Syllabus Agreement

By the end of second week, you are asked to log onto Blackboard, download the syllabus, read it carefully, ask any questions, and confirm your agreement by filling out an online form. *Without your agreement, your assignments and exams will not be graded. If you cannot agree to the syllabus, you have an option of dropping from the course.*

### Attendance

Class attendance is required. As students, you are expected to contribute to the class by asking questions and participating in class discussions; your attendance is essential for making these contributions.

**Implication for Final Grade.** See the “Grading” section below.

**Excuses.** The following and only the following absences are eligible to be excused: Religious holidays, as specified in FSU policy; absences due to representing FSU at official functions, including intercollegiate debating or varsity sports events; verified emergencies and/or medical illness. Medical illness refers to conditions that are serious in nature and require treatment by medical professionals and/or surgical or other treatments. Documentation is required for an absence to be excused.

**Coming in Late and Leaving Early.** If you come in late, see me after class session, so you can sign on the attendance sheet. If you know in advance that you will need to leave early, come talk to me before the class session. Your partial attendance (coming late or leaving early) will count as half attendance for grading purpose.

### Reading Assignments

Read the assigned chapters before you come to each session (see the class schedule in the end of this syllabus). In order to successfully complete reading assignments, you need to understand what is in each chapter. In addition to highlighting the text and taking notes, I suggest you write down any specific questions and comments you would like to share in class.

### Chapter Research

Five times during the semester, you will select a chapter from the weekly reading assignment and collect additional information about the sociological theory or deviant group described in the chapter. In the first class session, you will be asked to sign up for specific chapters. Your research is part of a collective class project across semesters, which accumulates information each student gathers. By taking this course, you agree that your activity reports will be shared with your current classmates and other students who will take my deviance course.

### Research for Theory Chapters (For September 11 and 18)

Before studying specific deviant groups, we first go over various sociological theories that will guide our discussions of deviant groups. The purpose of your research is to learn how each deviance theory has been used in empirical studies. In *Sociological Abstract*, find one empirical article based on the theory. “Empirical articles” refer to those based on actual data (survey, participant observation, experiment, content analysis, historical data), as opposed to review articles or exclusively theoretical articles. A search tip: Use the theory name or/and author name (e.g., “Merton and strain theory”) or the original title of text chapter (shown at the bottom of first page in each chapter) (e.g., “Merton and Social Theory and Social Structure”).

Obtain an electronic or hard copy of the full-length article (as opposed to abstract only). The article is part of your required reading assignment, so read it carefully, although you do not have to understand every technical detail. Keep the following questions in mind as you read the article: Does the study

focus on the same type of deviant behavior as the original theory or apply the theory to a different type of behavior?; How are the major concepts measured?; Does the study test any alternative theories?; How usefulness is the theory for explaining the behavior?; Does the author provide any criticisms of the theory?

#### What to submit

A professionally written and typed summary of your answers to the questions above. The report should be 1 to 2 pages. To meet the page limit, select information which you think is most important and interesting. At the end of your report, give reference information of the article in the ASA format. Double space your report with one-inch margins and use 12 font size. The report is only a summary of your research activity. Prepare to give a three-minute verbal explanation in class and answer any questions from your classmates. In addition to hard copy submission, upload your report to Blackboard. (We will go over in class how to complete this task.) The empirical article you found in *Sociological Abstract* can be attached to the hard copy of your report or electronically uploaded to Blackboard (preferred).

### **Chapter Research for Deviant Groups (October 2 through November 20)**

For text chapters that focus on specific groups or behaviors, you will engage in Type A or Type B research activity.

#### Type A Research.

Academic Literature Review. In *Sociological Abstract* (or other academic database), find a journal article or a book that addresses one of the following topics:

- Social group or institution which attempts to control the deviant group.
- State, federal, or international laws that regulate the group.
- Social movement organized by the deviant group as a collective attempt to gain social recognition.
- Any other aspects of the group not discussed in the text chapter.
- Another study about the group which takes a theoretical perspective different from the one used in the text chapter.

