UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Sociology 250A: Crime and Society
Section 003 - Term 2
January – April 2010

Tues/ Thurs 2:30-4:00
Lasserre 104

Instructor: Dr. Renisa Mawani
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Anthropology and Sociology Building
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Teaching Assistants: Sherrie Dilley dilley9@hotmail.com
Mosope Fagbongbe mosope@interchange.ubc.ca

Course Description:
This second year survey course is designed to introduce students to the study of crime and the criminal justice system. **The objective is to encourage students to think critically about crime as a social phenomenon as well as social, legal, and institutional responses to it.** This course does not concern forensics and the “criminal mind” but explores the social and political circumstances in which certain behaviors come to be thought of as “crime” and how certain types of crime might be associated with particular groups of people. In other words, this course, in part, problematizes prevailing definitions of crime as well as social and legal responses to it.

The course is organized into three sections. In Part I, we explore competing definitions of crime. Here, we pay close attention to the role of the criminal law; the ways in which criminal justice agencies define, count, and measure crime, and how these definitions might change over time and context.

In Part II, we focus on theories and explanations of crime. Because no one theoretical perspective can adequately explain all forms of criminal behavior, this section introduces students to a range of criminological theories, their limitations, and policy implications. In this section, we will also explore the historical, social, and political contexts in which theories of crime emerge.

In Part III, we examine specific types of crime and how social relations including race, class, sexuality, and gender influence their definitions. Here, students will be expected to think critically about social inequality and its effects on dominant conceptions of crime as well as criminal justice policies and practices.
Course Format:
The course consists of two lectures/discussions each week. The professor will lecture for most of each class however students will be expected to participate through discussion groups and in-class assignments. While there are no participation marks, students are expected to attend all classes and be prepared to discuss or comment on the relevant readings. Students who do not attend class will have serious difficulty passing the course. Students who are unavoidably absent because of illness or disability should report to the professor immediately and provide appropriate documentation as soon as possible.

Required Readings:
2  To reduce paper and costs all additional required readings are available on VISTA.
   Students will require a campus wide login to access the course materials. It is each student’s responsibility to print out readings as necessary.

The required text is available at the UBC Bookstore

Course Evaluation:
- Mid-Term Exam: 25%
- In class assignments: 10%
- Group Project: 30%
- Final Exam: 35%  Scheduled by the University in April

NOTE: THE PENALTY FOR LATE ASSIGNMENTS IS 5% PER DAY
In Class Assignments (10%)
Students will be expected to complete 2 in-class assignments (one page each) that will be scheduled by the professor (see weekly schedule). Each assignment will consist of one question relating to the required readings for the particular week. Students will have 20-30 minutes of class time to complete the assignment. The expectations are that students will demonstrate an ability to think analytically and apply the readings to a current event or film as specified in the assignment.

Please note: students who miss the class in which an assignment is scheduled will not be allowed to make it up unless arrangements are made in advance with the professor.

Group Project (30%)
Students will be required to do a group project with 4-5 other class members. The assignment will include a project proposal (2-3 pages single spaced worth 10%) and an oral component to be presented in one of the last three classes. Details will be announced during the first few weeks of the term. Grading of the assignment will be based on both the oral and written components and will include content, style, creativity, and presentation.

Mid-Term Exam (25%)  Feb. 11th / 2010
Final Exam (35%)  To be scheduled in April 2010
The mid-term and final exam will each cover ALL course materials (including lectures, readings, and films). The format will include a combination of short answer and essay questions. Students will have 1 ½ hours to complete the midterm exam and 2 ½ hours to complete the final exam.

Academic Dishonesty:
Please review the UBC Calendar “Academic Regulations” for the University’s policy on cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty. Also visit www.arts.ubc.ca and go to the student section for useful information on avoiding plagiarism and on correct documentation.
Grading:
UBC courses are graded on a percentage basis. Corresponding letter grades are assigned automatically by the Registrar’s Office.

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<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>A+</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>A-</th>
<th>B+</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>B-</th>
<th>C+</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>80-84</td>
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<td>68-71</td>
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Please Note the Following Important Dates:
Last date for withdrawal without a W on your transcript – Jan. 18/10

Last date for withdrawal with a W instead of an F on your transcript – Feb. 12/10

**Sociology 250A: Crime and Society**
**Class Schedule and Readings**
*(Tentative and may be subject to change)*

**PART I: CRIME IN CANADA**

**Week 1: What is Crime? What is Criminology?**
January 5th & 7th

Required Readings
- White, Haines, Eisler - Chapter 1

**Week 2: Defining Crime: The Criminal Law in Canada**
January 12th & 14th

Required Readings:
- White, Haines, Eisler – Chapter 8
- Coutin, Susan “Contesting Criminality: Illegal Immigration and the Spatialization of Legality,” *Theoretical Criminology, 9*(1), (2005), 5-33

**Film: Grass**

**Week 3: Measuring Crime**
January 19th & 21st

Required Readings:
PART II: THEORIES OF CRIME

Week 4: Classical Criminology and Rational Choice Theory
January 26th & 28th

Required Readings:
- White, Haines, Eisler, Chapter 2
  
  *January 28th – In class assignment*

Week 5: Positivist Approaches to Criminology: Biology and Psychology
February 2nd & 4th

