

**SOCIOLOGY 351 Fall 2016**  
**Public Policy and Juvenile Justice**  
TTH 9:30-10:50 TTH 108

**Dr. Karen Sternheimer**

Office: HSH 214

Office hours: TTH 11:30-1:30 and by appointment

Phone: 213-740-3541

[sternhei@usc.edu](mailto:sternhei@usc.edu)

---

**Themes and Goals:**

What is juvenile justice? How is our perception of juvenile behavior rooted in time, place and context? Who is most likely to be considered “delinquent?” Throughout the semester we will raise questions about common perceptions of youth as well as what kind of behaviors are considered delinquent in some contexts but not others.

We will first examine how childhood, adolescence, and delinquency have been defined historically, and what factors have shaped the way that we have viewed young people and the idea of “delinquency.” We will see that status and power are central in the definition process. Next we will explore the realities of juvenile crime, exploring statistical data collected regarding crime trends. We will also consider the importance of social contexts and the perceptions of and reactions to young people’s behavior. Finally, we will learn about institutional responses to young people within the juvenile justice system. Throughout the semester we will consider the importance of race, class, and gender in the perception and reaction to juveniles.

**Student evaluation:**

Attendance and participation	15%
Tuesday in-class essays	5%
Midterm (due 10/11)	25%
Term Paper or group project	25%
Final due 12/8 at 1 pm	30%

**Tracking your progress:**

You are expected to seek more than a grade from this course. However, I realize grades are very important to students. You are responsible for keeping a record of your grades and to be aware of your progress as well as areas where improvement is needed, and for seeking help from your peers or professor. Use the breakdown above to calculate your grade.

**Participation and Attendance:**

Active student participation in class discussions and activities is absolutely essential for this class.

Therefore, students are expected to attend every class meeting prepared to discuss the assigned reading.

Students are expected to welcome differing viewpoints and to respect the thoughts and ideas of all class participants. You are expected to treat everyone in the class with respect; this means quietly listening while others are speaking, and arriving and leaving on time. Note that a great deal of information covered in the lectures may not be in the readings, and vice versa. *Students are responsible for getting notes or assignments from classmates* should an absence become necessary.

Students often overlook the importance of participation and attendance in their course grade. This grade is based on the percentage of class meetings you attend (you can’t participate if you are not there!), and may be increased or decreased based on your participation. Things that will increase it are comments and questions that reflect knowledge of course material, as well as courteous attention to your professor and peers. Things that will bring your grade down include disruptive behavior (includes ringing cell phones web browsing and texting), rudeness towards your professor or peers, and comments that reveal a lack of

preparation and attention. Ideally all class members will attend class regularly, prepared to discuss the reading and be open and respectful of differing viewpoints.

It is your responsibility to sign in every class, as attendance will be taken at the beginning of each meeting. To receive full attendance credit you must attend the entire class session. Signing in for a previous day is not possible, so be sure to sign in. **Signing in for another student is a form of academic dishonesty.**

### **Technology Etiquette:**

E-mail is a great resource but never takes the place of a conversation. **Please include “SOC1 351” in the subject line of any email.** Lengthy questions or concerns should be addressed during office hours or a special appointment. Keep in mind that your professor is quite busy and probably cannot check e-mail as often as you may. **Absolutely no assignments will be accepted via e-mail.**

**Cell phones must be turned off and out of sight during all class meetings, and laptops or electronic devices are forbidden except by special permission. Multitasking (web surfing, Facebooking, texting, studying for another class) is expressly forbidden and will reduce your participation grade.**

### **Essays:**

For five Tuesdays of the semester (from 9/6-10/4) there will be a brief essay assignment at the start of class to ascertain how well you are engaged in the course (attending lectures and reading assignments). The assignment will start at the beginning of class so if you are late you will lose time and may not be able to complete the assignment. The essay topic will come from a central theme from the previous week’s reading and course discussions and will be an opportunity for you to reflect on the material. Do not assume that simply filling a page will earn you credit; your writing must reflect awareness of central issues and ideas expressed by authors and in class. These assignments are graded credit/no credit and are each worth 1% of your total course grade. **Missed essays or essays that earn “no credit” can be made up with extra credit assignments, as noted below.**

### **Extra Credit**

After the midterm, an essay question will be posted on Blackboard at the end of each week. Your one page response must be uploaded onto Blackboard before the start of class the following Tuesday. By completing these assignments you may make up any missed essays or no credit essays and/or earn up to 3 percent extra credit in the course (1 percent per essay).

