

# SOC 425 Juvenile Delinquency

**Spring 2015**

**Section 001**

**3 Credit Hours**

## Prerequisites

3 credits at SOC 200-level; SOC 300

## General Education Program Category

This course does not fulfill a General Education Program category.

## Course Meetings

**Days:** MW

**Time:** 3:00-4:15 PM

**Location:** 124 1911 Building

## People

**Instructor:** Professor Stacy De Coster

**Email:** [smcoster@ncsu.edu](mailto:smcoster@ncsu.edu)

**Web Page:** <https://wolfware.ncsu.edu/>

**Office Location:** 323 1911 Building

**Office Hours:** Wed 10:30-11:30

**Teaching Assistant:** Kelly Godwin

**Email:** [kggodwin@ncsu.edu](mailto:kggodwin@ncsu.edu)

**Office Location:** 360 1911 Building

**Office Hours:** Mon 11:00-12:00

## Textbook

**The Stickup Kids: Race, Drugs, Violence, and the American Dream**

**Author:** Randol Contreras

**Press:** University of California Press

**Year:** 2013

**ISBN:** 978-0-520-27338-2

**Cost:** \$13.00 - \$22.00

*This textbook is required.*

## Course Description

Our course focuses on sociological theory and research on juvenile delinquency in the U.S. The material builds on basic concepts and principles taught in introductory sociological courses and the major theoretical traditions in sociology. The main goal of the course is to teach you to think critically about the sociology of delinquency. Specifically, we will focus on the following objectives:

- (1) learning concrete particulars about the relationship between delinquency and social class, gender, and other demographic characteristics;
- (2) using sociological theories of delinquency as conceptual tools to make sense of the concrete particulars of delinquency;
- (3) critically evaluating theoretical arguments in terms of clarity, logical consistency, and empirical support; and
- (4) deriving concrete policies from theoretical arguments and evaluating existing and past policies in light of theory and research.

## Point Earning Opportunities

Final course grades will be determined based on the total number of points you earn. I have listed the opportunities to earn points below.

**Exams:** There will be three in-class examinations in this class. The exams will be a combination of multiple-choice and essay questions. You will notice as the course progresses that an effective understanding of material covered after the first and second exams will entail that you are knowledgeable of the material covered prior to these exams. In this sense, examinations will be cumulative.

**Theory Application Paper:** This course will expose you to a variety of theoretical perspectives on juvenile delinquency. The goal of the course is to teach you to use theories as tools for understanding why juveniles break the law. To achieve this goal, each student will be required to write a paper that applies the theories and concepts learned in class to explain the deviance and law violation described in *The Stickup Kids*. You can earn 50 points for the theory application paper.

**Class Participation:** Everyone is expected to complete all reading assignments on time, take notes on reading assignments, take notes during class lectures and discussions, and to contribute to class discussions. You may earn points for class participation in the following ways:

**Application Exercises:** There will be opportunities to earn points through group exercises. On the dates listed in the syllabus, we will divide into small groups to practice applying theories to films we watch in class. You can earn 15 points from the application exercises.

**Think/Pair/Share Exercises:** Some people demonstrate their effort and participation in the course through good attendance. To reward these

people and get them involved in the course, you will break into groups of 5 to discuss questions I pose in class. After each group has had an opportunity to discuss their responses to questions, the class will convene to hear your group responses. You can earn approximately 15 points for this form of course participation.

**Consistent Contribution to Class Discussion**: Thoughtful and consistent participation in the classroom will be rewarded. The assignment of grades in borderline situations will be determined largely by consistent and thoughtful contribution in the classroom.

**Photo Card Attendance Points**: You can earn 5 points for turning in your attendance notecard with your photo and answered questions. To earn full credit, you must turn it in on time, the photo must be attached to the card, and the answers must be completed.

**Reading Quizzes**: There are several short quizzes on the readings that you will take by midnight on the specified dates on your moodle class page. These quizzes are designed to ensure that you keep on pace with the course readings and **must** be completed by the due date. You may earn approximately 20 points on reading quizzes.

