

SOC 270: Deviance in Society

Summer 2012 - online

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Course Introduction: Who (and what) is normal and who gets to decide? How is deviance maintained by all of us? How has it changed over time? Why are some acts of deviance seen as immoral, criminal, or illegal but others are collectively celebrated? How do authority figures factor into defining deviance? If any (or all) of these questions are of interest to you, then you are in the right place!

In this course we are going to explore a number of questions about the boundaries of acceptability within societies. Instead of just taking such boundaries for granted, we will look at how the creation of normality and deviance is a process of social construction. We will examine how society can influence or constrain people to live within or outside of the socially constructed boundaries. And as we explore this subject we will be challenged to reexamine our own understandings of what is deviant and what is normal, to reflect on how definitions of deviance shape our identities and values, and to wrestle with how definitions of deviance and attempts at social control affect others.

The aim of this course is for us to begin analyzing deviant behaviors/practices in order to better understand the relationship between individuals and society. We will question how normality is defined and critically think about how we participate in shaping the "deviance box." Ultimately, this course will compel us to see how labels construct our sense of self, where we fit into society, and the ways in which the structures of society maintain social order. Welcome, strap yourself in, and enjoy the ride!

Required Texts:

John Curra. *The Relativity of Deviance*. 2nd edition. Pine Forge Press, 2011.
ISBN# - 978-1-4129-6466-1.

Learning Atmosphere:

I believe that students learn best when they are actively involved in the teaching and learning process. Thus, this is an active and interactive course where you will often learn by doing. You are expected to observe the world, read, write, discuss, and participate. I think of our class as a collaborative learning community where we all teach and learn from each other. Every time you make a comment or ask a question, you teach something to the rest of us. I challenge you to abandon the traditional passive student role and to get involved with teaching and learning - I think you'll enjoy it and learn a lot in the process.

A note about online learning: Unfortunately (or fortunately, depending upon your perspective!), online classes are not for everyone. In general, they demand far more independent initiative and personal

discipline than do classes that meet on campus. Additionally, online classes demand stronger reading and writing skills. If you are a student who likes having someone to keep you on your toes, such as reminding you regularly to keep up with your work, then online classes are probably not a good choice for you. That's okay (it's not a failure on your part!)...some students simply thrive more when working on a "strict" daily routine, the kind of routine that on-campus classes provide. Thus, the students who succeed most at online learning tend to be those students who:

- are disciplined enough to check the course website around five-to-seven days per week;
- have enough personal initiative that they will contact their instructor (that is, me!) if they don't understand something;
- have good to excellent written communication skills;
- are good readers (i.e. they can sit down and focus on a reading, highlighting key concepts/ideas, and then study it well);
- are independent; AND
- have a basic understanding of computer culture and technology (navigating a website, uploading/downloading, discussion etiquette)

A note about course content: Since sociologists examine just about every aspect of the social world, we will sometimes talk about provocative material in class. Please be advised that when we explore controversial topics, they will be framed in an academic context. Topics run the gamut in sociology and at times there may be material that makes people uncomfortable. Keep in mind that when we find ourselves in a space outside of our comfort zone, it's an opportunity for learning. You may be confronted with subject matter that is difficult to watch, see, discuss, or listen to. You are free to leave the room at any time, but please know you will be responsible for any course material you may have missed while you were gone. Also, profanity exists in our social world and thus will be used throughout this course - so please be advised. If you have any questions or concerns about course content or climate, don't hesitate to let me know.

A note about instructor availability: I have noticed that, sometimes, students who enroll in online classes have unreasonable expectations about their Instructor's availability. Please be aware that I am not online 24-hours a day. In general, I am online for this class a couple of hours per day. You will rarely be able to reach me in the evenings or on the weekends. I am, obviously, an active member of this course, but I do my coursework during the week, during daytime business hours. *Thus, please do not send to me late-night or weekend emails expecting an immediate response.*

Learning and Course Outcomes:

After participating, discussing, and completing this course, a successful student will demonstrate:

- 1) Apply basic sociological concepts and ideas to the idea of Deviance;
- 2) Discuss the role of power in defining "deviance";
- 3) Describe a critical perspective of society and social control;
- 4) Question the idea of a "polite society" or the "status quo" in relation to control and power;
- 5) Explain how we construct ideas of our Selves against the landscape of deviance;
- 6) Demonstrate an understanding of positive and negative sanctions as related to deviance in society;
- 7) Describe how changes in society impact what is and is not considered deviant;
- 8) Describe how changes in society impact who has/has not been considered deviant;

9) Explain the role of race, class, gender, and sexuality in the construction of deviance.

