

## SOCI 474/874: SOCIOLOGY OF DEVIANCE<sup>1</sup>

Department of Sociology  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln  
Fall 2015

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Course Information			
Instructor:	Dr. Tara D. Warner	Lecture Times:	Tuesday & Thursday 11:00am – 12:15pm
Office:	705 Oldfather Hall	Lecture Room:	204 Henzlick Hall
Email:	<a href="mailto:twarner2@unl.edu">twarner2@unl.edu</a>		
Prerequisites:	None, but completion of SOCI 101 and SOCI 209 is strongly recommended		
Office hours:	Tuesday & Thursday, 2:00 – 4:00pm, or by appointment		

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“Imagine a society of saints, a perfect cloister of exemplary individuals. Crime, properly so called will there be unknown; but faults which appear venial to the layman will create there the same scandal that the ordinary offense does in ordinary consciousness.”

—Emile Durkheim (Rules of the Sociological Method, 1893)

### Introduction:

This course aims to provide you with a sociological approach to the study of deviance, including ways to think about and understand the social construction of “deviance” and “deviants.” Thinking sociologically enables us to make observations and offer insights about deviance that extend far beyond “common sense,” personal experience, or explanations that rely only on individual characteristics. This course is designed to engage your “sociological imagination” in the study of the actions, beliefs, and conditions that violate social norms. The lectures, readings, class discussions, activities, and assignments will focus on the following types of questions:

- What is deviance? How is deviance defined, and by whom?
- How can we study deviance?
- What are the causes of deviance?
- What are the experiences of those who engage in deviance?
- How does society respond to and (attempt to) regulate deviance?

**Required Text** (available in the campus bookstore or online):

Adler, Patricia and Peter Adler. 2016. *Constructions of Deviance: Social Power, Context, and Interaction*, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition. Cengage Learning

**\*\*Other required readings (e.g., journal articles) will be available on Blackboard (under “Readings”).\*\*** These readings are intended to complement the text and lecture, provide additional examples, illustrate points, and stimulate critical thinking/discussion.

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<sup>1</sup> Information in this document is subject to change throughout the course of the semester; please consult Blackboard for the most current version of the course syllabus.

## Course Disclosures<sup>2</sup>

- (1) This is not a class in abnormal psychology. There are legitimate mental illnesses, but their etiologies are not the subject of this class. Rather, the goal is to expand the student's understanding of deviance as social phenomena.
- (2) This is not a carnival sideshow. The study of deviance is more than a voyeuristic exposé of “nuts, sluts, and perverts” (Liazos 1972). In this class, the goal is to foster the student's ability to view deviance from a sociological perspective based on scientific method.
- (3) This is not a morality play. Scholars of deviance refrain from making judgments about those they study, even while recognizing that society (and they themselves) may view certain behaviors or beliefs as immoral.
- (4) This is a class in which there are topics that some people may find abnormal, unusual, and/or morally repugnant. When such discussions make people uncomfortable, they tend to giggle, huff, make jokes or snide comments, or resort to dismissive terms like “crazy,” “freak,” or “sinner.” Such behavior on your part should be avoided!
  - If you have a sense of discomfort, remind yourself to remain scientifically objective. (If you don't, I will.)
  - There will be open discussion of research findings pertaining to criminality, sexuality, etc., in this course. **If you find such topics objectionable, please enroll in another course.** No alternative assignments will be given.

## Course Requirements:

(1) *Exams*— There will be three (3) take-home essay exams, which students will submit online, via Blackboard. These exams will be open book and open note and will cover material from readings and lecture. Students will have a 5-day window for completing the exam (see dates below). SOCI 474 students are required to complete all 3 exams; SOCI 874 students will select two of the three exams (the third exam will be replaced by a critical book review [see below]).

(2) *Term Paper*— Students will complete a term paper, the purpose of which is to challenge you to investigate an aspect or category of deviance or “deviants” more closely. I will present you with several options from which to choose. Additional details—including key due dates and submission information—will be available on Blackboard.

(3) *Critical Book Review (SOC 874 students ONLY)*— In addition to the course requirements applicable to all students, graduate students enrolled in SOCI 874 are required to complete a critical book review. Details, including a list of book choices, will be available on Blackboard.

