DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND EDUCATION

COURSE OUTLINE – FALL 2012
SO2240 DEVIANCE AND CONFORMITY

INSTRUCTOR: Alan Segal   **PHONE:** 780-539-2011
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OFFICE HOURS: Mondays and Tuesdays 16:30 - 17.15. Or by appointment.

PREREQUISITE(S)/CO-REQUISITE: SO1000

REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS:
Deviance, Conformity, and Social Control in Canada, Third Edition - Tami Bereska

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION: A study of the politics and social ramifications of conformity, deviance, and their relation to social change. The course examines how and why some behaviour patterns are defined as deviant or conformist.

CREDIT/CONTACT HOURS: 3 University Credits

DELIVERY MODE(S):   Class and Group Discussion, Lectures, Film Analyses

TRANSFERABILITY: *   Grades of 'D' or 'D+' may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Students must be aware it is their responsibility to contact receiving institutions to ensure transferability.**

GRADING CRITERIA:

GRADING CONVERSION CHART			
Alpha Grade	**4-point Equivalent**	**Percentage Guidelines**	**Designation**
A+	4.0	95 – 100	**EXCELLENT**
A	4.0	90 – 94	
A-	3.7	87 – 89	**FIRST CLASS STANDING**
B+	3.3	83 – 86	
B	3.0	80 – 82	**GOOD**
B-	2.7	77 – 79	
C+	2.3	73 – 76	**SATISFACTORY**
C	2.0	65 – 72	
C-	1.7	60 – 64	
D+	1.3	55 – 59	**MINIMAL PASS**
D	1.0	50 – 54	
F	0.0	0 – 49	**FAIL**
WF	0.0	0	**FAIL, withdrawal after the deadline**

NOTE: On the College's marking grid there is no D-. Therefore no such final mark will be recorded. However, for the course assignments, I will use D- as an additional non-failing mark.

EVALUATION:

Academic assignments for this course emphasize synthesis of ideas from a sociological standpoint, and the best questions you can think of to advance that synthesis. Analysis does not mean just reporting what others have said on a topic. Important as this is, other authors` ideas or conclusions are valuable because they add insight or specific details that help you to ask questions about the topic you have selected. My assignments are a philosophical inquiry that is advanced through your and others`

investigations. Deciding what questions are worth raising is an important part of analysis. Conclusions can be valuable but aren't obligatory for any of my assignments.

Tabulating Grades:

All of your assignments will receive a letter mark. At the end of the course I will add the Total Grade Points you have received based on the letter-grades your assignments have received. The grid above shows you the Grade Point Value for each letter. Maximum Grade Points available from all your assignments for this course is 16.6. Attaining a Grade Point Total of 16.6 is the same achievement as receiving 100%.   When I have your Total Grade Point I will divide it by 16.6.   A percentage will be derived based on this calculation, and the percentage will be reconverted to a final grade according to the grid above.

Analytical Essay (F, D- to A+) (4 Points Out of 16.6 = 24%)

Due Date: October 29th

Much of the text for the course – despite its open stance on a wide range of behaviour - and most materials addressing what we call deviance, assume it is the unusual or strange or the unexpected that require explanation or theorizing. This essay entails the opposite. You will discuss some phenomenon from Canadian society, that you have perceived through art or articles, books or other materials you have read; films or shows you have watched, social events current in the minds of many, etc. In this essay you will analyze the message(s) of conformity in the phenomenon, and why people might respond positively. Rather than discuss how and why we may 'deviate', you will discuss how and why we may conform, and what qualifiers might be seen in the conformity.

Museum Presentations (F, D- to A+) (4 Points Out of 16.6 = 24%)
Presentation Evaluation By Group Members (A, B, C, D)   (4 Points Out of 16.6 = 24%)

Presentations will be sometime in December.

These will be group presentations to the class, comprised of a maximum of 5 people. However, groups of 3 will be customary. The mark will be assigned collectively for group presentations but members of each group will evaluate each other. I will then assign a grade based on those evaluations. For this assignment you will consider yourselves curators of a new museum exhibition. The topic of the exhibition is entirely your choice, but you should think about its theme and how you sequence the items included in the exhibition. A minimum of 25 items must be displayed.   You will explain to the class the ideas underlying your curation.   This course will emphasize the instability and arbitrary characteristics of our beliefs, morality, judgments, and practises.   Therefore the significance and meaning(s) of your exhibit from a conformist and/or deviant perspective, and the logic of its display-sequence, must be openly addressed. You should not just persuade us of your interpretation, but acquaint us with the logic of both the items selected and its sequence.

