Sociology 444 - Juvenile Delinquency  
Spring 2014  
Syllabus

Instructor: Kelly Ranasinghe J.D., C.W.L.S.¹

Course Description: Sociological theories about causes and consequences of juvenile delinquency. Social origins of juvenile justice system, with attention to methods of control and prevention at community and national levels. (SDSU General Catalog 2013)

Learning Objectives:

- Understand and critically articulate the major sociological theories of juvenile delinquency, including social process, structural and reactionist arguments, and apply them when confronted with novel fact-patterns.
- Identify the role family and gender play in the cause and desistance of delinquency, and articulate the major premises of feminist theories of delinquency.
- Understand the effects of biological and psychological development on social behavior, and articulate the major conflict between human development and criminal accountability.
- Articulate a basic understanding of the juvenile justice system, and the substantive differences between the adult and juvenile criminal process.
- Describe how drugs and gangs influence delinquent behavior, and integrate these concepts into major sociological theories.
- Apply the major legal theories and holdings surrounding juvenile delinquency and under the sociological arguments underpinning each legal premise.

Contact Information: I am available through my e-mail at kelly.ranasinghe@gmail.com. I am also available via phone at (858) 395-2144. You can also text me at the same phone number.

Office Hours: My office hours are usually one hour before class, and by appointment. If you would like to make an appointment to meet you can e-mail me at kelly.ranasinghe@gmail.com, or call me at (858) 395-2144.

Course Grading: This course is graded on a numerical system. Letter grades correspond to a specific percentage of the total points earned in the class. The numerical score is based on three assignments; a test, a midterm, and a final exam. The numerical values of the assignments are as follows:

Quiz 1 = 50 points
Quiz 2 = 50 points

¹ Certified Child Welfare Law Specialist, National Association of Counsel for Children, Accredited by the California Board of Legal Specialization.
Midterm = 100 points
Final Exam = 100 points.
Total Points = 300

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<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Lowest Raw Score</th>
<th>Lowest Level of Grade (%)</th>
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<td>A</td>
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<td>93</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
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<td>90</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>D-</td>
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**Push Points** - In the instructor’s discretion, up to 3 points are available in addition to the student’s raw total score for outstanding work such as excellent recitation of case problems, particularly exemplary analysis or ideas, or other meritorious activities.


**COURSE CALENDAR:**

**January 28th** - Lecture 1 - Introduction to the course, course policies, grading and assignments. Overview of learning objectives and major themes in the course. The historical concept of “the child.” Basic introduction to the juvenile justice system and sociological terms.
**Reading:** Chapter 1

**Reading:** Chapter 12

Reading: Chapter 3


In-Class Exercise 1A - Heinz Dilemma.

Reading: Chapter 3

February 25th - Lecture 5 - Social Structure Theories - Social Disorganization, Urbanity and Delinquency, Different Opportunity, Cultural Transmission.

Reading: Chapter 4

March 4th - Lecture 6 - Guest Lecturer - Jodi Miller, District Attorney's Office. Strain Theory, Merton’s Theory of Anomie, Subcultures of Delinquency (Conflict and Retreatist), Public Policy and Delinquency (Reduced Social Capital)

Reading: Chapter 4


Reading: Chapter 5


Reading: Chapter 9

March 25th - Midterm

April 1st - HOLIDAY (SPRING RECESS)

April 15th - Lecture 10 - **Guest Speaker - Margie Bradley, Exec. Dir of CHARLEE Group Homes.** Delinquency Prevention. Gender and Delinquency. Gender roles and delinquency, Characteristics of the Female Delinquent, Gender Bias and Delinquency.

*Reading:* Chapter 6, pg 146 - end. Chapter 7.


*Reading:* Chapter 8.

April 29th - Lecture 12 - **Quiz 12 - Substance Abuse and Delinquency.** The Controlled Substance Act and Schedules, Explanations for Use, Treatment Modalities, Intervention.

*Reading:* Chapter 11

May 6th - Lecture 13 - **Comprehensive Review** (Come prepared with your questions about the final!)

May 13th - **FINAL EXAMINATION**

**Course Policies:**

**Blackboard**

Students are expected to regularly check the course website on Blackboard for updates about the class, grades, assignments and readings. Supplementary materials, including powerpoints, will also be placed on Blackboard.

**Policy on Incomplete Grades:**

All requests for incomplete grades must be made by date of the final substantive class. As noted in the General Catalog, "An incomplete grade indicates that a portion of required coursework has not been completed and evaluated in the prescribed time period due to unforeseen, but fully justified, reasons, and that there is still a possibility of earning credit. It is your responsibility to bring pertinent information to the instructor and to reach agreement on the means by which the remaining course requirements will be satisfied. The conditions for removal of the Incomplete shall be reduced to writing by the instructor and given to you with a copy placed on file with the department chair until the Incomplete is removed or the time limit for removal has passed. A final grade is assigned when the work agreed upon has been completed and evaluated. An Incomplete shall not be assigned when the only way you could make up the work would be to attend a major portion of the class when it is next offered. Contract forms for Incomplete grades are available at department offices or the Office of the Registrar Web site at
http://www.sdsu.edu/registrar.” (See, SDSU General Catalog, pg. 473).

Policy on Plagiarism:

As noted in the General Catalog, “Institutions of higher education are founded to impart knowledge, seek truth, and encourage one’s development for the good of society. University students shall thus be intellectually and morally obliged to pursue their course of studies with honesty and integrity. Therefore, in preparing and submitting materials for academic courses and in taking examinations, a student shall not yield to cheating or plagiarism, which not only violate academic standards but also make the offender liable to penalties explicit in Section 41301 of Title 5, California Code of Regulations.” (SDSU General Catalog, pg. 483 2013-14).

Plagiarism and cheating are extremely serious violations of the Student Conduct Code. Instances of cheating or plagiarism will be handled in accordance with section 41301 et sequitur of the California Code of Regulations, governing academic discipline at the California State Universities. The operative sections can be found on page 481-484 of the SDSU General Catalog, and should be reviewed by all students. Keep in mind that plagiarism need not be “intentional” and can occur through negligence. Be careful to check all of your work to ensure that appropriate references have been provided.

Policy on Late Work:

Late work may be accepted at the instructor's discretion with a reasonable excuse. (Illness, family emergency, injury etc.) If a student is absent for an in-class exam or quiz, the student will be allowed to take the exam at the next available class date. The student must advise the instructor at the start of the next class where he or she is present that they need to take a make-up examination. This is to ensure the student does not gain an unfair advantage if the instructor is reviewing the midterm from the previous week. If the student is unable to attend class for two or more weeks in a row, and is therefore unable to re-take the quiz or exam, an alternative assignment may be assigned at the instructor's discretion.