(4) *Attendance and Participation*— This is a senior undergraduate/masters graduate level class. This is not a lecture-based class. It is a reading, writing, and discussion-intensive course that requires preparation, attention, and participation. **Preparation** means critically reading all assigned readings before class, checking Blackboard for any important announcements, and looking over the course

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<sup>2</sup> Text adapted from Lisa Kort-Butler's Sociology of Deviance (SOC 474/874) course syllabus, 2012, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

schedule to know what we will be doing in class that day. **Attention** means engaging with the material, with me, and with your fellow students; it does not mean reading the newspaper, texting, sleeping, and/or talking with friends. **Participation** means answering questions when asked of you, raising critical comments of the material, and asking your own questions when you do not understand something.<sup>3</sup>

To facilitate active participation, students are required to submit discussion questions on Blackboard (via the “Discussion” tab on the course page) for each week of readings. You should submit *at least* two (2) questions per week on any of the assigned readings (they can be two questions on a single reading, or distributed across readings). You are welcomed and encouraged to submit more than 2 questions. Questions should be based on a **critical reflection** of the readings and can address any of the following: empirical and/or theoretical strengths/weaknesses of the reading; data or variables; research methods or analytical design; hypothesis testing; theoretical conceptualization; policy implications; or directions for future research.

In the BB Discussion page, Discussion Forums will be created for each week, with separate threads for each reading—please post your questions in the applicable thread for that reading. **The deadline for question posts is 9:00am the day of class on which the corresponding reading is assigned.** Students may miss 2 posts without penalty.

**Attendance and participation are 20% of your grade. Take them seriously!**

**Absences:** If you are absent, you should ask your student contacts (see below) for copies of their notes, and discuss with them what you missed. If, after reviewing material with other students you require further clarification, please see me during office hours.

**Student Contacts:** Knowing a few other students in class has the potential of being extremely beneficial for you—both academically and socially. To facilitate this, in the spaces below please record the first and last names of two of your classmates, along with phone numbers or e-mails (whichever they feel comfortable providing). Turn to whoever is sitting near you for this. If, during the course, you notice that your student contacts have dropped, please obtain contact information from 1-2 other students.

Name	Email address and/or phone #
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____

**\*\*If you must miss class, you should contact these individuals to get missed material—you will not get missed class material from me (nor do I post these materials on Blackboard)!\*\***

**Make-up Exams:** Since students have a three-day window in which to complete the course exams (which themselves are take-home exams), make-up exams are only allowed under extreme circumstances, and at the instructor’s discretion. Students must provide documentation for medical emergencies.

**Athletes:** If you are an athlete, and your game and/or practice schedule conflicts with an exam window, you must complete the exam before the scheduled date on the syllabus—it is your

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<sup>3</sup> Text adapted from Keri Burchfield’s Deviance in Society (SOC1 380) course syllabus, 2012, Northern Illinois University

responsibility to coordinate this with me two weeks prior to the scheduled exam window. If your schedule conflicts with the due date of an assignment, you must submit that assignment before the scheduled date on the syllabus.

**Grading:**

SOCI 474 students will earn their final grade based on the following:

Exam 1	100 points
Exam 2	100 points
Exam 3	100 points
Term paper	100 points
Attendance and participation	100 points
<b>Total points possible (SOCI 474):</b>	<b>500 points</b>

SOCI 874 students will earn their final grade based on the following:

Exam	100 points
Exam	100 points
Term paper	100 points
Attendance and participation	100 points
Critical book review	100 points
<b>Total points possible (SOCI 874):</b>	<b>500 points</b>

Here are the percentage totals used to assign final grades in this course:

To earn a(n): students need  $\geq$ : of the total points

A+	97%	C	73%
A	93%	C-	70%
A-	90%	D+	67%
B+	87%	D	63%
B	83%	D-	60%
B-	80%	F	= < 60%
C+	77%		

These percentage cut-offs are absolute; I will **not** “round-up” final grades. Please put in sufficient effort to earn your desired grade, and please see me at any point during the semester for assistance with course content.

**Extra Credit:** There are two opportunities for earning extra credit, both of which are administered online, via Blackboard: (1) completion of the online mid-semester course evaluation, and (2) completion of the end-of-semester course evaluations (details will be announced in class and on Blackboard).

**Grade Check Requests:** Grade checks/reports for student athletes, scholarships, Greek society memberships, etc. are **only** handled in-person during office hours. Please do not inquire about grade check requests during class.

**Students with Disabilities:** It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, you must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities

(SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration. Please contact the (SSD) office as soon as possible to have them advance the paperwork to the instructor in a timely manner.

**Academic Misconduct:** Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. It includes, but is not limited to, any form of cheating or unapproved help on an exam or academic exercise/assignment, copying someone else's written work without citation, or any unauthorized collaboration among students. In this class, academic dishonesty will be handled on a case-by-case basis. The minimum penalty for academic dishonesty in any form is determined by the instructor, and may consist of a reduced grade (including F or zero) for the assignment; a reduced grade (including F) for the entire course, or other options as stipulated in the UNL Student Code of Conduct. Also, the incident will be reported in writing to UNL's Judicial Affairs.

