

Sociology 102
Contemporary Social Issues: The Sociology of Vice
University of Michigan, Spring 2010
May 4-June 24

Instructor: Alexandra Gerber

Email: alexaz@umich.edu

Office: 4247 LSA Building

Office Hours: Tuesday 10 am-12 pm, Wednesday 2-3 pm

Course Time: Tues, Wed, Thurs 12-2 pm

Class Room: 3242 LSA Building

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will introduce students to the discipline of sociology and its major approaches, by applying these to the study of vice and other "bad habits." We will discuss how "good" and "bad," "legal" and "illegal," and even "healthy" and "harmful," are labels generated via processes that reflect both social conflict and social cohesion. Using historical and contemporary examples of vice (swearing, sexual abstinence, gambling, drinking, smoking, and over-eating), students will be introduced to foundational ideas about gender, race, class, urban sociology, deviance and social control, and will become familiar with basic sociological theories of conflict, functionalism, social constructivism, and labeling.

I have three main goals for this class. First, I want you all to learn how to think sociologically about both the past and the present. Second, I want to introduce you to the fundamentals of Sociology as an academic discipline, which can help you as you advance in your coursework in Sociology or in other departments (although I hope at least some of you will become Sociology concentrators!). And finally, I want to help you learn to read critically and write analytically—skills that will serve you well in college and in life.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

- **Best 2 out of 3 response papers (40%):** Each response paper will contain a brief summary/abstract with critical comments on any two of the required readings. We will go over the format of these papers in class. You may choose which two papers you want to hand in. If you submit three papers, I will calculate your grade using the two best scores, and will drop the lowest. You do not need to hand in a third paper if you are satisfied with the scores you received on the other two. The third paper will not be counted as "extra credit" in any way. These response papers are intended to help you keep up with the readings, and to provide you with study guides that will be useful to you when preparing for the exams. Due dates are as follows:

RESPONSE PAPER #1: May 20 (covering readings between May 11 and May 19)

RESPONSE PAPER #2: June 2 (covering readings between May 20 and June 1)

RESPONSE PAPER #3: June 16 (covering readings between June 2 and June 15)

Response papers are to be 2-3 pages (500-750 words), double-spaced, in 12pt Times New Roman or Arial font, with 1 inch margins on all sides. Do not write less than two pages, and do not write more than three pages: you will lose points. Papers must be given to me **IN HARD COPY, IN CLASS**, on the day that they are due. **EMAIL SUBMISSIONS ARE NOT ACCEPTED** unless you are absent due to a legitimately excused medical emergency. Late papers will also lose points: your grade will drop by one-third (A becomes A-; A- becomes B+, etc) for each day that it is late. I will **NOT** accept the paper if it is more than one week late (for example, if the paper was due on Thursday then the last day I will accept it is the following Thursday) unless you have a valid medical excuse.

- **Exams (45%):** The tests will be comprised of some combination of any or all of the following: IDs, true/false, definition, short answer, or essay questions. Tests #1 and #2 **WILL NOT** be cumulative, whereas Test #3 **WILL** be cumulative.

TEST #1: May 26 **worth 25% of your exam grade (11.25% of total grade)**

TEST #2: June 9 **worth 25% of your exam grade (11.25% of total grade)**

TEST #3: June 24 **worth 50% of your exam grade (22.50% of total grade)**

Exams will not be rescheduled for any reason other than medical or family emergency (with valid supporting documentation).

- **Attendance & class participation (15%):** Students are expected to attend class on time and actively contribute to class discussion. I will take attendance at the beginning of each class. Because of the compressed nature of the summer semester, I will allow only **TWO** unexcused absences. If you miss class, you are responsible for arranging to get any handouts or materials you might have missed. Each additional absence will result in the deduction of one-third of the final participation grade (A becomes A-; A- becomes B+, etc). Filling out a course evaluation at the end of the course is mandatory, and will also be counted towards your participation grade. Participation will be assessed based on your contribution to class discussion, preparing discussion and/or exam review questions, in-class writing exercises, and even the occasional surprise quiz.