## Grading

		Points Possible	% of Total
Exams	3 @ 50 points	150	58%
Theory Application Paper	50 points	50	19%
Application Exercises	20 points	20	8%
Think/Pair/Share	15 points	15	5%
Photo Card Attendance	5 points	5	2%
Reading Quizzes	20 points	20	8%
Total Points		260	100%

Note: Exams, exercises, group projects, note checks, and your theory application paper constitute the only mechanisms through which you can earn points in the course. **There will be no extra credit opportunities or projects.**

## Grading Procedure

Your final course grades will be determined by dividing the points you earn by the total points possible. If the distribution of final grades falls significantly below a certain threshold, I will develop a curve to *improve* grades. A curve will only be

used to help final grades. In no instance will the curve be used to bump grades down. The following guarantees tell you what the minimum standards are for earning certain letter grades:

If you earn 93% of the total points, you are guaranteed no less than an a-

If you earn 83% of the total points, you are guaranteed no less than a b-

If you earn 73% of the total points, you are guaranteed no less than a c-

If you earn 63% of the total points, you are guaranteed no less than a d-

The only exception to these guarantees is for students who violate codes of academic conduct or who do not complete all three examinations, as well as the theory application paper. Students who violate codes of academic conduct, do not take all three examinations or do not complete the theory application paper will not receive a passing grade in this course.

### **Requirements for Credit-Only (S/U) Grading**

In order to receive a grade of S, students are required to take all exams and quizzes, complete all assignments, and earn a grade of C- or better. Conversion from letter grading to credit only (S/U) grading is subject to university deadlines. Refer to the Registration and Records calendar for deadlines related to grading. For more details refer to <http://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-20-15>.

### **Requirements for Auditors (AU)**

Information about and requirements for auditing a course can be found at <http://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-20-04>.

Additional requirements TBD.

### **Policies on Incomplete Grades**

If an extended deadline is not authorized by the instructor or department, an unfinished incomplete grade will automatically change to an F after either (a) the end of the next regular semester in which the student is enrolled (not including summer sessions), or (b) the end of 12 months if the student is not enrolled, whichever is shorter. Incompletes that change to F will count as an attempted course on transcripts. The burden of fulfilling an incomplete grade is the responsibility of the student. The university policy on incomplete grades is located at <http://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-50-3>.

## **Course Policies**

1. Full participation in class is expected of all students. Excuses for anticipated absences **must** be presented **before** the absence. If excuses are not provided prior to the missed class period, the student will not be allowed to make up participation points (including group projects) on the day class was missed.

Examples of anticipated situations that qualify as excused absences include:

- a. Student is away from campus, representing an official university function (e.g., participating in a professional meeting or participating in an athletic event) – official notification must be provided before missing the class;
- b. Required court attendance as certified by the clerk of court – court certification must be provided before the missed class period;
- c. Religious observances as certified by the department of student development – certification must be provided before the missed class period;
- d. Required military duty as certified by the student's commanding officer – certification must be provided before the missed class period.

Examples of absences that are not considered excused:

- a. Meeting with a faculty member for another class;
- b. Work obligations;
- c. Heading home early (or coming back late) for a holiday break or long weekend.

For complete attendance and excused absence policies, please see <http://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-20-03>

If an emergency or other unanticipated problems arise that require you to miss five or more class periods during which you are unable to be academically productive, you will be unable to remain abreast of the course materials and will be advised to withdraw from the course. The counseling center will aid you in this process. (<http://healthcenter.ncsu.edu/counseling-center/general-information/forms/>)

2. Students who miss regular class periods will have to get notes from a classmate. **The course TA will not provide class notes, even for those who miss class for excused reasons.** Please befriend a classmate on whom you can rely for taking good notes in case you have something that keeps you from class one day. After you have had a chance to go over the notes from your classmate, you should feel free to come to our office hours to discuss the material.
3. Students who miss think/pair/share days (excused or unexcused) will **not** be allowed to make up the points for the exercises. Think/pair/shares are used to reward class attendance. I will drop everyone's lowest score to account for

potential excused absences on days when we do think/pair share.

4. Your readings for each week are on the course webpage. The readings are not simple reiterations of the lectures. Instead, they are supplemental (i.e., extra information). It is important that you complete the readings and take the readings quizzes by midnight on the specified due dates. If you do not complete the quiz before it closes, you will NOT be allowed to take it at a later date. Please plan accordingly. I will drop everyone's lowest quiz score to account for potential computer problems or simple forgetfulness.
5. If you miss an exam due to a medical or family emergency, you **must** provide documentation. You should try to notify me before the exam but are required to do so no later than one week after your return to class. See the policy: <http://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-20-03>.

