

Deviant Behavior  
Sociology 4111 (Uggen)

Week 1: Welcome  
*A. Social Facts and  
Social Constructions*

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- Notecards
- Name (spell phonetically if necessary)
  - Contact
    - Phone or (other) email you check frequently
  - Hometown
  - Courses
    - Major/minor and related courses
  - Experience
    - Work or internship (advocacy, social services, criminal or juvenile justice systems)
  - Future
    - Long-term career goals?
  - Motivation
    - Why are you here?
  - Interests (Optional)
    - Any suggestions for projects, trips, or speakers?
  - Identification (Optional)
    - Physical description and seating tendencies

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- Syllabus and Logic of Course
- Deviance and Control at Core of Sociology
  - Two Logics (example?)
    1. Durkheim's "sociological realism" and Social Facts
      - Social Facts are
        - external (exist outside the individual)
        - constraining (coerce into or away from actions)
        - Subject to objective measurement (e.g. rates)
      - This course: learn the "social facts" but also critique them

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## 2<sup>nd</sup> logic

2. Social constructionism
  - Focus on labels and power in rule-making process
    - “The deviant is one to whom that label has been successfully applied; deviance is behavior that people so label” (Howard Becker)
  - Study the claims and who makes them
  - This course: learn about rule creators and rule enforcers as well as “deviants” (Adler & Adler text)
- Power and Value of Sociological Analysis

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## Course Organization

1. Basic Concepts
  - Deviance, Order, Control, Careers, Subcultures
2. Theories
  - Overlap, but distinct from criminology
3. Method
  - Which evidence is reliable and valid?
4. Case Studies
  - Violence, other crime, organizational and occupational, substance use, sexuality, suicide, disability, and mental illness

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## Course Requirements and Expectations

- Much reading – Adlers and “Local” examples
  - More challenging, focus on ASR/AJS examples
- Exams cover both ideas and social facts (e.g., who is most likely to commit suicide?)
- Grades
  - 20% Participation (10% contribution and 10% group/individual exercises)
  - 25% Midterm
    - Mainly basic concepts and theories
    - Vote on format
  - 25% Working Paper (defined options or your own)
    - OR: see me if you are working in an agency or volunteering;
    - OR: bigger research project/proposal for grad students and ambitious undergrads
  - 30% Final Exam – case studies, format TBA
- “Who I am and How You Can be Too!”

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- Course Policies
  - Turn in work on time (don't work through class)
  - Grading: convert grades to points in spreadsheet, rank, and draw lines (A vs B vs C grades).
  - Offensive materials
  - Note on course page (pdf and ppt)
- Teaching philosophy
  - Anonymous grading
  - Evaluations
  - Accessibility
  - Learn both social facts and big ideas about them

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*Week 1B:  
Defining Deviance*

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- Marshall Clinard's Definitions
- Statistical
    - Deviance as behavior that is rare - anything in the statistical minority.
      - 1964 nickels. Problems?
  - Absolutist
    - Deviance as violation of universal cultural standards or prerequisites
      - Consensus against force and fraud. Problems?
  - Reactivist
    - Deviance as whatever a social audience labels as deviant
      - No reaction, no deviance. Problems?
  - Normative\*
    - Deviance is departure from norms that draw social disapproval and elicit, or are likely to elicit if detected, negative sanctions.
      - What is a norm? a sanction? Problems?

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## Adlers' definition

- Deviance as violation of social norms – behavioral codes, expectations of conduct
  - Attitudes – beliefs (mental illness?)
  - Behaviors – intentional or not
  - Conditions – ascribed or achieved
- Classroom norms [etiquette]
  - prescriptive and proscriptive
- When, Where, and How are you deviant?
- Relativity and fluidity in definition
  - Compared to what? Drinking examples

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## useful concepts

- Norm – expectations of conduct in a given situation. Behavioral codes that guide people into actions and self-presentations conforming to social acceptability.
- Role – collection of norms for conduct tied to a position (Professor)
- Power – ability to make choices (or control others) by virtue of control over political, economic, and social resources
- Subcultures – a collection of norms, values, and beliefs that depart from those of the dominant culture
- Stigma – a mark of disgrace or infamy; a stain or reproach, as on one's reputation

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## a little deeper - subcultures

- Broad definition (Clinard):
  - a culture within a culture; a collection of norms, values and beliefs with content distinguishable from those of the dominant culture.
  - Conforming (police) or deviant
- Specific connotations (cultural studies):
  - (Often) face-to-face interaction
  - Organized around shared social practices (e.g., music, drugs)
  - Reflect identities and shared values (often political)
  - Disempowered
- Variants:
  - "Pseudocultures," Countercultures, Scenes, Tribes, etc.

