

**SOCIOLOGY 665 - Women and Crime
Fall 2006**

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That women less often are engaged in highway robbery, murder, homicide, and assault is due to the very nature of the feminine constitution. To conceive an assassination, to make ready for it, to put it into execution demands, in a great number of cases, not only physical force, but a certain energy and combination of intellectual functions. In this sort of development women almost always fall short of men (Cesare Lombroso, 1911).

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is an upper-division undergraduate/graduate course dealing with a selected topic within the broad spectrum of criminology: women and crime. We will deal with three topics over the course of the semester. First, we will look at women as offenders, both from an empirical and a theoretical perspective. By and large, mainstream criminological theory has tended to ignore women, or as the quote above indicates, has seen them as somehow pathological for NOT engaging in the number and variety of crimes men commit. We will then look at women's experiences as victims, focusing specifically on violence in social context. Finally, we will look at women's experiences as workers in the legal/criminal justice system.

At the outset, you should be aware that this course will require a very high level of engagement from you in terms of reading, writing, and discussion; it is no accident that the course is listed at the 600 level. However, if you keep up with the reading, complete assignments on time, and contribute to the discussion, I believe that the course will be a rewarding experience.

OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to:

- 1) Help students to fill in the gaps typically left by general criminology courses concerning women's experiences as offenders, victims, and workers in the legal system.
- 2) Make students more aware of the influence of gender, race, class, and sexuality in the labeling, processing, and punishment of offenders, and in the social construction of criminality.
- 3) Give students a greater understanding of the social construction of gender, race, class, and sexuality.
- 4) Develop your abilities to be critical consumers of popular and academic information about crime, and allow you to apply these abilities in written assignments.

REQUIRED TEXTS

The required texts for this course are:

Girshick, Lori B. 1999. *No Safe Haven: Stories of Women in Prison*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Price, Barbara Raffel and Natalie J. Sokoloff. 2003. *The Criminal Justice System and Women: Offenders, Victims, and Workers (third edition)*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Lefkowitz, Bernard. 1998. *Our Guys: The Glen Ridge Rape and the Secret Life of the Perfect Suburb*. New York: Vintage Books.

Britton, Dana. 2003. *At Work in the Iron Cage: The Prison as Gendered Organization*. New York: New York University Press.

Additional readings will be assigned and made available to students on K-State Online. See attached list for citations.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Readings:

Tentative reading assignments are listed below. However, due to length of discussions and other factors beyond my control, this schedule will undoubtedly change. I'm comfortable with that, as you should be - the point in a course like this one (or any course, actually) should be the quality of the learning experience, not the quantity of material consumed. Reading assignments will therefore also be made at the beginning of each class period. You are expected to complete all readings on time and be prepared to discuss them in class. There is a lot of reading in this course, none of which is optional. Needless to say, if you should get behind, it will be incredibly difficult to catch up. It is imperative that you complete these readings PRIOR TO the class session in which they will be discussed. Class attendance is mandatory because lectures will cover material not included in the readings.

Class Participation:

I teach all of my classes in the form of an ongoing dialogue with my students, rather than in a traditional lecture format. For this reason, discussion of the readings and lecture materials in class is both encouraged and expected. In my view, strenuous debate and discussion facilitate the learning process - some of the most important insights are often gleaned in the heat of an argument. If you don't agree with a point that is being made (either in a reading or in a class discussion) speak up and we'll address your issue. The class will be more interesting for all of us if you talk to each other, rather than allow yourselves to become passive recipients of the lecture material.

