

## Sociology 233: Juvenile Delinquency

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CRN # 16333  
Spring 2009  
260 Hodges Hall  
MW 5:00-6:15

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**"One's mind, once stretched by a new idea, never regains its original dimensions."  
--Oliver Wendell Holmes**

**REQUIRED TEXT: All readings should be completed before class!**

Regoli, Robert M., John D. Hewitt, and Matt Delisi. 2008. *Delinquency in Society 7<sup>th</sup> ed.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

This book is on reserve in the library. There is also a web page with practice quizzes and flashcards:  
[http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072989688/student\\_view0/](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072989688/student_view0/)

Students should complete the assigned readings *before* class, take notes on them, and be prepared to contribute questions and ideas to class.

Students will enhance the content, discussion, and understanding of the course by becoming/staying aware of current political and social issues through reading newspapers such as *The New York Times* and listening to *Morning Edition* and *All Things Considered* on National Public Radio (90.9 WVPM-FM) <http://www.wvpubrad.org/>.

### INTRODUCTION

Does research support the “get-tough” policies that states have been adopting for juvenile offenders? Violent juvenile delinquency has been steadily declining since the mid-1990s, but U.S. citizens remain concerned about the involvement of children and adolescents in crime. This course introduces students to the sociological perspectives on and the scientific study of a complex problem: juvenile delinquency. Lecture topics focus on social forces that push children and adolescents into delinquent directions. The lectures, readings, films, and active learning exercises in the course direct our attention to these factors.

- ❖ Students should understand the processes that create delinquent children and teens to gain a greater appreciation of societal conflicts related to children and crime. Students should learn the language, history, and theories of key juvenile delinquency researchers.
- ❖ Students should hone skills in critical thinking and effective communication of ideas. All such forms of communication should take place in a scholarly and informed manner. Reading, listening, writing, and thinking are integrally related, so successful completion of the course rests on the development of these skills over the semester.
- ❖ Students should develop, understand, and exercise a "sociological imagination," a unique and useful perspective that sociologists use to examine society. When we use this perspective critically and systematically, it helps us examine the way individuals, institutions, and structures interact to comprise society and influence human behavior. It is challenging to think sociologically; it

encourages us to question all that we take for granted.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Active Learning and Attendance:**

While attendance is a matter of students' systems of priorities, Dr. Woldoff expects regular attendance and informed participation. Absences are likely to affect grades as a substantial amount of in-class material is not available in the text. If students miss class, they are responsible for obtaining the notes from another student. Dr. Woldoff will not lend out notes or outlines under any circumstances.

Students will participate in four scheduled active learning exercises that are dependent on viewing films. Dr. Woldoff will discuss these further (see the schedule below). On four separate days, students must attend class for the full length of time and engage in group learning activities to receive credit--no exceptions. Students may not have credit for just attending, but must participate with their groups and submit BOTH individual and group responses to get credit. This counts for 10% of students' grades and is quite a boost to the overall course grade. For instance, it can bump up a high B to an A! The teaching assistant records attendance on the active learning days listed on the schedule. Each day is worth 2.5 points out of the 100 points that form students' total grade. Dr. Woldoff will detract 25% from this 10% for each day missed. If students leave class early without consulting Dr. Woldoff, they will not receive credit for attendance on that day. Students must take notes to verify their attendance in case of a dispute. Students who are dishonest about their/someone else's attendance will lose all of the attendance points for the whole group.

There are only four active learning days and students know them in advance. **Absences on active learning days are only excused when students discuss the matter with Dr. Woldoff in advance and before the absence occurs.** Students should not assume that an absence will be excused if they did not come to an agreement with Dr. Woldoff before the missed day.

### **Participation:**

Education is a collaborative process. Voluntary student participation is important and allows professors to treat students in mature fashion, so they can learn for themselves. In this course, we deal with controversial topics. Students are encouraged to offer the class their comments or disagreements. Varied points of view must be expressed respectfully and in a manner that is sensitive to differences in ability, class, ethnicity, lifestyle preference, race, religion, or sex. Students may not express views in a way that others may perceive as a personal attack. It is extremely counterproductive when students disagree with the readings or something said in class, but they refuse to voice this. If students disagree, they should say so in a respectful fashion. To do otherwise is ignorant and contrary to the development of the mind. Talk to Dr. Woldoff and each other after class. Dialogue and debate are essential to the active learning environment that Dr. Woldoff seeks to create in this class. Students are the most important component of such an atmosphere. **Dr. Woldoff will not penalize students for disagreeing with her or other students, but please be certain perspectives are based on evidence from the course or other readings.**

### **Classroom Conduct:**

Verbal and physical incivilities are not harmless, but interfere with learning, intellectual atmosphere, and

prevent class from being all that it might be. The following behaviors are unacceptable examples of rudeness, distraction, and passivity: cell phone use, lateness, chatting, reading newspapers/non-course materials, sleeping, displaying overt boredom, leaving early, and missing class.

