

**Instructor:** Aaron Samuel Johnson  
**Email Address:** [aaron.johnson@colorado.edu](mailto:aaron.johnson@colorado.edu)  
**Office Hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30-11:00 and by appointment  
**Office Location:** TBA (most likely in Norlin Library)  
**Office Phone:** 720-446-9810  
**Sociology Dept.** Flemming 209 and 303-492-6410

\* This Brief Class Calendar is for 1st day, in class reference only. The official *Class Syllabus*, including detailed *Assignment Guidelines & Scoring Rubrics* which you are required to read and abide by, is posted on D2L.

## Class Overview

Class meets Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:00am to 9:15am in [ENVD 120](#)

The topic of deviance has long held an enduring fascination for students of sociology, gripping their interests for several reasons. Some students have career plans in the criminal justice system or the law and want to expand their base of knowledge. Others feel a special affinity for the subject of deviance based on personal experience or inclination. A third group is drawn to deviance merely because it is different, offering the promise of excitement or the exotic. Finally, some are interested in how social norms are constructed; the ways in which people and society decide what is acceptable and what is not. The sociological study of deviance can fulfill these goals, taking us deep into the criminal underworld, inward to the familiar, outward to the fascinating and bizarre, and finally back to the central core of society.

In the following weeks, we will peer into the deviant realm, looking at both deviants and those who define them as such. In doing so, we look at a range of deviant behaviors, discuss why people engage in these and analyze how they are sociologically organized. In doing so, you will be introduced to the central sociological concepts of deviance, social order, social power, identity construction and its management. We will also work together to begin to understand the basics of the sociological perspective and to see how it differs from the faith-based, biological and psychological approaches that many people use to understand society and social life. We will use the topic of deviance to see how groups of people have the power to shape social definitions and apply them onto others. We will then look at the consequences for those defined as deviant of this label. We will look at how people come to develop a deviant identity and what that means to them in the exercise of their everyday lives.

**A Word of Caution!** In this class, we will be discussing issues that might make some people uncomfortable. You will be presented with, and asked to discuss, topics such as sexual deviance such as pedophilia, autoerotic asphyxiation and rape; self-injury, including “cutting”; intolerance and inequality; prejudice and privilege; racism, sexism, hate and violence; as well as, good ol’ sex, drugs and rock ‘n’ roll! The course is taught primarily from a social constructionist perspective, thus we will closely attend to the way deviance varies across time and cultures and means different things to different people based on their social location. In other words, there are no “universal deviants”! Predictably, many of the ideas presented in class are critical of deeply cherished and widely-valued beliefs and norms. You will be asked to think critically, creatively, reflexively and scientifically about “our” society, its norms, deviance and *YOUR role* in it all. And while I understand that at times you may feel uncomfortable, you are, *at all times*, expected to respectfully consider the ideas presented (by me as well as classmates) and discuss them in a calm, kind and academic manner. If you are not prepared to “think sociologically” about society, deviance, and yourself, **this class may not be for you!**

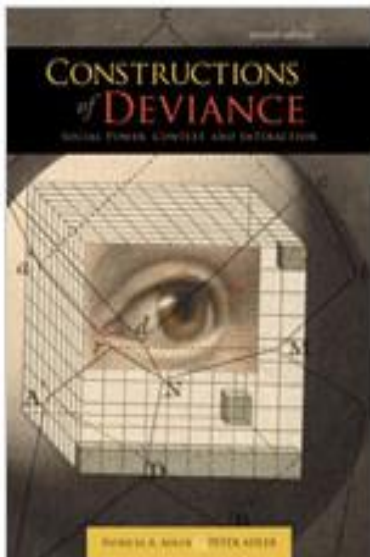
**What to expect in class:** As mentioned, I teach the course primarily from a social constructionist perspective. This means that rather than simply being a professor of expert knowledge, I see my primary role in class as that of a facilitator, or a “coach” of sorts. To me, a coach is someone that *motivates and assists* others in developing new and improving upon existing skills, competencies and expertise. Unlike “professing”, coaching is a partnership in which both parties are willing to work towards a common goal. Rather than simply professing what I know, my role is to “scaffold” your collaborative construction of knowledge and foster an appreciation of the sociological perspective in general. As a coach, I will provide sociological expertise, pedagogical support, critique/criticism and suggestions for improvement (Spouse 2005). As the coached, you are expected to *actively* read, write, and talk about the course topics. It is not it is not a sit-back-and-take-notes-for-the-exam sort of class!