Make-up exams, both early and late, will be administered at the time of the final, consist of 4 long-answer essay questions, and last approximately one hour.

6. Your theory application paper must be turned in **prior to or at the start of the class on which it is due**. Late papers will be penalized half a letter grade for each day they are late. If for some reason you cannot make it to class on the day the assignment is due, it is your responsibility to get a friend or classmate to turn in the assignment on time. There will be **no exceptions** to this policy.
7. The absence of unnecessary distractions and interruptions is essential for an effective learning environment. As such, you are not allowed to use electronic devices (cellphones, computers – laptops, notebooks, netbooks, handhelds – or other audio or video players) without express permission. Students violating the classroom policy can be subject to the following actions: Confiscation of the device for the remainder of the class period, dismissal from the class for the day the offense occurs, or loss of any attendance (think/pair/share) points for the day.
8. The university prohibits plagiarism and all other forms of cheating. Students who plagiarize are placed on academic integrity probation for the remainder of their academic career. Instructors may reduce grades in the course to an F.

Per the honor pledge at NCSU, your signature on any test or assignment indicates, "I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this test or assignment."

Please review the Code of Student Conduct and a detailed explanation of academic honesty at <http://policies.ncsu.edu/policy/pol-11-35-01>

9. If anyone (including myself, the teaching assistant, or any of your peers) says or does anything that you consider harassment or discrimination in this class, you may write me an anonymous note or contact me in person. If this does not resolve the issue, please know that NC State University provides equality of opportunity in education for all students. Accordingly, NC State affirms its commitment to maintain an academic environment for all students that is free from all forms of discrimination. Discrimination based on race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation is a violation of state and federal law and/or NC State University policy and will not be tolerated. Harassment of any person (either in the form of quid pro quo or creation of a hostile environment) based on race, color, religion, creed, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation also is a violation of state and federal law and/or NC State University policy and will not be tolerated. NC State's policies and regulations covering discrimination, harassment, and retaliation may be accessed at <http://policies.ncsu.edu/policy/pol-04-25-05> or [http://www.ncsu.edu/equal\\_op/](http://www.ncsu.edu/equal_op/). Any person who feels that he or she has been the subject of prohibited discrimination, harassment, or retaliation should contact the Office for Equal Opportunity (OEO) at 919-515-3148.
  
10. Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with verifiable disabilities. In order to take advantage of available accommodations, students must register with disability services for students at 1900 student health center, campus box 7509, 515-7653. For more information on NC State's policy on working with students with disabilities, please see the Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Regulation at <http://policies.ncsu.edu/regulation/reg-02-20-01>.
  
11. Students who would like assistance with their writing skills for the writing assignments in the course are encouraged to utilize the free services available at writing and speaking tutorial services: <http://tutorial.ncsu.edu/wsts-undergrad>

## Course Schedule

**NOTE:** The course schedule is subject to change.

### Introduction – 01/07

Quiz 1: complete by Jan 14 (Wednesday)

### Measurement Issues and Delinquency— 01/12-01/14

Read:

Thornberry, Terrence P. and Marvin D. Krohn. 2000. "The Self-Report Method for Measuring Delinquency."

### Correlates of Delinquency/Intro to Theories – 01/21-01/26

Quiz 2: complete by Jan 21 (Wednesday)

Read:

Hirschi, Travis and Hanan C. Selvin. 1966. "False Criteria of Causality in Delinquency Research." *Social Problems* 13:254-265 (1<sup>st</sup> paragraph on p. 265 only).

### Social Control & Social Disorganization Theories – 01/29-02/02

Read:

Pratt, Travis, Jacinta M. Gau, and Travis W. Franklin. 2011. "Key Idea: Hirschi's Social Bond/Social Control Theory." Chapter 5 in *Key Ideas in Criminology*. Sage Publication.

Cullen, Francis T. and Robert Agnew. 2011. "Part III: The Chicago School: The City, Social Disorganization, and Crime." In *Criminological Theory: Past to Present*. Oxford University Press.

Solomon, Kobrin. 1959. "The Chicago Area Project: A 25-Year Assessment." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. 322:19-29.

