

SC2212: Sociology of Deviance
FASStrack 2026

Schedule: AM Session (10am-1pm, 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

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Tutor

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Course Assessment

Welcome to the FASStrack Sociology of Deviance course! The assessment for this course will be 100% Continual Assessment (CA).

The assessments are as follows:

Assessments		Assessment deadlines
Video Reflection	30%	3 July 2026 (Friday)
Group Project - 25% Content - 15% Presentation + Q&A	40%	16 July 2026 (Thursday)
Fieldtrip Reflection	20%	17 July 2026 (Friday)
Participation & Discussion	10%	Assessed throughout the course
Total for CA:	100%	

Assessment Instructions

1. Assessment 1: Video Reflection (30%)

This assignment is an **individual assignment**. The recommended word count is 1500 words. This assignment is due on **3 July 2026 (Friday)** and worth 30% of your total marks.

For Assignment 1, you will be required to write a reflection paper based on a Channel News Asia documentary on violence against women in India. This assignment aims to help you connect the sociological theories of deviance introduced in the first few weeks of class with a real-world case study of gendered violence. You are encouraged to reflect critically on the content of the documentary, and how sociological theories and concepts help us better understand the structural and symbolic dimensions of deviance. In doing so, you may also consider how sociological perspectives differ from biological or psychological explanations of deviant behaviour. More guidelines will be provided at a later date.

Video

CNA Insider (28 May 2024) [Rape In India: Why Does India Struggle To Stop Sexual Assault & Violence Against Women? | Insight](#)

2. Assessment 2: Group Project (40%)

This assignment is a **group project**. You will be required to work in groups of 4 to 5. Each group will prepare and deliver a 20-minute presentation on **Thursday, 16 July 2026**. This will be followed by a 10-15 minute Q&A session. This group assignment is worth 40% of your total marks. We have included a presentation component to give students an opportunity to develop and harness their oral communication and public reasoning skills, which are crucial in professional and academic settings. We would also like to encourage students to synthesise and explain complex sociological ideas to their peers in a concise and accessible way.

The task for this component will be to present, as a group, on any topic relevant to this course. This assignment acquaints you with the basic steps you must take in carrying out research. You are expected to formulate your own research problem based on your group interest and access to data/field sites. It is encouraged to use the lecture topics/material to assist in the formulation. In this assignment, you will learn, as a group, to make decisions on what topic to work on, what material to collect, how to collect the relevant data, where to find them, and how to organize and present your data in a clear and coherent manner.

This assignment aims to assess your ability to apply sociological analysis to a topic in Sociology of Deviance/Crime/Social Control/Law/Criminal Justice that you are interested in. Essentially, you and your group will be attempting to make sense of a situation, phenomenon, event, policy, discourse or issue that you consider to be worthy of and warranting investigation. You will be assessed on your conceptual skills, and interpretation and analysis of the material sociologically. It is important that you remain theoretically conscious. By this, you will be assessed on your ability to locate or connect the findings to the established theoretical traditions/paradigms you have been exposed to in Sociology of Deviance. Or perhaps you might want to make a convincing argument as to why a particular theory falls short of explaining crime or criminal motivation regarding the phenomenon you've observed.

3. Assessment 3: Fieldtrip Reflection (20%)

This assignment is an **individual assignment**. The recommended word count is 1000 words. This assignment is due on **17 July 2026 (Friday)** and worth 20% of your total marks.

For this assignment, you are required to write a reflection paper based on what you have learnt from your fieldtrip to the Singapore State Courts. This field exposure is designed to help you observe the administration of justice in Singapore and to connect these observations with the theories and concepts discussed in class. Reflection is an important part of making connections between theory and practice. In this paper, you are expected not only to describe your experience at the State Courts, but also to evaluate it using ideas from the course. A reflection guide will be provided at a later date.

4. Assessment 4: Participation & Discussion (10%)

Marks for participation will be based on punctuality and the quality of your contributions during discussions. You are expected to come prepared, engage actively with your peers and demonstrate familiarity with the readings and lecture content. This is worth 10% of your total marks.