You may earn *up to* 10 points extra on your or midterm (i.e. a grade of 90 can be increased to a grade of 100) by reading one of the optional books in its entirety (listed on Blackboard) and answering the questions (also on Blackboard) in a 5-7 page paper (due date 11/29). A brief, informal presentation to the class is required as well.

### **Midterm & Final Exams:**

The midterm and final exams will be essay format and will require thoughtful analysis and application of issues from the readings and class meetings. Both the midterm and final exams will be take-home essay format and will be distributed in class one week in advance. Your exam must be typed and incorporate your ideas with those in the reading and class discussions.

**Paper: All papers must be uploaded onto Blackboard to ensure academic integrity; a hard copy must be turned in as well.**

*Option 1—ANALYSIS OF JUVENILE CRIME TRENDS—*Choose one form of juvenile crime for which the government collects statistics. Based on government data, what are the recent and long-term trends? Discuss the relationship between this type of delinquency and race, gender, age, location, and any other factors available. How were the data gathered? How are the data on this type of juvenile crime limited? How do these trends compare with common assumptions about this type of juvenile crime? If applicable, how do data from law enforcement differ from victimization surveys? What do you suggest would be the best way to gather information on this type of crime in the future? Apply the theory of your choice from class readings to explain why this form of delinquency occurs. **Discuss your findings in a 8-10 page paper; topic**

statement and preliminary findings due 9/20, paper due 9/29. No crime trend papers accepted after October 6. More detailed instructions will be posted on Blackboard soon.

**GROUP PROJCT OPTION—DELINQUENCY PREVENTION/TREATMENT PROGRAM EVALUTATION RESEARCH**—This option requires you to choose one program designed to prevent or rehabilitate delinquency that has been empirically evaluated. Based on at least five **academic journal articles**, discuss the efficacy of this program; this paper should be 7-9 pages **and includes a class presentation**. You will work with 2-3 other students on this project and share a project grade. A topic statement, with description of the studies you will present, is due on 11/8 and worth 10 percent of your project grade. **Due 11/22; no late projects accepted. More detailed instructions will be posted on Blackboard soon.**

**JEP EXPERIENCE**—This assignment requires you to write a 7-9 page paper **and an informal class presentation** on 11/22 based on your JEP experience. Choose one concept from class to explain the circumstances of the young people you work with, the authorities' reaction to them, as well as your suggestions for programs to best assist the young people you meet in the program. You may team up with another classmate to write this paper and conduct this presentation with (note that your grade will be shared). A topic statement with a list of specific examples is due on 11/8 and worth 10 percent of your paper grade. Another ten percent of your paper grade will be based on your JEP evaluation. **Due 11/22; no JEP papers accepted after 11/29. More detailed instructions will be posted on Blackboard soon.**

All assignments must reflect original work. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and consequences will be in accordance with university policy. Any papers that are dramatically different in style and content from in-class work will require an oral exam. Failure to appear or to successfully demonstrate that the work is your own within one week of notification will result in a failing grade and will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs. Extra credit opportunities may arise at times; note that special individual opportunities for extra credit violate university policy and will not be considered. Finally, grades are earned, they are not given. It is your responsibility to do the best work you are capable of producing. *Nitpicking over points is discouraged, as it reveals a commitment to a grade rather than to learning.* **Continued enrollment in this course indicates acceptance of class policies.**

**\*\*Any special learning needs should be brought to my attention as soon as possible.\*\***

#### **Required Reading:**

1. Sternheimer, Karen. *Pop Culture Panics: How Moral Crusaders Create Meanings of Deviance and Delinquency* (Routledge, 2015).
2. Rios, Victor M. *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys* (NYU Press, 2011).

