

SOCIOLOGY 2240

FEB. 07 2003

DEVIANCE AND CONFORMITY
(WINTER 2003)

Grande Prairie Regional College

Course Description:

A study of the politics and social ramifications of conformity, deviance, and their relation to social change. The course examines how and why some behaviour patterns are defined as deviant or conformist.

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Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays: 15.00 - 16.00 Tuesdays & Thursdays: 14.00 - 15.00
Or By appointment

GOALS:

1. To understand how sociological concepts may help us analyze and comprehend our inclination to define and classify people and their behaviour.
2. To develop analytical and critical thinking skills through discussions of issues relevant to conformity.
3. To become aware of historical and contemporary attitudes, practices, and values relevant to concepts of deviance and conformity, and to their applications.

Course Prerequisite: SOCIOLOGY 1000

Required Reading:

Constructions of deviance: Social power, context, and interaction, fourth edition - Patricia and Peter Adler, Editors

Blue/Orange - Joe Penhall

Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices - Stuart Hall, Editor

Assignments:

Project/Essay:

Individually or in groups, select material from the array of cultural phenomena in society. What forces of division and harmony do you perceive? Analyze these contrasting inducements, and analyze them according to ideas discussed, especially in Hall's book, but in the Adders' book as well. Essays or projects are marked on a 9-point stanine scale. Do not write a descriptive report. You may use first person words like 'I', but the paper is not a large opinion piece. It is intended to be analytical, based on thought and ideas, not quickly-generated opinions. The expected minimum standard is 1500 words. Your mark will be reduced by a half-stanine for inadequate length. This applies only to papers that are too brief. References must appear in the main text of your assignment, and in a Works Cited section at the end of the paper. Both are required. **If either is omitted, your assignment will be reduced by one stanine per section. All documentation [referencing] must be consistent with MLA style.** Remember that not all disciplines accept the same approach to writing up reference. You must reference more than quotations. Other authors' interpretations, analyses, perceptions, or ideas, deserve credit in your papers. Mentioning them does not disqualify your view of their analyses.

If you hand in the assignment before the due date, I will comment fully on your essay, or on your project, and you will have the option of rewriting the paper. Otherwise, I will provide a general comment at the end of your papers or projects. Grammar is important to communicating precise meaning. Grammar will not be valued as highly as content, but it will be evaluated and has the capacity to adversely affect your standing in the course.

Three Journals:

Due the first class of each month of the semester, beginning in February.

Each is worth a maximum of 1.5 stanines. However, a usual grade of I will apply to all journals. Each journal is to be at least the equivalent of one double-spaced typed page of text. It can be as long as you like. Anything pertaining to deviance and conformity, ideas introduced in class discussions or lectures, class interaction, personal experience, etc., is suitable. Observations about, and suggestions for, the course are also suitable. No research is necessary or expected. The journals are an informal type of communication with me.

Discussion Bonus:

Class discussion is a vital aspect of this course. Everyone may (but not necessarily will) receive a bonus mark for the QUALITY of your class discussion, based on a combination of the frequency and quality of the participation. You will be eligible only if you display commitment to the course by doing your reading and completing the required assignments, **and if you have not missed more than 3 classes during the term.** The bonus system will have a maximum grade of 3. WebCT discussions will be considered for the bonus grade.

Tabulating Grades

The total of all stanine marks available from your assignments is 13.5. Your marks will be totaled out of this number, a percentage will be obtained, and the percentage will be reconverted to a final stanine grade according to the following table.

Stanine Grade	Percentage Equivalent
9	90 - 100
8	80 - 89
7	70 - 79
6	60 - 69
5	55 - 59
4	50 - 54
3	40 - 49
2	20 - 39
1	0 - 19

NOTE: (1) No class averaging will be done. (2) All marks will appear on webCT. If you are

unfamiliar with this system, employees of the library will instruct you for access. **You are responsible for monitoring your grade input, and informing me that a mark has not appeared for which you deserve credit.**

DISCUSSION SEQUENCE

1. Introduction to course: General, Sociological, and Historical

Class Discussion: General perceptions of deviance and conformity: What behaviours do you consider deviant? Do you react to these similarly to how you respond to conforming behaviour? Do you rank deviant behaviours in a hierarchy of ascending 'transgressiveness', and if so, based on what criteria? Should sociologists contemplate such a hierarchy?

2. Hall: Introduction; Adler: General Introduction, Part 1 Intro, Chapters 1 & 2

Class Discussion: What is Hall attempting to articulate in his opening comments on language, meaning, discourse, culture, and representation? Why are these important? What is the relationship, mentioned by Erickson, of social institutions to deviance? Is "the sociology of deviance" only a casual phrasing, or is there a perspective here that is profoundly sociological? Why speak of deviance in relation to middle class norms? Do you accept the logic of the middle class norms presented? Assuming a middle class ethos, can you say whether conformity and deviance are considered equally as sources of social benefits or problems? What, so far in your reading of this book, might count as a social problem? In this discussion, and throughout the course, you should contemplate this question.

3. Hall: Chapter 1 - Sections 1-3;

Class Discussion: Outline Hall's opening explanations of language, signs, codes, and myth. Prepare to discuss the theories of representation, Reading A, and Saussure's ideas of signification. What is meant by semiotics? Why entitle section 3 "From language to culture"? Prepare to discuss in groups Activities 5 & 6. What is Barthes' intent in differentiating between connotation and denotation?