Two Journals: (F, C- to C+) (Maximum 4.6 Grade Points Out Of 16.6 = 28%)
Due Dates: First class of October and November.

Anything pertaining to sociological observation and insight of social conformity, class discussions or lectures, class interaction, personal life, that is relevant to this course, is a suitable topic.   No research is expected. The minimum length is 350 words.

***Grammar is important to communicating precise meaning. Therefore, while it will not be valued as highly as content, it will be evaluated and therefore can affect your mark.

****ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS EXCEPT THE JOURNALS ARE SUBJECT TO LATENESS PENALTIES OF ONE GRADE LEVEL PER CALENDAR DAY BEYOND THE DUE DATE.

JOURNALS WILL BE REDUCED BY ONE GRADE LEVEL FOR EACH TWO-DAY LATENESS PERIOD. THERE IS ALSO A ONE-GRADE PENALTY FOR ASSIGNMENTS THAT ARE LESS THAN THE MINIMUM LENGTH.

****ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE SENT BY EMAIL, TO MY COLLEGE ACCOUNT: asegal@gprc.ab.ca   ALSO, YOU MUST INCLUDE THE WORD 'ASSIGNMENT' IN THE SUBJECT LINE, AND INDICATE WHICH ASSIGNMENT IT IS.

Discussion Bonus: (A, B, C, D)

Every person in the course may (but not necessarily will), receive a bonus mark based on a combination of the frequency and quality of the participation.   Discussion postings to a Moodle discussion forum also will be considered class participation. You will be eligible for a bonus mark only if you display commitment to the course by reading the books and completing all written assignments.   Although attendance is not relevant to the regular assignments for the course, it is important to your eligibility for a bonus mark. The bonus mark offers an A, B, C, or D.   No plus or minus signs will be used.   If you receive a bonus mark, it will be added to your overall grade total prior to working out a final mark.   Eligibility for the bonus is nullified if you are absent for more than 4 classes. The bonus will not result in more than a 3-level rise in final grades.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

University courses provide the best intellectual and perhaps social experience, when students arrive prepared for the day's work. My classes are heavily discussion - oriented and therefore require commitment from students.

1. Read assignments.
2. Participate in class conversation about the material.
3. Complete all written work.
4. Indicate on submitted material your name; section and course number; and which assignment is being sent to me.

5. All written work must be sent via email to asegal@gprc.ab.ca   You MUST use the word 'assignment' in the subject line.

6. *** Electronic Devices: People who must have contact with others during class time may leave their cell phones on 'vibrate', and leave the room if a response is required.   Otherwise, texting or use of phones will result in you having to miss that particular class.   Please do not put me in a position of having to do this.

STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:

In an academic setting, presenting others' work as your own is a serious violation. However, referencing articles and books and online academic products do not prevent you from building on their ideas and speculations.   For a more precise definition of plagiarism and its consequences, refer to the Student Conduct section of the College Admission Guide at http://www.gprc.ab.ca/programs/calendar/ or the College Policy on Student Misconduct: Plagiarism and Cheating at www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/**

**Note: all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

1.   Introduction to course
Class Discussion: General perceptions of deviance and conformity

What behaviours do you consider deviant?   Do you react to these similarly to how you respond to conforming behaviour?   Do you rank deviant behaviours in a hierarchy of ascending transgression, and if so, based on what criteria?   Ask yourself the same question about conformity. Are some conforming attributes more powerful or meaningful or valuable or reassuring or necessary, than others? Id there sociological merit in contemplating such a hierarchy?

2.   <u>Chapter 1 -   Determining Deviance</u>

Class Discussion: What are objective and subjective ideas and theories of deviance (and conformity)?   Be ready to discuss all the theories introduced here, and what you think are their strong and vulnerable assumptions.   /   What do sociologists mean by social processes? For many non-sociologists such language is vague and meaningless. Is this a worthwhile judgment? Can processes offer enough insight into human experience to justify the language?   /   Sociologists may mention deconstructing patterns of behaviour or belief.   What are they trying to say?   Professional disciplines may adopt the same terminology but argue over their meanings.   Does this occur in chapter 1?   If not, keep this question in mind as you read through the rest of the book.   /   Begin a semester-long consideration in your minds of the validity of concepts of pathology, harm, rights, etc. Does our society have dominant moral codes? What persuades you they are dominant? Do they prevail in some contexts but not others?   The 'Ask Yourself' section on page 26 addresses moral codes. Prepare a response.

