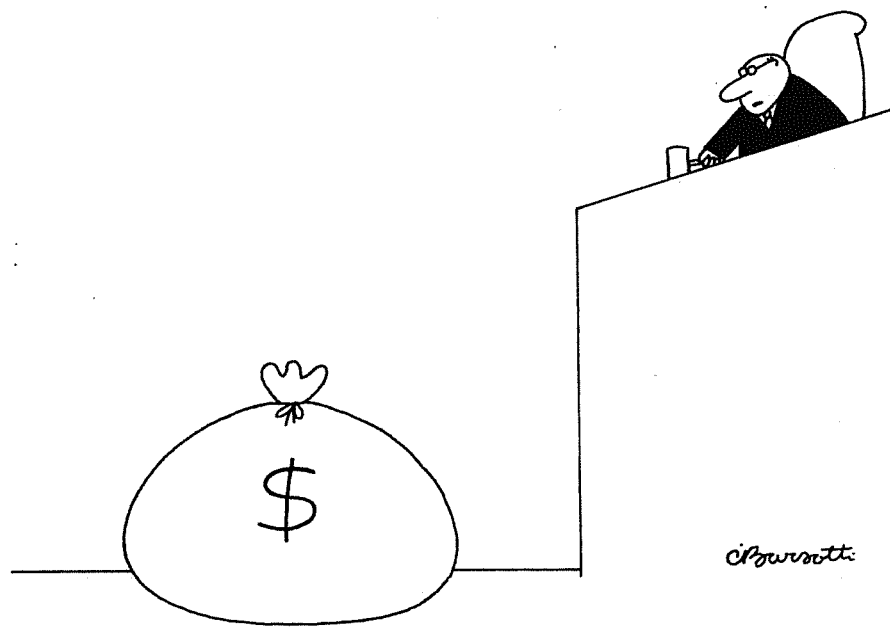


UTEN
Fall
2001

Sociology 5004
Special Topics in Criminology:
Inequalities and Social Control
Fall 2001

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Spurritt

"Not guilty."

Course overview

This course is designed to provide you with an overview of current theories and research on inequalities and social control. We will focus on four types of inequalities throughout the semester: class, race, age, and gender, and will conclude the course with a discussion of intersections among these various forms of inequality.

Course meetings

The class is scheduled to meet Wednesdays from 9:00-11:50 in Ketchum 8. We will have a short break in the middle of each class period.

Course readings

The following books are available at the University Bookstore:

Reiman, Jeffrey. 2000. The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison, Sixth Edition. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Cole, David. 1999. No Equal Justice: Race and Class in the American Criminal Justice System. New York: The New Press.

Tonry, Michael. 1995. Malign Neglect: Race, Crime, and Punishment in America. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Humes, Edward. 1996. No Matter How Loud I Shout: A Year in the Life of Juvenile Court. New York: Touchstone.

Bernard, Thomas J. 1992. The Cycle of Juvenile Justice. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Daly, Kathleen. 1994. Gender, Crime, and Punishment. New Haven: Yale University Press.

There will also be a number of articles and book chapters required throughout the semester. They will be available for photocopying in the sociology department main office.

Course requirements

Readings: To ensure that you have the background information necessary for seminar discussions, you will need to read all assigned reading by class time on the day it is assigned. The readings for this course include both books and articles. In general, articles are assigned to provide you with a range of examples of how research is done on a particular topic; books are assigned to provide examples of research and/or theoretical arguments in greater depth. I have tried to design the course schedule to keep the reading load manageable from week to week by interspersing articles and books.

Class participation and discussion leadership: Because this is a seminar, your presence in class and active participation in discussions is mandatory. Each of you will be responsible for signing up to lead the class discussion on one or two occasions (depending on class size) during the course of the semester. Leading the discussion entails emailing questions and/or comments about the readings to the other members of the seminar (including me) by 5:00 pm on the Monday before the seminar meets, and leading the class in discussion (for approximately half of class time) on the day of the seminar. Other members of the seminar are required to come to seminar prepared to discuss these questions/comments.

Writing assignments: Academics write for many different reasons. While occasionally we write something to be published, most of the writing that we do (or that we should do) serves to stimulate or clarify our own thinking about a particular topic or argument we wish to make, or to work through, summarize, and/or critique someone else's thoughts or arguments. It is my opinion that we tend to think of the vast majority of our writing as writing of the first variety (that is, writing that is formal and structured – writing that we expect others to read and critique), when it would be far more productive to think of most of our writing as examples of the more informal second and third varieties. Accordingly, I will ask you to do three very different kinds of writing for this course; each is described below. Together, the writing assignments will constitute 80% of your course grade.