POLICIES:

- **Office Hours/Email:** Office hours are a valuable time to discuss any questions or concerns that you may have about the readings, assignments, lectures, etc. No appointment is necessary. Additionally, please feel free to e-mail me with any concerns or questions. I will try to answer all e-mails within 24 hours.
- **Special Arrangements:** Please inform me by email or come to office hours if you have any special needs/requirements, so that arrangements can be made.
- **Cell Phones and Laptops:** Cell phones must be on silent or vibrate. Texting or talking on the phone in class is absolutely prohibited, and you will be asked to leave if I observe you doing it. If you are expecting an important phone call, or have an emergency, feel free to leave the classroom to take the call and return when you are finished. I strongly discourage the use of laptops, as it is nearly impossible to resist the temptation to check your email or surf the web. If you are going to use your laptop to take notes, I ask that you disable your

wireless adapter at the start of class so as to not be seduced by the call of the internet. If I find that you are using your technology inappropriately during class, I will ask you to leave.

- **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is intellectual theft. We will discuss how and when to cite sources, and you can always ask me as many questions as you like if you still feel you haven't quite got the hang of it. If you need further clarification on what constitutes plagiarism and what the consequences are, please refer to www.lib.umich.edu/handouts/plagiar.pdf . You can read the Sociology Department's Plagiarism Policy here: <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/soc/undergraduate/policies.asp#Plagiarism>. Please do not plagiarize.

READINGS:

Course readings will be available on CourseTools at <https://ctools.umich.edu/portal> . I will show you how to access the readings in Ctools. You are only required to purchase one book:

Wagner, D. (1997). *The New Temperance: The American Obsession With Sin and Vice*. Westview Press.

There are many used copies available through Amazon.com for less than \$10. I have also requested that the library put the book on reserve, but there is only 1 copy and you can only check it out for 4 hours at a time. Although I won't *require* it, I would strongly *recommend* that you buy your own copy of *They Say/I Say*. It is not an expensive book (also around \$10 on Amazon.com), and it will be a valuable resource to you as you become more involved with academic reading and writing.

I reserve the right to make changes, additions and deletions to the weekly readings. If I do make changes, I will give you a minimum of one week's notice of the change, and will send out an additional email reminder when posting the new readings to our Ctools site.

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

Class 1: Navigating Michigan

Tuesday, May 4

We will use this class period to go over the syllabus, discuss the goals of the course, and ensure that everyone in the class knows how to operate CTools, search in the MIRLYN catalog, and so on. We will also review basic citation format.

Class 2: Thinking Sociologically, Reading Critically

Wednesday, May 5

Johnson, A. G. (1997). "The Forest and the Trees: Sociology as Life, Practice, and Promise." Pages 1-35.

Graff, G. and C. Birkenstein (2010). "What's Motivating This Writer? Reading For The Conversation." In *They Say/I Say* (pp. 145-55).

Class 3: Studying Social Questions

Thursday, May 6

Schaefer, R. (2007). "What Is Sociology?" In *Sociology*, 10th Edition (pp. 3-20, 31-36).

SECTION 2: VICE, DEVIANCE, AND CRIME

Class 4: The Difference Between Norms and Laws

Tuesday, May 11

Durkheim, E. (1966). "The Normal and the Pathological." In *The Rules of Sociological Method* (5 pages)

Skolnick, J. (1988). "The Social Transformation of Vice." *Law and Contemporary Problems* 51:1 (pp. 9-29)

Burnham, J. "Smoking." In *Bad Habits: Drinking Smoking, Taking Drugs, Gambling, Sexual Misbehavior, and Swearing in American History* (pp. 86-92).

Class 5: Insiders and Outsiders

Wednesday, May 12

Weber, M. ([1930] 1992). "Asceticism and The Spirit of Capitalism." In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (pp. 102-25)

Becker, H.S. "Outsiders." In *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* (pp. 1-18).

Class 6: Case Study: Prostitution

Thursday, May 13

Davis, K. (1937). "The Sociology of Prostitution." *American Sociological Review* 2 (pp.744-755).

Rosen, R. (1982). "Introduction" and "From Necessary to Social Evil." In *The Lost Sisterhood: Prostitution in America, 1900-1918* (pp. xi-xvii, 1-13).

SECTION 3: BAD ACTS OR BAD PEOPLE?

Class 7: The Social Construction of Vice

Tuesday, May 18

Wagner, D. (1997). "Temperance and the Social Construction of Risk." In *The New Temperance: The American Obsession With Sin and Vice*. (pp. 35-66).

Ackerman, A. (2010). "Analyze This: Writing in the Social Sciences." In *They Say/I Say* (pp. 175-92).

Class 8: Medicalizing Bad Habits

Wednesday, May 19

Schenider, J. (1978). "Deviant Drinking as Disease: Alcoholism as a Social Accomplishment." *Social Problems* 25:4 (pp.361-372).

