

SOCIOLOGY 4XX3
THE SOCIOLOGY OF AT-RISK YOUTH

Fall, 2017

Day and Time of Classes: Mondays, 11:30-2:20

After first week: 11:30-1:30

Class Location: ETB 237

Instructor: Allison Chenier

Ext.: 27346

Office Hours: Monday 1:30-2:30

KTH 643

Email Address: chenieam@mcmaster.ca

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OUTLINE, TEXTS AND METHOD OF EVALUATION

This course examines the sociology of at-risk youth, including youth delinquency. This course is intended to provide a comprehensive understanding of issues facing at-risk youth in Canada. Particular emphasis will be given to contemporary issues in Canadian youth justice. The course begins with an overview of the social construction of youth deviance and then moves on to legislation and the changing philosophies that shape our official responses to youth crime. We will study important correlates of youth crime, such as the peer group, social disadvantage, and mental health to shed light on the lives of at-risk youth and the link to the youth justice system. We will also examine special populations of at-risk youth, such as girls, Aboriginal youth, and street youth. Throughout the course, students are encouraged to critically assess the official responses to youth crime as well as consider implications for legal and social policy.

This course also has an academic placement component. Students will be volunteering as tutors and informal mentors to high school students through the “Pathways to Education Program”. This community engaged scholarship component is a unique and valuable opportunity for students to gain deeper insight into the problems facing at-risk youth in their own community. This placement component will also allow students to apply what they are learning in this course. This will be of particular value for those students who are interested in education, welfare, and health. Because the placement component involves a significant time commitment, after the first week of class we will be meeting for only two hours. Information on the “Pathways to Education Program” and details about scheduling will be given in the first week of class.

Students are expected to do all required readings, come to all classes, and participate in class discussions. The evaluation components for the course include class participation, midterm, essay, and bi-weekly reading assignments.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course addresses four University Undergraduate Degree Level Expectations (see <http://ccl.mcmaster.ca/COU/pdf/Undergraduate%20Degree%20Level%20Expectations.pdf>). First, this course will allow students to develop knowledge of the key concepts, theoretical explanations, and emerging issues in the field of at-risk youth and youth justice. Second, students will be exposed to and critically examine the different methodologies used to not only measure youth crime in Canada, but also critically examine social scientific methodologies that develop our understanding of youth crime more broadly. Thirdly, through the written exams and essay components of the course, students will learn to communicate and make cogent arguments regarding one or more aspects of youth justice. Finally, the academic placement component of the course will allow students to transfer the skills and knowledge learned in class to a practical setting.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Tanner, Julian. (2009). *Teenage Troubles Youth Deviance in Canada*. 4th ed. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Winterdyck, John and Russell Smandych. (2012). 2nd ed. *Youth At Risk and Youth Justice A Canadian Overview*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Textbooks are available at the bookstore. Other readings will be posted on Avenue to Learn or will be on Reserve at the library.

EVALUATION:

Class participation	15% (to be decided in December)
Bi-weekly reading assignments	25%
Midterm	20%
<u>Essay</u>	<u>40%</u>
Total	100%

CLASS PARTICIPATION (15%)

Attendance at all lectures is essential for success in this course. Students are expected to be familiar with materials introduced in class lectures and videos as well as all assigned readings. Lecture notes will not be posted nor distributed by the instructor. If you miss a lecture, please make arrangements with another student to borrow notes. In order to avoid disruptions, please put cell phones on silent and turn computer notification sounds off during lecture.

Students are also expected to contribute meaningfully each week to our class discussions. The small class size will allow us to engage with the material together. Participation grades will be allocated in December.

BI-WEEKLY READING ASSIGNMENTS (5 x 5% each)

Students will be divided into two groups on the first week of class. Students are responsible for submitting a 1-2 page reflection paper on a bi-weekly basis. These reflections should incorporate the week's required readings and, if possible, include links to their experiences at Pathways to Education. Each student will submit five reading assignments throughout the term. They are worth 5% each for a total of 25% of the final grade.

MIDTERM EXAM (20%)

The midterm exam will consist of long answer questions. The midterm will cover course material from weeks one through six. The midterm will take place in class **Monday, October 30th**.