**The cell phone policy is as follows: no usage (including ringing, talking, text messaging, picture taking). It is preferred that the phone is not visible in any way. If students violate the code of conduct, they may be asked to leave class. Note: During exams, any cell phone use will automatically constitute cheating (and will be dealt with as such).**

### **Examinations:**

These will consist of 55 multiple choice questions. Students are responsible for all readings, films, exercises, and lecture material. Lectures cover material that is not in the readings, and not all of the readings will be discussed in detail in the lectures. **Optimal performance is the result of attending class and doing the assigned readings before class.** The final exam is not cumulative. Please use Scantron # 882-E.

Dr. Woldoff will give make-ups *only* for students who contact her before the exam. The student must have written documentation of medical problems, such as a serious illness or for other emergencies in the *immediate* family. If students think that they fit this category, they must notify Dr. Woldoff *as soon as they find out* about the conflict *and well before* the exam. They must do this by speaking directly to her or sending e-mail ([rachael.woldoff@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:rachael.woldoff@mail.wvu.edu)). Upon approval, make-ups must be completed within the week of the original exam date. Dr. Woldoff reserves the right to give make-ups in an alternative format.

**Remember, students must contact Dr. Woldoff before the exam—no exceptions!**

**Grades:** The breakdown for final grades is as follows:

Active learning/attendance	10.0%	(four predetermined and scheduled days)
Exam 1	22.5%	
Exam 2	22.5%	
Exam 3	22.5%	
<u>Exam 4</u>	<u>22.5%</u>	
Final Grade	100%	

The formula is: final grade = [(E1 \* .225) + (E2 \* .225) + (E3 \* .225) + (E4 \* .225) + (AL% \* .10)]

### **Grading Scale:**

The grading scale is standard:

A	90-100	D	60-69
B	80-89	F	Below 60
C	70-79		

### **Academic Misconduct:**

Academic misconduct in any form is in violation of West Virginia University's policies and will not be tolerated. All cases of academic misconduct will be immediately referred to the dean of Arts and

Sciences office, the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled, and the Office of Judicial Programs. **Attendance, exams, and assignments are worth points** and honesty about all sources of all points is required. Exams are a reflection of an individual's ability to understand the course material; therefore, providing and/or seeking assistance from fellow students or using other aids during an exam will constitute cheating. Students should be familiar with the WVU statement. See it here:

<http://www.arc.wvu.edu/admissions/integrity.html>

*According to WVU: Academic Dishonesty Defined, WVU expects that every member of its academic community share the historic and traditional commitment to honesty, integrity, and the search for truth. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to any of the following:*

1. Plagiarism is defined in terms of proscribed acts. Students are expected to understand that such practices constitute academic dishonesty regardless of motive. Those who deny deceitful intent, claim not to have known that the act constituted plagiarism, or maintain that what they did was inadvertent are nevertheless subject to penalties when plagiarism has been confirmed. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to: submitting, without appropriate acknowledgment, a report, notebook, speech, outline, theme, thesis, dissertation, or other written, visual, or oral material that has been copied in whole or in part from the work of others, whether such source is published or not, including (but not limited to) another individual's academic composition, compilation, or other product, or commercially prepared paper.
2. Cheating and dishonest practices in connection with examinations, papers, and projects, including but not limited to:
  - a. Obtaining help from another student during examinations.
  - b. Knowingly giving help to another student during examinations, taking an examination or doing academic work for another student, or providing one's own work for another student to copy and submit as his or her own.
  - c. The unauthorized use of notes, books, or other sources of information during exams.
  - d. Obtaining without authorization an examination or any part thereof.
3. Forgery, misrepresentation, or fraud:
  - a. Forging or altering, or causing to be altered, the record of any grade in a grade book or other educational record.
  - b. Use of University documents or instruments of identification with intent to defraud.
  - c. Presenting false data or intentionally misrepresenting one's records for admission, registration, or withdrawal from the University or from a University course.
  - d. Knowingly presenting false data or intentionally misrepresenting one's records for personal gain.
  - e. Knowingly furnishing the results of research projects or experiments for the inclusion in another's work without proper citation.
  - f. Knowingly furnishing false statements in any University academic proceeding.