The article/book you choose should be available in full length (as opposed to abstract only) at the FSU library. If the article is available online as an electronic file (e.g., PDF format), you have a choice of printing it out OR reading it on computer screen. For a chapter in edited books, make a photo copy. For a whole book, make a photo copy of the most relevant chapter plus the title page.

#### Type B Research.

1. Deviant Group on Internet. On internet, find one of the following types of information about the deviant group described in the text chapter.

- Web site for the deviant group. The web site should be created by the group members. So you cannot select web pages created by journalists and social scientists who study the group, for example.
- Discussion forum for group members. Please remain as an observer and refrain from participating in the discussion.

Print out several pages. In your report of web sites, briefly describe any formal and informal rules among group members, group symbols, insider language, funding sources, affiliated organizations, etc. Discuss what kind of image the group is trying to present to the public and what aspects of the group are emphasized or downplayed. For the discussion forum, possible topics for your report include (but are not limited to): discussion topics on which members agree and disagree, efforts of boundary

maintenance (“He is not one of us because he does not do this!”), collective or individual efforts to justify their behaviors or cope with stigma, attempts to socialize new members.

Or 2. **Group Images in Public Media.** Using internet and other sources, find out how the deviant group is presented in public media (newspapers, magazines, TV shows, movies etc). One or two examples would be sufficient for this exercise, although you can provide as many examples as you want. Take notes on how the media describe the group in terms of age, race, socioeconomic status, gender, family background, attractiveness, personality traits, behaviors/beliefs not directly related to the deviant behavior in question, etc. Note any implicit or explicit explanations provided by the media about causes or motivations of the deviant behavior. Think about to what extent and in what ways those images of the group in the public media are consistent with the text chapter and how those images may shape other people’s responses to the deviant group.

What to submit.

A professionally written and typed report which includes the following two components: (1) general summary of the article/web site/public media material; and more importantly (2) your discussions of how the article/web site/media material complements the text chapter for studying the deviant group. The report should be 1 to 2 pages. In the end of your report, give reference information of the article/web site/public media material in the ASA format. Double space your report with one-inch margins and use 12 font size. The report is only a summary of your research activity; prepare to give a three-minute verbal explanation in class and answer any questions from your classmates. In addition to hard copy submission, upload your report to Blackboard. Your supplementary documents can be attached to the hard copy of your report or electronically uploaded to Blackboard (preferred).

### **Evaluation of Chapter Research**

You will receive a letter grade for each research activity based on your written report, verbal presentation, and class discussion.

### **Discussion Questions**

You are required to submit three questions for the readings each week. Those questions can focus on one chapter or involve multiple chapters, but you cannot ask questions about the chapter which you use for your research activity. Please ask interesting questions which will motivate class discussions. They may address methodological issues, theoretical issues, policy implications, etc. Type your questions and submit them at the end of class session. You will receive full 2 points for a “check” grade in each set of questions and 1 point for a “check-minus” grade.

### **Final Project**

In this small research project, you will collect your own data. You can select a topic from those we covered in class or find a new topic within the area of deviance and social control. Your project can be based on small survey, in-depth interview, participant observation, context analysis, historical analysis, or any combinations of these methods. For example, you can conduct a survey of college students’ attitudes toward plagiarism, interview people who work with those with disability or mental illness, or examine how different newspapers and TV programs describe a corporate scandal. If your method involves personal contact with members of stigmatized groups, make sure to treat them with respect, review ethical issues we discuss in Week 2, and communicate with your respondents that you as a researcher do not necessarily endorse any deviant label others impose to them.

### **Project Proposal**

A one-page description is due on September 25, at the beginning of class session.

**Presentation**

Each student will give a 10 minute presentation during the last two weeks of semester.