Required Readings:
- White, Haines, Eisler, Chapter 3

Week 6: Social Structural Theories
February 9th & 11th

Required Readings:
- White, Haines, Eisler, Chapter 4 & 5
  
  *February 11th – Midterm Exam*
**Week 7: Conflict/ Critical Criminology**
March 2\(^{nd}\) & 4\(^{th}\)

Required Readings:
- White, Haines, Eisler – Chapter 6 & 11

**PART III: SPECIFIC TYPES OF CRIME**

**Week 8: Women and Crime**
March 9\(^{th}\) & 11\(^{th}\)

Required Readings:
- White, Haines, Eisler – Chapter 7

**Week 9: Crimes of the Powerful: Corporate Crime**
March 16\(^{th}\) & 18\(^{th}\)

Required Readings:

*Film: The Corporation*
Week 10: Aboriginal Peoples and the Criminal Justice System
March 23rd & 25th

Required Readings:
• White, Haines, Eisler – Chapter 10

March 25th – In class assignment

Week 11: Race, Crime and Immigration
March 30th & April 1st

Required Readings:

Week 12: Group Presentations
April 6th & April 8th
• No Required Readings

Week 13: Group Presentations and Conclusion
April 13th & 15th
• No Required Readings

Final Exam to be scheduled during the April Exam Period
The group assignment is intended to facilitate collaborative and hands on learning outside the classroom. This component of the course is worth 30% of your final grade. In circulating directions early on, it is expected that you will:

1. Form groups of 4-5 people (if you have difficulty please see Dr. Mawani)
2. Decide on a format and/or topic. You will present your project in one of the last three classes of the term.

Please note: the grading criteria are as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Option 1: Photo Essay</th>
<th>Option 2: Community Service Learning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>10%</strong> 2-3 page typed proposal due on March 4/10</td>
<td><strong>10%</strong> 2-3 page typed individual reflection paper due on last day of class.</td>
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<td><strong>20%</strong> Presentation of the photo essay (scheduled during the last 3 days of classes)</td>
<td><strong>20%</strong> 3 days of community service with one of the participating organizations during the term. Presentation of CSL experience during the last 3 days of classes</td>
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Late penalty is 5% per day for written work (including weekends)

**Option 1: Photo Essay**

A photo essay is a series of photographs that is intended to tell a story, convey an argument or evoke a series of emotions in the viewing audience. While journalists and popular historians have long used this medium to convey their ideas, photo essays have only recently been introduced to the social sciences by visual culture theorists desirous of an appropriate medium to communicate the results of their research.

For the purposes of this assignment you could compile a slideshow of images that effectively convey the findings of your research. Depending on the nature of your project, these images will either be photographs taken during your urban “fieldwork” or images you have found in popular media. The presentation of your photo essay should be accompanied by a verbal engagement with the main findings of your research. Whether this entails a more general discussion of the images you have selected or a sustained critical analysis of each image is entirely up to your group. You should relate your essay to the themes of the course. The more specifically you can do so the better. Below is a list of web-links to provocative photo essays that might help you think about how to present your findings in this visual format.

**Examples of Photo Essays:**
Potential Research Questions that will guide the photo essay:

1. How are law and order represented in the city?
2. How do (crime) noir films represent gender in relation to crime and victimization?
3. How do neighbourhood watch campaigns get us to think about safety, crime, and criminality?
4. How is the culpability of youth constructed in the media coverage of school shootings?
5. How does “gangster entertainment” (i.e. the Sopranos, the Godfather trilogy, Scarface) tie race/ethnicity to criminality?
6. How are ideas of justice, law and order represented at the courthouse?
7. How are shopping malls organized to affect lawful and orderly conduct?
8. How are debates surrounding correctional reform structured by the news media?
9. How is graffiti constructed in the news media? How is graffiti distributed in the city? What does this tell us about order/disorder?
10. How are neighborhoods designed to deter a certain type of criminal behavior?
11. What ideas about law, space, and criminality structure debates about sex offender registration in the news media?
12. How are the murders of certain people presented differently than others in the news media?
13. How is white collar crime imagined and approached in popular culture?
14. How does the presence of law enforcement vary by neighborhood in the City of Vancouver?
15. How is serial criminality constructed in popular culture?
16. How does the news media represent immigration in relation to problems of crime, terror and security?

Option 2: Community Service Learning
Community Service Learning provides undergraduate students with a valuable opportunity to work with a local non-profit organization. In consultation with the Community Service Learning Office on campus, Dr. Mawani has been in touch with several organizations that are interested in partnering with UBC to facilitate student learning outside of the classroom. The organizations will be announced to those who select this option. Students who choose this option will be required to spend three days working with an organization on a research based project. In the past, students have conducted research on NIMBY (not in my backyard), compiled resource binders for women in a local transition house, or have organized an educational campaign around violence against women. Depending on student schedules, these three days on site may be arranged during the Olympic Break in February. Students who choose this option will not be required to hand in a proposal on March 4th but will be required to submit a 2-3 page “reflection paper” on the last day of classes (April 15th).