Responsive writing assignments: During “book” weeks, I would like for you to record your reactions to the week's book. This should be very informal writing. My recommendation to you is simply to write for thirty minutes or so after you've finished the week's reading. Write whatever comes to mind; these writing assignments should be your opportunity to wander around a bit after putting down your book. It may be helpful for you to jot down notes as you read – quick thoughts about things you might want to come back to (you don't need to turn in these notes). These assignments will be ungraded, but you must hand one in for each book assigned during the class period in which we are

discussing that book. As long as you turn the assignment in, you will receive full credit.

For those of you who want a little more structure, here are a few examples to get you started of things you might write about:

- What did you find interesting about the book? Write about that, and see where it takes you.
- Did you have a hard time figuring out what the author's main arguments were? Talk through it, and see if maybe you can't figure them out through your writing.
- Do you see existing or possible connections to other course readings? What are they?

Summary/commentary assignments: During "article" weeks, I will ask each of you to sign up to provide both a summary and a brief commentary for one of the assigned articles. This writing should be somewhat more formal than the responsive writing described above; because you are trying to succinctly summarize and comment on someone else's writing, I expect that you will draft these summaries more than once before you are satisfied.

In these assignments, you should do two things. First, you should summarize the author's main argument(s) in 3-5 sentences (note: no more than five sentences!). This should not simply be a statement of the findings, but more of an explanation of the kind of argument the author is trying to make (you can then include a statement as to whether or not the findings support the argument). Second, you should provide a brief (4-5 sentences) commentary on the article. Comments may include critiques, connections to other course readings, or research questions which are suggested by the author's argument and findings.

In addition to turning these in to me to be graded, you should also bring enough copies to distribute your writing to every seminar member. These assignments will be graded using a check/check-plus/check-minus system, which means the following:

- Check: Work that meets basic expectations, follows the assignment
- Check plus: Work that indicates both an ability to concisely state an argument and high-quality thinking or exploration about that argument
- Check minus: Work that does not meet basic expectations

Note that you are not required to do summary/commentary assignments for either the first two weeks or the second to last week of the semester.

Final research paper: For your final assignment, you will be required to write a 15-25-page research paper that deals with some aspect of inequalities and social control. Some possibilities for this paper include: a detailed critique of one or more of the readings or of existing research on one type of inequality, a statement of a research question that evolves from the course material and a preliminary proposal for how you might go about addressing that question, or a discussion of the different ways researchers conceptualize and test for inequalities. The complete paper is due by 1 p.m. Monday, December 17th.

A 1-2 page description of your preliminary thoughts about your paper topic is due the ninth week of the semester (October 24th). This is an ungraded assignment, but will serve as an opportunity for you to get early feedback from me about your paper ideas (and for you to get started on your paper).

Late policy for writing assignments: Work turned in late is an inconvenience to me, as it requires me to adjust my grading schedule. I understand, however, that students often have good reasons for turning in late work. My late policy is therefore as follows: If you need to turn something in late, you must inform me no later than the beginning of the class period in which it is due. While you may inform me in person, you must also send me an email (by the same deadline) detailing your reasons for needing extra time. For students who follow these instructions, I am generally willing to grant an extension for up to one week. You may take advantage of this policy twice and only twice throughout the semester. Extensions will not be granted for the final paper. I consider this to be a very reasonable late policy, and therefore I will not accept any late work from students who do not follow these instructions.

Paper presentations: The final day of class will be devoted to paper presentations; each of you will have 10-15 minutes in which to present your paper; you will be expected to respond to questions and comments following your presentation. You should treat these presentations as you would a conference presentation. While the presentations themselves will not be graded, failure to take this assignment seriously (that is, failure to come to class organized and prepared to discuss your paper) will negatively affect your final paper grade.

Grading

Your grade for this course will be based on satisfactory completion of the required tasks. The grade you earn does not depend on how well you do compared with others in the class. Your grade will be based on the following components:

Class participation	10%
Responsive writing assignments (Each assignment worth 5% of total grade)	30%
Summary/commentary writing assignments (Each assignment worth 5% of total grade)	20%
Research paper	40%

Schedule of weekly topics, readings, and writing assignments

Week one (8/29): Course introduction

Readings:

Mills, C. Wright. 1959. The Sociological Imagination, pp. 195-226.

