

FEB. 07 2008

**GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE**  
**Department of Arts, Education & Commerce**

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**SOCIOLOGY 2240**  
**Deviance and Conformity**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Alan Segal, Ph.D.  
**OFFICE:** C410  
**OFFICE HOURS:** Monday - Thursday: 13.30-14.15  
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**COURSE 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, and factors that influence this. Many types of behaviour will be discussed.

**COURSE PREREQUISITE:** SO1000

**REQUIRED TEXTS:** Images of deviance and social control - Stephen Pfohl  
Danger, duty, and disillusion - Joan Barker

**ASSIGNMENT:**

**One Field Project**

Marked on a 9-point stanine scale. Lateness penalty is 1 stanine per calendar day. Along with a discussion of the project and data, you must critically analyze the topic, using your own and others' ideas. Do not write a descriptive report; think about the ideas you express. The expected length is 1750 words. You can work individually or in groups, but groups are the preferred approach. I will sanction individual work only under circumstances of an unlikely collaboration with another class member. Any project can be selected on any topic pertinent to the subject matter of the course; if you are uncertain about your choice please speak with me about it.

While your own thinking is the most important requirement, research is valuable and obligatory. Theories of deviance and conformity should be considered in your discussion.

References must appear in the main text of your assignment, and in a **Works Cited** section at the end of the paper. All references must be compliant with MLA style. Failure to observe this, or the omission of references in the text or a Works Cited section at the end, will affect your grade. You may email your assignment or submit it as hard copy. If you choose the latter, all papers must be stapled and double-spaced. If you hand in your assignment late, have another faculty member or a regular employee of the College sign and date it. All signatures must be legible and must identify the area in which the person works.

### **Three Journals**

One journal is due the first class of each month. Each journal is worth a maximum of 1.5 stanines. Each journal must be one page if typed, and two pages if written out. All journals must be double-spaced. Ignore the last stipulation if you email the journal. Anything pertaining to sociology, class discussions or lectures, class interaction, or course observations and suggestions, is a suitable topic. No research is necessary or expected. The purpose is to allow informal communication with the instructor.

### **Tabulation of Marks**

The total of all stanine marks available for assignments is 13.5. Your marks will be totaled out of 13.5 and a final stanine grade given according to the following table.

<b>Stanine Grade</b>	<b>Percentage Equivalent</b>
9	90-100
8	80-89
7	72-79
6	65-71
5	57-64
4	50-56
3	45-49
2	26-44
1	0-25

**NOTE:** No class averaging will be done.

**NOTE:** Because class discussion is a vital aspect of this course, everyone may (but not necessarily will) receive a bonus mark for the **QUALITY** of your class discussion, based on a combination of the frequency and quality of the participation. You will be eligible only if you display commitment to the course by reading and completing the required assignments. The bonus mark will have a range of 1-3. If you receive a bonus mark, it will be added to your overall grade total prior to its conversion to a percentage.

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**Discussion Sequence**1. General Introduction to course :

Class Discussion: General perceptions of deviance and conformity. What behaviours do students consider deviant? Do they react to these similarly to how they respond to conforming behaviour? Do students rank deviant behaviours in a hierarchy of ascending 'transgressiveness', and if so, based on what criteria? Do sociologists contemplate such a hierarchy?

2. Pfohl: Chapter 1; Barker, Chapters 1 & 2

Class Discussion: Why refer to "images" of deviance? Is this a casual phrasing, or does Pfohl communicate something more substantial? What value might there be in using the concept of 'image' in this discussion, and what images are introduced in this chapter? What does Pfohl mean by "deconstructive viewpoint on theory?" Are conformity and deviance considered problematic? If so, are they equally problematic? Would this book be pointless if we did not perceive problems of deviance and conformity? What counts as a social problem? In this discussion, and throughout the course, you should contemplate this question. What discourses of control and deviance, and what vocabularies of categorization, control, and public judgment, can you identify?

Class Discussion: What early exposures to the worldviews of police officers do we receive in these first readings from Barker's book? What contributes to the development of these positions? Generally speaking, what sociological inputs can we find in a worldview perspective? More specifically, are the inputs similar or dissimilar in the development of a police officer's viewpoint?