**Classroom Conduct:** I place the utmost premium on respectful conduct both in and out of the classroom, representing diversity, and acknowledging different experiences and opinions—especially in a course where we may discuss controversial topics. All students are asked to review the Classroom Conduct Policy, located on Blackboard (under “Course Documents”). Students who choose to engage in disruptive behavior will be asked to leave the classroom. In accordance with University policy, I reserve the right to define additional behavior as disruptive as needed (see, <http://stuafs.unl.edu/dos/code>).

**Laptop Computer Policy:** This course is discussion- rather than lecture-based. As such, laptop computers, netbooks, tablets, etc. are **not** allowed.

## Course Outline and Schedule:

The following is a *tentative* reading list and schedule for the course. It is subject to change as the course progresses based on our movement through the material. All changes will be announced in class and a revised syllabus posted on Blackboard. You are expected to complete the assigned reading prior to the first class for which it is assigned.

Assignment details are listed on Blackboard in the “Assignments” folder.

Students are advised to manage their time, reading, and assignments accordingly. Failure to complete the assigned readings on time will quickly lead you to fall behind.

Reading assignment key:

“A&A” = required Adler & Adler text

“Author (Year)” = required news/journal article (available in “Readings” on Blackboard)

Week	Date	Topic	Reading Assignment
<b>Identifying Deviance</b>			
1	T 8/25	Course Introduction	
	R 8/26	What is deviance?	A&A pg. 1-24
2	T 9/1	Deviance & norms	A&A pg. 25-39; Horowitz (2008); Mollborn (2015)
	R 9/3	3 perspectives on deviance	A&A pg. 40-56
<b>Theories of Deviance</b>			
3	T 9/8	Theoretical perspectives	A&A pg. 57-88
	R 9/10	Cont.	
4	T 9/15	Theoretical perspectives	A&A pg. 89-104; Weitzer (2003)
	R 9/17	Cont.	A&A pg. 105-108; Meyer (2003)
<b>Studying Deviance</b>			
5	T 9/22	Methods	A&A pg. 109-114; 132-148
	R 9/24	Methods cont.	McCaghy (2006); A&A pg. 122-131 (skim); Irvine (2012)
6	T 9/29	<b>Exam 1 (opens 9/25, due to BB by 5pm 9/29)</b>	
<b>Constructing Deviance</b>			
6	R 10/1	Moral entrepreneurs: rule creation & enforcement	A&A pg. 149-157; Miller (2015)
7	T 10/6	Moral panics: definitions	Jenkins (2009); Brooks (2014); Friedersdorf (2014a); Friedersdorf (2014b)
	R 10/8	Moral panics: examples & effects	Griffin (2008); Galeste (2012); Tewksbury (2012)

	T	10/13	Differential social power: race & gender	A&A pg. 206-228; Wade (2011); Marcott (2014)
8	R	10/15	Differential social power: social class	A&A pg. 229-252; Tiger (2011); Walsh (2015); Zevallos (2012)

### The Deviant Identity

	T	10/20	<b>Fall Break—No Class</b>	
9	R	10/22	Identity development: the body	A&A pg. 253-273; 285-296; Anonymous (2009)
	T	10/27	Identity development: sexuality	A&A pg. 274-283; Ward (2008)
10	R	10/29	Managing deviance: Accounts	A&A pg. 309-334
	T	11/3	Cont.	Shoenberger (2012); De Young (1989)
11	R	11/5	Managing deviance: Stigma	A&A pg. 335-360; Wade (2010); Kane (2015)
	T	11/10	Stigma cont.	A&A pg. 361-387
12	R	11/12	Deviant careers: Entry	A&A pg. 545-558
	T	11/17	Deviant careers: Exits	A&A pg. 585-607
13	R	11/19	<b>Exam 2 (opens 11/19, due to BB by 5pm 11/23)</b>	

### The Organization and Structure of Deviance

	T	11/24	The lone deviant	A&A pg. 473-490
14	R	11/26	<b>Thanksgiving—no class</b>	
	T	12/1	Groups: Communities & Subcultures	A&A pg. 421-430; Brownstein (2012)
15	R	12/3	Cont.	Luttrell (2011); Hess (2012); Holt (2010)
	T	12/8	Groups: Social conflict & status hierarchies; <i>Term papers due</i> (to BB by 5pm)	A&A pg. 537-544; Wagner (2015);
16	R	12/10	Is deviance dead?	Liazos (1972); TBA

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**Exam 3 (opens 12/11, due to BB by 5pm Tues, 12/15)**