Course Topics

Week	Day	Topic	Session Activities Total Hours: 36 hours
1	30 June Tuesday	Problematizing deviance, crime, and social control (I)	Introduction, Icebreakers, Lecture (3 hours)
	1 July Wednesday	Problematizing deviance, crime, and social control (II)	Lecture (2 hours) Assignment 1 discussion (1 hour)
	2 July Thursday	Deviance as rational hedonism or sickness? The classical and pathological perspectives on deviance	Lecture (2 hours) Class Discussion (1 hour)
	3 July Friday	Durkheimian Theory: Functionalism, Deviance and Control	Lecture (3 hours) Due: Assessment 1 Video Reflection
2	7 July Tuesday	Fieldtrip to State Courts	Fieldtrip (3 hours)
	8 July Wednesday	Anomie theory: normlessness, inequality and deviant aspirations (I)	Lecture (2 hours) Class Discussion (1 hour)
	9 July Thursday	Subcultural Theory of Deviance (I)	Lecture (2 hours) Group Project Discussion (1 hour)
	10 July Friday	Subcultural Theory of Deviance (II)	Lecture (2 hours) Class Discussions (1 hour)
3	14 July Tuesday	Social Reaction Perspective: Labelling and the work of moral entrepreneurs (I)	Lecture (2 hours) Class Discussions (1 hour)
	15 July Wednesday	Social Reaction Perspective: Labelling and the work of moral entrepreneurs (II)	Lecture (2 hours) Group Project Discussion (1 hour)
	16 July Thursday	Group Presentations	Assessment 2 Group Presentations + Q&A (3 hours)
	17 July Friday	Wrap Up	Lecture (3 hours) Due: Assessment 3 Fieldtrip Reflection

Reading List

1. Problematizing Deviance, Crime and Social Control

Classical/Mandatory

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

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.

Optional/Contemporary

Goode, Eric (2015) 'Ethical issues in the qualitative study of deviance and crime'(chapter 4), in Heith Copes and J. Mitchell Miller (2015) *The Routledge Handbook of Qualitative Criminology*, Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge.

Burman, M. J., Batchelor, S. A., & Brown, J. A. (2001). Researching girls and violence. Facing the dilemmas of fieldwork. *British journal of criminology*, 41(3), 443-459.

Liebling, A. (2001). Whose side are we on? Theory, practice and allegiances in prisons research. *British Journal of Criminology*, 41(3), 472-484.

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

Classical/Mandatory

Carrington, K., & Hogg, R. (2017). Deconstructing Criminology's Origin Stories. *Asian Journal of Criminology*, 12(3), 181–197.

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

Classical/Mandatory

Downes and Rock, (2007) *Understanding Deviance*, 5th edition, Oxford: Clarendon Press – Chapter 4: Functionalism, Deviance and Control

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

4. Anomie Theory: Normlessness, Inequality and Deviant Aspirations

Classical/Mandatory

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

Optional/Contemporary

Agnew Robert (2015) 'Using General Strain Theory to Explain Crime in Asian Societies', Asian Criminology, 10:131-147.

5. Subcultural Theory of Deviance

Classical/Mandatory

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

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.

Optional/Contemporary

Kamaludeen Mohamed Nasir (2016) 'Antipodal Tattooing: Muslim Youth in Chinese Gangs', Deviant Behavior. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2016.1161456>

Ganapathy, N., & Lim, R. (2025). Triadization as a Rite of Passage: Conceptualizing the Links between Youth Gangs and Adult-Based Secret Societies in Singapore. Asian Journal of Criminology, 20(1), 1–22.

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

Classical/Mandatory

Becker, Howard (1973) Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance, New York: Free Press - Chapter 8: Moral Entrepreneurs (pp. 147-163).

Optional/Contemporary

Bernbug, J. G., Krohn, M. D., and Rivera, C. J. (2006) Official Labeling, Criminal Embeddedness, and Subsequent Delinquency: A Longitudinal Test of Labeling Theory, in Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, 43(1), pp 67-88.

Greener, J. and Naegler, L. (2022) Between containment and crackdown in Geylang, Singapore: Urban crime control as the statecrafting of migrant exclusion, in *Urban Studies*, 59(12), pp. 2565-2581.