### Differential Assoc, Social Learning & Techs of Neut – 02/04

Quiz 3: complete by Feb 4 (Wednesday)

Read:

Matsueda, Ross L. 1988. "The Current State of Differential Association Theory." *Crime & Delinquency* 34:277-288.

### Theory Application Exercise: Streetwise – 02/09-02/11

If you are not in class for the film, you will be unable to partake in the group exercise and will not earn points for this exercise.

## **Anomie and Strain Theories — 02/16 - 02/18**

### Read:

Merton, Robert K. 1938. "Social Structure and Anomie." American Sociological Review 5:672-682.

Agnew, Robert. 1992. "Foundation for a General Strain Theory of Crime and Delinquency." Criminology 30:47-61 (up to "Measuring Strain")

## **Critical and Power Control Theories — 02/23**

Quiz 4: complete by Feb 25 (Wednesday)

### Read:

Hagan, John, John Simpson, and A.R. Gillis. 1987. "Class in the Household: A Power-Control Theory of Gender and Delinquency" American Journal of Sociology 92:788-798.

## **First Exam — 02/25**

Review sheet available on moodle course page.

## **Introduction to Subcultures — 03/02**

### Read:

The Stickup Kids, Introduction and Chapter 1

Brown, Timothy S. 2004. "Subcultures, Pop Music and Politics: Skinheads and "Nazi Rock" in England and Germany." Journal of Social History 38: 157-178.

## **Subcultural Applications — 03/04**

### Read:

The Stickup Kids, Chapters 2-4

## **Spring Break — 03/09-03/11**

### Read:

The Stickup Kids, Chapters 5-7

## **Subcultural Applications (con) — 03/16**

### Read:

The Stickup Kids, Chapters 2-4

## **Theory Application Exercise: SLC Punk — 03/18-03/23**

Quiz 5: complete by April 1 (Wednesday)

### Watch:

Bloods and Crips: Made in America

## **Introduction to Gang Delinquency — 03/25**

In-class quiz on “Made in America: Bloods and Crips”

Read:

Bursik, Robert J. and Harold G. Grasmick. 2006. “Chapter 1: Defining and Researching Gangs.” In *The Modern Gang Reader*. Los Angeles: Roxbury.  
The Stickup Kids, Chapters 8-10

## **Lower Class Culture & Social Control Gangs — 03/30-04/01**

Read:

Shoemaker, Donald J. 2000. “Chapter 6: Lower-Class-Based Theories of Delinquency.” In *Theories of Delinquency: An Examination of Explanations of Delinquent Behavior*.

The Stickup Kids, Chapter 11 and Conclusions

## **Status-Frustration & Differential Opportunity Theories — 04/06**

Quiz 6: complete by April 15 (Wednesday)

Reading Review:

Shoemaker, Donald J. 2000. “Chapter 6: Lower-Class-Based Theories of Delinquency.” In *Theories of Delinquency: An Examination of Explanations of Delinquent Behavior*

## **Second Exam — 04/08**

Review sheet available on moodle course page.

## **History of Juvenile Justice — 04/13-04/15**

Theory application paper due at the start of class on 04/13.

Read:

Bernard, Thomas J. 1992. “Chapter 7: Juvenile Justice Today: Good Intentions.” *The Cycle of Juvenile Justice*. New York: Oxford University Press.

## **Labeling Theory — 04/20**

Read:

Bernburg, Jon Gunnar, Marvin D. Krohn, and Craig J. Rivera. 2006. “Official Labeling, Criminal Embeddedness, and Subsequent Delinquency.” *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 43:67-72 (up to “Hypotheses and Analysis”).

Van Vleet, Russell K. 1999. “The Attack on Juvenile Justice.” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 564:203-214

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## **Deterrence and the Death Penalty – 04/22**

Quiz 7: complete by April 22 (Wednesday)

Read:

Stevenson, Bryan. 2014. Chapter 6: Surely Doomed. In *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*. New York: Spiegel and Grau.

Stevenson, Bryan. Chapter 8: All God's Children. In *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*. New York: Spiegel and Grau.

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## **Final Exam @ 1:00 pm – 05/01 (Friday)**

The final exam will be at 1 pm in our regular classroom.

There will be no opportunities to take the exam at an earlier date/time or a later date/time. Plan accordingly!