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## deviance, science, and morality

- A pejorative term *outside* class
  - Get used to observing deviance and conformity
- Is deviance dead or more central than ever?
  - My deviance research seen as criminology, inequality, punishment, gender, political sociology
- Moral entrepreneurs attempt to impose their norms on others (examples?)
  - Deviance is closely tied to moral judgments, which are made on the basis of norms.
- Social scientists cannot make the same moral judgments in their professional lives.
  - "Hats" and roles
  - John Irwin example
  - Debate on sexuality and deviance
- "Blaming the victim"

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## Agape News 9/2/05

Rev. Bill Shanks, pastor of New Covenant Fellowship of New Orleans, also sees God's mercy in the aftermath of Katrina... Shanks says the hurricane has wiped out much of the rampant sin common to the city. The pastor explains that for years he has warned people that unless Christians in New Orleans took a strong stand against such things as local abortion clinics, the yearly Mardi Gras celebrations, and the annual event known as "Southern Decadence" -- an annual six-day "gay pride" event scheduled to be hosted by the city this week -- God's judgment would be felt. "New Orleans now is abortion free. New Orleans now is Mardi Gras free. New Orleans now is free of Southern Decadence and the sodomites, the witchcraft workers, false religion -- it's free of all of those things now," Shanks says. "God simply, I believe, in His mercy purged all of that stuff out of there -- and now we're going to start over again."

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## Catholic Relief Services 9/05

Heavenly Father, we pray that You in your mercy  
will bestow Your blessings on those who suffer because of  
Hurricane Katrina, and all natural disasters.  
Please accept into Heaven the souls of those who died.  
And for the survivors, we pray that they will recognize  
Your love and grace in the faces of the relief workers and  
all those throughout the world that support and pray for them now.  
God, we pray that all will come through this trying time stronger,  
and with a deeper acceptance of Your love and Divine plan.  
In Jesus' name we pray.  
Amen

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## Traffic

- Which substances are deviant?  
Conforming?
- Who makes and enforces rules?  
– Sources of power?
- Where is deviance defined and contested? Where else?
- What role does the law play?

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## Kai Erikson (1966)

- Classic – peak of “deviance” research (Best)
- The deviant is one whose activities have moved outside the margins of the group, and when the community reacts ... it makes a statement about the nature and placement of its boundaries
  - *tells us what evil looks like, the shapes the devil can assume*
- Boundaries are a meaningful point of reference only if they are repeatedly tested (by deviants) and defended (by representatives of the group’s inner morality)
  - *Is there a media role in setting boundaries or the “normative outlines of society?”*
  - *Functional?*

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## Erikson II

- Deviant forms of conduct seem to *derive nourishment* from the very agencies devised to inhibit them.
  - Stigma and "self-fulfilling prophecy"
- deviant commitment ceremonies are a rite of transition, moving the individual from his ordinary place in society to a special deviant status (courtroom)
  - Deviant decertification ceremonies?
- Deviance is not simply behavior disrupting society, but it is also important for preserving stability

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## stigma & murder of sex offenders 8/27/05

- BELLINGHAM — Last Friday night, a man claiming to be an FBI agent dropped in on three Level 3 sex offenders living together, supposedly to warn them of an Internet "hit list" targeting sex offenders. The man was not an FBI agent, but he may have been enforcing a hit list of his own creation. Two of the roommates were found dead early Saturday of gunshot wounds, and Bellingham police are investigating a crime that authorities say may be one of the nation's most serious cases of vigilantism aimed at sex offenders. The killings also highlight a potential problem about Washington's 1990 law requiring sex offenders to register their addresses so the public can keep track of them.

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## blog comment 4/07

- Hello. I've got convictions a-plenty (five I believe at this point). All over a decade old and all centering around writing bad checks. I've worked in tech all my career and can't get a job. I had one at HP and was hired through a temp agency that was not required to run background checks at the time. I doubt that situation exists anywhere in America any more. If you lie about your record you will be found out and probably get fired if not worse. If you tell the truth, well you don't get hired to begin with. My advice? Stay in crime and as often as possible perpetrate those crimes against companies that have turned you down for honest work. What else have you got? See you in the grave as this is my last log on anywhere. I don't want to be a criminal and since losing my last job to a coworker that used my record to get me fired (she was promoted to my job) I give up. I'd say that a full year of no work due to a fifteen year old bad check conviction is enough. Tonight it's a drug smoothy that should end this existence and if it doesn't it's a bullet at 6am sharp as I have my alarm set. I served my time and didn't owe the interest society demanded. My kids couldn't afford it either but at least now they get the insurance. Can't look them in the eye anymore when I can't even get a job that pays the bills. Bye.

"-dead soon" (4/17/07) Chris Uggen – Sociology 4111

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## threat and rulemaking

- Behrens, Uggen, & Manza (2003)
  - Sociology undergraduate (UROP)
  - Quantitative + Historical
  - Q: Origins of felon voting restrictions?
- “deviance” readings unsatisfactory
  - how theory is really used
  - uncovering and presenting social facts
  - policy: making a difference
  - end result looks complicated
- conflict & (racial) threat in rulemaking
  - Hypothesis: As (political) threat rises, a deviant label is applied to keep a less-powerful group from the polls.