Rosecrance, J. (1985). "Compulsive Gambling and the Medicalization of Deviance." *Social Problems* 32:3 (pp. 275-84)

Szasz, T. (1972). "Bad Habits Are Not Diseases: A Refutation of the Claim That Alcoholism Is A Disease." *The Lancet* Vol. 300, Issue 7767 (pp. 83-84)

Class 9: Case Study: The "Obesity Epidemic"

Thursday, May 20

"America's Moral Panic Over Obesity: An Interview With Paul Campos, author of *The Obesity Myth*." *The Atlantic Monthly* (July 2009).

*****FIRST PAPER DUE*****

SECTION 4: MORAL CRUSADES AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Class 10: Panics and Crusades

Tuesday, May 25

Goode E. and N. Ben-Yehuda (2009). "Three Theories of the Moral Panic." In *Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance* (pp. 51-72)

Wagner, D. (1997). "Déjà Vu All Over Again." In *The New Temperance: The American Obsession With Sin and Vice*. (pp. 13-34).

Class 11: Who Panics?

Wednesday, May 26

Wagner, D. (1997). "Getting Lean and Mean: The Middle-Class Return to Respectability." In *The New Temperance: The American Obsession With Sin and Vice*. (pp. 103-35).

*****FIRST EXAM*****

Class 12: Case Study: Sex Panic

Thursday, May 27

Wagner, D. (1997). "Reversing Cause and Effect?: The Teen Pregnancy 'Problem'," and "Science As Morality: The 'Multiple-Partner' Risk." In *The New Temperance: The American Obsession With Sin and Vice*. (pp. 84-95).

"Warning: Celibacy Can Be Hazardous To Your Health." *Gawker.com* (April 19, 2010).

"The Downside of 'Friends With Benefits'." *CNN.com* (April 15, 2010).

SECTION 5: WHERE VICE HAPPENS

Class 13: Urban (dis)Order

Tuesday, June 1

Wilson, J.Q. and Kelling, G. (1982). "Broken Windows." *The Atlantic Monthly* (March).

Stark, R. (1987). "Deviant Places: A Theory of the Ecology of Crime." *Criminology* 25:4 (pp. 893-909)

Class 14: Place and Race

Wednesday, June 2

Shumsky, N. L. (1986). "Tacit Acceptance: Respectable Americans and Segregated Prostitution, 1870-1910." *Journal of Social History* 19:4 (pp. 665-679).

New York Times Book Review "Why The Poor Stay Poor," a review of Jackson's *Good Results of Bad Habits*."

SECTION 6: THE GENDER, RACE AND CLASS OF VICE

Class 15: CLASS CANCELED

Thursday, June 3

*****SECOND PAPER DUE JUNE 7*****

Class 16: Race and Ethnicity

Tuesday, June 8

Auerhahn, K. (1999). "The Split Labor Market and the Origins of Antidrug Legislation in the United States." *Law & Social Inquiry* 24:2 (418-440).

Class 17: Gender

Wednesday, June 9

Luke, K. (2005). "Drunk Girls Are Easy: Binge-Drinking College Women's Engagement with the 'Slutty' Discourse and its Implications for Sexual Violence." Unpublished seminar paper.

"No Hooking Up, No Sex For Some Coeds." *CNN.com* (April 19, 2010).

Class 18: Gender and Case Study: The Abstinence Movement Thursday, June 10

Ehrlich, S. (2006). "From the Age of Consent to the 'Silver Ring Thing': The Regulation of Adolescent Female Sexuality." *Health Matrix* 16 (pp.151-181)

"A Ring That Says No, Not Yet." *New York Times* (December 8, 2005).

*****MOCK EXAM DUE JUNE 14*****

Class 19: Taste and Lifestyle

Tuesday, June 15

Bourdieu, P. (1984). "Introduction." In *Distinction: A Social Critique of Judgment and Taste* (pp. 1-7).

Wenger, L. et. al. (2001). "Cigar Magazines: Using Tobacco to Sell a Lifestyle." *Tobacco Control* 10:3 (pp. 279-284).

Class 19: Speech

Wednesday, June 16

Burnham, J. "Swearing." In *Bad Habits: Drinking Smoking, Taking Drugs, Gambling, Sexual Misbehavior, and Swearing in American History* (pp. 208-229)

Class 21: Exam Review

Thursday, June 17

Everybody is responsible for developing questions for us to use as our exam review material. I will give you more information about this assignment ahead of time. This activity will count towards your participation grade.

*****OPTIONAL THIRD PAPER DUE JUNE 17*****

*****FINAL EXAM 8:00-10:00 AM, JUNE 24*****