General guidelines for participation - note well:

In this class, we will discuss both abstract theoretical ideas and concrete, practical information about different social groups and social behaviors. I hope that these materials will challenge you intellectually and personally. Because this class touches on many social sore points, however, you may occasionally feel more threatened than challenged. To limit these difficulties I have set out the following guidelines that I would like you all to agree to assume while in this classroom:

1. Acknowledge that prejudice and discrimination based on race, class, sex, age, sexual orientation, and physical differences exist.
2. Acknowledge that all of us have learned misinformation about our own group and about members of other groups, whether we belong to a majority or minority group.
3. Agree not to blame ourselves or others for the misinformation we have learned in the past, but accept responsibility for not repeating misinformation after we have learned otherwise.
4. Assume that people--both those we study and those in this class--do the best they can.
5. Never demean, devalue, or in any way "put down" people for their experiences, backgrounds, or statements. This does not mean that you can't disagree, only that you must do so respectfully. I will not tolerate personal attacks of any kind.
6. Acknowledge that much of the material and discussion in this course is designed to challenge taken-for-granted assumptions about gender and sexuality, and that you may initially find some of this material offensive and even threatening. For the purposes of this course, however, students agree to take the arguments and ideas of the authors presented *seriously and respectfully*. Even if you disagree - ask yourself, could this be true? What would it mean if it were? Under what conditions would someone see this as true? Don't just use an author's argument as an excuse to "go off" because you've been offended. In fact, if you are offended or threatened, interrogate yourself about that. The authors in this course have been carefully chosen, and their work highlights concerns central to course themes. For the purposes of this course, students are not allowed to simply disregard arguments without interrogating their own. Acknowledge that the readings/discussions are designed to challenge your beliefs and cause you to think about your experiences in new ways, and be prepared to *honestly engage* in that process.
7. Be aware that there are students in the class who have experienced rape, other forms of sexual assault, marital or dating violence, or other forms of violent victimization. Your comments in class should be respectful of these experiences and their effects on victims.
8. Because of the particular nature of this class, we will be reading and discussing graphic, explicit and controversial material on gender and sexuality. Four letter words will be used. Films that include material that some would consider explicit or offensive may be shown. If your religious, moral, or psychological sensibilities will be offended by these materials, you are advised not to take this course.

(Thanks to Lynn Weber of the University of South Carolina for providing the learning contract from which these rules are adapted).

Class visitors:

You may bring a visitor to class, on rare occasion, under two conditions. First, notify me in advance. There will be some class days during which course material may not be suitable for children for example. Second, visitors must agree to abide by the ground rules set out above. You are responsible for informing any visitor of these conditions. I reserve the right to refuse access to anyone not enrolled in this course. You may not bring visitors along on the prison tour (see below).

Exams:

There will be two examinations in this class, a midterm and a final. Both will be in a take-home, essay format, and you will be permitted to use your books and notes. Collaboration on these exams with other students is not permissible, and will result in a grade of 0 for the exam and in the pursuance of formal charges of academic dishonesty. All stipulations of the university policy on plagiarism and the honor system apply to this course. Late exams will be marked down one full letter grade for each week day that they are late. The midterm will be handed out in class on October 5th, it is due in class on October 12th. The final will be handed out in class on December 7th. It is due in my office (or my mailbox) by 5:00 P.M. on December 14th. Exam grades will constitute 200 of the 400 points available in this class.

Questions on the Readings:

There are thirteen sets of readings listed below. For ten of these (sets 3, 8 & 11 are required, you may choose seven from among the other ten), you must write a set of three to four questions that your reading has raised for you. What I'm looking for here are questions that integrate material or raise substantive critiques of the articles - not just questions like "What the heck are the authors saying on page 254?" Each question should raise a specific issue from the article(s) in which you are interested and that has puzzled you in some way, and this should be a question that cannot be directly answered by material we've covered in the course (for example, "What are the differences in the kinds of crimes that men and women commit?" would not be a legitimate question). After you've described this issue, you may speculate a bit about what you think the answer might be, given what you've learned in the course, or your own experience, but in each case, leave us with a question for class discussion. What I want to see is the thought process that emerges in dealing with complex issues for which there are no clear answers. Writing questions like this is not an easy task, but it is a technique that you'll be able to catch on to as the semester progresses. In general, what I'm looking for in these questions is some sense that you've read and engaged with the material - a good set of questions will often take up an entire page, hand-written. It will be impossible, of course, to write a logical set of questions if you don't understand what you're reading, and you may find some of these articles to be quite difficult. If you're struggling, please see me or email me and we'll talk about it.

