



# USC University of Southern California

**SOCIOLOGY 351 Spring 2021**  
**Public Policy and Juvenile Justice**  
TTH 12:30-1:50 On Zoom

## **Dr. Karen Sternheimer**

Office hours: TTH 11:00-12:00 by appointment on Zoom (*other appointment times may be available*)

[sternhei@usc.edu](mailto:sternhei@usc.edu) (response time within 24 hrs M-F 9-5)

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 problematic in some contexts but not others. We will see that status and power are central in the definition process. We will consider the importance of social contexts and the perceptions of and reactions to young people’s behavior. We will also focus on institutional responses to young people within the juvenile justice system.

### **Course Goals:**

1. Examine how childhood, adolescence, and delinquency have been defined historically
2. Understand the differences between popular perceptions of youth and social problems and the data collected on these issues, as well as public policies and programs created to address youth-related problems.
3. Locate and interpret government-collected crime statistics and academic research.
4. Describe the relationship between juvenile crime and punishment and class, race, ethnicity, and gender.
5. **Develop critical thinking, research, data analysis, writing, presentation, and teamwork skills.**

### **Student evaluation:**

Participation	10%
Reflective Blackboard Journal Entries	5%
Weekly essays	5%
Take home midterm (due Thursday 3/9)	25%
Group project or JEP paper and presentation	25%
Take home final exam (due Wednesday 5/12 4 pm)	30%

### **Tracking your progress:**

You are expected to seek more than a grade from this course. You are responsible for checking your feedback and scores on Blackboard, to be aware of your progress as well as areas where improvement is needed, and for seeking help from your peers or professor. The course grading scale is posted on Blackboard.

### **USC technology rental program**

If you need resources to successfully participate in your classes, such as a laptop or internet hotspot, you may be eligible for the university’s equipment rental program. To apply, please [submit an application](#).

### **USC Technology Support Links**

[Zoom information for students](#)

[Blackboard help for students](#)

[Software available to USC Campus](#)

### **Technology Etiquette:**

E-mail is a great resource but never takes the place of a conversation. Please include "SOCI 351" in the subject line. Lengthy questions or concerns should be addressed during office hours or a special appointment. Emails are typically answered within one business day. Absolutely no assignments will be accepted via e-mail. We will be using Blackboard (<https://blackboard.usc.edu>) for all course content.

*Even in an online platform, your complete focus is expected during live Zoom sessions. Please do not multitask during meetings. You are encouraged to attend class as if you would in person: sitting upright and ready to participate and share video and audio.*

### **Synchronous session recording notice**

Synchronous sessions will be recorded and provided to all students asynchronously. To access previous recordings, go to Blackboard, Zoom, and then Cloud Recordings. *USC prohibits sharing of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.*

### **Participation (10%):**

This class is based on active student participation in discussions and activities and is designed to be hands-on and experiential. Students are expected to attend class meetings prepared to discuss the assigned reading and participate in all activities. If you are not able to attend a live Zoom session, you are expected to fully participate in the discussion board conversation on Blackboard that week. Discussion questions will be posted each week. You are encouraged to participate on the discussion board even if you are able to attend.

Students are expected to welcome differing viewpoints and to respect the thoughts and ideas of all class participants, listen quietly while others are speaking, and arrive and leave meetings on time. Note that a great deal of information covered in class may not be in the readings, and vice versa. Students are responsible for getting notes or assignments from Blackboard and Zoom recordings.

A full rubric detailing how participation is graded is posted on Blackboard on the "Syllabus and Grading" tab. Active participation in activities, comments and questions that reflect knowledge of course material, as well as courteous attention to your professor and peers are expected.

### **Reflective Blackboard Journal Entries (5%):**

Each week, you are asked to reflect on what you have learned during the week and what questions you have about the material and your project using Blackboard's Journal function. There will be ten journal entry requirements, each worth .5% of your grade. Only you and the professor can see these entries. They are due each week of the semester by 11:59 pm PST on Fridays. You can miss 5 without penalty.

### **Essays:**

Before the midterm, there will be five essay assignments to ascertain your comprehension of the course material. The essay topic will come from a central theme from the week's reading and course discussions and will be an opportunity for you to reflect on the material. These essays will be posted on Blackboard by 5pm on the Thursday they are listed, and due the following Tuesday before the start of class. In order to earn credit your writing must reflect awareness of central issues and ideas expressed by authors and in class (see rubric on Blackboard for more specific details). These assignments are graded credit/partial 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 group project grade 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 4/20). A brief, informal discussion of your paper with the class is required as well.

### Midterm & Final Exams:

Both the midterm and final exams will be take home, essay format and should incorporate your ideas with those in the reading and class discussions. Both exams will be distributed at least one week prior to the due date. All assignments must be submitted on Blackboard (instructions will be provided). Late midterms will be reduced by 10% per day (including weekend days); **no late final exams can be accepted.**

### Paper:

*Option 1*—ANALYSIS OF JUVENILE CRIME TRENDS (8-10 pages); topic statement and preliminary findings due 2/16, paper due 2/25. Late papers reduced 10% per day; 5% if turned in after start of class on 2/25. No crime trend papers accepted after 3/4. **See instructions posted on Blackboard.**

*GROUP PROJCT OPTION*—DELINQUENCY PREVENTION/TREATMENT PROGRAM EVALUTATION RESEARCH (7-9 page group report and presentation)—Choose one program designed to prevent or rehabilitate delinquency that has been empirically evaluated and results published in **academic journal articles**. You will work with 1-2 other students on this project and share a project grade. A topic statement, with description of the studies you will present, is due on 4/13 and worth 10 percent of your project grade. Each student is required to write a 1-2 page essay detailing their role in the group as well. **Due 4/27; no late projects accepted. See detailed instructions posted on Blackboard.**