General Course Rules and Expectations:

- **A sincere effort to learn the course material.** When participating in discussions and when writing papers, your comments should indicate to me that you have read and understand the course material. Some students wrongly assume that they can simply "wing it" in an online class and still receive a high grade.
- **Preparation.** You should keep up with the readings each week, particularly before contributing to the discussion board.
- **Promptness.** You should comply with all due dates, as **I do not accept late work.** **All assignments are due by 10am on the listed due date...NO EXCEPTIONS (that includes computer problems).** You will learn that I am quite a stickler on due dates, so please learn to comply with all deadlines. I highly recommend that you plan to turn in your work early (with plenty of time to spare before the 10am deadline - you can even turn in your work days early!).
- I accept assignments ONLY in the following formats: pdf and Word. Do NOT send to me attachments in other formats. Submitting your work to me in other formats will result in a **ZERO** grade. **You can submit your work to me in one of three ways:**
 - (1) by uploading your work to Vista (on the Assignments pages)
 - (2) by emailing your work to me through Blackboard Vista, or
 - (3) by emailing your work to me at my Bellevue College address.

If #1 doesn't work for you, then try #2 or #3. It is your job to get your work in on time. I highly, HIGHLY recommend that you create a "back up plan" for what you will do if you have computer problems. **Please note that you are responsible for getting your work in on time REGARDLESS of the state of your computer/browser or your Internet Service Provider (ISP).** All late work will receive a zero grade. Due dates are indicated on the "Calendar" link on the left-hand side of the course website, so it is extremely important for you to stay on top of the Calendar.

- **Contribution.** Learning about each other's experiences and perspectives is an integral part of the learning process in this course. I believe that you will learn a lot about yourself and your fellow classmates. To work effectively in this course, therefore, you are expected to be an active participant in our learning environment. This is why you are required to contribute to class discussions and to read almost all of your classmates' posts. Please be advised that your grade will suffer if you do not participate and contribute to the intellectual life of our class.
- **Respect, courtesy, and tolerance.** Since learning about diverse experiences is central to this course, it is of the utmost importance that you respect your classmates' experiences, differences, and opinions. Disrespectful attitudes will not be tolerated.
- **Honesty.** This means no cheating and no plagiarism. If you cheat/plagiarize, you fail. No excuses will be taken into account. Your work must be your own. Furthermore, you are required to acknowledge in your papers if you have borrowed any ideas, terms, or phrases, even if you have borrowed from a classmate OR from the textbook. Please do not copy and paste material from wikipedia or any other website into your assignments, as this is a severe form of cheating (that is very easy to catch, by the way). ***In this class, your assignments should be grounded in the textbook (rather than web resources, which are often wrong). This means that you should NOT do internet research in this class - all you need is in the course textbook.*** If you have any hesitation, or if you are in doubt about one of these issues, feel free to ask me.

Bellevue College's Rules and Regulations:

