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**Sociology 3260: Juvenile Delinquency
Weber State University, Fall 2014**

**Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays 9:30 – 10:20 pm
SS 44**

Course overview and objectives

This course considers the juvenile delinquency as a broad phenomenon that encompasses far more than just crime. We will consider three main questions:

- *What is the category of youth, and how do we construct it in our culture?*
- *How do various social institutions, both locally and internationally, manage youth delinquency?*
- *How are youth both powerless and powerful?*

To answer these questions, we will especially consider the everyday lived experience of youth as described in their own voices. We will explore youth in several settings: on social media, on “the streets” both in the

Course requirements and grade percentages
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Reaction papers	40%
Final paper	35%
Mini-assignments	20%
Group presentations	5%

Reaction papers – To help you keep up with and process the class material, as well as develop your skills of analysis and critical thinking, I am asking you to complete two reaction papers. These are **typed, double-spaced, five page essays** where you will be asked a series of questions, and you will need to explain as well as compare and contrast the course materials of the preceding weeks. The week before they are due, I will distribute a prompt with complete instructions. The papers are due in class on the Fridays of Week Five (September 26th) and Week Ten (October 31st). Late papers will be marked down 4 points per day (from 25 to 21, etc.). (2 papers X 20% each = 40%)

Final paper – To help you master the material, I am asking you to analyze the course readings using data that you collect – namely an interview of a juvenile delinquent. See full instructions on [page 7](#). (35%)

Mini-assignments – In order to connect these readings to “real world” examples, I am asking you to complete four “Mini-assignments.” These will be due in class on Wednesdays. No late assignments will be accepted. See instructions on [page 9](#). (4 mini-assignments x 5% each =

Disclaimers

- We will be discussing issues of a sensitive nature. Be forewarned that the course content may be challenging, disturbing, and/or offensive.
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Part Two: How do institutions manage youth delinquency?

WEEK THREE: The media and teen sexuality

(September 8-12)

- “For whose eyes only? The gatekeeping of sexual images in the field of teen sexuality.”
Tara Chittenden (ONLINE)
- “Teens and Sexting.” Amanda Lenhart (ONLINE)

Mini-assignment #1 due Wednesday, September 10th

WEEK FOUR: Homeless youth

(September 15-19)

- “‘Home Children’: Nurtured Childhood and Nurturing Childhood” *At Home in the Street* (pp. 70-92)
- “Betraying Motherdom: Maloqueiros and ‘That Life’ in the Street” *At Home in the Street* (pp. 93-117)
- [“Brazil police accused of ‘cleansing’ favelas before World Cup football carnival rolls into town” \(ONLINE\)](#)

Reaction paper #1 prompt distributed

WEEK FIVE: Survival strategies and violence on the streets

(September 22-26)

- “Being in the Street” *At Home in the Street* (pp. 41-69)
- “When Life Is Nasty, Brutish, and Short: Violence and Street Children” *At Home in the Street* (pp. 118-148)

Reaction paper #1 due in class Friday, September 26th

WEEK SIX: Social service institutions

(October 1-3)

No class – Monday, September 29th

- “Street Children and Their ‘Clients’” *At Home in the Street* (pp. 174-187)
- “Conclusion: The Ephemeral Lives of Street Children” *At Home in the Street* (pp. 188-214)

WEEK SEVEN: Social control and punishment*(October 6-10)*

- “Preface” *Punished* (pp. vii-xvi)
- “Dreams Deferred: The Patterns of Punishment in Oakland” *Punished* (pp. 3-23)
- “The Flatlands of Oakland and the Youth Control Complex” *Punished* (pp. 24-42)
- *Film: “Fruitvale Station” (optional)*

Mini-assignment #2 due Wednesday, October 8th**WEEK EIGHT: The youth control complex***(October 13, 15)***No class – Friday, October 17th**

- “The Labeling Hype: Coming of Age in the Era of Mass Incarceration” *Punished* (pp. 43-73)
- “The Coupling of Criminal Justice and Community Institutions” *Punished* (pp. 74-94)

WEEK NINE: Youth control in Ogden*(October 20-24)*

- "Legitimated oppression: Inner-city Mexican American experiences with police gang enforcement" (Robert J. Durán ONLINE)

Reaction paper #2 prompt distributed**WEEK TEN: Education***(October 27-31)*

- “The Civil Rights Movement Comes to Town” *Learning Capitalist Culture* (section “The Modern Civil Rights Movement Comes to North Town” pp. 3-6)
- “The Great American Football Ritual” *Learning Capitalist Culture* (pp. 28-62)
- For those of you taking sociological theory courses, I highly recommend Chapter 6 of *Learning Capitalist Culture*, which contains crystal clear explanations of Marx, Weber, Bourdieu, Gramsci, Habermas, and Goffman by connecting them to education.

Reaction paper #2 due in class Friday, October 31st

Final assignment

Conduct an interview with a “juvenile delinquent,” or former juvenile delinquent, about being a delinquent, and then analyze the interview using concepts, theories, and other findings from the course. This is an opportunity to do real sociology – original data collection and analysis!

Part One: Recruit and interview a juvenile (or former juvenile) delinquent

Find and interview a current or former juvenile delinquent. Chances are you already know several people who fit this description, but if you don’t, ask around to your friends and family – you should be able to find them quickly. This person **must** be over 18 years old.

Directly asking the questions in Part Two will probably not give you very good data. Instead, get them to “tell their story” in as much detail as possible, asking “probe” questions (such as “*Tell me more about that,*” “*Then what happened,*” or “*How did that make you feel*”) to get them to expand on their answers. Then analyze how what they said fits Part Two. If necessary, follow up your interview by later asking them specific questions that directly address Part Two. Don’t worry! Most people **love** to talk about themselves, and especially their adventures in deviance.

Turn in a copy of your [NIH training certification](#), a signed informed consent form, a transcript of the interview, as well as an audio file of it (I have digital recorders, as well as transcription pedals, available).

Part Two: Analyze your interview

Answer the following **three prompts**, using direct quotes from your interview as “data” to support your arguments. Be sure to also back up your points with material from the course readings, citing at least **two direct quotes from two assigned books or articles for each of your three answers** (that is, six direct quotes minimum in the entire assignment). Each analysis should be about 3 pages long, for a total of about 10 typed,

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B) The delinquent identity – We have also considered how forces outside of youth shape their identities. For example, Rios argued that, seeing their position as their personal responsibility, youth in Oakland internalized their deviance, and Gordon found that youth gained powerful identities with the help of activist communities. *How did your interviewee define themselves, and what influenced that definition?*

C) Youth resistance and agency – Many of the readings argued that delinquency by young people is not simply immaturity (or “hormones”), but it is a purposeful, and even political, reaction to the unique circumstances of youth. For example, Rios found that youth will take small, stupid risks – even with big consequences – as resistance against demeaning systems of authority, and Foley found that much deviance at school was class and race based. *How could the delinquency of your interviewee be defined as resistance, and what social forces were they resisting?*

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Your answer will be graded on:

- 1) The quality and completeness of your interview and transcription (*Is it complete? Is it useful for answering the prompts in Part Two, or did you need to ask more follow up questions?*). (10 points)
- 2) How well you answer each question in Part Two (*Is it a careful and well-argued analysis, or is it incomplete, unorganized, or seem to be “thrown together”?*). (10 points)
- 3) How well you incorporate the readings (*Is it grounded in a deep and well researched evidence that ties together multiple sources and main ideas, or is the use of readings a superficial sk*

Mini-assignments

- 1 *Teen sexuality and film* (September 10th). Watch **one**