Questions will be due, in class, on the day that the relevant material is scheduled for discussion, and I will announce this in advance. Given that the point of the question sets is to provoke discussion, in class, of the assigned material, late question sets *will not be accepted*. The total number of points possible for all ten sets will be 50.

Exercises:

1) Prison visit - We will visit the Topeka Correctional Facility in two groups, on September 26th and 28th, from 1-4 pm (we will leave Manhattan at 11:30 on those days) - further details to be announced in class. Students will be able to see the facility and talk with administrators and inmates. Students are then responsible for writing a brief (3-5 page) report on their perceptions and assessment of the facility in light of course material. This report

will be worth 50 points, and details will be handed out in class prior to the visit. The report will be due in class on one week following the tour (October 3 for Group 1, October 5 for Group 2).

2) Assignments keyed to videos - There will be 4 (more or less) videos shown over the course of the semester. For each of these, there will be a question set that will be distributed in class on the day of the video and turned in during the class session after the video has been shown. All of the completed sets will be worth a total of 100 points.

3) Pretests/Posttests - There will be 3 pretests given online at the beginning of each of the three units. The first of these will be available on Wednesday, August 23rd, and must be completed by Friday, September 1st. Dates for the other two pretests will be announced in class. At the end of each unit, you will take the same test again. You must take both exams for each unit, and I will award you the higher of the two scores you receive. In total, these exams will be worth 50 points.

Final Grade:

As noted above, your grade for the class will be calculated as follows:

Midterm Exam	100 points
Final Exam	100 points
Questions on readings	50 points
Video exercises	100 points
Prison visit assignment	50 points
Pre/posttests	50 points
Total	450 points possible

For the purposes of calculating the final letter grade I will use a standard scale:

90 - 100% (405-450 points) = A	60 - 69% (270-314 points) = D
80 - 89% (360-404 points) = B	0 - 59% (<270 points) = F
70 - 79% (315-359 points) = C	

POLICIES

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the submission of assignments that are plagiarized or written in collusion with another or the falsification of any records connected with this course or any examination. Using material from a web site without citation is plagiarism, as is quoting or closely paraphrasing any printed or virtual source without giving appropriate credit (i.e. Gould, 1981:123). I will not tolerate plagiarism of any sort. I will give you one warning about this on your assignments. After that, any assignments that appear to be plagiarized in any way will be given a grade of 0. Exams that are plagiarized in any way will also be given a grade of 0, and further charges may be pursued at my discretion. It is acceptable to talk with classmates about homework assignments and question sets. Handing in substantially the same assignment constitutes plagiarism, however. It is not acceptable to discuss the take-home essay questions with classmates. Essays that appear to be substantially similar will be given a grade of 0. If you have any doubts at all about what constitutes plagiarism check with me before you turn in any assignment.

All students, upon registration, agree to be bound by the University Honor Code. This code stipulates that a student has neither given nor received unauthorized aid on any academic work. The full text of the policy is available on the honor code website: <http://www.ksu.edu/honor/>. Students who violate the honor code are subject to university disciplinary procedures, and can receive a grade of "XF" for a course, which denotes a failing grade due to academic dishonesty.

Borderline Grades, Curves, and Other Grade Inflators:

Grades for this course will not be "curved."

I do not grade on the basis of need. If you need an A in this course, figure out the total number of points necessary to earn an A. Do not come to me and ask me to change your final grade unless I have made a mathematical error. Results of individual exams and assignments may be discussed during office hours, though I will impose a 24 hour rule on discussions of examinations. Further details in class.

