Queen’s University Department of Sociology

SOCIOLOGY 387

THE SOCIOLOGY OF CRIME AND DELINQUENCY

FALL 2014

Vincent F. Sacco

Lectures: TUES 10:00 & THUR 8:30 - JEFFRY 127

Office: Macintosh-Corry Hall, Rm. D525

Phone: (613) 533-6000 ext. 74492

e-mail: saccov@queensu.ca

Office Hours: Wednesday 2:00 – 3:00 pm
Thursday 11:00 am – noon
Or by appointment

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION
Critical study of conceptual, empirical and theoretical bases of sociological approaches to crime and delinquency; Canadian research emphasized.

PREREQUISITE SOCY274 or Socy275/Socy276

EXCLUSION SOCY380

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course focuses on several key issues in the study of the sociology of crime and delinquency. Throughout the course we will be attentive to the relationship between theory and research. It is assumed that students will bring to the course a basic understanding of deviance theory and of the major empirical approaches to sociology. Our interests are NOT interdisciplinary nor are they, in the first instance, as practical and applied as students sometimes expect them to be.

Material supporting the course will be available in Moodle format. More details will be made available at the start of the term.

READING
The reading for this course consists of two books. The basic text for the course is:

This is a text which develops and applies "the criminal event" perspective and thus integrates much of the diverse material we will explore in the course.

You will be required to read:


This is a true crime narrative which raises a number of interesting questions about the ways in which we respond to crime and how those directly involved are affected.

These books are available for purchase at the Campus Bookstore and for loan at the Reserve Desk at Stauffer library. The Sacco and Kennedy book is the text for the course. Your knowledge of the Sommers book will be tested in by the final exam.

**Text Website:**
You will find resources in support of the textbook at:

[www.criminalevent-5e.nelson.com](http://www.criminalevent-5e.nelson.com)

**Course Website:**
The course uses Moodle to share Powerpoint slides from lectures, as well as posting of: the course outline, tutorial assignments, and teaching assistants’ office hours.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**
Academic integrity is constituted by the five core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (see [www.academicintegrity.org](http://www.academicintegrity.org)). These values are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Adherence to the values expressed through academic integrity forms a foundation for the "freedom of inquiry and exchange of ideas" essential to the intellectual life of the University (see the Senate Report on Principles and Priorities [http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/senateandtrustees/principlespriorities.html](http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/senateandtrustees/principlespriorities.html)).

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the regulations concerning academic integrity and for ensuring that their assignments conform to the principles of academic integrity. Information on academic integrity is available in the Arts and Science Calendar (see Academic Regulation 1 [http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academic-calendars/2011-2012-calendar/academic-regulations/regulation-1](http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academic-calendars/2011-2012-calendar/academic-regulations/regulation-1)), on the Arts and Science website (see [http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academics/undergraduate/academic-integrity](http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academics/undergraduate/academic-integrity)), and from the instructor of this course. Departures from academic integrity include plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitation, forgery and falsification, and are antithetical to the development of an academic community at Queen's. Given the seriousness of these matters, actions which contravene the regulation on academic integrity carry sanctions that can range from a warning or the loss of grades on an assignment to the failure of a course to a requirement to withdraw from the university.
COPYRIGHT OF COURSE MATERIALS
This material is copyrighted and is for the sole use of students registered in [the course]. This material shall not be distributed or disseminated to anyone other than students registered in [the course]. Failure to abide by these conditions is a breach of copyright, and may also constitute a breach of academic integrity under the University Senate’s Academic Integrity Policy Statement.

Class Etiquette:
Cell phones, pagers, Blackberries, internet surfing, watching videos, playing computer games, checking e-mail, text messaging, and listening to music are disruptive to other students in class. This behavior is also disrespectful toward the professor. Please be courteous to your classmates and professor and turn off all such devices before the class starts. Notebook computers are to be used exclusively for the purposes of taking notes during class and other electronic devices may be used only if you have permission from the professor.

Academic Accommodation:
Students with a disability, who require academic accommodation, need to register with the Counseling and Disability Resource Centre. Academic accommodation letters need to be provided to course instructors no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of class. It is a student’s responsibility to register with the Counseling and Disability Resource Centre and to request academic accommodation, if required. The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments and exams from a public place (e.g., outside a professor’s office, the department office, etc.) or posting grades on office doors or online. Examination results must be returned to students individually, during class or during the professor’s office hours.