4. Hall: Chapter 1 - Sections 4 - 6; Adler: Chapter 3, Part 2 Introduction, Chapters 4 - 10

Class Discussion: How does Foucault link power, discourse, truth, knowledge, and what he calls the subject? What is power/knowledge? Explain the final sentences of the first paragraph in 4.3. What does Hall intend to communicate when he calls 4.1 "From language to discourse"? Prepare to discuss Activity 8 in groups. Does the term 'Positive Deviance' strike you as ironic or perplexing? What is positive deviance? Prepare to discuss the theories of deviance. Does our constant effort to control deviance suggest rationality or irrationality in our understanding of human existence? What practices do you perceive in society, that could be placed in the various theoretical sets? Does any theory strike you as being more explanatory than the others? What accounts for this - better reasoned, more encompassing, more politically astute, etc.?

5. Overview of Ian Hacking's views of constructing social categories of people. Hall: Chapter 2 - Sections 1 - 3; Adler: Part 3 Introduction, Chapters 11-13

Class Discussion: What is a paradigm? How does it apply to culture, norms, and what is its relevance to discussion of deviance? What assumptions of deviance and research are evident in chapters 11-13 in the Adders' book?

6. Hall: Chapter 2 - Sections 4-6; Adler: Part 4 Introduction, Chapters 14-16

Class Discussion: Explain the use of the 'paradigm' in looking at French society. Are you persuaded that photos convey and embody social paradigms, as is suggested in this chapter? Prepare to discuss Activity 3. Does Grande Prairie, or whatever community you have lived in, have events that resembles the *fetes populaires*? What observations do you have regarding urban/rural space in this city? Why mention humanism in this chapter? Of what value to our knowledge of deviance, is the concept of the moral entrepreneur? What is a moral entrepreneur? Is this concept applied well and appropriately to drugs, smoking, and sexuality? What is meant in chapter 15 by status politics? Explain its relevance to this section of readings.

7. Hall: Chapter 3; Adler: Chapters 17-19

Class Discussion: What is referred to in the phrase "poetics and politics of exhibiting"? What implications does it have for our understanding of representation? What questions of context are raised in this chapter? What do the Adders contemplate when they cite differential social power? Do the

examples in these chapters support the concept? Can you think of other examples? Can you think of contexts that are more indicative of differential social power than the ones *given voice* in chapters 17-19?

8. Hall: Chapter 4 - Sections 1-3; Adler: Part 5 Introduction, Chapters 20 - 22

Class Discussion: How might the Adlers explain identity to us? In what sense can an identity be deviant? Before reading chapter 20, would you have considered words like 'adoption' and 'management' in your thoughts about identity? Do they advance our understanding of what identity can encompass? Do bisexuality, body weight, and self-image serve well as foundations of personal identity? What about these as foundations of social identity? Do self-concept and identity refer to the same criteria of personal existence? What are primary and secondary deviance? How does identity intertwine with Stuart Hall's discussion of the spectacle of the other in chapter 4? What is this spectacle? Is race critical to otherness?

9. Hall: Chapter 4 - Sections 4-6; Adler: Parts 6 & 7 Introductions, Chapters 23 - 27

Class Discussion: Were we somehow to abolish race as a context of difference, would we abolish simultaneously, stereotyping? Is establishment of the 'other' an outcome of stereotypes mainly? How do stereotypes, power, and fetishism work conceptually? How would you explain each of them? What is commodity racism? Prepare to discuss Activities 2 and 5. Why does Hall mention Jacques Derrida in his look at difference? Explain how stereotyping becomes a signifying practise. How do power and fantasy intersect? What does Hall have in mind when he refers to fetishism and disavowal? Does disavowal have anything to do with stigma management? What is stigma management? Is it the same as a vocabulary of motive? Do you accept the examples of stigmatization that are presented in Adlers' book? Would you delete any from the list?

10. Hall: Chapter 5; Adler: Part 8 Introduction, Chapters 28 - 32

Class Discussion: How crucial is the word "exhibiting" to the chapter's on masculinity in Hall's book? Is this exhibition similar to the spectacle discussed in an earlier chapter? What is meant by techniques of the self? Can this be linked to stigma management? Is masculinity organized through and in social life the way deviance is, according to the Adlers' book? How do the illustrations of chapters 28-32 stand up to scrutiny? What is the logic of risk as outlined in chapter 30? Is it generalizable to other considerations we have taken up in this course?

11. Hall: Chapter 6

Class Discussion: What is the genre of gender? What is genre as text [page 355]? What is the fiction of everyday life? What does Gledhill want to say when she writes that the social world enters fictional discourse. How can culture be gendered? Would you have conceived of the soap opera as a part of hegemony? Is the soap opera genre still mainly a woman's viewing interest? Work on Activities 1, 3, and 4.

12. Adler: Part 9 Introduction, Chapters 33 - 36

Class Discussion: In what manner do cruising for sex, manufacturing fantasy, medical crime and fraternity rape indicate a structure of deviant acts. What type(s) of structure nurture, harness, or direct deviance?

13. Adler: Part 10 Introduction, Chapters 37 - 39

Class Discussion: Do the Adlers make a case, through their selection of articles, that there is a structured means of entering and departing deviance? What do these chapters tell us about our society, its social margins, its rewards and penalties, etc.?