

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

**SOCI 3204 SOCIOLOGY OF CRIME AND DEVIANCE**

Course Outline

First Term, 2024-25  
Monday 2:30 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.  
Venue: WMY 407

*Lecturer:* Prof. Nicole Wai Ting CHEUNG  
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The study of crime and deviance is central to the discipline of sociology. Breaking the law and rules is always controversial. We would not understand the rules of society unless we understand the rule-breakers. This course aims at examining the nature and social correlates of crime, deviance and victimization from a variety of sociological perspectives. In addition to reviewing a number of criminological theories and empirical research findings, this course is specially designed to help students critically analyze some issues of crime and deviance in Hong Kong and international contexts.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

After completing the course, the students should be able to:

- 1 recognize the significance of scientific, evidence-based study of crime and deviance;
- 2 capture the role of sociological theories of criminology in understanding crime and deviance, compare their underlying theoretical assumptions, recognize their interrelationships, and comprehend how these theories reflect the historical context of the times and cultures in which they were developed;
- 3 identify and critically evaluate certain commonly-held views regarding crime and deviance, and present alternative and even opposing hypotheses on criminal and deviant phenomena;
- 4 recognize the importance of sociological analyses for reflection of the diversity of values and positions in terms of crime and deviance; and
- 5 develop practical skills of applying sociological theories to examine real life instances of crime and deviance.

**COURSE STRUCTURE**

The course consists of (1) lecture, (2) case discussion, and (3) tutorial class (five sessions in total). It adopts a face-to-face teaching mode, unless otherwise announced by the University.

## **COURSE ASSESSMENT**

- 1 Group Research Reflection Project 30%
- 2 Tutorial class (Attendance, Presentation and Participation) 20%
- 3 Final Examination 50%
- 4 Case Discussion

## **TEXTBOOK**

Akers, Ronald L., Christine S. Sellers, and Wesley G. Jennings. 2017. *Criminological Theories: Introduction, Evaluation, and Application*. 7<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

## **COURSE CONTENTS**

### **Defining and Measuring Crime and Deviance**

- Sep 2** What is Crime and Deviance?  
Intellectual background of criminology
- Sep 9** Measuring Crime and Deviance

### **Explaining Crime and Deviance**

#### **I Consensus Model: Theories of Structural-functionalism, Control, and Learning**

- Sep 16** Social Strain Paradigm: From Anomie to General Strain  
Do modernization and class position matter in social strain causation?
- Sep 23** Case discussion on empirical test of general strain theory
- Sep 30** Control Theories and Life Course Criminology
- Oct 7** Theory of Control-Balance: Do crime and deviance result from too little control or too much control?
- Oct 14** Environmental Criminology: Spatial Analysis and Dynamics  
Why are crime and deviance not geographically distributed by randomization?
- Oct 21** Case discussion on theoretical integration
- Oct 28** Learning Theories and Neutralization Theory: Criminals and deviants are not born
- Nov 4** In-person consultation of group research reflection projects from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the lecturer's office. No formal lecture. Participation is optional. Just walk in and no need to make time appointment.

#### **II Conflict Model**

- Nov 11** Marxist/Critical Criminology: Who defines crime and deviance?  
Green Criminology: Extension of Ecological Marxism

**Nov 18** Postmodern Criminology: Crime and deviance as a function of linguistic domination

### **Explaining Victims of Crime**

**Nov 25** Victimology and Routine Activity Theory  
Who are more likely to be victims of crime?  
Do victims cause crime?  
In what ways does victimology transcend the pestilence fallacy of criminology?

### **Academic Honesty and Plagiarism**

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/> . Our Department also has a detailed guideline on academic citations <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/soc/citation.pdf>.

Students are required to submit an **Academic Honesty Declaration Statement signed by all members of the group paper** that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. For assignment that is principally text-based and submitted via the VeriGuide system, the Academic Honesty Declaration Statement in the form of a receipt will be issued by VeriGuide upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment. Assignments without the receipt will not be graded by teachers. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.

## **Final Grade Descriptors**

### **A Scoring 90-100**

- Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.
- Demonstrate the ability to articulate and elaborate individual sociological theories of criminology introduced in the course.
- Able to fully interpret and compare the theoretical hypotheses, and to fully identify the interrelationships, among these sociological theories of criminology.
- Able to fully apply these sociological perspectives to analyze empirical criminal and deviant behaviors. Examine all relevant sociological arguments and connect their synthesis to empirical issues with a clear, well-organized, critical and cogent analytical framework.

### **A- Scoring 80-89**

- Generally outstanding performance on almost all learning outcomes.
- Demonstrate the ability to recall and elaborate individual sociological theories of criminology introduced in the course.
- Able to interpret and compare the theoretical hypotheses, and to identify the interrelationships, among these sociological theories of criminology.
- Able to apply these sociological perspectives to analyze empirical criminal and deviant behaviors. Connect most of the sociological arguments to empirical issues with a clear and well-organized analytical framework and with some signs of critical thinking.

### **B+ / B / B- Scoring 70-79**

- Substantial performance on all learning outcomes.
- Demonstrate the ability to recall relevant sociological theories of criminology introduced in the course.
- Able to partially interpret and compare the theoretical hypotheses, and to partially identify the interrelationships, among these sociological theories of criminology.
- Able to apply these sociological perspectives to analyze empirical criminal and deviant behaviors. Connect some sociological arguments to empirical issues with a comprehensible analytical framework in which reasoning is sometimes incomplete.

### **C+ / C / C- Scoring 60-69**

- Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.
- Demonstrate the partial ability to recall pieces of sociological theories of criminology introduced in the course.
- Able to partially interpret the theoretical hypotheses of these sociological theories of criminology, without the ability to compare their theoretical constituents.
- Able to partially apply these sociological perspectives to analyze empirical criminal and deviant behaviors. Connect few sociological arguments to empirical issues with a somewhat confusing analytical framework in which reasoning is sometimes impaired by emotive, inconsistent or incomplete argumentation.

### **D Scoring 50-59**

- Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes.
- Demonstrate the partial ability to recall some simple terms derived from sociological theories of criminology introduced in the course.
- Able to interpret few theoretical hypotheses of these sociological theories of criminology, without the ability to compare their theoretical constituents.
- Able to minimally apply these sociological perspectives to analyze empirical criminal and deviant behaviors. Connect few sociological arguments to empirical issues with a confusing or irrelevant analytical framework in which reasoning is often impaired by emotive,

inconsistent or incomplete argumentation.

**F Scoring below 50**

- Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, or failure to meet specified assessment requirements.
- Unable to recall sociological theories of criminology introduced in the course.
- Unable to interpret and compare the theoretical hypotheses of these sociological theories of criminology.
- No application of these sociological perspectives to analyze empirical criminal and deviant behaviors. Only state personal and emotive opinions on empirical issues without sociological arguments.