

SOCIOLOGY 441: Criminology – FALL 2009 Section Syllabus

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Section Info **301:** 2:25-3:15M :: 6125 Social Sci
302: 1:20-2:10M :: 4322 Social Sci
303: 12:05-12:55M:: 6113 Social Sci
304: 1:20-2:10T :: 2637 Humanities
305: 12:05-12:55T :: 216 Ingraham

Overview and Purpose

Welcome to your section of Sociology 441! My name is Zach, and I will be your TA.

In regards to content, there are *three* essential elements to this course: (1) lecture, (2) reading and (3) discussion. During his lectures, Prof. Burkhardt will focus on the broad content of this course, whether it be reiterating or supplementing the varied readings. On your own time, you will read the assigned materials before every lecture. In section, we will synthesize what you learned from both the lectures and the readings primarily through active discussion. Through this, you will develop a broad understanding of major criminological areas, and be cleverly tricked into enjoying your fifty minutes with me every week.

Discussion sections are meant as a forum for collective evaluation and analysis of the weekly topic, focusing mainly on the course readings. I highly encourage you to develop your ability to think critically every day. In other words, I encourage you to continuously ask questions and closely examine every topic as if you were a criminologist yourself. Think about the strength and logic of the evidence used for arguments, the methodological approaches used to support those arguments, as well as the authors' moral and professional motivation for developing these arguments. At all times, strive to think about both what *is* and *isn't* being said.

Remember that discussion sections complement both the lecture and your individual readings. It is meant as a supplement to improve your overall understanding, *not* as a substitute for either one.

Expectations and Rules

Your Discussion Section accounts for 13% of your final grade. It will be based primarily on participation, but attendance is key.

Absences/Lateness: Attending both lecture and section every week is absolutely imperative to your success in this class. Out of respect for your classmates and me, please make it to class on time. If you are late to section by more than 15 minutes, you will not receive credit for participation. If you miss more than 3 discussion sections, you will receive *zero* credit for discussion section (13% off final grade). This includes excused absences. In rare circumstances, you can make-up your attendance and participation in a different section; however, you must contact me *at least 2 days* before section. I will be taking attendance at every discussion section.

Participation: All types of discussion, whether in small groups, round-table, oral presentations or simply the Socratic Method, are essential in developing and solidifying the content from this course. Discussion will be something that you see over and over throughout your career, and it is for a good reason: *it works!*

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Remember, I am not a lecturer. For the most part, I do not intend to lecture, and I do not intend to be your personal tutor. Instead, I will help clarify confusing portions of the reading and guide critical discussions. I encourage all of you to bring up any concerns relevant to either lecture or the readings, which we as a class will collectively address. More likely than not, if you are confused about something, at least two or three quiet students are just as concerned.

Your participation (and hence discussion grade) will be determined mostly by your contribution to discussions. Questions, responses, comments, rebuttals, etc will fulfill this requirement. Occasionally, there will be short, in-class assignments. These may take the form of a quiz on the readings or a simple activity to help guide your thinking on a specific topic. There may be other factors that contribute to participation, which we will discuss in class.

If you miss class with a valid excuse, you have the opportunity to make-up your participation points. Simply write a short, (*no more than one page*) summary of one of the required readings of that week, and submit it to me no later than the following week. This can only be done *twice* throughout the semester. It will be graded based on insight and understanding of the material.

A few other notes regarding participation:

- *Be prepared:* Come to discussions having read and considered the readings, and reviewed your lecture notes. Bring the readings (let me know if this isn't possible) and your notes, and be prepared to take notes during sections. Have questions prepared beforehand, and be ready to talk.
- *Be respectful:* Arrive to class on time, and enter silently if you are late. Turn off your cell phones, iPods and other music players; put away your unrelated books, magazines and newspapers; if you have food, eat it quietly and non-barbarically; and remember to use your laptops *only* for class (I had a laptop as an undergrad, so I know the temptation. Please, make it easier on all of us, and stay in Word). Most importantly, respect each other. We will be discussing issues that have become fundamentally morally charged; understand that there are many different perspectives and viewpoints originating from many diverse backgrounds. Your willingness to understand this fact is not only crucial (both for this class and beyond), but it is expected.
- *Be empathic and thoughtful:* I encourage an environment that embraces and accepts all levels of diversity. I will not tolerate anything that is offensive or abusive mentally, emotionally or physically. While I am not a big fan of political correctness, I am not a fan of bigotry or intolerance either.
- *Be reasoned:* Feel free to discuss any topic relevant to our discussions, but remember to provide reasonable justifications for your responses. Opinions are okay as a start, but reasoned arguments are always better. If you disagree with another topic, be prepared to explain why.
- *For exceptional participants:* If you have participated exceptionally throughout the semester, I will take note! By exceptional, I mean above average contributions and level of preparedness. To reward you at the end of the

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semester, if your grade is on the cusp of the next highest letter grade (less than .5% difference), we will round up!