## Class Requirements & Policies

### 1. Textbooks

#### Required Text:

Patricia Adler & Peter Adler 2012  
*Constructions of Deviance: Social Power, Context, and Interaction, 7th Edition.*



\* Other editions, including the recent custom editions, are quite different and are not suitable alternatives

#### Optional Text:

Erich Goode 2014  
*Deviant Behavior, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition*



2. **Computers and Educational Technology:** It is your responsibility to make sure that you can access, and know how to use, your university-established email account (@colorado.edu), D2L and CUClickers). If you are unfamiliar with these technologies, please take the time in the first week of class to learn to use them. You are also required to have regular access to a computer that has the capability to access the Internet. Additionally, you must have access to a word processing program such as Microsoft's *Word* as well as program capable of displaying Adobe Acrobat files (".pdf's") such as Adobe's *Reader* or Apple's *Preview* in order to view course materials.

You are permitted to use a laptop or tablet computer in class so long as its use facilitates your learning and is not a distraction to you or your classmates. To ensure such, I may ask you to sit in a particular area of the room if using a computer. I ask that phones and other devices used for non-class related communication be silenced and put away during class.

3. **Communication:** I use a combination of in-class announcements, email, and D2L to communicate important information and distribute course materials to the class as a whole. I use *email* and *office hours* (both real and "virtual"), to communicate with individual (or small groups of) students. I intend to check my email each weekday, and to reply to every message received, to at least acknowledge its receipt, within 24 hours. Similarly, I suggest that you check D2L and your email regularly throughout the semester (at least 2 to 3 times per week). **You are responsible for all information communicated through these means.**
4. **Attendance and Participation:** Regular attendance and participation in class is ESSENTIAL and I cannot stress strongly enough the importance of staying fully engaged in class! In effort to encourage and reward such, attendance is recorded and points available every recitation meeting. *You are responsible for ensuring that your presence is recorded.* Should you miss a class, be sure to remember that **you are still responsible for all announcements and material covered in the class missed.** Also, you should keep in mind that **in class assignments cannot be made up.**

Finally, be aware that **CU-Boulder requires that you attend class regularly during the first two weeks to ensure your place in the class;** students that do not may be administratively dropped from the class to make room for those on the waitlist.

## Class Schedule & Assignments Overview

Lesson 1:	Tuesday August 25 Thursday August 27	<i>Intro to Sociology</i>
Lesson 2:	Tuesday September 1 Tuesday September 8	<i>Defining Deviance</i>
Lesson 3:	Thursday September 10 Tuesday September 22	<i>Theories of Deviance</i>
Lesson 4:	Thursday September 24 Tuesday September 29	<i>Studying Deviance</i>
Lesson 5:	Thursday October 1 Tuesday October 13	<i>Constructing Deviance</i>
Lesson 6:	Thursday October 15 Tuesday October 27	<i>Deviant Identities</i>
Lesson 7:	Thursday October 29 Tuesday November 10	<i>The Social Organization of Deviance</i>
Lesson 8:	Thursday November 12 Tuesday December 1	<i>Structure of the Deviant Act</i>
Lesson 9:	Thursday December 3 Thursday December 10	<i>Deviant Careers</i>
Lesson 10:	Monday December 14	<b>Final Assignment</b>

The course is comprised of 10 “Lessons” used to organize topics into conceptually logical groups and pace the completion of class assignments. Every Lesson will include at least one of each of the types of assignments listed below. Precise due dates and deadlines are provided via D2L.

You should think of the course assignments, scoring and grading scheme as a “cafeteria-style” opportunity to earn points. That is, you are asked to choose from a large offering of assignments that facilitate the opportunity for you to demonstrate your engagement in class and the ability to “think like a sociologist” about the course material. The “spirit” of this assessment scheme is to build in flexibility and allow you to capitalize on your strengths by participating in those sorts of assignments at which you excel. Rather than one-time, high stakes assignments with hard-n-fast deadlines, most assignments are due within a range of dates (Lessons), and with the exception of the Final Assignment, you are not required to complete any *specific* assignment, although it may not be possible to earn the points sufficient to obtain your desired grade without completing several different *types* of assignments.