Becker, Howard. 1986. Writing for Social Scientists, pp. 135-149.

Saltzman, Joel. 1993. If You Can Talk, You Can Write, pp. 3-26.

NO WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE THIS WEEK

Week two (9/5): Explanations for inequalities, Doing research on inequalities

Readings:

Hagan, John. 1989. "Why is there so little theory in criminal justice research?"

Bridges, George and Martha Myers. 1994. "Problems and Prospects in the Study of Inequality, Crime, and Social Control."

Tittle, Charles. 1994. "Theoretical Bases for Inequality in Formal Social Control."

Eisenstein, James and Herbert Jacobs. 1977. Felony Justice, pp. 3-12 and 19-39.

Farrell, Ronald and Malcolm Holmes. 1991. "The Social and Cognitive Structure of Legal Decision-Making."

Albonetti, Celesta. 1991. "An Integration of Theories to Explain Judicial Discretion."

NO WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE THIS WEEK

Week three (9/12): Class

Readings: The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison

RESPONSIVE WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE

Week four (9/19): Class

Readings:

Champion, Dean J. 1989. "Private Counsels and Public Defenders: A Look at Weak Cases, Prior Records, and Leniency in Plea Bargaining."

Myers, Martha. 1987. "Economic Inequality and Discrimination in Sentencing."

Hagan, John and Clayton Mosher. 1994. "Constituting Class and Crime in Upper Canada: The Sentencing of Narcotics Offenders, circa 1908-1953."

Albonetti, Celesta. 1994. "The Symbolic Punishment of White-Collar Offenders."

SUMMARY/COMMENTARY WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE

Week five (9/26): Race

Readings: Malign Neglect

RESPONSIVE WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE

Week six (10/3): Race

Readings:

Zatz, Marjorie. 1987. "The Changing Forms of Racial/Ethnic Biases in Sentencing."

Peterson, Ruth and John Hagan. 1984. "Changing Conceptions of Race: Towards an Account of Anomalous Findings of Sentencing Research."

Bridges, George and Bob Crutchfield. 1988. "Law, Social Standing, and Racial Disparities in Imprisonment."

Bridges, George and Sara Steen. 1998. "Racial Disparities in Official Assessments of Juvenile Offenders."

Kennedy, Randall. 1991. "Race, Law, and Punishment: The War on Drugs."

SUMMARY/COMMENTARY WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE

Week seven (10/10): Race

Readings: No Equal Justice

RESPONSIVE WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE

Week eight (10/17): Age

Readings: No Matter How Loud I Shout

RESPONSIVE WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE

Week nine (10/24): Age

Readings:

Tittle, Charles and Debra Curran. 1988. "Contingencies for Dispositional Disparities in Juvenile Justice."

Dannefer, Dale and Russell Schutt. 1982. "Race and Juvenile Justice Processing in Court and Police Agencies."

Sutton, John. 1994. "Children in the Therapeutic State: Lessons for the Sociology of Deviance and Social Control."

Bishop, Donna. 2000. "Juvenile Offenders in the Adult Criminal Justice System," pp. 82-88 and 122-156.

SUMMARY/COMMENTARY WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE

Week ten (10/31): Age

Readings: The Cycle of Juvenile Justice

RESPONSIVE WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE

November 7 No Seminar (ASC Meetings)

Week eleven (11/14): Gender

Readings: Gender, Crime, and Punishment
RESPONSIVE WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE

November 21 No Seminar (Thanksgiving Holiday)

Week twelve (11/28): Gender

Readings:

Hilary Allen. 1998. "Rendering them harmless: The professional portrayal of women charged with serious violent crimes."

Chesney-Lind and Pollock. 1995. "Women's prisons: Equality with a Vengeance."

Bridges, George and Gina Beretta. 1994. "Gender, Race, and Social Control."

SUMMARY/COMMENTARY WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE

Week thirteen (12/5): Intersections: Race, Class, Age and Gender

Readings:

Steffensmeier, Darrell, Jeffrey Ulmer, and John Kramer. 1998. "The Interaction of Race, Gender, and Age in Criminal Sentencing: The Punishment Cost of being Young, Black, and Male."

Additional readings to be announced.

NO WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE THIS WEEK

Week fourteen (12/12): Paper presentations

Final Research Paper Due Monday, December 17th