**Final Paper**

Your final paper should be submitted to my mailbox in the sociology departmental office (526 Bellamy) by Friday, December 14 at 4:00 pm. The paper must include the following components:

- Literature review: Describe what previous research has found on the topic.
- Research questions: Explain what you attempt to find out in your research and any hypotheses you plan to test. Good research questions are motivated to address limitations or discrepancies in previous studies (e.g., certain aspects of a deviant group are understudied, certain theories have not been applied, research methods in previous studies were inadequate, previous research is outdated).
- Method: Describe how you collected data and how you analyzed them.
- Results: Describe what you found.
- Discussions: Describe implications of your findings. For example, how does your research contribute to the existing knowledge about the behavior or the group? Any implications for social policies? Any limitations of your study? What would you have done differently if you were conducting a larger study?
- References: Please follow the ASA format.

The maximal length is 10 pages including references and any tables and figures.

**GLB Project**

In this class project, students work collectively as a research group. The purpose of this project is to examine how sociologists have studied homosexuality and bisexuality and whether and how their approaches have changed over time. Using *Sociological Abstract*, I will create a list of studies which have dealt with homosexuality and bisexuality since 1960. Each student will read an assigned set of abstracts and code them in terms of study characteristics such as publication year, major themes (e.g., mental health, HIV, sodomy law, marriage, employment, etc), sexuality phrases (e.g., orientation, preference, queer, identity), age focus (e.g., adolescence, adulthood), and methods. We will discuss more in class what codes our study should include. Each student will upload his or her coding result (in an Excel file) to Blackboard. After I combine those files, we will collectively analyze the data in class. Detailed instructions will be provided later in the course. Your coding sheet must be uploaded by October 16.

**Late Submission Policy for All Assignments**

Any assignment turned in more than 10 minutes after the deadline is considered late. A late assignment will receive a 10% grade reduction. An additional 10% reduction is given for every 24 hours of late submission.

## GRADING

- **Discussion questions (12)**, 10% of final grade.
- **Chapter research (5)**, 45% of final grade.
- **Final project proposal**, 5% of final grade.
- **Final project presentation**, 5% of final grade.
- **Final project paper**, 30% of final grade.
- **GLB coding sheet**, 5% of final grade.
- **Attendance.** No penalty for one absence. Starting from the second unexcused absence, 2 points will be deducted from your final grade for each absence.

## Incomplete Grades

Missing work or uncompleted assignments are insufficient reasons for an Incomplete grade. An Incomplete grade will not be given except extenuating circumstances at my discretion. Note that College of Social Science guidelines require that students seeking an “I” must be passing the course.

## COURSE WEB SITE

When you register for this course, you automatically gain access to the course web site (Blackboard). In this web site, you can download additional reading assignments, upload your assignments, and send email to me or your classmates. To visit the site, open your web browser and go to <https://campus.fsu.edu>. After you log on, click the course number. If you are not familiar with Blackboard, click on “Blackboard Tools” in the first logon page to learn more.

**Receiving class email:** I use this web site to send email to the class about assignments, materials covered in class sessions, etc. I may send email to some of you individually to ask questions about your assignments, etc. All email messages from this course will be sent to your FSU account. If you use other accounts (e.g., yahoo, AOL), make sure to frequently check your FSU account, too.

**Sending email:** Please remember to include your name in the message text when sending email from Blackboard. The Blackboard email only shows your username (e.g, “xyz04”).

## CLASSROOM POLICY

### Academic Honor Policy

Students are expected to abide by the Academic Honor Policy of the Florida State University, including the statement on Values and Moral Standards published in The Florida State University General Bulletin. The Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of these expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty throughout the process. Please see the following website for a complete explanation of the Academic Honor Policy: <http://www.fsu.edu/~dof/honorpolicy.htm>.

### Cheating and Plagiarism

Students must abide by the highest standards of academic integrity. Any form of academic dishonesty will result in a “zero” for that particular assignment or an “F” for the course, at the instructor's discretion. Any student who plagiarizes, cheats on exams, or otherwise behaves in a dishonest way may be reported to the university administration for further disciplinary action as specified in the Academic Honor Policy (<http://www.fsu.edu/~dof/forms/honorpolicy.pdf>).