- **Incomplete:** If a student fails to complete all the required work for a course, an instructor may assign the grade of Incomplete ("I"). The student must complete the coursework by the end of the next quarter, or receive the assigned letter grade (usually an "F").
- **F Grade:** Students who fail a course will receive a letter grade of "F."
- **Final Examination Schedule:** The Social Science Division will adhere to the final examination schedule as stated in the BC Schedule. Final examinations will be held at the end of each quarter at fixed times. Instructors will not give examinations in advance of the regular schedule. A student who is absent from any examination held at any time during the quarter may forfeit the right to make up the examination. If, for illness or some other circumstance beyond the student's control, the student is unable to be present at any scheduled examination and has contacted the instructor on a timely basis, the student may be permitted to take such examination at a time designated by the instructor.
- **Withdrawal from Class:** College policy states that students must formally withdraw from a class by the end of the seventh week of the quarter (Registration Office, B125). If a student has not withdrawn by that date, an appropriate letter grade will be assigned for the course.
- **Hardship Withdrawal:** Instructors may assign the grade of "HW" (hardship withdrawal) at their discretion in the event that a student cannot complete the coursework due to extreme and exceptional circumstances. Students may also contact the Enrollment Services office BEFORE grades are assigned in cases of hardship.
- **Cheating, Stealing and Plagiarizing:** Cheating, stealing and plagiarizing (using the ideas or words of another as one's own without crediting the source) and inappropriate/disruptive classroom behavior are violations of the Student Code of Conduct at Bellevue College. Examples of unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to: talking out of turn, arriving late or leaving early without a valid reason, allowing cell phones/pagers to ring, and inappropriate behavior toward the instructor or classmates. The instructor can refer any violation of the Student Code of Conduct to the Dean of Student Services for possible probation or suspension from Bellevue College. Specific student rights, responsibilities and appeal procedures are listed in the Student Code of Conduct, available in the office of the Dean of Student Services. If you are accused of cheating, stealing exams and/or plagiarism, there is a Bellevue College Student Discipline and Appeals Procedure (the right to due process) which you may pursue. Contact the office of Division Chair (D110), the Dean of Student Services (B231A) or the Associated Student Body (C212) for information regarding the appeals process.

Students with Disabilities:

All students are responsible for all requirements of the class, but the way they meet these requirements may vary. If you need specific academic accommodations due to a disability, please speak with me and with the Disability Resource Center at (425)564-2498. You will need to obtain the appropriate documentation from the DRC in room B132. The disability accommodation documentation must be given to me **before it is needed** rather than afterward, so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

Grading:

Grades are based on **three main factors**. (1) Discussion Board Participation, (2) quizzes, and (3) application papers. Each of these elements is awarded a specific number of points:

Discussion Board Participation
 Quizzes (5 at 50 points/each)
 Application Papers (5 at 50 points/each)
TOTAL

200 points
 250 points
 250 points
700 points

Grade	Points	Percentage
A	648-700	93-100%
A-	627-647	90-92%
B+	613-626	88-89%
B	578-612	83-87%
B-	557-577	80-82

Grade	Points	Percentage
C+	543-556	78-79%
C	508-542	73-77%
C-	487-507	70-72%
D+	473-486	68-69%
D	417-472	60-67%
F	416 & Below	59% & Below

Description of the 3 Grading Components:

1. **Discussion Participation (200/700 points):** Each week, you will participate in large class discussions on the "Discussions" link (on the left-hand side of the course website). It is your responsibility, as a member of our class, to respond thoughtfully not only to my prompt(s), but also to your classmates' comments. You are required to participate thoroughly in each week's discussion(s), as your grade will be based on the quality of your contributions and your level of involvement. In order to receive high grades on your discussion, you will need to:

(1) begin posting your comments **early** in the week (if you wait until the night before the discussion is "due," then your classmates will not benefit from your insights!),

(2) make **AT LEAST 3-5 *quality* posts** throughout the week (i.e. contribute something intellectually meaningful), and

(3) aim to read **almost all** of your classmates' posts throughout the week (you will likely learn a lot from them!) Since the Blackboard system keeps track of everything you do while logged into our course website, I am able to discern how much you are participating in discussion, including how many of your classmates' posts you are reading. I use this information when assigning your discussion grades for the week. Remember, **post AND READ**.

