

SOCL 4462: Sociology of Youth and Crime
Fall 2017

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Class Location/Time: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 3:00pm - 4:20pm, 220 Stubbs Hall

SOCL 4462: SOCIOLOGY OF YOUTH AND CRIME (3)

Prereq.: SOCL 2001 or equivalent. The sociological study of adolescent deviance and crime; the socio-demographic correlates and social psychological causes of youthful offending and the juvenile justice system.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course presents an overview of the relationship between youth and crime through the lens of street gangs. A general survey of theory, measurement, and reproach on gangs along with gang control programs and policies will be presented. Diverse research-based perspectives about gangs will be exposed to students, often times contrasting with depictions of gangs from law enforcement and the news/entertainment media. Various mediums will be used to illustrate the gap between the idea of what a street gang is and the reality of street gangs. The emphasis in this course is to critically evaluate what we know about street gangs, their relationship to crime, and what public policies can and should be used to deter crime and violence.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- To **describe** basic definitions of gangs and why these groups are considered to be a problem in society;
- To **explore** different theoretical perspectives used to explain the emergence, development and persistence of gangs;
- To **understand** the extent, nature, and criminal involvement of gangs in both America and globally;
- To **critically evaluate** the effectiveness and the consequences of suppression, intervention, and prevention strategies used to combat gangs;
- To **become smart consumers** of news reports, political rhetoric, and public discussion about youth crime, gangs, and other criminal groups.

ASSIGNED TEXTS:

Howell, James C. & Elizabeth Griffiths. 2016. *Gangs In America's Communities*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sullivan, Mercer L. 1989. "Getting Paid": *Youth Crime and Work In The Inner City*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

*Additional articles / chapters are posted on MOODLE.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

Gang ethnography and gang films used for course papers.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

Students are expected to come to class on time and remain for the entire class. Attendance and participation are vital components to being successful in this class. The reading assignments should be completed by the dates indicated on the schedule below. In class, you should be prepared to demonstrate your understanding of the reading material (or at least have a set of thoughtful questions) and prepared to offer a point of view about the issues being addressed. Participation by students produces a more thoughtful discussion making the course not only more interesting but more meaningful. Class attendance / participation is worth 20% of your grade.

Reading quizzes will be given out periodically throughout the quarter. If students are actively engaged in class discussion then quizzes will become infrequent. However, if class participation is lacking then quizzes will be relied upon to gauge student preparedness.

A class paper will be given and due the final week of the semester. Each student will choose a gang ethnography to read and write a 8-10 page essay assessing how themes from class are depicted in the text. This assignment is worth 20% of your overall course grade.

Students will also be required to participate in a group project. Groups will be based upon a students selection of two gang-related films. Generally, students will discuss the myths and realities of how gangs are portrayed in each film and also compare and contrast how gangs are depicted in these films. Each group will be required to present their project on **November 28, 2017** during the last week of the semester.

Three in class exams (non-cumulative) will be given on **September 1, 2017; October 5, 2017; November 14, 2017**. The final examination (cumulative) will be given during the examination period on **December 6, 2017** from **10:00 am to 12:00 pm**. The final is comprehensive. All exams will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. All students will be taking the class for a letter grade; there is no pass/fail option.

Grades will be distributed as follows:

		<u>Grading Scale:</u>	
Class Attendance / Participation	20%	97% - 100%	A+
Quizzes	5%	94% - 96.99%	A
Gang Ethnography Paper	20%	90% - 93.99%	A-
Group Project - Gang Film	15%	87% - 89.99%	B+
Exams	20%	84% - 86.99%	B
Final	25%	80% - 83.99%	B-
		77% - 79.99%	C+
		74% - 76.99%	C
		70% - 73.99%	C-
		67% - 69.99%	D+
		64% - 66.99%	D
		60% - 63.99%	D-
		0% - 59.99%	F

COURSE POLICIES

Academic Misconduct and Classroom Etiquette: Students are expected to abide by the LSU student code of conduct. Students who are caught cheating on an exam you will be referred to LSU's Dean of Students. Students are also expected to abide by the basic rules of classroom etiquette including: getting to class on time and coming prepared to engage; turning off all electronic devices; not talking during lectures; and remaining respectful of diverse views when engaging in classroom debate. All views are allowed and welcome; however, expressing them in a respectful way is required. Reasonable people can disagree, but disagreement needs to be expressed in ways that are conducive to the free exchange of ideas, productive dialogue, and meaningful learning.

Use of Technology in the Classroom: Please turn off **all** computers, cell phones, pagers, portable devices (e.g., Tablets, MP3, or CD players) and any other electronic communication and/or entertainment devices before coming to class. Students with phones that ring during class will be asked to leave.

Missed Classes: If you miss a class, you will be required to provide written documentation of a valid reason for your absence within one week of the day (see LSU Policy Statement 22, posted on the course website, for examples of valid reasons for absences). Missing class more than once or twice is likely to compromise your grade.

