



**JUVENILE DELINQUENCY**

Department of Sociology, Social Work, and Anthropology  
 SOC 3410, Section 001, Fall 2016, CRN 43730  
 Tuesday/Thursday, 9:00-10:15 am  
 Old Main, Room 115

Instructor: Stephen G. VanGeem, PhD  
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 Office: Old Main 224D  
 Office hours: Tuesday/Thursday 10:30-11:45 am and by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES**

Adult criminality does not appear in a vacuum. Many of the warning signs of adult anti-social behavior appear in adolescence, specifically as juvenile delinquency. That said, attitudes about how to handle such behavior in the teenage years is conditioned by how we view adolescence within American society. More specifically, juveniles are seen as individuals who are still developing physically, emotionally, socially, and cognitively, and adolescence itself is a tumultuous time marked by internal struggles for autonomy and external pressures from peer groups. As such, teenagers are a uniquely vulnerable population and, therefore, require special protections during the criminal justice process. Over the course of this semester, this class will examine how we define what it means to be delinquent, discuss what criminologists theorize is the source of delinquency, and describe the juvenile justice system that exists separate from the adult criminal justice system.

**REQUIRED TEXT AND EQUIPMENT**

- Fuller, R. J. (2013). *Juvenile Delinquency: Mainstream and Crosscurrents* (2nd edition). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

**STUDENT EVALUATION**

Your course grade will be based upon three exams, two research assignments, and class participation. Each exam is worth 25 percent, each writing assignment is worth 10 percent, and participation in classroom discussion is worth 5 percent.

Exam #1	25%
Exam #2	25%
Final Exam	25%
Research Assignments	20%
<u>Class Participation</u>	<u>5%</u>
Total	100%

**GRADING SCALE**

A 93 and above	A- 92-90	
B+ 89-87	B 86-83	B- 82-80
C+ 79-77	C 76-73	C- 72-70
D+ 69-67	D 66-60	F 59 and below

**EXAMINATIONS**

There are two exams given throughout the semester and one final exam given during finals week. All exams will be worth 50 points and contain a combination of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank and short answer questions. **\*No exam will be cumulative.\***

**RESEARCH ASSIGNMENTS**

There will be two research assignments due throughout the semester, each one worth 10 percent of your final grade. The completed assignments will be turned in as short 3-5 page essays and are meant to build off of in-class topics and discussion.

***Research Assignment #1: Juvenile Justice in Your Area or Beyond***

One of the other goals of this course is to make you better consumers of policy. Theories of delinquency and empirical research testing such theories are only useful once translated into policy and practice. Ideally, all programs aimed at reducing problematic behaviors or situations should be informed by research findings and should demonstrate a reduction in reoffending. For the second assignment, I would like you to: (1) identify a local, national, or international program that focuses on juvenile delinquency, youth crime, or youth victimization; (2) identify the theoretical underpinnings that inform why that program should cause a reduction in delinquency, crime, or victimization; and (3) identify what evidence that program (or someone else evaluating that program) provides supporting/challenging the program's utility. Again, I will provide a more detailed assignment description later in the semester.

Your second essay **\*must be uploaded to CANVAS\*** by 6pm on Tuesday, October 20.

***Research Assignment #2: Topic Investigation***

One of the goals of this course is to make you better consumers of information. More specifically, to give you some tools for critical thinking that will help you to distinguish opinion from evidence and good research from bad research. Several classes will be aimed at integrating "research-based studies" into our discussion in order to highlight what information should be informing our justice policy. For the first assignment, I would like you to: (1) choose a topic related to juvenile delinquency, youth crime, or youth victimization; (2) find a blog entry online that espouses an opinion about the causes of or contemporary state of that topic; and then (3) find official statistics (via agency websites) **\*AND\*** an empirical study (via Merrill-Cazier Library's online journal databases) that inform/test that argument. I will provide a more detailed assignment description later in the semester.

Your first essay **\*must be uploaded to CANVAS\*** by 6pm on Tuesday, November 22.

**LECTURES, ATTENDANCE, AND CLASS DISCUSSION**

While attendance is not mandatory, it is strongly encouraged. As this is a discussion-based course, class participation will factor into your final grade. As the instructor, my goal is to guide your learning as much as I can, but I need you to participate in class in order to provide you with the most interactive experience possible.

**COURSE POLICIES**

1. The subject matter of this course can be both highly theoretical and highly technical, which means that the material can be rather dense and difficult to understand at times. My role is to help clarify each topic, provide explanations and context that are not included in the readings, and answer any questions

that you might have, but you are expected to read all of the assigned readings so that you can participate as fully as possible. In addition, you are responsible for knowing the content of any materials posted to the online-classroom in Canvas, including any additional written or audio lectures.

2. Please extend courtesy and respect to your fellow students in any discussion and avoid any overtly hostile or demeaning language when reacting to another student's ideas. Repeated disrespectful and rude behavior may be grounds for dismissal from the class.

3. Late assignments will not be accepted unless: (1) you notify me 48 hours \*before\* the assignment is due and (2) provide me with an acceptable reason for why the assignment will be late. I may request written documentation for the excuse if deemed necessary. If you do not follow this procedure then you will receive a zero on the assignment.

4. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated (see below).

