

*Teacher: Now students, the study of deviance is a lot like Spot the Looney. Of course, we're all looney.
Student: Uh, er, well then, which one's Spot?*

Class meetings: Striving for nearly normal!* Class will meet in-person Monday and Wednesday, 5:45-7pm in Room 301 in the Academic Building.

How to contact me: I will be available prior to class in the Adjunct Faculty Office Suite from 5-5:45 and after class on Mondays and Wednesdays. Come talk to me if you have questions or need assistance. I can be available at other times but we would need to make an appointment. You can leave a message in my mailbox in the Faculty Mailroom on the first floor (across from the elevator). The best way to contact me is to email me at dennis.breslin@uconn.edu.

Companion Website: I have created and maintain my own companion website for my teaching - socbres.com. A separate course page has been created for **SOCI 2305 Deviant Behavior** and the link on socbres.com will take you to it. On the course page you will find links to course readings, assignments, videos, lectures, and additional course content.

The Deviance course page is password protected (mostly to keep the prying eyes of Google-bots and other search engines from indexing it). Clicking on the course page link will prompt you for an ID/USER NAME and a PASSWORD. Use these to access it:

ID or USERNAME = students (all lower case)
PASSWORD = Socbres1students (the first S is capitalized)

Husky CT/Blackboard: We will use a wee bit of HuskyCT/Blackboard. While all online course materials will be on the course page at socbres.com, **weekly readers' responses will be submitted through HuskyCT**. I will also use the Blackboard grade book to record work you've submitted, the points you've earned, and the running tally of your progress in the course.

Required Readings: The main text is John Curra's, *The Relativity of Deviance*, 5th ed. It's available from the UConn bookstore or you can buy it online. There will be additional readings, accessible from the online SOCI 2305 course schedule on the Deviance course page at socbres.com.

Course Description: The university requires that the course catalog course description be included in the syllabus. Thus:

SOCI 2305. Deviant Behavior: How society defines a behavior as deviant, how and why members of society react to those who act this way, why people engage in deviant behavior, their experiences when labeled as deviants, and how they manage the stigma. May consider extreme body modification, drug abuse, mental illness, prostitution, suicide, and unconventional beliefs within the above context.

The course is a sociological examination of deviance and social control. The course involves a critical examination of the competing and contrasting logics that have governed the study of deviance, delinquency, or crime over the course of modernity (roughly the past two hundred years).

The most common way of understanding deviance has been that it's about bad people badly wanting to do bad things. The bad things are attitudes, behaviors or conditions (the ABCs), the badness of which is more or less taken for granted. They can range from simply unacceptable to seriously objectionable and abominable behaviors that provoke fear, harm people, and threaten social order. Or they have been understood as illness or disease that can be cured or treated. Sociology and science more generally step in to investigate and explain the why people behave badly and their motivations to engage in deviance. Knowing what makes bad people want to do bad things is the main objective.

Sadly, what we got from all of this, however, was a legacy of bad science, weird theory, repressive social policy, and an unquestioned commitment to locating the worst of deviance in the usual suspects, namely women and children, the working poor,

and people from non-European backgrounds. When the science of deviance has not been employed as a tool to maintain a preferred, if unjust, social order, it then became a voyeuristic exercise gazing at, in the words of Alexander Liazos, a world of "nuts, sluts, and perverts."

In this course we're going to approach the matter differently. This involves not only a change in an understanding deviance but a significant shift in focus. As Robert Heiner writes,

the defining quality of deviance resides in the audience and not in the person or behavior. That is, there is nothing inherent in the behavior of or the person that makes it or him or her deviant. Rather, a behavior or person is deviant because an audience defines it or him or her as such. ... [I]t suggests that a sociological understanding of deviance requires us to study the audience.