I recommend that you **check the discussion board almost daily, including the morning the discussion closes**. By checking the discussion board frequently, you will be able to look for opportunities where you

can add more to the conversation (thus improving your grade!). This will also improve your learning. The following are guidelines that you should follow in order to contribute to successful class discussions:

- Your responses to my discussion questions should be in sentence/paragraph format, and you should avoid what I call "text message" grammar (that means no "u" instead of "you"). While format is always important (since it eases communication), the focus in this class is primarily on content. Therefore, your comments should be meaningful and expand your classmates' understanding of the topic. The goal for our discussions is to deepen our understanding of the course themes.
- On each discussion thread, you can earn up to **twenty points** for your contributions. To get a high discussion grade, you must read a significant number of your classmates' posts (that's worth half of the points), and your answers must reflect real thought and deepen the conversation (that's the other half of the points). Therefore keep the following in mind:
 - Say something that will *contribute* to a *meaningful* discussion--this requires *time and thought!* Thoroughly reflect on and think about the point you are making.
 - Fully explain and elaborate your points, using examples, evidence and logic to explain. Rely on evidence whenever possible, as this course is a social science course, and you are learning the social science perspective. Speak with precision regarding your meaning, rather than being vague or general.
 - Respond to the topic, not the author. This does not mean you should ignore the person who wrote the original post, but it means you need to focus on the ideas in the post and how to further the conversation on the topic, not tell the author what you think of his or her post.
 - Place your reaction in the context of the discussion. Make sure that you clearly connect your response to the week's (or previous weeks') themes.
 - Minimize prejudices, biases, unfounded beliefs, and too much reliance on emotional reactions, which can sidetrack good sound judgment and opinions rooted in your learning and in the sociological perspective. It is easy for bias, belief and emotion to dominate a discussion because we have existing emotions around the topic at hand, or because we fall prey to "reductionism" (seeing individuals as causes of their predicaments, which have social roots and solutions).
 - Feel free to be personal and interpersonal on the threads, in addition to substantive discussion. This aspect of discussion helps the group bond as a community. Remember, too, that you will apply many of the topics to your own social worlds. Be careful, however, not to go WAY off on a personal tangent--stay focused on the topic. If you want to carry on a more personal discussion, use the "other" forum on the discussion site. The assignment forums are reserved for analyzing the assignment of the week.

Examples of good discussion posts include: clarifying or expanding the relevant concept if important points are missing, vague or incorrect; looking at the issue from another angle or perspective; adding pertinent information; asking a question that forces your classmates to think more in depth on the topic.

Since the discussion board is our virtual classroom conversation, please, do not take this portion of your grade lightly! I'm looking forward to an engaging and interesting discussion board!

2. Quizzes: (250/700points; 50 points each)

Over the course of the quarter, you will be given 5 quizzes assessing your understanding of the readings. Quizzes will typically be short answer, although I may throw in a multiple choice question once in a while. **Quizzes will be open for a one-hour time frame.** Quiz dates are noted on the course calendar.

3. Application Papers (250/700 points; 50 points each)

You will have 6 "application papers" due throughout the quarter. The purpose of these papers is to apply concepts introduced in our readings toward an analysis of outside materials. For each paper, students will be asked to use a sociological and critical lens on supplemental materials, such as a film, websites, and conduct a little research of their own. Each paper should be 1-2 pages in length and should integrate key ideas from the textbook. All papers or written work should be typed, in Times New Roman, 12 point font, and double-spaced with 1" margins on all sides. Assignments are due promptly at 10:00 a.m. - no late work will be accepted. Late papers or assignments will receive a zero. You must always give proper credit to the text(s) from which you draw and formulate your ideas. Papers should be written from an academic perspective - so, dude, like no colloquial language please!

PLEASE NOTE THAT IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, COSIDERATIONS, OR COMPLAINTS ABOUT A GRADE YOU RECEIVED, I ASK YOU TO TAKE 24 HOURS TO REEXAMINE THE ANSWERS OR THE WRITING THAT YOU SUBMITTED AND THEN COME AND TALK WITH ME.

Instructor Notes:

If at any point throughout the quarter you are confused or unclear about the expectations of the course, course material, a grade you received, or any other matters, I strongly encourage you to come talk with me early. It is my goal that all students succeed in this course; but, I can only help you if you meet me half way. Furthermore, if you are having personal problems or other issues going on outside of school, please let me know. I recognize that we all have lives outside of school, and am very willing to work with students, but I can only do so if I know there is a problem!