**\*\*All dates are estimates and subject to change\*\***

#### **I. Perceptions and Realities about Youth**

1	T 8/23	Introduction to course	
2	TH 8/25	Adolescence in history	• Sternheimer, <i>Kids These Days</i> (Blackboard)
3	T 8/30	What are moral panics?	• Sternheimer, <i>Pop Culture Panics</i> ch 1-2
4	TH 9/1	Children as “folk devils”: 1930s-1950s	• Sternheimer, <i>Pop Culture Panics</i> ch 3-4
5	T 9/6	Contemporary perceptions of youth <b>FIRST IN-CLASS ESSAY</b>	• Sternheimer, <i>Pop Culture Panics</i> ch 5-6
6	TH 9/8	Contemporary perceptions of youth: Sex and pregnancy	• Sternheimer, <i>Pop Culture Promiscuity</i> (Blackboard)

7	T 9/13	Contemporary perceptions of youth: substance use <b>SECOND IN-CLASS ESSAY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sternheimer, “Does Pop Culture Promote Smoking, Toking, and Drinking?” (Bb)</li> </ul>
8	TH 9/15	Contemporary perceptions of youth: violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sternheimer, “From Screen to Crime Scene?” (Bb)</li> </ul>
<b>III. Realities of Juvenile Crime</b>			
9	T 9/20	Measuring juvenile crime <b>THIRD IN-CLASS ESSAY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mosher, Miethe, and Phillips ,The Mismeasure of Crime (Bb) <b>CRIME TREND TOPIC STATEMENT DUE</b></li> </ul>
10	TH 9/22	Juvenile crime rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review OJJDP Report: “Juvenile Offenders and Victims” <a href="http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/nr2014/downloads/NR2014.pdf">http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/nr2014/downloads/NR2014.pdf</a></li> </ul>
11	T 9/27	Juvenile crime rates <b>FOURTH IN-CLASS ESSAY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review OJJDP Briefing Book: <a href="http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/">http://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/</a></li> </ul>
12	TH 9/29	Studying youth using ethnography <b>DISTRIBUTE MIDTERM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rios, Dreams Deferred</li> <li>Rios, Beyond Jungle Book Tropes <b>CRIME TREND PAPER DUE</b></li> </ul>
<b>IV. Youth and Social Contexts</b>			
13	T 10/4	Urban contexts <b>FIFTH IN-CLASS ESSAY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rios, The Flatlands of Oakland</li> <li>Venkatesh, The Social Organization of Street Gang Activity (Bb)</li> </ul>
14	TH 10/6	Suburban contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pattillo, Sweet Mothers and Gangbangers (Bb)</li> </ul>
15	T 10/11	Family	<b>MIDTERM DUE</b>
16	TH 10/13	Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rios, The Labeling Hype</li> </ul>
17	T 10/18	School and community organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rios, The Coupling of Criminal Justice and Community Institutions</li> </ul>
18	TH 10/20	Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spivak et al. “Gender and Status Offending: Judicial Paternalism in Juvenile Justice Processing” (Bb)</li> </ul>
19	T 10/25	Masculinity, race, and criminalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rios, Proving Manhood</li> </ul>
20	TH 10/27	Peers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rios, Guilty by Association</li> </ul>
21	T 11/1	Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adams, “The Effectiveness of Juvenile Curfews at Crime Prevention” (Bb)</li> </ul>
<b>V. The Juvenile Justice System</b>			
22	TH 11/3	Origins of juvenile justice and the juvenile court	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mennel, Origins of the Juvenile Court (Bb)</li> </ul>

23	T 11/8	Juvenile court proceedings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review Juvenile Law Center's site: <a href="http://jlc.org/news-room/media-resources/youth-justice-system-overview">http://jlc.org/news-room/media-resources/youth-justice-system-overview</a></li> </ul>
24	TH 11/10	Juvenile court reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bernard &amp; Kurlycheck, "The Supreme Court and Due Process" (Bb)</li> </ul>
25	T 11/15	Juvenile Justice, "Superpredators" and the Get Tough Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stevenson, "All God's Children" and "Cruel and Unusual"(Bb)</li> </ul>
26	TH 11/17	Trying juveniles in adult court	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bernard &amp; Kurlycheck, "Youths in the Adult System" (Bb)</li> <li>Klein, Dennis the Menace or Billy the Kid (W&amp;M)</li> </ul>
27	T 11/22	Prevention programs	<p><b>PREVENTION/ TREATMENT PRESENTATIONS JEP PAPER AND PRESENTATIONS DUE</b></p>
28	T 11/29	Treatment programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Morash &amp; Rucker, A Critical Look at Boot Camp (Bb)</li> </ul> <p><b>EXTRA CREDIT PAPERS/PRESENTATIONS DUE</b></p>
29	TH 12/1	The Future of Juvenile Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rios, Toward a Youth Support Complex</li> </ul>
	TH 12/8	<b>FINAL EXAM DUE HSH 314 at 1 pm; NO LATE EXAMS ACCEPTED</b>	