3. Pfohl: Chapter 2

Overview of Ian Hacking's views of constructing social categories of people.

Class Discussion: Is the title of this chapter melodramatic? Pfohl uses different words in conjunction with his discussion of deviance: construct, discover, discern. Are these words synonymous with each other, or do they represent different conceptualizations of deviance? If the second is the case, does Pfohl effectively make the case for these distinctions? Of what value to the 'procedures' of deviance control was/is confession? Does our constant effort to control deviance suggest rationality or irrationality in our understanding of human existence? What types of control are mentioned in this chapter?

Considering Hacking's ideas, do you think you embody categories of people? If so, what categories do you identify?

Prepare to identify the diverse categories of thought, intent, and conceptualization of the points made in these chapters. What practises do you perceive in society that could be placed in the various theoretical sets mentioned by Pfohl? What are hedonism and pathology? Why cite them when writing about deviance?

Does any theory strike you as being more explanatory than the others? What accounts for this - better reasoned, more encompassing, more politically astute, etc.?

4. **Pfohl: Chapter 3**

Class Discussion: What is hedonism and why mention it in a chapter on the classical perspective? What is the classical perspective? Explain the supposed value of rational punishment to the preservation of the social contract? What is the social contract and how does it fit into Pfohl's discussion of deviance? Is deterrence more than rhetoric? Are justice and rational punishment compatible? Does it matter if they are not?

5. **Pfohl: Chapter 4**

What does the concept of pathology add to the concept of deviance? Would our construction of deviance change if pathology were removed from it? What components of pathological theorizing does Pfohl identify? Considering the logic developed in the chapter on this point, are you persuaded such a thing as a criminal personality exists?

6. **Barker: Chapters 3 & 4**

In the world of policing, how do police differentiate among themselves and the kinds of work they do? Does this differentiation have any implications for how police perceive the public, and particular populations within it? Is there a general view of society that new police officers cited in this research, articulate? Does a relationship exist between the degree or type of danger faced by police, and the assessment of deviance within certain populations?

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7. **Pfohl: Chapters 5 - 7**

Class Discussion: In these chapters, how are social change, social disorganization, functionalism, and deviance linked conceptually? Are there points at which the logic of the linkages weakens? In what ways can a society become disorganized? What is functional deviance? What is anomie? Explain its connection to deviance.

8. **Barker: Chapters 5 & 6**

Class Discussion: This phase, says Pfohl, is when police officers become confident. Does this confidence come at the expense of any group? Are some groups more likely than others to be deemed deviant by police in this phase of their careers? Do disillusion and "hitting the wall" always coincide? By this time in their careers, and considering the previous chapters as well, are there some officers who are considered deviant by others on the force?

9. **Pfohl: Chapter 8**

Class Discussion: How do we learn to be deviant? What meaning[s] does 'learning' have in this consideration? How does a person acquire deviance? Is deviance an identity, or a matter more of identification than of developing or adhering to, an identity? Is this question relevant?

10. **Pfohl: Chapter 9**

Class Discussion: Should we think it important that Pfohl has written a chapter on societal reactions, but it comes in as chapter 9 instead of 1 or 2? Is this a less intellectually viable outlook on deviance than those preceding it? What elements of social control are discussed here? Should we distinguish state and social institutions from each other? What forms of resistance and response are brought forward by Pfohl? In what ways do deviants contest social definition?

11. **Pfohl: Chapters 10 & 11**

Class Discussion: What does the title mean? Why include "critical perspectives?" What is power? Of what sociological and conceptual value are the author's references to knowledge, pluralism, authority, social structure, hegemony, agency, heterosexism, anarchism, feminism, and racism? How does each fit into a concluding analysis of conformity and deviance? What meaning

does Pfohl hope to convey when he writes of critical praxis; power-reciprocal control; corporate and government deviance?

12. Barker: Chapters 7-9

Class Discussion: What similarities or differences characterize the worldview of police in this phase of their careers compared to earlier phases? Do police perceive people in general differently as they regroup, perhaps retire? Compare their views on deviance to those expressed by new recruits to the force.