

SC2212: Sociology of Deviance
FASStrack 2025

Schedule: AM Session (9.30am-1.30pm, Singapore Time)
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday

Course Description

What is deviance? What is “normal”? Who is the deviant? Who defines deviance? Why do people conform to social rules? Why and how do institutions of social control emerge? Why are some forms of behaviour come to be socially defined as deviant while others are not? What are the distinctions between crime and deviance? This course introduces students to the sociological study of deviance and social control, distinguishing it as a field of research from biological, psychological and “clinical” explanations of deviance. It will trace the historical development of theories on sociology of deviance and chart their relevance to understanding contemporary forms of crime and deviance. These perspectives will be utilized and illustrated through a study of the changing patterns of defining and controlling deviance in modern societies.

Preclusion/ Prerequisite

Nil

Lecturer

Associate Professor Narayanan Ganapathy socng@nus.edu.sg

Tutor

TBC

Course Assessment

Welcome to the FASStrack Sociology of Deviance course! As you know, the assessment for this course will be 100% Continual Assessment (CA). As such, there will be a total of THREE written assessment components + 1 component based on your attendance and participation that you will be required to complete/fulfil. The written assessments are as follows:

Assessments		Assessment deadlines
Critique (individual)	30%	9 Jul 2025
Class Attendance and Participation	20%	Assessed throughout the module
Group Project	30%	15 Jul 2025
Reflection and Report (individual)	20%	18 July 2025
Total for CA	100%	

Assignment Instructions

1. Assignment 1 - Critique Paper (Individual Project) (30%)

For the first assignment, you will be expected to **write a critical review** of an article. This assignment is an individual paper. You are required to write a 1500-word critique of the article. This is an individual assignment worth 20% of your overall grade. We will provide you with some guiding questions but you are at liberty to organise the critique in any way you are comfortable with, while remaining cognizant of the learning outcomes of this assignment.

2. Assignment 2 - Group Project (30%)

For the second assignment, you will be tasked to identify and critically discuss any issue of contemporary concern pertaining to crime, deviance, law, and the administration of criminal justice. Some examples may include, but not limited to, the death penalty, legalization of drugs, laws governing homosexuality, technology and crime, rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders, gang violence, juvenile crime, desistance, class and crime etc. This opinion piece is not only confined to academic debates but it warrants a critical appraisal of crime, deviance, and criminal justice policy as set against a global context.

Instructions:

This assignment is a group project worth 30% of your grade. You will be required to work in groups of 3 to 4. Your project will be presented using PowerPoint slides. The estimated length may not exceed 20 slides and can also include tables and pictures to go with your accompanying text. Discussion points can be bulleted but should be in concise sentences, with the arguments laid out throughout the PowerPoint presented in a logical flow. Indicate on the first slide a clear and accurate title of your topic, and the names of all your group members.

3. Assignment 3 – Reflection Paper (20%)

For assignment 3, you will be required to write a reflection paper based on what you have learnt about a local halfway that has been mandated by the Singapore government to rehabilitate and reintegrate recovering drug abusers. You will also be expected to view a video depicting the Scandinavian approach to reforming offenders. Reflection is an important part of making connections between theory and practice. You will be expected to not only describe your experience, but to also evaluate it based on ideas from class. You can assess a theory or approach based on your observations, experience, and insights gleaned from your viewing of the videos.

Instructions:

This assignment is an individual reflection paper. The recommended word count is 1500 words. A reflection guide will be given to you at a later date.

4. Assignment 4 – Tutorial Attendance and Participation (20%)

Course Topics

S/N	Date	Topic	Breakdown of Class Activity (Total Min Hrs: 36)
1	4 Jul Friday	Problematizing deviance, crime, and social control (I)	Lecture 3 hrs + 1 discussion
2	8 Jul Tuesday	Problematizing deviance, crime, and social control (II)	Lecture 3 hrs + 1 hour of discussion on first assignment
3	9 Jul Wednesday	Deviance as rational hedonism or sickness? The classical and pathological perspectives on deviance	Lecture 4 hrs inclusive of discussion and first assignment submission
4	10 Jul Thursday	Durkheimian Theory: Functionalism, Deviance and Control	Lecture 4 hrs
5	11 Jul Friday	Anomie theory: normlessness, inequality and deviant aspirations (I)	Lecture 4 hrs inclusive of discussion
6	15 Jul Tuesday	Subcultural Theory of Deviance (I)	Lecture 3 hours + 1 hour of working on second assignment
7	16 Jul Wednesday	Subcultural Theory of Deviance (II)	Lecture 4 hrs inclusive of discussion
8	17 Jul Thursday	Social Reaction Perspective: Labelling and the work of moral entrepreneurs	Lecture 3 hrs + 1 hour of discussion of third assignment
9	18 Jul Friday	Marxian Perspective on Crime	Lecture 3 hours + 1 hour of students working on their projects Wrap-up

