

The Sociology of Deviance
University of Cincinnati
Professor Robert Garot
Soc. 325-001

Class Meeting Time: TTh, 9:30-10:45

Place: Braunstein 325

My Email: garotr@email.uc.edu

My Phone: (513) 556-4708

My Office: 1008 Crosley Tower (Tenth Floor)

Office Hours: TTh, 1:00-2:00

Sociology Office: 1018 Crosley Tower

Sociology Department Phone: (513) 556-4700

While many of us may think of certain behaviors as deviance, no behaviors are deviant in all contexts, all the time. Whether a behavior is classified as “deviance” is a product of historically and culturally contingent macro- and micropolitical processes. This course will provide a theoretical framework for examining such processes, in order to understand the fundamental power dynamics which underlie designations of deviance. The first half of the course is devoted to the micropolitics of deviance designations, while the second half of the course is devoted to the macropolitics of deviance.

It is essential that you *wrestle* with the readings for each week, and *mull over* how they apply to your own experience. I hope to open new perspectives to you, and what transforms information into a perspective that opens up new ways of thinking is wrestling with what you encounter. For each reading, I hope that you work to understand not just *what* the author is saying, but *why*. What received wisdom is she or he trying to challenge? With what ideas might they be competing? What is their evidence? I hope that you will enhance for yourself the value of what you read through the paired (and perhaps literally opposed) habits of mind of skepticism (What I ought to really believe that?) and suspended disbelief (What if it were true?).

The idea is to foster an intense, searching class discussion. A great deal of learning happens in discussion, when one's new ideas, guesses, hunches, ideological convictions, and moral persuasions rub unexpectedly up against others'. I will assist this process through my questioning in class, and want you to have challenged each reading so that you, in turn, can be challenged by others in class.

Please feel free to discuss topics further with me after class, or before class by appointment. Be sure to exchange phone numbers with two or three other students and form study groups.

Required Readings

Available at Du Bois Bookstore, 321 Calhoun Street.

Be sure to complete each week's readings PRIOR TO coming to class. Additional background readings are available for students who wish to read further on the week's topic. Also, be sure to check the class website frequently for announcements.

Attendance/In-Class Presentations

Attendance and participation in lecture is integral to this course. Because there will be discussion of materials not included in the readings, it is essential that you make every class meeting. Lecture notes will not be available. Although this is a large class, efforts will be made to encourage participation from students during the lectures – so come prepared.

Requirements

Written assignments for the class consist of one 3-5 page personal reflection and one 10-15 page term paper. Be sure to consult the paper guidelines posted at the course website.

The personal reflection should be based on an experience or observation of deviance from the micropolitics of trouble perspective. How did you experience this event? Were you a perpetrator, victim, or observer, or did these roles intertwine? What sort of troubleshooters were brought in to deal with the event? How did their professional ideology influence how the event was conceptualized and managed?

The final paper should be a deeper examination of the personal reflection, incorporating a macropolitics of trouble perspective. Be sure to incorporate readings from Foucault, and Spector and Kitsuse. You will also need to conduct a literature review on your topic, to find how the “trouble” you are writing about has been defined historically and culturally. If you wish, you may choose a topic different from the topic of your first paper, provided you discuss it with me first.

Exams will be based on lectures and readings. Questions on exams will be provided in a short and long answer format. The final will be cumulative, but it will focus heavily on the final weeks of the course. No make-up exams will be given – so you must conform to the times as scheduled for the midterm and final. If you absolutely cannot attend a scheduled exam, you must let me know beforehand, provide written documentation of your reason for missing (a doctor’s note for an illness, an obituary for a death in the family, etc.), and schedule your exam with the Linda Kocher, the Sociology departmental secretary.

Grading Policy

You will not be graded on a competitive basis, so in theory everyone can do well in the class. However, in order to get a top grade, students will be expected to achieve standards of excellence in their work. If you are dissatisfied with any grade you receive, you must submit a written request for a review of the grade, including a defense, no later than one week after the work is handed back to the class. By requesting a review of the grade you receive, you invite the possibility that the new grade will be lower than the original grade, as well as the possibility that it will be higher.

