

THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

**SOCI 3204 SOCIOLOGY OF CRIME AND DEVIANCE**

Second Term, 2021/22  
Monday 11:30 a.m. – 1:15 p.m.  
Venue: YIA LT4

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The study of crime and deviance is central to the discipline of sociology. Breaking the law and rules is always controversial. We would not understand the rules of society unless we understand the rule-breakers. This course aims at examining the nature and social correlates of crime, deviance and victimization from a variety of sociological perspectives. In addition to reviewing a number of criminological theories and empirical research findings, this course is specially designed to help students critically analyze some issues of crime and deviance in Hong Kong.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

After completing the course, the students should be able to:

- 1 recognize the significance of scientific, evidence-based study of crime and deviance;
- 2 capture the role of sociological theories of criminology in understanding crime and deviance, compare their underlying theoretical assumptions, recognize their interrelationships, and comprehend how these theories reflect the historical context of the times and cultures in which they were developed;
- 3 identify and critically evaluate certain commonly-held views regarding crime and deviance, and present alternative and even opposing hypotheses on criminal and deviant phenomena;
- 4 recognize the importance of sociological analyses for reflection of the diversity of values and positions in terms of crime and deviance; and
- 5 develop practical skills of applying sociological theories to examine real life instances of crime and deviance.

**COURSE STRUCTURE**

The course will consist of (1) lecture, (2) case discussion, and (3) tutorial class (five sessions in total). It will adopt a face-to-face teaching mode, unless otherwise announced by the University.

## **COURSE ASSESSMENT**

- 1 Group Research Reflection Project 30%
- 2 Tutorial class (Attendance, Presentation and Participation) 20%
- 3 Final Examination 50%
4. Case Discussion

### **Textbook**

Akers, Ronald L., Christine S. Sellers, and Wesley G. Jennings. 2017. *Criminological Theories: Introduction, Evaluation, and Application*. 7<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

## **COURSE CONTENTS**

### **Defining and Measuring Crime and Deviance**

**Jan 10** What is Crime and Deviance?  
Intellectual background of criminology

**Jan 17** Measuring Crime and Deviance

### **Explaining Crime and Deviance**

#### **I Consensus Model: Theories of Structural-functionalism, Control, and Learning**

**Jan 24** Social Strain Paradigm: From Anomie to General Strain  
Do modernization and class position matter in social strain causation?

**Jan 31** Chinese New Year holiday, no lecture.

**Feb 7** Case discussion on empirical test of general strain theory

**Feb 14** Control Theories and Life Course Criminology

**Feb 21** Theory of Control-Balance: Do crime and deviance result from too little control or too much control?

**Feb 28** Environmental Criminology: Spatial Analysis and Dynamics  
Why are crime and deviance not geographically distributed by randomization?

**Mar 7** Case discussion on theoretical integration

**Mar 14** Learning Theories and Neutralization Theory: Criminals and deviants are not born

#### **II Conflict Model**

**Mar 21** Marxist/Critical Criminology: Who defines crime and deviance?  
Green Criminology: Extension of Ecological Marxism

**Mar 28** Postmodern Criminology: Crime and deviance as a function of linguistic domination

**Apr 4** University reading week, no lecture.

**Explaining Victims of Crime**

**Apr 11** Victimology and Routine Activity Theory  
Who are more likely to be victims of crime?  
Do victims cause crime?  
In what ways does victimology transcend the pestilence fallacy of criminology?

**Apr 18** Easter public holiday, no lecture.