



Course description – version 1.0 (2024-05-31)

Sociological criminology: Crime, violence, and deviance, 7.5 credits

Sociology, School of Social Sciences, Södertörn University

Fall 2024 (December 4, 2024 – January 17, 2025)

Course aims

The course provides an overview of central theories and concepts within the research field of sociologically oriented criminology, focusing on how and why crime, violence, and deviance occur and analyzing their impact on society, individuals, and groups. Course work is focused on further developing the ability to critically examine the theoretical perspectives and connecting them to empirical issues of current interest.

The course consists of a series of combined 3-hour lecture-seminars, where a topic is initially introduced in lecture format (2 hours) and then followed by mandatory seminar discussion (1 hour) based on active reading of the course literature. The course is concluded with an examination seminar, where course papers are presented and discussed.

After completing the course, you should be able to:

Knowledge and understanding

- describe, explain, and reflect on central theories and concepts within the contemporary field of sociologically oriented criminology,
- explain and reflect on the role of crime, violence, and deviance in modern societies.

Competence and skills

- in an independent, critical, and reflective manner, examine the assumptions and empirical underpinnings of the various theories and concepts,
- independently analyze contemporary or historical forms of crime, violence and deviance using central theories and concepts of the research field,
- independently produce synthesizing knowledge reviews based on literature in the research field,
- independently formulate research problems and questions based on different theoretical perspectives within the research field of sociologically oriented criminology.

Judgement and approach

- independently and critically review and evaluate advanced research results within the research field of sociologically oriented criminology,
- independently and critically reflect on the merits and shortcomings of the central theories and concepts within the research field of sociologically oriented criminology.

Teachers

Alexandra Bogren (course coordinator), email alexandra.bogren@sh.se

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Sofia Beskow, email sofia.beskow@sh.se

Lectures and seminars

For the exact timing of each lecture or seminar, see “Schedule” on Studiewebben.

Wednesday 4 December

- *Lecture-seminar 1:*
 - Introduction to the course
 - What is crime, deviance, and social problems, and how do sociologists think about causes and explanations of crime? An introduction to the research field of sociologically oriented criminology and its roots in classical sociological theory.

Thursday or Friday 5 / 6 December

- *Guest lecture*: Professor Amir Rostami, 1 hour

Monday 9 December

- *Lecture-seminar 2*: Sociological explanations and theories of criminality: Why do people commit crime?
- *Seminar discussion* based on learning memos submitted in advance.

Wednesday 11 December

- *Lecture-seminar 3*: Understanding and problematizing crime rates, patterns, and trends.
- *Seminar discussion* based on learning memos submitted in advance.

Monday 16 December

- *Lecture-seminar 4*: Violence and political violence: Micro-sociological theories about violence and theories about political violence.
- *Seminar discussion* based on learning memos submitted in advance.

Wednesday 18 December

- *Lecture-seminar 5*: What are the social effects/consequences of crime, crime prevention, and law enforcement interventions targeting crime?
- *Seminar discussion* based on learning memos submitted in advance.

Tuesday 14 January, 2025

- *Examination seminar*: Presentation and discussion of papers.

Minor changes to the timing of the lectures and seminars may be made before the course starts.