### **Student Services:**

Dr. Woldoff encourages students to schedule a time to meet with her. She is willing to discuss student concerns and progress during individual appointments and make every effort to assist students who are experiencing difficulty in this course. In addition, there are several options on campus for students who need extra assistance. Students are encouraged to take advantage of these services:

Carruth Center for Counseling  
& Psychological Services  
3rd Floor of Student Services Building  
304-293-4431  
<http://www.wvu.edu/~cocenter/>

Center for Writing Excellence  
240 Stansbury Hall  
304-293-3107 x410  
<http://www.as.wvu.edu/english/cwe>

WVU Student Support Services/TRIO  
215 Student Services Center  
PO Box 6230  
Morgantown, WV 26506-6230  
304-293-6629  
<http://sss.wvu.edu/>

Office of Student Life  
Elizabeth Moore Hall,  
1507 University Avenue  
PO Box 6411  
Morgantown, WV 26506-6411  
304- 293-5611  
<http://studentlife.wvu.edu/contactinfo.html>

### **Social Justice Statement:**

**West Virginia University is committed to social justice. I concur with that commitment and expect to foster a nurturing learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Our university does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color, or national origin. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration.**

### **Students with Disabilities:**

**If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with Disability Services (293-6700). Students with disabilities are responsible for making their needs known to the instructor and seeking available assistance in a timely manner.**

### **Class Cancellation Policy:**

**Dr. Woldoff will email a class cancellation notice if she is unable to hold class. Students are responsible for getting cancellation information.**

## Course Outline

Note: this is only a guide. There may be points during the semester when the course moves slightly faster or slower than indicated below. Dr. Woldoff will inform students of any major deviations from this outline. By the end of the semester, students should understand and be able to clearly communicate sociological perspectives, patterns, and findings on the following general issues:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic/Readings</b>
1/12	Course Introduction/ Introduction to the Study of Sociology
1/14	Regoli, Hewitt, Delisi Chapter 1: Defining Delinquency
1/21	Regoli, Hewitt, Delisi Chapter 3: Violent Youth Crime
1/26	Regoli, Hewitt, Delisi Chapter 5 (pp. 143-153 only): Individual Theories–Choice Explanations
1/28	Film: <i>The Killer at Thurston High</i>
2/2	Active Learning Day
2/4	<b>Exam 1</b>
2/9	Regoli, Hewitt, Delisi Chapter 2: Measuring Delinquency
2/11-2/16	Regoli, Hewitt, Delisi Chapter 4: Illegal Drug Use and Delinquency
2/18-2/23	Regoli, Hewitt, Delisi Chapter 6: Cultural Deviance, Strain, & Social Control Theories
2/25	Film: <i>Juvenile Justice</i>
3/2	Active Learning Day
3/4	<b>Exam 2</b>
3/9	Regoli, Hewitt, Delisi Chapter 12: Peer Group and Gang Delinquency
3/11	Regoli, Hewitt, Delisi Chapter 12: Peer Group and Gang Delinquency cont.
3/23	Regoli, Hewitt, Delisi Chapter 13: Police and Delinquency
3/25-3/30	Regoli, Hewitt, Delisi Chapter 7: Labeling and Conflict Explanations
4/1	Film: <i>LAPD Blues</i>
4/6	Active Learning Day
4/8	<b>Exam 3</b>
4/13	Regoli, Hewitt, Delisi Chapter 10: The Family and Delinquency
4/15-4/20	Regoli, Hewitt, Delisi Chapter 5 (p.153-183 only): Trait Explanations
4/22	Film: <i>Frontline--Little Criminals/Active Learning</i>
4/27	Regoli, Hewitt, Delisi Chapter 5 (p.153-183 only): Trait Explanations
4/29	Regoli, Hewitt, Delisi Chapter 9: Female Delinquency Theories

Final Examination: Saturday 5/9 from 8-10 in our classroom. \*\*\*Read and study. Good luck!

## Active Learning in Large Classrooms

Lectures are the best way to spread lots of information to large section, but students are not just spectators!

### Introduction

This course examines the growing sociological literature on juvenile delinquency. On active learning days, students spend considerable time (four complete days) involved in collaborative work with peers. The goal is to create a learning environment that is characterized by interaction and stimulation while preparing for upcoming examinations. Students also have the chance to teach each other.

### General Strategy

Students work in groups as they complete a project related to juvenile delinquency. Assignments are based on integrating three areas: theory, substantive concepts, and films. Students may use the text and notes to complete the assignment. At first, students work alone. Then, each group must choose a recorder to write the group response as the students work together (usually for about 30 minutes or 40 to 45 minutes, depending on the length of the class). To ensure that students share the role of leader, groups must select different people to collect the individual papers and act as recorder each time. Each group must submit all individual responses with the group response stapled on top (the teaching assistant will bring a stapler to class). Students must sign the group response and include their student I.D. numbers.