### Classroom Courtesy

Classroom courtesy is necessary to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn without distractions.

This means no talking during lectures (unless recognized by the instructor), reading newspapers, etc. during class.

### **Cell Phone Use**

You are not allowed to make/answer phone calls or send/receive text messages during class sessions. If you must have a cell phone to receive emergency calls about children or other family members, please keep it on vibrate. This policy also applies to handheld devices such as Blackberry.

### **Laptop Computer Use**

Laptop computers are permitted only for note taking purposes. Students who use their computers in any other ways may be asked to leave the classroom.

### **Class Discussions**

Class discussions can stimulate strong feelings and heated debate. Because this is a college classroom, all discussions must be scholarly. Failure to abide by these principles can result in academic penalties ranging from a lowered grade, to dismissal, to failing the course.

#### Scholarly comments are:

Respectful of diverse opinions and open to follow-up questions and/or disagreement; related to course materials; motivated to advance the discussion about issues related to course materials rather than personal beliefs; delivered in normal tones and a non-aggressive manner.

#### Unacceptable behaviors are:

(a) Personal attacks. This includes attacks on a person's appearance, demeanor, or political beliefs. (b) Interrupting the instructor or classmates. Raise your hand and wait to be called on by the instructor to prevent this problem. (c) Using the discussion to argue for political positions and/or beliefs. If political discussions arise, they must be discussed as scholarly endeavors (see above). (d) Using raised tones, yelling, engaging in arguments with other students, and being physically aggressive. (e) Ignoring the instructor's authority to protect the integrity of the classroom. Anyone who violates these guidelines will be asked to stop and may be asked to leave the classroom and/or drop the course.

### **Caution About Course Content**

We will approach each topic from sociological perspectives but not from our personal standpoints. The scholarly approach should minimize negative psychological impact, but it is possible that you find some topics emotionally challenging. Please review the course schedule and text chapters and let me know immediately if you find any topics which might make you uncomfortable. Before watching movies in class, I will describe the content, so you can decide whether you will be comfortable with it. If you start to feel upset in class despite these precautions, you have the right to leave the classroom. Please email me later to explain what happened.

### **Disability Accommodations**

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. Your request should be made during the first week of class. For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact:

Student Disability Resource Center, 108 Student Services Bldg., Florida State University  
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167. Tel: (850)644-9566 (voice), (850)644-8504 (TDD).

E-mail: [SDRC@admin.fsu.edu](mailto:SDRC@admin.fsu.edu). Website: <http://www.fsu.edu/~staffair/dean/StudentDisability/>.

### **Syllabus Change Policy**

This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice.

## COURSE CONTENT AND SCHEDULE

	Chapters	Topic	Assignments
August 28		<i>Welcome</i>	
September 04	1,2,3,4,IRB	Definition; Methods; Ethics	DQ
September 11	5,6,7,8	Positivist Theories	DQ; CR
September 18	9,10,11,12,13	Constructionist Theories	DQ; CR
September 25	Online	GLB Project	DR; Proposal
October 02	14,15,16,17	Physical Violence	DQ; CR
October 09	18,19,20,21	Intimate Violence	DQ; CR
October 16	42,43,44,45	Privileged Deviance	DQ; CR; GLB code
October 23	46,47,48,49	Underprivileged Deviance	DQ; CR
October 30	30,31,32,33	Heterosexual Deviance	DQ; CR
November 06	26,27,28,29	Victims of Stigma	DQ; CR
November 13	22,23,24,25	Self Destructive Deviance	DQ; CR
November 20	34,35,36,37	Drug Use	DQ; CR
November 27		GLB Project Results / Student Presentations	
December 04		Student Presentations	
December 14		<i>Final Paper Due in Koji's Mailbox at 4:00pm</i>	

DQ – Discussion Question; CR – Chapter Research