ESSAY (40%)

One benefit of community engaged scholarship is the opportunity to apply the knowledge learned in class to a practical situation. Thus, for the essay component students will be reflecting on their academic placement in "Pathways" and will be relating it to a topic covered in class. The choice of topic is up to the student and it is not required that students examine only one topic. As will become clear in the course, often at-risk youth are dealing with more than one issue in their lives. The essay is to be 10 pages, double-spaced. Students should consult at least six academic sources outside of the course texts as they apply the course material to their experiences in placement. Students are encouraged to come talk to me early in the term to discuss essay topic ideas. A hard copy of the essay is due in class **Monday, December 4th**.

Students will also be required to submit their papers via the TurnItIn dropbox for plagiarism detection. The drobox will be available through Avenue to Learn.

ACADEMIC PLACEMENT:

Academic placements are subject to the guidelines set out by the Faculty of Social Science. The benefits to academic placements are many: students are able to apply what they are learning in class through practical and hands-on experiences; they are able to learn from those with experience working in the field; and they are able to make contacts and build their resume. All of these benefits will enrich learning both inside and outside the classroom.

Students are **required** to complete a **minimum of 24** hours of placement at “Pathways to Education Program”, where they will volunteer as tutors or mentors on a weekly basis for students in grades 9, 10, 11, or 12 (<http://www.pathwaystoeducation.ca/en/hamilton>). This program is offered to youth in North Hamilton and takes place at the North Hamilton Community Health Centre (NHCHC). Two hours of orientation will be given the first week of class.

Students completing unpaid placements as part of an academic course are required to complete the following documents and return them to your instructor or Ruthanne Talbot:

- 1) Students must sign the [student declaration letter](#), required to let them know, via sign-off, they have coverage via WSIB or ACE/private coverage and to report incidents accordingly;
- 2) Placement “employers” sign off on [letter to placement employers](#), noting that they have been informed that WSIB coverage (or ACE/private coverage) is provided via the MTCU, and therefore their respective WSIB standings (i.e. premiums) will not be effected, and;
- 3) Students and placement “employers” will sign off on the [Pre-Placement Safety Orientation Checklist](#).

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Readings may be added throughout the term. Notices of additional readings will be posted on Avenue to Learn

SECTION ONE: Introductions, the Social Construction of Deviance, Legislation, and the Nature and Extent of Youth Crime in Canada

WEEK ONE: September 11th

Course outline and introductions
Pathways to Education Program orientation

Required Reading: None

WEEK TWO: September 18th

The Social Construction of Youth Deviance

Students in Group 1 submit a reading assignment

Required:

- Tanner, Ch. 1
- Parnaby, P. (2003). “Disaster Through Dirty Windshield: Law, Order and Toronto’s Squeegee Kids”. *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 28 (3), 281-308. (Available on Avenue to Learn)

WEEK THREE: September 25th

Theories of Juvenile Delinquency

Students in Group 2 submit a reading assignment

Required:

- Tanner, Ch. 3
- Winterdyck and Smandych, Ch. 8

WEEK FOUR: October 2nd

Legislation and the Nature and Extent of Youth Crime

Students in Group 1 submit a reading assignment

Required:

- Tanner, Ch. 2
- Winterdyck and Smandych, Ch. 2, 3, 6
- Sprott, Jane B., & Allan Manson. (2017). "YCJA Bail Conditions: 'Treating' Boys and Girls Differently". *Canadian Criminal Law Review*, 22 (1), 77-94. (Available on Avenue to Learn)

SECTION TWO: Correlates to Youth Crime

WEEK FIVE: October 9th--No classes-Mid term break ☺

WEEK SIX: October 16th

Risk Factors-School and the Family

Students in Group 2 submit a reading assignment

Required:

- Tanner, Ch. 5
- Cernkovich, Stephen A. and Peggy Giordano. (1987). "Family Relationships and Delinquency". *Criminology*, 25(2): 295-321. (Available on Avenue to Learn)
- Kierkus, Christopher A., & Douglas Baer. (2002). "A social control explanation of the relationship between family structure and delinquent behaviour". *Canadian Journal of Criminology*, 44 (4), 425-458. (Available on Avenue to Learn)

WEEK SEVEN: October 23rd

Risk Factors-Peers/Gangs

Students in Group 1 submit a reading assignment

Required:

- Tanner, Ch. 7
- Winterdyck and Smandych, Ch.12

- Decker, Scott. (1996). "Collective and Normative Features of Gang Violence". *Justice Quarterly*, 13 (2): 243-264. (Available on Avenue to Learn)

Supplemental:

- Hemmati, Tony. (2006). "The Nature of Canadian Urban Gangs and Their Use of Firearms: A Review of the Literature and Police Survey". Department of Justice Canada. (Available on Avenue to Learn)