JEP EXPERIENCE—(7-9 page paper and participation in JEP assignment connected with this class) A topic statement with a list of specific examples is due 4/13 and worth 10 percent of your paper grade. Another ten percent of your paper grade will be based on your JEP evaluation. **Due 4/27; late papers reduced 10% per day; 5% if turned in after start of class on 4/27; no JEP papers accepted after 4/30. See detailed instructions posted on Blackboard.**

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 previous 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. **Once assigned, grades will not be changed unless a mathematical error occurred.*** 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 of Youth

- 1 T 1/19 What is adolescence?
- 2 TH 1/21 Adolescence in history

- Sternheimer, *Kids These Days* (Blackboard)  
**FIRST ESSAY POSTED (due 1/26)**

3	T 1/26	What are moral panics?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sternheimer, <i>Pop Culture Panics</i> ch 1-2</li> </ul>
4	TH 1/28	Children as “folk devils”: 1930s-1950s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sternheimer, <i>Pop Culture Panics</i> ch 3-4</li> </ul> <p><b>SECOND ESSAY POSTED (due 2/2)</b></p>
5	T 2/2	Contemporary perceptions of youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sternheimer, <i>Pop Culture Panics</i> ch 5-6</li> </ul>
6	TH 2/4	Contemporary perceptions of youth: sex and pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sternheimer, <i>Pop Culture Promiscuity</i> (Bb)</li> </ul> <p><b>THIRD ESSAY POSTED (due 2/9)</b></p>
7	T 2/9	Contemporary perceptions of youth: substance use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sternheimer, “Does Pop Culture Promote Smoking, Toking, and Drinking?” (Bb)</li> </ul>
8	TH 2/11	Contemporary perceptions of youth: violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sternheimer, “From Screen to Crime Scene?” (Bb)</li> </ul> <p><b>FOURTH ESSAY POSTED (due 2/16)</b></p>

### III. Realities of Juvenile Crime

9	T 2/16	Measuring juvenile crime	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mosher, Miethe, and Phillips ,The Mismeasure of Crime (Bb)</li> </ul> <p><b>CRIME TREND TOPIC STATEMENT DUE</b></p>
10	TH 2/18	Juvenile crime rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review OJJDP Report: “Juvenile Arrests”  <a href="https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh176/files/media/document/254499.pdf">https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh176/files/media/document/254499.pdf</a></li> </ul> <p><b>FIFTH ESSAY POSTED (due 2/23)</b></p>
11	T 2/23	Juvenile crime rates	<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 2/25	Studying youth using ethnography <b>MIDTERM POSTED</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rios, <i>Dreams Deferred</i></li> <li>Rios, <i>Beyond Jungle Book Tropes</i></li> </ul> <p><b>CRIME TREND PAPER DUE</b></p>

### IV. Youth and Social Contexts

13	T 3/2	Urban contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rios, <i>The Flatlands of Oakland</i></li> </ul>
14	TH 3/4	Suburban contexts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pattillo, <i>Sweet Mothers and Gangbangers</i> (Bb)</li> </ul>
15	T 3/9	Family	<b>MIDTERM DUE</b>
16	TH 3/11	Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rios, <i>The Labeling Hype</i></li> </ul>

17	T 3/16	School and community organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rios, The Coupling of Criminal Justice and Community Institutions</li> </ul>
18	TH 3/18	Masculinity, race, and criminalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rios, Proving Manhood</li> </ul>
	<b>T 3/23</b>	<b>WELLNESS DAY</b>	
19	TH 3/25	Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spivak et al. "Gender and Status Offending: Judicial Paternalism in Juvenile Justice Processing" (Bb)</li> </ul>
20	T 3/30	Peers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rios, Guilty by Association</li> </ul>
21	TH 4/1	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	T 4/6	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	TH 4/8	Juvenile court reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bernard &amp; Kurlycheck, "The Supreme Court and Due Process" (Bb)</li> </ul>
24	T 4/13	Juvenile Justice, "Superpredators" and the Get Tough Movement <b>GRP TOPIC STATEMENT/OUTLINES DUE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stevenson, "All God's Children" and "Cruel and Unusual"(Bb)</li> </ul>
25	TH 4/15	Juvenile court proceedings and placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the following:  <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>  <a href="https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/snapshots/DataSnapshot_JRFC2018.pdf">https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/snapshots/DataSnapshot_JRFC2018.pdf</a>  <a href="https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh176/files/media/document/juvenile-court-statistics-2018.pdf">https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh176/files/media/document/juvenile-court-statistics-2018.pdf</a> </li> </ul>
26	T 4/20	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 (Bb)</li> </ul> <p><b>EXTRA CREDIT READING ASSIGNMENT DUE</b></p>
	<b>TH 4/22</b>	<b>WELLNESS DAY</b>	
27	T 4/27	Prevention and treatment programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Morash &amp; Rucker, A Critical Look at Boot Camp (Bb)</li> </ul> <p><b>PREVENTION/TREATMENT PRESENTATIONS JEP PAPER DUE</b></p>
28	TH 4/29	The future of juvenile justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rios, Toward a Youth Support Complex</li> </ul>
	W 5/12	<b>FINAL EXAM DUE 4pm PST; NO LATE EXAMS ACCEPTED</b>	