On the basis of this logic, deviance is relative. Designations of deviance vary according to what others see and how they respond to what they perceive as deviant. Definitions or perceptions of deviance vary across time and space, the social or cultural context in which audiences or others are operating. The reality of deviance also varies according to the ability or power of audiences to get others to adopt and utilize those definitions in their own reactions to deviance. Alternately, the meaning of deviance can depend on those who struggle and resist the imposition of labels and the stigma associated with them. Finally the relativity of deviance can reverse the spotlight and shed light on who is making rules, in whose interests, and for what purpose. Relativity doesn't mean anything goes or an absence of rules and values - rather it puts those rules and values in a clearer context. We should have standards but we need to remember the role people play in fashioning and enforcing them.

As Stephen Pfohl remarks, "The story of deviance and social control is a battle story. It is a story of the battle control to the ways people think, feel, and behave. It is a story of winners and losers and of the strategies people use in struggles with one another." The discipline of sociology did not flower according to some logic of history but was borne of the aims and interests of those wrestling with the turmoil wrought by two centuries of a developing urban industrial capitalist society. Those aims and interests sometimes corresponded with an enlightened pursuit of truth; at other times the story of sociology and its theory is about little beyond politics and power. And frequently in the story of sociology's interest in deviance, the sociological enterprise has been harnessed to the practices of social control. To theorize is to explain *and* to control. But who benefits from social control?

The course will be guided by these considerations. And some elementary questions. When and why do we see deviance? What makes us see it? Why do we see it here but not there? Why do we see it at one point in time but not another? What are we doing when we seek to help people and control deviance?

Course Objectives.

When you complete this class, you will be able to:

1. Explain significance of seeing deviance as relative, context-dependent, and social constructed.
2. Identify the differences in explaining deviance as socially constructed in contrast to biological, psychological, and conventional sociological approaches to deviance.
3. Consider the impact claims and definitions of deviance have had on those subject to them, the professional disciplines, and society.
4. Assess the claims about the natural or biological causes of and treatments for mental illness.
5. Conduct surveys of and interpret attitudes about the contexts in which rape is perceived to have occurred
6. Assess claims about the alleged harms of illicit drugs, the alleged benefits of drug rehabilitation, and the consequences of these claims.
7. Contrast the alleged harms of conventional deviance and elite deviance.

Course Requirements.

In-person classes may well go the way of the dinosaurs as teaching innovations increasingly turn attention to learning management systems, online courses, distance learning, internships, and the like. But nothing beats putting a bunch of people together in a room and permit the give and take of in-person communication to work its wonders. We learn well from others. It's

part of our social nature. Consequently, the course will be a mixture of lecture, class discussion, in-class group work, outside class work, and videos – all of which is designed to guides us through the course's topics.

Class participation is thus the main foundation for the course. **Attendance isn't mandatory** – you don't just get points for showing. You will get points for participating! Thus attendance is necessary for you to participate in the various in-class discussions and work we'll be doing.

Course Work.

Weekly Reader's Responses to the readings – 13 weekly submissions – each worth 5 points (65 points total). Each Monday you will need to *prepare 1 question and 1 observation or comment on the readings we'll be covering that week*. That means you will need to complete all of the reading ***prior*** to Monday classes. Reader's responses will be emailed to me no later than the class time at 5:45 on Mondays. Bring your phone, print out your response, or use your memory (!) to participate in Monday classes.

Reader's responses are prompts for class participation in Monday's class meetings. You may be called on in class to share your thoughts and thus you will always have something to say! They also give me feedback on what you're getting from the reading. As you read, think about what is and what isn't explained well by the authors and what would you want to know more about? I want your questions and observations to be clearly related to the reading and indicate that you have actually read the material. You get credit for doing the reader's responses – I won't deduct points unless I feel they are unrelated to the assigned readings. Reader's responses may contribute to exam questions.