COURSE REQUIREMENT
The final grade in the course will be based on the following:

1. A first in-class test, to be written on Tuesday October 21st and valued at 25 percent.
2. A final take-home examination handed out at the end of the course and valued at 30 percent
3. A paper abstract and bibliography due on October 30th and valued at 10%
4. Research paper - valued at 35 percent. **The assignment is due NO LATER THAN MIDNIGHT ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7TH. The paper must be submitted through Moodle.**
5. With respect to these course requirements, please note:

1. Students will not be allowed to replace or supplement these assignments with alternative or additional work.

2. It is assumed that students have read and are familiar with the University policy on academic integrity.

3. Students must complete ALL of the course work in order to complete the course.

Tips for Success: This is a challenging course and students will need to apply themselves. Be responsible for your learning: attend classes, take detailed lecture notes, complete assigned readings, and develop good study habits. Do not undermine your learning by multi-tasking during class. Failure to follow this sound advice will negatively impact grades. You should take some comfort in the fact that the instructor and the teaching assistants will make every effort to help you succeed in the course. We ask that you do likewise.

**PLEASE NOTE ALL COURSE ASSIGNMENTS ARE INTENDED TO PROVIDE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR STUDENTS TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR MASTERY OF COURSE MATERIAL AS DISCUSSED IN CLASS AND IN READINGS. PAPERS, EXAM ANSWERS ETC. WHICH DO NOT DEMONSTRATE THIS MASTERY WILL NOT BE REGARDED AS HIGHLY AS THOSE THAT DO.**

All components of this course will receive numerical percentage marks. The final grade you receive for the course will be derived by converting your numerical course average to a letter grade according to Queen’s Official Grade Conversion Scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Numerical Course Average (Range)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>90-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>85-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>80-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>73-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>63-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>57-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>53-56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>50-52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COURSE OUTLINE
Readings associated with each topic are listed below. Topic headings correspond to chapter headings in Sacco and Kennedy.

**Topic 1: Defining Crime and Criminology**
Crime may be conceptualized in a number of different ways. Each kind of conceptualization encourages us to ask some theoretical questions rather than others. We begin therefore with an exploration of major conceptualizations and we are particularly attentive to those which are offender-centred. As well we examine the images of crime which we encounter in popular culture and consider the social organization of the discipline of criminology.

Chapter 1 in Sacco and Kennedy

**Topic 2: The Criminal Event**
A comprehensive theory of crime must account for the distribution of criminal events in time and space, the social and demographic characteristics of event participants and the social reactions which are associated with particular types of events. The breadth of this conceptualization and its applicability to different domains is illustrated.

Chapter 2 in Sacco and Kennedy


**Topic 3: Researching Criminal Events**
Data used in the study of crime come from a variety of sources. This topic involves an investigation of the major kinds of statistical information about crime employed by sociologists of crime and delinquency. These data sources include police-generated data (the UCR), victimization survey data and self-report (offender) data. The data sources are assessed in terms of their respective utilities as well as their respective limitations.

Chapter 3 in Sacco and Kennedy

**Topic 4: Criminological Schools of Thought**
As you know, most theoretical attempts to explain crime have focused attention on the study of offenders. Two major schools of thought (the Classical and Positivist) on the sociological factors relating to offending will be identified and the formative developments in each case will be reviewed. This is the first of two topics which address this issue. We are particularly interested, however, in recent theoretical developments.

Chapter 4 in Sacco and Kennedy
**Topic 5: Theoretical Integration**

Criminologists have formulated a large number of theories to explain the behavior of offenders. Most routinely, these theories are seen as competitors. However, another important intellectual current in criminology emphasizes the way in which certain of these explanations can be integrated. We will discuss some of the more important examples of theoretical integration.

Chapter 5 in Sacco and Kennedy

**Topic 6: Opportunities, Lifestyles and Situations**

Since the 1970s sociologists have become increasingly interested in understanding crime as a "victim-centred" phenomenon. In short, such theories ask, "Is it possible to understand crime rates as a function of the behaviour of (actual or potential) victim behaviour rather than as a function of offender behaviour?" The major victim-centred accounts (lifestyle/exposure, routine activities, victim precipitation) are reviewed.

Chapter 6 in Sacco and Kennedy

**Topic 7: Crime's Aftermath: The Consequences of Criminal Events**

How do communities react to crime and what are the sociological implications of these reactions? In recent years, sociologists have become increasingly interested in topics such as fear of crime and social capital.

Chapter 7 in Sacco and Kennedy

**Chapter 8: The Family and the Household**

Some recent scholarship has suggested that there is real value to be derived from a domain-specific approach to crime. Such an approach, it is argued, makes not only theoretical and empirical sense but also provides important prevention opportunities. In this topic, we explore the first of three major domains of social life - family and household.