Contacting Me

Office: Feel free to come by my office during office hours or through an appointment. I am always happy to answer any questions or concerns that you can't seem to find anywhere else or even just to chat about the quandaries of life.

Phone: You can try to call me, but it will only be reliable if I am actually in the office. If you need to leave a message, there is no voicemail. Really, avoid this; instead use...

Email: The email address above should be used for all inquiries. I will use blanket email lists ([soc441-\(\(YOUR SECTION#\)\)-f09@lists.wisc.edu](mailto:soc441-((YOUR SECTION#))-f09@lists.wisc.edu)) to send broad announcements to the entire section. If you have an important announcement to make to the whole class, let me know, and I will be happy to forward your message to the section. Please do not use the lists to inform people of non-class related activities, including party invitations, advertisements or general spamming. Remember, emailing is a professional tool, to be used intelligently and respectfully.

Though this is the best way to get in contact with me for an immediate concern, remember to use all methods of contact at your disposal. If it is a long question where direct, interpersonal discussion is probably more sensible, come by my office, or talk with me before or after section. If email is your favored course, remember patience. I check my email periodically, but if it is before 8:00am or after 5:00pm, I can't guarantee an immediate response. I will try to answer all questions as soon as possible, but please allow up to 48 hours.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Before asking me a question, ask yourself, "can I easily find this myself?" You have many resources at your disposal, including two syllabi, course materials, the UW website, an extensive library system and even public search engines like Google. **If you know your question can be easily answered by minimal effort on your part, answer it!** Learn to explore your options and choose the most reasonable course; again, another important life lesson of college! If you are having trouble answering your question through those means, throw me an email.

Academic Misconduct

The university defines academic misconduct as the following:

"UWS 14.03 defines academic misconduct as follows: Academic misconduct is an act in which a student: seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation; uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise; forges or falsifies academic documents or records; intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others; engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance; assists other students in any of these acts." –from Student Advocacy and Judicial affairs

Any form of cheating or plagiarism is absolutely unacceptable and intolerable in this class and in the entire UW-System. If you are suspected of doing so, I will speak with Prof. Burkhardt, the Dean, and file a written report in your permanent academic file. You

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are expected to familiarize yourself of your rights and duties as a UW-student, and about the consequences of cheating at

<http://www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html>.

Useful Resources

The Writing Center: Excellent writing instructors offer classes and one-on-one meetings to help you with all aspects of the writing process from ways to improve your skills to focused work on a particular class assignment. You can contact them at 263-1992, drop by their office at 6171 Helen C. White Hall or check out their website at www.wisc.edu/writing

The McBurney Center: It is the intention of both the University and me to work toward full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), to make facilities and instructional programs accessible to all people, and to provide reasonable accommodations according to the law. No qualified person will be denied access, participation or benefits to any program or activity operated in the UW System. Please contact me or Prof. Goldberg early in the semester to discuss special arrangements to help you best succeed in this class. For more information about accommodations for students with disabilities, please contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center at 263-2741, drop by their office at 1305 Linden Drive, or check out their website at www.mcburney.wisc.edu.

Counseling & Consultation Services: Our University offers free consultation services to all of its students. If at any point you are experiencing personal stress, career issues, family or interpersonal conflicts, general anxiety, depression or other psychological concerns, feel free to contact them. I am a strong advocate of professional counseling, and strongly encourage you to take advantage of this free service. You can contact them at 265-5600, drop by their office at 115 North Orchard St, or check out their website at www.uhs.wisc.edu. The staff also provide an **after-hours crisis response service** at the same number.

Cross-College Advising Service: If you have questions concerning your future career path or general advising questions, take advantage of this resource. You can contact them at 265-5460, drop by their office at 10 Ingraham Hall or check out their website at www.ccas.wisc.edu/. Also, each school and college dean's office provides academic advising information (contact your personal advisor for those inquiries).

Greater University Tutoring Service (GUTS): If you are having general troubles with your academics or even conversational English, feel free to stop by this office and set up tutoring services. The office offers tutors from all majors that have taken your classes and many others beyond it! You can contact them at 263-5666, drop by their office at 302A Union South, or check out their website at guts.studentorg.wisc.edu/.

"In times of change, learners inherit the Earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists."

-Eric Hoffer, social philosopher