Lecture Topics

1. Problematizing Deviance, Crime and Social Control

Schur, Edwin (1980) *The Politics of Deviance*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall. Chapter 1. (uploaded on IVLE)

Alexander Liazos (2002), 'The Poverty of the Sociology of Deviance: Nuts Sluts, Perverts[Perverts]' in Henry Pontell (ed) *Social Deviance: Readings in Theory and Research*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

2. Deviance as Rational Hedonism or Sickness? The Classical and Pathological Perspectives on Deviance

Roshier, Bob (1989) *Controlling Crime: The Classical Perspective in Criminology*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press. Part One pp 1–39.

Ganapathy, Narayanan (2008) 'Criminal Justice Policy' Social Order, Risk and the "Governmental Policy" in Lian Kwen Fee and Tong Chee Kiong (eds) Social Policy in Post-Industrial Singapore, Leiden: Brill.

3. Durkheimian Theory: Functionalism, Deviance and Control

Durkheim, Emile (1984) 'The Normal and Pathological' in Delos H. Kelly (ed) Deviant Behaviour, New York: St Martin's Press.

Erikson, Kai (2003), 'On the Sociology of Deviance' in Patricia A. Adler and Peter Adler (eds) Constructions of Deviance: Social Power, Context, and Interaction, United Kingdom: Wadsworth.

4. Anomie Theory: Normlessness, Inequality and Deviant Aspirations

Merton, Robert (1994) 'Social Structure and Anomie' in Stuart H. Traub and Craig B. Little (eds) in Theories of Deviance, Illinois: Peacock Publishers.

Wikstom, Per-Olof H. and Treiber, Kyle. (2007) 'The Role of Self-self-control in Crime Causation: Beyond Gottfredson and Hirschi's General Theory of Crime', European Journal of Criminology, Vol. 4, No.2. 237-264.

5. Subcultural Theory of Deviance

Cohen, Albert (1997) 'A General Theory of Subcultures' in Ken Gelder and Sarah Thornton (eds) The Subcultures Reader, London: Routledge.

Cohen, Albert (1967) 'Middle-Class Delinquency and the Social Structure' in Edmund W. Vaz (ed) Middle Class Juvenile Delinquency, New York: Harper and Row Publishers.

Cloward, Richard and Ohlin, Lloyd (2001) 'Illegitimate Means and Delinquent Subcultures' in Nathaniel Terrell and Robert Meier (eds) Readings in Deviant Behavior: Classic and Contemporary, London: Harcourt College Publishers.

Sutherland, Edwin and Cressey, Donald (2003) 'The Theory of Differential Association' in Stuart H. Traub and Craig B. Little (eds) in Theories of Deviance, Illinois: Peacock Publishers.

Sykes, Gresham and Matza, David (1990) 'Techniques of Neutralization: A Theory of Delinquency' in Kelly Delos (ed) Criminal Behaviour, New York: St Martin's Press.

6. Social Reaction Perspective: Labelling and the Work of Moral Entrepreneurs

Downes and Rock, Chapter 7.

Becker, Howard (1973) Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance, New York: Free Press. Chapter 8.

Clark, Marilyn (2006) 'Commitment to Crime: The Role of the Criminal Justice System', in European Journal of Criminology, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp 201-220.

7. Toward a Marxian Theory of Deviance and Crime

Reiman, Jeffrey (1984) 'A Radical Perspective on Crime' in Kelly Delos (ed) *Deviant Behaviour: A Text-Reader in the Sociology of Deviance*, New York: St Martin's Press. HM 291 Kel

Quinney, Richard (2003) *The Social Reality of Crime*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company. Chapter 2.