5. This syllabus is not a contract. I reserve the right to modify this syllabus at any time throughout the semester and will give you ample notification beforehand via class-wide announcements. It is your responsibility to stay abreast of any changes made.

6. In line with university policy, students with disabilities who are in need of academic accommodations must (1) register with and provide documentation to the Disability Research Center (DRC) and (2) bring a memorandum from the DRC to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be accomplished within the first two weeks of the semester. Additional information can be accessed at [www.usu.edu/drc/](http://www.usu.edu/drc/)

7. In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), academic progress in this course will be kept private from all third parties unless waived by the individual student. This waiver, along with other information, can be found at <http://www.usu.edu/registrar/htm/ferpa>.

8. If you have a problem, please do not hesitate to contact me. It is easiest to reach me via email, although I do request that you include your \*first name\*, your \*last name\*, your \*A number\*, and the \*course number\* in all correspondence. I check my email account daily, so if you need to contact me, you can expect a response within 24 hours, but you should not wait until the last minute before deadlines to write to me with questions.

#### **CHEATING, PLAGIARISM, AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. A single case of cheating can be the basis for a failing grade and/or dismissal from the University. Plagiarism includes knowingly “representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one’s own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgement. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials” (*Code of Policies and Procedures for Students*, Article V, Section 3A.1). The penalties for plagiarism are severe and may include probation, suspension, expulsion, withholding of transcripts, denial or revocation of degrees, referral to psychological counseling, and other appropriate disciplinary actions. If you have any questions concerning what constitutes cheating or plagiarism, feel free to ask me.

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNED READINGS**

**WEEK 1: Course/Syllabus Introduction/The Social Construction of Childhood (Tuesday, August 30)**

**Defining and Measuring Juvenile Delinquency (Thursday, September 1)**

Chapter 1, pp. 3-41

**WEEK 2: Defining Childhood/The Development of Social Control (Tuesday, September 6)**

Chapter 2, pp. 43-52

**The Juvenile Court (Thursday, September 8)**

Chapter 2, pp. 52-72

**WEEK 3: Theories of Delinquency/Classical Criminology (Tuesday, September 13)**

Chapter 3, pp. 75-91

**Positivism/Biological Theories (Thursday, September 15)**

Chapter 3, pp. 96-105

Chapter 4, pp. 107-121

**WEEK 4: Psychological Theories/Social Structure Theories (Tuesday, September 19)**

Chapter 4, pp. 121-143

Chapter 5, pp. 145-150

**Social Process Theories (Thursday, September 22)**

Chapter 5, pp. 150-163

**WEEK 5: Subcultural Theories/Social Reaction Theory (Tuesday, September 27)**

Chapter 5, pp. 163-179

**Critical Theories (Thursday, September 29)**

Chapter 6, pp. 181-195

**WEEK 6: Life-course and Integrated Theories (Tuesday, October 4)**

Chapter 6, pp. 196-212

**Study Guide available \*VIA CANVAS\***

**EXAM #1 (Thursday, October 8)**

**WEEK 7: Female Delinquency (Tuesday, October 11)**

Chapter 7, pp. 215-245

**Theories of Female Delinquency/The Family and Delinquency (Thursday, October 13)**

Chapter 7, pp. 227-245

Chapter 8, pp. 247-281

**WEEK 8: **\*\*NO CLASS\*\*** (Tuesday, October 20)**

**RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT #1 IS DUE \*VIA CANVAS\* at 6 PM MST**

**\*\*NO CLASS\*\*** (Friday Schedule, Thursday, October 22)

**WEEK 9: The Role of Neglect and Abuse (Tuesday, October 25)**

Chapter 8, pp. 259-270

**School and Delinquency/The Role of School Failure (Thursday, October 27)**

Chapter 9, pp. 283-315

**WEEK 10: Film: “Zero Tolerance” (Tuesday, November 1)**

**Youth Gangs and Delinquency (Thursday, November 3)**

Chapter 10, pp. 317-349

**WEEK 11: Film: “18<sup>th</sup> Street Gang” (Tuesday, November 8)**

**Substance Abuse and Delinquency (Thursday, November 10)**

Chapter 11, pp. 351-382

**Study Guide available \*VIA CANVAS\***

**WEEK 12: EXAM #2 (Tuesday November 15)**

**The Police in Juvenile Justice (Thursday, November 17)**

Chapter 12, pp. 385-419

**WEEK 13: Police Procedure, Discretion, and Prevention/The Juvenile Court (Tuesday, November 22)**

Chapter 12, pp. 404-419

Chapter 13, pp. 421-443

**RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT #2 IS DUE \*VIA CANVAS\* at 6 PM MST**

**\*\*NO CLASS\*\*** (Thanksgiving Break, Thursday, November 24)

**WEEK 14: Trying Juveniles as Adults/Juvenile Corrections (Tuesday, November 29)**

Chapter 13, pp. 444-453

Chapter 14, pp. 455-468

**Secure Confinement (Thursday, December 1)**

Chapter 14, pp. 455-491

**WEEK 15: Film: “Kids for Cash” (Tuesday, December 6)**

**International and Comparative Delinquency/Course Summary (Thursday, December 8)**

Chapter 15, pp. 493-523

**Finals Week: FINAL EXAM (Thursday, December 14, at 9:30 – 11:20 am in Old Main 115)**