Literature

- Best, Joel (2012). *Damned lies and statistics: untangling numbers from the media, politicians, and activists*. Updated ed. Berkeley: University of California Press. Introduction + Chapter 1-4 (60 pages) [Electronic resource]
- Best, Joel (2004). *More damned lies and statistics: how numbers confuse public issues*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (selection from Chapter 3, pages 63-67, 5 pages) [Electronic resource]
- Becker, Howard (1963). *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*. Free Press. (selection, approx. 15 pages)
- Bosi, Lorenzo & Malthaner, Stefan (2017). "Political Violence", pp. 439–451 in della Porta, Donatella & Diani, Mario (Eds.). *The Oxford handbook of social movements*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (13 pages)
- Cloward, Richard & Ohlin, Lloyd (1960). *Delinquency and opportunity: A theory of delinquent gangs*. Free press (selection, approx. 15 pages)
- Cohen, Lawrence E. & Felson, Marcus (1979). Social change and crime rate trends: A routine activity approach. *American Sociological Review*, 44, 588-608. (21 pages).
- Collins, Randall (2008). *Violence*. Princeton University Press. Chapters 1 ("The micro sociology of violent confrontations"), 2 ("Confrontational tension and incompetent violence") and 3 ("Forward panic"), pp. 1–133. (133 pages)
- della Porta, Donatella (2008). "Research on Social Movements and Political Violence". *Qualitative Sociology* 31 (3): 221–230. (10 pages)
- della Porta, Donatella (1995). *Social movements, political violence and the state: Comparative analysis of Italy and Germany*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 6 ("Patterns of radicalization in political activism"), pp. 136–164. (29 pages)
- Garland, David (2018). Theoretical advances and problems in the sociology of punishment. *Punishment & Society*, 20(1), 8-33. (18 pages)
- Kruttschnitt, Candace (2013). Gender and crime. *Annual Review of Sociology* 39, 291-308. (17 pages)
- Kurlychek, Megan & Johnson, Brian (2019). Cumulative Disadvantage in the American Criminal Justice System. *Annual Review of Criminology*, 2, 291-319. (32 pages)
- Lemert, Edwin (1951). *Social Pathology*. McGraw-Hill. (selection, approx. 15 pages)

- Lyon, David (2007). Surveillance, Security and Social Sorting: Emerging Research Priorities. *International Criminal Justice Review*, 17(3), 161-170.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1057567707306643> (9 pages)
- Merton, Robert K. (1968). *Social theory and social structure*. The Free Press. Selection, pages 185-214.
- Park, Robert E., Burgess, Ernest & McKenzie, Roderick (1925). *The City*. University of Chicago Press (selection, approx. 15 pages)
- Pemberton, Antony, Mulder, Eva, & Aarten, Pauline G. M. (2019). Stories of injustice: Towards a narrative victimology. *European Journal of Criminology*, 16(4), 391-412.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1477370818770843> (21 pages)
- Rader, Nicole (2004). The threat of victimization: A theoretical reconceptualization of fear of crime. *Sociological Spectrum*, 24(6), 689-704 (15 pages)
- Solhjell, Randi, Saarikkomäki, Elsa, Birk Haller, Mie, Wästerfors, David & Kolind, Torsten (2019). “We are Seen as a Threat”: Police Stops of Young Ethnic Minorities in the Nordic Countries. *Critical Criminology* 27, 347–361. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10612-018-9408-9> (14 pages)
- Spector, Malcolm & Kitsuse, John (1973). Social Problems: A re-formulation. *Social Problems*, 21(2), 145–159, <https://doi.org/10.2307/799536>
- Sutherland, Edwin & Cressey, Donald (1966). *Principles of Criminology*. JB Lippincott Company. (selection, approx. 15 pages).
- Van Brakel, Rosamunde (2020). “Rethinking predictive policing: Towards a holistic framework of democratic algorithmic surveillance.” In Schuilenburg, Mark & Peters, Rik (eds), *The Algorithmic Society*, Routledge, pp. 104-118. (15 pages)
- Von Hofer, Hanns (2000). Crime Statistics as Constructs: The Case of Swedish Rape Statistics. *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research* 8, 77-89
<https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1008713631586> (13 pages)
- Vuorela, Miikka (2018). The historical criminal statistics of Finland 1842–2015: A systematic comparison to Sweden. *International journal of comparative and applied criminal justice*. 42, 2–3, 95–117 <https://doi.org/10.1080/01924036.2017.1295395> (23 pages)

Wahlström, Mattias (2022). Constructing “violence-affirming extremism”: A Swedish social problem trajectory. *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, 15(4), 867–892. (26 pages)
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17539153.2022.2094540>