3.   <u>Chapter 2   -   Explaining Deviance: The Act</u>

Class Discussion: This chapter outlines functionalist, learning, and social control theories of deviance. We will discuss them and I will ask you if any theory strike you as being more explanatory than the others?   Assuming such exists, what accounts for it – quality of reasoning, more encompassing, more politically astute, etc.?   /   Does our constant effort to control deviance suggest rationality or irrationality in our understanding of human experience?

4.   <u>Chapter 3   -   Explaining Deviance: The Perception, Reaction, and Power</u>

Class Discussion: What differentiates positivist form non-positivist theorizing? Theorists mentioned in Chapter 3 differ from those cited in chapter 2.   How do you explain the differences?   /   Of what value to sociology is the idea of a master status?

How does this connect with either conformity or difference?   /   What is poststructuralism and its conceptual contribution to theory?   /   Why distinguish among Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Deviance?   Could we use the same categories for conformity?

5.   Lecture on Ian Hacking's Views of Constructing Social Categories of People
         Chapter 4   -   'Deviant' and 'Normal' Sexuality

Class Discussion: What is a paradigm?   How does it apply to culture and norms, and what is its relevance to a discussion of deviance or conformity?   /   Do these concepts coincide well with Foucault's analyses as presented in this chapter?   /   On page 104 there are two quotes that we will discuss.   Think about varied questions you might ask of both.   /   Are you intellectually satisfied with the cross-cultural approach utilized by Bereska?   Do the examples possess the persuasive power she believes they have?   One of them is sexuality, within which she introduces assumptions of consent.   Develop a critical analysis of consent.   In conjunction with this we will look at concepts of 'the victim'.

6.   Chapter 5   - The Troubling and Troubled World of Youth

Class Discussion: Would you depict youth as troubling or troubled?   /   Bereska refers to aversive education, in which dangers of life are instilled in children.   Does she overstate this argument?   If not, might a sociological link exist between such education and the moral panics she addresses?   /   Identify the moral panics you perceive in contemporary Canadian life, assuming you think we have some.   /   On page 166 Bereska asserts that Canadian society identifies youth as threats to themselves. Is this a viable interpretation, that youth are self-threatening?

7.   Chapter 6 - Looking Deviant: Physical Appearance

Class Discussion: Were you in a Psychology course you would be presented with that discipline's outlooks on body modification.   How do sociologists conceptualize it?

8.   Chapter 7 - Mental Disorders

Class Discussion: What is stigma?   Is what we term mental illness a good illustration of this?   Of the theories you have been using in this course, which of them aptly apply to stigmatization?   /   In sociology we usually deal with micro and macro manifestations of social experience.   How do these different planes work with regard to people with some type of mental distress?   If the allegedly mentally ill were 'ill' but unobtrusive in society, would anybody care?   If not, does this suggest the stigma operates through interpersonal functions, not really at a group level?   /   Does this chapter support or not, how we characterize mental illness?   /   When and why do we differentiate between physical and mental illness?

9.   Chapter 8 - What Do You Believe? Religion and Deviance
      Chapter 9 - Scientific Belief Systems

Class Discussion: You might have been raised to consider religion an important aspect of personal and social life, even if you or your family follow no religion and may not believe in any god.   How, then, does a chapter appear that asks you to look at religion as a form of deviance?   /   What concepts does Bereska marshal together in her analysis? She writes of truth and also of religion. Is this a reasonable tie-in? /   Is the inclusion of religion as a system of truth-creation treated similarly to her treatment of science as a truth-creation system?   Be prepared to elaborate on your response(s).   /   Are Foucault's ideas relevant to these 2 chapters?

9

10.   <u>Chapter 10   -   The 'Deviance Dance' Continues</u>

Class Discussion: Explain the Deviance Dance.   Does this terminology blunt the impact of sometimes-severely brutalizing discrimination?   /   Who or what are moral entrepreneurs?   Do they establish or counter the Deviance Dance?   Is there also a Conformity Dance?