Chapter 8 in Sacco and Kennedy

**Chapter 9: Leisure**

Much crime occurs when people are “at rest” and the reasons for this are complex. We discuss how leisure settings and leisure activities increase the likelihood of criminality and victimization.

Chapter 9 in Sacco and Kennedy

**Chapter 10: Crime and Work**
The workplace is the third important social domain to be discussed in the course. The jobs we do affect the likelihood that we will be victimized and give us access to unique types of criminal opportunities. In some cases, crime itself can be thought of in occupational terms.

Chapter 10 in Sacco and Kennedy

**Chapter 11: Summary and Review of Public Policy Responses to Crime**

This final topic is concerned with the various ways in which crime can be prevented. In order to sort out the productive ideas from the fanciful ones, we draw on our understanding of the complexity of criminal events of the body of supporting empirical evidence.

Chapter 11 in Sacco and Kennedy

**PAPER ABSTRACT AND BIBLOGAPHY ASSIGNMENT**

This assignment involved the development of a specific research question and the parameters of your final paper. The abstract (a double-spaced typewritten pages) should briefly outline the thesis issues and arguments you intend to address in your research paper. Try to choose a clearly delineated and manageable topic and avoid trying to undertake a project that exceeds your resources.

The bibliography should present the literature you propose to use to address these issues. Thee bibliography should conform to the requirements for the final research paper (see below). You are encouraged to discuss the assignment either with your teaching assistant or the course instructor.

**RESEARCH PAPER**

For this assignment, students must write an essay on a subject directly relevant to the course. It is important to utilize ideas, arguments and concepts discussed in lectures and in course readings.

The aim of the paper is to synthesize, discuss and assess (not simply describe or summarize) the relevant scholarly literature and to offer an analysis of the issue in question.

Papers MUST NOT exceed 12 double-spaced typewritten pages.

Composition of the Research Paper – the paper should communicate specific information from the writer to the reader. It should start with a statement of intentions and objectives, followed by a discussion and analysis of supporting and illustrative materials. Do not limit yourself to descriptive analyses only. Employ relevant concepts and make use of
theoretical ideas. You should be able to summarize the thesis of your paper in short paragraph.

Layout of the paper

Introduction. The introduction presents the themes and issues to be explored in the paper. It briefly outlines your approach to the topic and the arguments you advance in the body of the survey.

Main Body of Essay. This section presents the central thesis or argument of the paper. It should review and assess relevant literature while providing an exposition of central points. Ideally each paragraph should focus on a major point relating to the central argument or theoretical framework. Internal headings and sub-headings are useful as a device to mark shifts in discussion.

Conclusion. This last section provides a brief summary of the essay’s major arguments.

Bibliography. Each research topic must make direct references to appropriate courses material relating to the specific topic. There is a huge bibliography at the end of The Criminal Event which should help you get started. A minimum of 15 cited scholarly references is required. These may include journal articles, book chapters, academic quality books by reputable social scientific scholars. Try to avoid unverified websites, dictionaries, popular magazines etc. If you use any of these “non academic” sources, they will not be counted toward the total of 15. Make sure that the sources you use are properly cited.

Citation of sources must always be given for the following: all direct quotations, paraphrase of the statements of others, opinions, theories and ideas which you know are not your own, and any information which you know is not general knowledge. Even when using the proper method of citations, it is not a good idea to rely too much on a single source. In addition, direct quotations should be used sparingly and should not be more than a couple of lines. If you do use a quotation of over 4 text lines, the quotations should be indented and the quotations marks removed. Quotations should be used to emphasize a point or because the author had an expertise which lends authority to the point being made.

With respect to the completion of this paper, please note:

• The paper has a clearly specified due date. Late papers will incur a ten percent penalty. After a one week (7 days) period, papers will not be accepted. This rule about late papers will only be waived for medical or compassionate reasons and it will be essential in all cases to supply documentation. You should be aware that the penalty cannot be waived because other assignments are due or because of what traffic analysts call "volume delays". Rather than asking for an extension of "a couple of days", it would be more sensible to start work on the project a couple of days earlier.
• Feel free to consult me or your teaching assistant regarding this project.
• Students should not be surprised or alarmed if the instructor or teaching assistants request a meeting to discuss the paper

The in-class tests will be written on October 17th and will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions.

The take-home exam will cover the entire term and will include a question on *Through the Glass*. This exam will consist of a limited number of essay questions. The precise due date will be announced early in the term.

End