Points will be distributed as follows:

Personal Reflection: 20%

Final Paper: 30%

Mid-Term: 25%

Final: 25%

A+ 98-100 B+ 88-89 C+ 78-79 D+ 65-69

A 93-97 B 83-87 C 73-77 D 55-64
A- 90-92 B- 80-82 C- 70-72 D- 50-54

Cheating/Plagiarism

Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will be referred to the Office of the Dean of Students. For guidelines on avoiding these offenses, please see the University Of Cincinnati Student Code of Conduct at: http://www.psc.uc.edu/pp/PP_Code_Of_Conduct.htm

Weekly Topics and Readings

Please note that the following schedule, including project and exam dates, is tentative, and may change based on how quickly we cover the material.

Week 1: Introduction

April 1st and 3rd

Goffman, Erving. "Stigma and Social Identity"

Part I: The Micropolitics of Trouble

Week 2: Theoretical Perspectives

April 8th and 10th

Thomas Scheff. "The Role of The Mentally Ill and the Dynamics of Mental Disorder."

Sociometry, 436-453.

Robert Emerson And Sheldon Messinger. 1977. "The Micro-Politics of Trouble." Social Problems. 121-134.

Week 3: Labelling

April 15th and 17th

Becker, Howard S. "Moral Entrepreneurs"

Erving Goffman. 1959. "The Moral Career of The Mental Patient: Prepatient Phase." Psychiatry. Pp. 222-229.

Week 4: Accommodation

April 22nd and 24th

Michael Lynch. 1983. "Accommodation Practices: Vernacular Treatments of Madness." Social Problems. 31:152-164.

Patricia B. Coughlan. 1993. Facing Alzheimers: Family Caregivers Speak. New York: Ballantine, 49-75.

Week 5: Tenability

April 29th and May 1st

Robert M. Emerson. 1989. "Tenability And Troubles: The Construction of Accommodative Relations By Psychiatric Emergency Teams." Perspectives on Social Problems. 1:215-237.

Egon Bittner. 1967. "Police Discretion In Emergency Apprehension of Mentally Ill Persons." Social Problems. 14:278-92.

May 1st: Mid-Term, Personal Reflection due

Part II: The Macropolitics of Trouble

Week 6: Theoretical Perspectives

May 6th and 8th

Spector and Kitsuse. Constructing Social Problems (Excerpts provided in class.)

Foucault, Michel. Madness and Civilization, pp. 42-43. The History of Sexuality, pp. 41-49.

Week 7: Constructing Mental Illness

May 13th and 15th

Mary Sykes Wylie. 1995. "The Power of DSM IV: Diagnosing for Dollars?" The Family Therapy Networker. pp. 23 ff.

Keith Humphreys And Julian Rappaport. 1993. "The Community Mental Health Movement to the War on Drugs: A Study in the Definition of Social Problems." American Psychologist. 48:892-901.

Week 8: Constructing Mental Illnesses

May 20th and 22nd

Joan Jacobs Brumberg. 1988. Fasting Girls. Cambridge: Harvard ("Anorexia Nervosa in Context") pp. 110-124.

Wilbur J. Scott. 1990. "PTSD in DSM-III: A Case in the Politics of Diagnosis and Disease." Social Problems 37:294-310.

Week 9: Constructing Crime

May 27th and 29th

Katz, Jack. 1980. "The Social Movement Against White-Collar Crime," in Criminology Review Yearbook, Ed. Egon Bittner and Sheldon Messinger (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage), 2:161-84. (Provided in class.)

Meehan, Albert J. 2000. "The Organizational Career of Gang Statistics." The Sociological Quarterly. 41(3):337-370.

Week 10: Constructing Moral Panic

June 3rd and 5th

Goode, Erich and Nachman Ben-Yehuda. 1994. Moral Panics. Selected Excerpts.

June 5th: Final Exam, Final Paper Due