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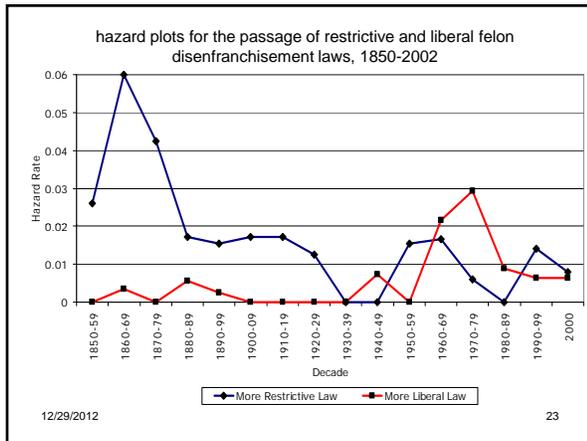
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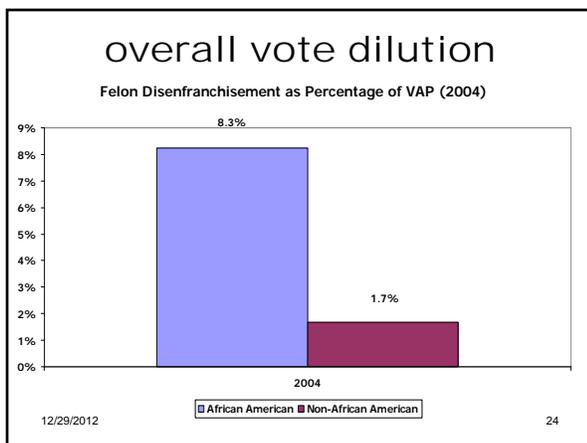
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racial threat and deviance

- **Group threat:** A dominant group sees a less powerful group invading its turf and defines the invaders as deviants, unfit to join (economic or political)
- **Labeling:** Shift from "Jim Crow" to modern racism
  - Jim Crow: Overt racist speech ("negros unfit to possess rights of citizenship")
  - Modern: stereotyping, blaming, and resisting policy efforts to reduce gaps.

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Jim Crow Era

- **1894:** "Fortunately, the opportunity is offered the white people of the State in the coming election to obviate all future danger and fortify the Anglo-Saxon civilization against every assault from within and without, and that is the calling of a constitutional convention to deal with the all important question of suffrage" —South Carolina *Daily Register*
- **1901:** "The justification for whatever manipulation of the ballot that has occurred in this State has been the *menace of Negro domination*" —John B. Knox, President of 1901 Alabama Constitutional Convention

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Modern "Race-Neutral" Discussion

- **2001:** "If it's blacks losing the right to vote, then they have to quit committing crimes" —S. Carolina Rep. John Graham Altman
- **2002:** "This Congress, with this little debate we are having on this bill, ought not to step in and, with a big sledge hammer, *smash something we have had from the beginning of this country's foundation*—a set of election laws in every State in America—and change those laws. To just up and do that is disrespectful to them ... *Each State has different standards based on their moral evaluation*, their legal evaluation, their public interest in what they think is important in their States." —Senator Jeff Sessions (R-AL).

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### does positive deviance exist?

- Clinard: deviance is departure from norms that draw social disapproval and elicit, or are likely to elicit if detected, negative sanctions.
- Heckerts: positive deviance also violates norms and elicits reactions
  - "deviance admiration" (rebel, rogue, class clown)
  - positively valued overconformity (ultramarathoners)
- 10 Examples of Norm -> Positive Deviance
  - Group loyalty -> Altruism (hero)
  - Responsibility -> Hyperresponsibility (4.0)
  - Participation -> Cooperation (athletic zeal)
  - Peacefulness -> Pacifism (MLK)
  - Moderation -> Temperance (Monk)

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### READ BEFORE CLASS

- Next: Social Controls and Deviant Careers

A. Lecture: *Criminology, Deviance, and the Hobbesian Problem of Order*

Read Adler & Adler: 2. Heckert and Heckert, Typology of Deviance pp. 25-40

Read Adler & Adler: 11. Best, The Constructionist Stance pp. 105-108

Read Adler & Adler: 18. Brunson and Miller, Gender, Race, and Urban Policing pp. 189-199

B. Lecture: *Introduction to Deviant Careers (of people, firms, nations...)* (5 min. video: *Bowling for Columbine*)

Read Adler & Adler: VIII. Phases of the Deviant Career pp. 521-525

Read Adler & Adler: 43. Wright & Decker, Deciding to Commit a Burglary pp. 526-535

\*Local: Christopher Uggen and Melissa Thompson, 2003. "The Socioeconomic Determinants of Ill-Gotten Gains: Within-Person Changes in Drug Use and Illegal Earnings." *American Journal of Sociology* 109:146-85.

[Note: focus on the case history pp. 161-65, the thousands of cases summarized in Table 6, and pp. 177-78 discussing whether criminal and conventional careers can be explained with the same set of concepts or tools]

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