Below you'll find a *brief* overview of each type of assignment offered this semester. **These are not complete assignment guidelines!** In addition to the following overviews, detailed *Assignment Guidelines and Scoring Rubrics* are found at the end of the official *Class Syllabus* found on D2L.

- 1. Readings and “Lectures”:** Every lesson will feature several Readings and Lectures that serve as the primary means of presenting the course material. Though there is no score associated with simply completing the Readings or attending Lecture, they are an important prerequisite for the completion of the associated Quizzes/Tests, and the completion of in-class and out-of-class Participation Assignments – which are scored.
- 2. Online Reading Quizzes and Alternative “Take Home” Tests:** Rather than two or three, high stakes, high pressure, in class “exams”, class includes 28 low-stakes, online Quizzes (2 to 4 per Lesson). Quizzes are comprised of 5 to 10 “discrete answer” questions such as multiple choice or matching. Quizzes will be made available at least one week before the beginning of a Lesson, and will remain available until the end of the Lesson with which it is associated, if not longer. In lieu of the online Quizzes you may complete an alternative, “take home” Test, comprised of 3 to 5 open-ended, essay-style questions per associated Reading, from which you will chose one to respond to.
- 3. In Class Participation Assignments:** Every class meeting will include the opportunity to earn a minimum of 5 points through the completion of a variety activities, including (but not limited to) 1) “Clicker” questions, 2) individual, in-class writing assignments, and 3) small-group learning activities and discussions.
- 4. Out-of-Class Participation Assignments:** Throughout the semester, you will have the opportunity to earn points through participation in a variety of online Class Discussions and the completion of various Homework Assignments. Since there is no scoring expectation associated with Out-of-Class Participation Assignments, they are the primary way of both “making up” for missing Quiz/Test questions and/or In Class Participation Assignments and earning “extra credit”.

5. **The Final Assignment:** Lastly, you are expected to complete a Final Assignment during the final week of class. The Final Assignment is meant to facilitate your (re)consideration of the class as a whole in term of what you've learned and its relevance for your personal, day-to-day life. Unlike the other assignments, **the Final Assignment is required!** Failure to complete the Final Assignment will result in a grade of F regardless of the amount of points earned during the semester.

### Scores & Grades

I assess assignments for completeness and quality, and report the resulting *scores* via D2L throughout the semester. The "Lesson-Assignment Score Matrix" (table below) specifies scoring opportunities by lesson and assignment type.

Lesson	Quizzes/Tests		In Class PA		Out-of-Class PA	Final		Totals	
	Pts	%	Pts	%		Pts	%	Pts	%
1	20	4.0%	10	2.0%		-	-	30	6.0%
2	30	6.0%	15	3.0%		-	-	45	9.0%
3	30	6.0%	20	4.0%		-	-	50	10.0%
4	15	3.0%	10	2.0%		-	-	25	5.0%
5	35	7.0%	20	4.0%	<i>bonus &amp; make up</i>	-	-	55	11.0%
6	35	7.0%	20	4.0%		-	-	55	11.0%
7	35	7.0%	20	4.0%		-	-	55	11.0%
8	25	5.0%	20	4.0%		-	-	45	9.0%
9	25	5.0%	15	3.0%		-	-	40	8.0%
10	-	-	-	-		100	20.0%	100	20.0%
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>30%</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100%</b>

Grades are assigned only once, at the very end of the class. Once everyone's total/final *score* has been calculated, I assign "whole-letter" *grades* based upon the conventional 60/70/80/90 scale, and then use a "curve" (based on rank and z-scores) to determine the +/- "bump". In other words, I use a combination of conventional grading norms, as well as, various deviation scores to ensure what I believe is a "fair" distribution of grades. Since final scores are not known until after class is complete, I offer the flowing "grade guarantees" in hopes of allaying the potential anxiety associated with not precisely knowing your grade before it's too late.

- \* Guaranteed A+ for final scores greater than or equal to 500 points (100%)
  - \* Guaranteed B- for final scores greater than the class "average" (reported via D2L)
  - \* Guaranteed D- (you'll pass) for final scores greater than 300 points (60%)
- ! I will consider requests for a grade of Incomplete (I) only if an agreed upon terms have ***in writing* by Monday, December 14, 2015.**
- ! Please do your best to keep a copy of everything you submit (even online). Little if anything can be done to resolve scoring disputes without referring to the assignment in question. In the case that a disputed score cannot be confirmed by referring to the original assignment, the score on record will stand.