Missed Exams: If you miss an exam, you will be required to provide written documentation of a valid reason for your absence within one week of the exam day (see LSU Policy Statement 22, posted on the course website, for examples of valid reasons for absences). All make-up exams will be administered at my discretion and at a time and place of my choosing. If you miss a scheduled make-up exam you will receive a zero for your exam grade, which will make it very difficult to pass this course.

Grade Disputes: As mistakes may occur and the instructor admits he is not perfect, students feeling that an error was made in grading an assignment may utilize the following procedure to challenge the score: Students should return a copy of their assignment along with a written statement arguing why the grade needs to be adjusted should be turned into the instructor within two weeks of the assignment's return. An assignment or exam grade is considered final after two weeks of its posting. The instructor will evaluate the student's argument and reevaluate the grade. The instructor will then discuss the argument with the student during office hours. Please be aware, the instructor may possibly downgrade the assignment if during the reassessment he notes additional errors **and any curve applied to the original grading will no longer apply**. Since a paper may be downgraded, groupwork will not be reevaluated unless all group members consent to the process.

Disability: Any student who feels he/she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the professor privately to discuss specific needs. Also, contact the LSU Disability Services at (225) 578-5919 as soon as possible to better ensure that accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

OUT OF CLASS EXPECTATIONS

It is expected that the students have read the assigned chapters or pages prior to class for the background necessary to properly participate in the discussion and think critically about the concepts addressed. As a general policy, for each hour you are in class, you (the student) should plan to spend at least two hours preparing for the next class. Since this course is for three credit hours, you should expect to spend around six hours outside of class each week reading or writing assignments for the class.

COURSE SUGGESTIONS:

Although it is not required, you are encouraged to:

1. Raise your hand in class, question the professor, and engage with the material via discussion!
2. Get acquainted with one another. Exchange e-mail addresses and phone numbers. Form study groups. Engage in collaborative learning. Studies show that students who engage in collaborative learning tend to do better in college and beyond.
3. See the professor and/or the GA as often as is necessary to do well in this course. Do not wait until problems are irreparable or concerns are outdated to seek assistance. Try to make it to our office hours but if that is not possible make an appointment. If you extend the effort, we will be available and willing to help you do well in this class.

CONTENT & TRIGGER ADVISORY

Several of the materials, used in class and assigned, contain mature themes with coarse language and adult content - viewer discretion is advised. To a degree, this is the point of using these materials to better understand street gangs and the larger social world - learning can be an uncomfortable process. If you have specific triggers, please let me know and I will note the assignments accordingly. However, this will not release you from the assignment. The trigger warnings are to give you the tools you require to complete the assigned work.

COPYRIGHT ISSUES

Copyright law protects this syllabus, my lectures, and all materials distributed and presented to me during this course. You are authorized to take notes in this class, but that authorization extends only to making one set of notes for your personal use and no other use. You are not authorized, and it is a violation of University policy, to sell, license, commercially publish, post, distribute, transmit, display, nor record notes from this class unless you have my written consent to do so. Students in this course have my permission to share notes with one another or with the Office of Disability Services, but may not transmit them to students not enrolled in this course this semester.

RIGHT TO MODIFY SYLLABUS

The standards and requirements set forth in this syllabus may be modified at any time by the course instructor. Notice of such changes will be by announcement in class.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Week 1: INTRODUCTION

August 22nd

THE WARRIORS

August 24th

Class Orientation

Read:

Howell & Griffiths - Preface

Watch: The Wire - Season 4

Episode 1: Boys of Summer

Episode 2: Soft Eyes

Episode 3: Home Rooms

Week 2: STREET GANG HISTORY

August 29th

History of Gangs in the United States

Read:

Howell & Griffiths - Chapter 1

Sullivan - Chapter 1

Watch: The Wire - Season 4

Episode 4: Refugees

Episode 5: Alliances

August 31st

Institutionalization of Street Gangs

Week 3: REALITY / PROMISE OF GANGS

September 5th

Myths & Realities of Gangs

Read:

Howell & Griffiths - Chapter 2 & 7

Sullivan - Chapter 2 & 3

Coughlin & Venkatesh, 2003 (Moodle)

Felson, 2006 (Moodle)

Maxson, 1998 (Moodle)

September 7th

National Gang Problem Trends

Watch: The Wire - Season 4

Episode 6: Margin of Error

Episode 7: Unto Others

Week 4: DEFINING GANGS & MEMBERS

September 12th

Definitional Problems

Studying Youth Gangs

Read:

Howell & Griffiths - Chapter 3

Sullivan - Chapter 4

Curry, 2015 (Moodle)

Katz & Jackson-Jacobs, 2004 (Moodle)

Hughes, 2005 (Moodle)

Sierra-Arevalo & Papachristos, 2015 (Moodle)