Data Workshops – essentially outside of class research & analysis (aka, writing). There will be five data workshop assignments that will require you to do research and investigation outside of class and prepare written reports, analysis, or reflections. Two of the assignments will require you to go into the field – interact with others – and report you're your experiences. Complete details on the data workshops will be handed later in the course. Tentative due dates are on the course schedule.

Video Workshops – We will watch several videos or excerpts of full documentaries in class on selected topics. I've chosen these videos to permit us to explore topics in more depth. Unless otherwise, the writing on the videos will be done in class and serve as prompts our discussion in class.

Exams. We will have two exams covering in-class lectures/discussions and the readings. The exams will be a variation on a take-home exam that you write in class. You will have an opportunity to prepare your answers ahead of time and will be able to bring an answer guide to the exam class session. Exam dates are scheduled below; you are expected to take the exams as scheduled. **There are no make-up exams** except in the case of serious emergencies that have the necessary documentation. Plan your life with that in mind.

Grades. Your course grade will reflect the percentage of total number of points you earn on your work. As the course schedule is finalized over the semester, I will announce the total number of course points and the point range I will use in calculating the course grade. The work tentatively breaks down as follows in determining the final grade:

13 Weekly Q & As on the Readings (5 points each) = 65 points
2 Exams (100 points each) = 200 points
5 Data Workshops (points will vary by assignment) = around 200 points
6 Video Workshops(10 points) = 60 points
Additional class activities = possibly around 50 points

Late Policy. All course due dates are outlined in the course schedule. I reserve the right to change dates as necessary as the semester progresses. All changes will be communicated clearly and in a timely manner in-class, via email, and reflected in the online course schedule in the course folder at socbres.com. You are expected to complete all assignments on time/due date. Late submissions will not be accepted and marked zero unless you contact me prior to the deadline for getting an extension. Extension approvals will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Feedback & Grades. I will make every effort to provide feedback and related grades within a week following any given assignment. While I don't currently use My Grades in HuskyCT, you can always ask me for your current grade and point total. I will report mid-term grades in the Student Admin System. I will also prepare for each student a mid-term and final course grade progress report that will inventory all of the coursework submitted, the points given for each assignment, and the mid-term or preliminary final course grade.

Evaluation of the Course. Students will be provided an opportunity to evaluate instruction in this course using the University's standard procedures, which are administered by Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) staff in the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (OIRE).

Student Responsibilities and Resources

As a member of the University of Connecticut student community, you are held to certain standards and academic policies. In addition, there are numerous resources available to help you succeed in your academic work. Review these important standards, policies and resources, which include:

[The Student Code](#)

The University of Connecticut seeks to balance the needs and the rights of the individual with the welfare of the community as a whole. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the values embraced by the University community and reflected in its various policies, contracts, rules and regulations, including those contained herein.

[Policy on Academic, Scholarly, and Professional Integrity and Misconduct \(ASPIIM\)](#)

[Academic Integrity in Undergraduate Education and Research](#)

Avoiding Plagiarism

As a student, it is your responsibility to avoid plagiarism and meet University expectations related to academic integrity. The University of Connecticut Library recommends the following resources for students to understand and avoid plagiarism:

[Understanding Plagiarism](#), a tutorial from UConn Library

[Citing Sources](#), a UConn guide to introduce citing MLA, APA styles and more

[Citation Machine](#), interactive citation tool for MLA and APA styles

[KnightCite](#), interactive citation tool for MLA, APA, and Chicago styles

[Assignment Calculator](#), interactive tool that provides a timeline for writing

[Research QuickStart](#), guidance on common questions and needs in the research process

[Research Now](#), guides to help you develop your research skills

Copyright

Copyrighted materials within the course are only for the use of students enrolled in the course for purposes associated with this course and may not be retained or further disseminated.

Netiquette and Communication

At all times, course communication with fellow students and the instructor are to be professional and courteous. It is expected that you proofread all your written communication, including discussion posts, assignment submissions, and mail messages. If you are new to online learning or need a netiquette refresher, please look at this guide titled, Rules of Netiquette in Online & Distance Learning Courses.