WEEK EIGHT: October 30th

Midterm Exam—No readings

WEEK NINE: November 6th

Risk Factors-Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Students in Group 2 submit a reading assignment

Required:

- Winterdyck and Smandych, Ch. 10
- Erickson, Patricia G. and Jennifer E. Butters. (2005). "How Does the Canadian Juvenile Justice System Respond to Youth with Substance Use Associated Problems? Gaps, Challenges, and Emerging Issues". *Substance Use & Misuse*, 40:953-973. (Available on Avenue to Learn)
- Harrison, Lana D. Et al. (2001). "The Drugs-Violence Nexus Among American and Canadian Youth". *Substance Use & Misuse*, 36(14): 2065-2086. (Available on Avenue to Learn)

SECTION THREE: SPECIAL POPULATIONS

WEEK TEN: November 13th

Special Populations-Girls

Students in Group 1 submit a reading assignment

Required:

- Tanner, Ch. 8
- Winterdyck and Smandych, Ch. 7
- Barron, Christie and Dany Lacombe. (2005). "Moral Panic and the Nasty Girl". *Canadian Review of Sociology*, 42(1): 51-69. (Available on Avenue to Learn)

WEEK ELEVEN: November 20th

Special Populations-Aboriginal Youth

Students in Group 2 submit a reading assignment

Required:

- Tanner, Ch. 4
- Winterdyck and Smandych, Ch. 11
- Grekul, Jana and Patti LaBoucane-Benson. (2008). "Aboriginal Gangs and Their (Dis)Placement: Contextualizing Recruitment, Membership, and Status". *Canadian Journal of Criminology and*

Criminal Justice, 50(1): 59-82. (Available on Avenue to Learn)

WEEK TWELVE: November 27th

Special Populations-Victims of Human Trafficking

Students in Group 1 submit a reading assignment

Required:

- Winterdyck and Smandych, Ch. 14
- Sethi, Anupriya. "Domestic Sex Trafficking of Aboriginal Girls in Canada: Issues and Implications". *First Peoples Child & Family Review*, 3(3): 57-71. (Available on Avenue to Learn)
- Bach, Jesse E., & Stacey Diane A. Litam. (2017). "'Kind Regards': an examination of one buyer's attempt to purchase a trafficked child for sex". *Journal of Sexual Aggression*, 23 (2), 222-233. (Available on Avenue to Learn)

WEEK THIRTEEN: December 4th

Special Population-Street-Involved Youth

*****TERM PAPER DUE*****

Students in Group 2 submit a reading assignment

Required:

- Tanner, Ch. 6
- Winterdyck and Smandych, Ch. 12
- Boisvert, Jean-Francois, et al. (2005). "The Health of Street Youth". *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 96(6): 432-437.
- Gaetz, Stephen. (2004). "Safe Streets for Whom? Homeless Youth, Social Exclusion, and Criminal Victimization". *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 46(4): 423-456. (Available on Avenue to Learn)

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, specifically Appendix 3, located at <http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained. (For example, submitting weekly written assignments or an essay that has already been submitted for credit in another course.)
2. Improper collaboration in group work.

3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

In this course we will be using a software package designed to reveal plagiarism. Students will be required to submit their work electronically and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

DEPARTMENTAL/UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

Do NOT fax assignments. Please see your instructor for the most appropriate way to submit assignments.

The Sociology staff do NOT date-stamp assignments, nor do they monitor the submission or return of papers. Written weekly assignments and the midterm will be returned in class.

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”. Please note these regulations have changed beginning Spring/Summer 2015. Please consult the MSAF policy, which can be found in the Undergraduate Calendar under General Academic Regulations. You may submit a maximum of 1 Academic Work Missed request per term. It is YOUR responsibility to follow up with your instructor immediately regarding the nature of the accommodation.

If you are absent more than 3 days, exceed 1 request per term, or are absent for a reason other than medical, you MUST visit your Associate Dean’s Office (Faculty Office). You may be required to provide supporting documentation.

This form should be filled out when you are about to return to class after your absence.

Students should check the web, the white board and the Undergraduate Bulletin board outside the Sociology office (KTH-627) for notices pertaining to Sociology classes or departmental business (eg. class scheduling information, location of mailboxes and offices, tutorial information, class cancellations, TA job postings, etc.).

Computer use in the classroom is intended to facilitate learning in that particular lecture or tutorial. At the discretion of the instructor, students using a computer for any other purpose may be required to turn the computer off for the remainder of the lecture or tutorial.

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

It is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.