Each student's grade is his or her own. The grading system will be 25 points per day (for a total of 100 points) for those who have participated *in a satisfactory way*. This means students have seen the film and contributed to the group. The grade is 10% of the total grade for the course (90% of the course is based on multiple-choice examinations). These percentages meet students' needs for multiple sources of evaluation and the professor's goals and resources.

### Setting Up Groups

The professor will allow teams to self-select. Some research shows that teams form more quickly this way. It may also give students a sense of control over their learning. Write down a list of your group members and keep that with your textbook for a record.

### Design of Group Work

Students will self-select into groups of five, an optimal number given the size of the class and amount of teaching support. Groups of this size are unlikely to face a decline in group dynamics if one or two members are absent from class. On a group activity day, students will turn in their seats to face each other and/or sit on the floor (depending on the room limitations). At this point, Dr. Woldoff will distribute the assignment, procedure, and questions. She will provide a brief introduction and students will complete three steps. See below.

- 1) Each student will individually write a response to the assignment. On the top of the page, the student will list his or her name, class standing, major, and ID number. When complete, the group members will randomly designate a leader for the day. Each student will turn in the sheets to the designated group leader of the day. To ensure accountability, individual responses will take up a significant portion of class time. For instance, in a 50 minute class, students will work independently for 15 minutes or in a 75-

minute class, they will work alone for 20-25 minutes. **Students cannot get credit for Active Learning without turning in the individual response on the Active Learning Day!**

2) Next, each group will meet to discuss the listed questions. Randomly, students will choose a group member to take notes while continuing to work together. This will continue for 30 minutes in a 50 minute class or 40-45 minutes in a 75 minute class. The group members will agree upon and draft a group response to the assignment. Each group member who completed an individual response and participated in the group response will sign the group response and include student numbers on the group worksheet. They will also mention who played the roles of leader and note taker for the day.

3) At the end of the class period, the groups will turn in the individual responses with the group response stapled on top. The TA will bring a stapler to class to ensure that this is possible.

### **Organization of Learning Groups**

To ensure that each student shares in the leadership and note taking roles, the assigned leader of the day will collect individual work and the recorder of the day will take notes. The names of the recorder and leader will be on the group sheet that is turned in to the professor.

### **Guiding of Learning Groups**

The professor will work with a TA to guide the learning groups. We will present directions to students and individually walk around and listen to and sit with groups to help them.

### **Evaluation of Group Work**

This work is graded on a 100 point scale and counts for 10% of the students' grades. Each student who is present and active for the whole class will receive a check mark for his or her individual writing and the group work. Students who have been present and active for all four group work days receive a score of 100. Those who were there and active for 3 of the 4 assignments, receive a 75%, those who were there and active for 2 of the 4 assignments receive a 50%, and those were there for 1 of the assignments receive a 25%. The remaining 90% will be based on multiple choice exams. The students will also rate their peers to assure accountability and determine whether full credit should be granted.

### **Dealing with Student Concerns about Group Work**

First, the professor informs students about required group work on the first day. Students who are uncomfortable working with others will be informed and may opt to drop the class. Ideally, people will not drop because the professor will describe the rationale for the group activities. By informing them of their structured nature and explaining why the assignments are meaningful, they are more likely to be open to this way of learning. Second, many students may be concerned about group work lowering their individual grades, but group work will not lower individual grades unless group members find the individual to be a "free rider" or unsatisfactory member on days when he/she is present.

**Group Evaluation Form:** Circle the answer that best describes each group member

#1

#2

#3

#4

#5

- Made all meetings -or- missed a bunch
- Arrived early /ready to work -or- drain on team & left early
- Contributed at meetings -or- criticized with no solutions offered?
- Initiated ideas -or- sat back & let others do this hard work?
- Accepted responsibility -or- kept quiet, hoping to avoid tasks?
- Delivered on promises -or- late, or didn't get work done?
- Positive working attitude -or- complained a lot?
- Organized -or- scattered and unproductive?
- Prepared, helped make decisions -or- unprepared and disruptive?
- Knowledgeable -or- weak conceptual/practical background?
- Saw all films -or- Missed at least one film
- Recommend full credit -or- Do not recommend full credit

Group member #1: \_\_\_\_\_

Group member #2: \_\_\_\_\_

Group member #3: \_\_\_\_\_

Group member #4: \_\_\_\_\_

Group member #5: \_\_\_\_\_

**Group Notes**

**Recorder** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Leader** \_\_\_\_\_

**Group members present (name and 700#)**

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Group members absent**

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_