Credit Hours and Workload

For a three credit in person course, University policy stipulates that for every 1 hour in class there is a minimum of 2 hours of student work out of class. For online courses, the minimum number of hours is a combination of the total hours required for an

in person course. For more details refer to the Minimum Number of Hours Per Credit found above under "Tips for Success". See [Credit Hour](#).

Course Add/Drop

If you should decide to add or drop a course, there are official procedures to follow:

- Matriculated students should add or drop a course through [Student Administration System](#).
- Non-degree students should refer to the Registrar's office [Non-Degree and Visiting Students page](#) for more information.

You must officially drop a course to avoid receiving an "F" on your permanent transcript. Simply discontinuing a course or informing the instructor you want to drop does not constitute an official drop. For more information, refer to the [Undergraduate Catalog](#).

Academic Calendar

The University's [Academic Calendar](#) contains important semester dates.

[Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment, and Related Interpersonal Violence](#)

The University is committed to maintaining a safe and non-discriminatory learning, living, and working environments for all members of the University community - students, employees, or visitors. Academic and professional excellence can flourish only when each member of our community is assured an atmosphere of mutual respect. All members of the University community are responsible for the maintenance of an academic and work environment in which people are free to learn and work without fear of discrimination or discriminatory harassment. In addition, inappropriate amorous relationships can undermine the University's mission when those in positions of authority abuse or appear to abuse their authority. To that end, and in accordance with federal and state law, the University prohibits discrimination and discriminatory harassment, as well as inappropriate amorous relationships, and such behavior will be met with appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the University. Additionally, to protect the campus community, all responsible employees (including faculty), as outlined in the Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Related Interpersonal Violence, are required to report to the Office of Institutional Equity any information that they receive related to sexual assaults, intimate partner violence, and/or stalking involving a student. An exception to this reporting exists if students disclose information as a part of coursework submitted to an instructor in connection with a course assignment. Even in the absence of such obligation, all Employees are encouraged to contact OIE if they become aware of information that suggests a safety risk to the University community or any member thereof. The University takes all reports with the utmost seriousness. Please be aware that while the information you provide will remain private, it will not be confidential and will be shared with university officials who can help. More information, including confidential and exempt employee resources available for support and assistance, can be found at equity.uconn.edu and titleix.uconn.edu.

[Sexual and Gender Misconduct](#)

[People with Disabilities, Policy Statement](#)

Center for Students with Disabilities

The University of Connecticut is committed to protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities and assuring that the learning environment is accessible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability or pregnancy, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options. Students who require accommodations should contact the Center for Students with Disabilities, Wilbur Cross Building Room 204, (860) 486-2020 or <http://csd.uconn.edu/>.

Statement on Absences from Class Due to Religious Observances and Extra-Curricular Activities

Faculty and instructors are expected to reasonably accommodate individual religious practices unless doing so would result in fundamental alteration of class objectives or undue hardship to the University's legitimate business purposes. Such accommodations may include rescheduling an exam or giving a make-up exam, allowing a presentation to be made on a different date or assigning the student appropriate make-up work that is intrinsically no more difficult than the original assignment. Faculty and instructors are strongly encouraged to allow students to complete work missed due to participation in extra-curricular activities that enrich their experience, support their scholarly development, and benefit the university community. Examples include participation in scholarly presentations, performing arts, and intercollegiate sports, when the participation is at the request of, or coordinated by, a University official. Students should be encouraged to review the course syllabus at the beginning of the semester for potential conflicts and promptly notify their instructor of any anticipated accommodation needs. Students are responsible for making arrangements in advance to make up missed work.

For conflicts with final examinations, students should contact the Dean of Students Office. Faculty and instructors are also encouraged to respond when the Counseling Program for Intercollegiate Athletes (CPIA) requests student progress reports. This will enable the counselors to give our students appropriate advice.