September 14th

EXAM 1

Watch: The Wire - Season 4

Episode 8: Corner Boys

Episode 9: Know Your Place

Week 5: MACRO-LEVEL GANG THEORY

September 19th

Social Disorganization Theory

Reaction Formation Theory

Subcultural Theory

Strain Theory

September 21st

Underclass Theory

Routine Activities Theory

Social Conflict Theory

Emergence & Expansion

Read:

Howell & Griffiths - Chapter 4

Sullivan - Chapter 5

Papachristos & Hughes, 2015 (Moodle)

Watch: [The Wire - Season 4](#)

[Episode 10: Misgivings](#)

[Episode 11: A New Day](#)

Week 6: MICRO-LEVEL GANG THEORY

September 26th

Life-course Theory

Intersectional Theory

Multiple Marginality

September 28th

Social Learning Theory

Risk & Protective Factors

Evolutionary Theory

Unified Theory

Read:

Howell & Griffiths - Chapter 5

Sullivan - Chapter 6

Ayling, 2011 (Moodle)

Wood & Alleyne, 2010 (Moodle)

Watch: [The Wire - Season 4](#)

[Episode 12: That's Got His Own](#)

[Episode 13: Final Grades](#)

Week 7: GROUP PROCESSES & STRUCTURE

October 3rd

Gang Structure

Group Processes

Social Network Analysis

October 5th

EXAM 2

Read:

Howell & Griffiths - Chapter 5

Sullivan - Chapter 7

Decker & Curry, 2002 (Moodle)

Klein & Maxson, 2006 (Moodle)

Papachristos et al., 2013 (Moodle)

Week 8: GENDER & GANGS

October 10th

Female Gang Members

October 12th - No Class

Fall Break

Read:

Howell & Griffiths - Chapter 6

Sullivan - Chapter 8 & 9

Esbensen & Carson, 2012 (Moodle)

Miller, 1973 (Moodle)

Panfil & Peterson, 2015 (Moodle)

Watch: [Lives in Hazard](#)

Week 9: RACE / ETHNICITY & GANGS

October 17th:

Latino/Hispanic/Chicano

Black

White

October 19th

Asian

Indigenous

Immigrant

Week 10: URBAN GANGS & VIOLENCE

October 24th

Gang Violence

October 26th

Gangs & Local Communities

**Week 11: RURAL, SUBURBAN, INTER-/
TRANS-NATIONAL GANGS**

October 31st

Rural & Suburban Gangs

November 2nd

Inter-/Trans-National Gangs

Week 12: "NON-TRADITIONAL" GANGS

November 7th

Prison Gangs

Fraternities & Sororities

November 9th

Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs (OMGs)

Alt-Right or Street Gang

Terrorist Groups vs Street Gangs

Read:

Sullivan - Chapter 10 & 11

Brown et al., 2012 (Moodle)

Chambliss, 1973 (Moodle)

Krohn et al., 2011 (Moodle)

Moore, 2000 (Moodle)

Freng et al., 2012 (Moodle)

Tsunokai & Kposowa, 2002 (Moodle)

White, 2009 (Moodle)

Zhang, 2001 (Moodle)

Read:

Howell & Griffiths - Chapter 8

Brantingham et al., 2012 (Moodle)

Huebner et al., 2016 (Moodle)

Valasik & Tita, 2017 (Moodle)

Vigil, 2002 (Moodle)

Read:

Glosser, 2016 (Moodle)

Johnstone, 1981 (Moodle)

Watkins & Taylor, 2016 (Moodle)

Cruz, 2010 (Moodle)

Gatti et al., 2011 (Moodle)

Higginson & Benier, 2015 (Moodle)

Klein, 1996 (Moodle)

Winton, 2014 (Moodle)

Read:

Gaston & Huebner, 2015 (Moodle)

Hughey, 2008 (Moodle)

Mitchell et al., 2016 (Moodle)

Scott & Maxson, 2016 (Moodle)

Skarbeck, 2011 (Moodle)

Decker & Pyrooz, 2011 (Moodle)

Klement, 2016 (Moodle)

Reid & Valasik (Moodle)

Valasik & Phillips, 2017 (Moodle)

Week 13:
November 14th
EXAM 3

November 16th
G-DOG

Week 14: GANG DESISTENCE
November 21st
Leaving Gangs

November 23rd
NO CLASS

Week 15: RESPONSES TO GANGS
November 28th
Group Project Presentations

November 30th
Prevention
Intervention
Suppression

Week 16: FINAL EXAM
Tuesday / Thursday 3:00 - 4:30
December 6th (Wednesday)
10:00am - 12:00pm

Read:
Carson & Vecchio, 2015 (Moodle)
Deane et al., 2007 (Moodle)
O'Neal et al., 2016 (Moodle)
Pyrooz & Decker, 2014 (Moodle)

Watch: [The Interrupters](#)

Read:
Howell & Griffiths - Chapter 9 & 10
Bjerregaard, 2015 (Moodle)
Braga, 2015 (Moodle)
Gravel et al., 2013 (Moodle)
Valasik et al., 2016 (Moodle)