A grade of "incomplete" will not be assigned except in extraordinary circumstances, and will in no case be given to a student who simply fails to attend class and complete assignments.

Extra credit work will not be given in this course.

Assignment and Exam Policies:

See above for policies on late assignments.

Make-up exams will be given only to those who must miss an exam for a University-approved reason. You are expected to notify me if you must miss a scheduled exam. Except in very special cases, exams must be made up in advance or within one week of the exam date.

With the exception of the final, all other graded assignments are to be picked up in class.

Office hours:

As noted above, my office hours are Tuesday and Thursday, 2:30 to 4:00. This is a time when you can drop in to talk about whatever you want - questions you have about the material, how you're doing in the course, things that you find particularly striking (or irritating) about the course or the readings. Please don't hesitate to use this time. If you're having trouble, it's better for both of us if I know that early in the semester. I (like most instructors) have little patience for last minute pleas for mercy (e.g., calling me the day before the final is due to tell me that you didn't understand the first unit and thus cannot possibly turn in your paper). I am also available at other times, either by appointment (call or e-mail me) or on a drop in basis. If I'm in the office (and I usually am, particularly on Tuesday and Thursday), feel free to knock; I'll either see you or set something up so that we can meet at a later time.

Electronic devices and other distractions:

Unless you have some sort of emergency and have cleared this with me in advance, please turn off cell phones, pagers, or any other two-way communication device before class begins. I understand that many of you will use laptops to take notes in class. This is fine with me. You may not, however, surf the internet, check your email, chat, or engage in other such activities during class time. I find this disrespectful and annoying, and you do NOT want to annoy me. It also distracts others around you. Turn the wireless function of your laptop OFF during class time (just like you would on an airplane). Should I walk behind you and find that you are surfing the web or

engaging in other activities as listed above – or if someone else tells me that they see you doing this and they are distracted by it – I will ask you to shut down your laptop. A second violation and you will not be allowed to use your computer in class again. Though this should go without saying, I also find reading a book or the newspaper (or anything else not connected to our immediate discussion) during class time disrespectful. I will call you out about this in class, and you will cease and desist or leave the room.

Two requests:

If you miss a class, please do not ask me what happened in it or whether you missed anything important. It may surprise you how many students actually ask me these questions. Find someone in the class from whom you can get the notes and learn about other important information. If there is a handout you did not get in a missed class, get it from a classmate.

If you need to give me any materials outside of class and I am not in my office, please leave them in my department mailbox (Waters 204) if at all possible. I hate stepping on assignments that have been slipped under my door.

READING ASSIGNMENTS *

Unit I: Introduction/Women as offenders

- A) Introduction - The Sociology of Gender, Why study women and crime?, Liberal feminist theory
8/24: Girshick, Introduction
P&S, Intro to part one, pp. 1-9, Reading 2 (Flavin)
- B) Statistics and research methods in criminology/Patterns of female offending
8/29-8/31 Reading set 1: Girshick, Chapter 2 and
P&S, Readings 3 (Miller), 5 (Steffensmeier), 7 (Maher)
- C) The law and female offenders
9/5 – 9/14: Reading set 2: Girshick, Chapters 3 - 4 and
P&S, Readings 1 (Sokoloff & Price) and 9 (Paltrow), additional: MacKinnon
Video: Aileen Wournos I & II
- D) Female offenders and prison
9/19-10/3: Reading set 3 (questions mandatory): Girshick, Chapters 5 - 9 and
P&S, Reading 10 (Owen), 12 (Sudbury), 15 (Reed & Reed),
additional: Britton (1999)

PRISON TOUR 1: 9/26, PRISON TOUR 2: 9/28

- E) Representing female offenders
10/5: Reading set 4: P&S 14 (Farr), additional readings: Faith
Video: *Reform School Girls* and other clips

MIDTERM OUT: 10/5, DUE IN CLASS 10/12

Unit II - Women as victims of crime

- A) Patterns of victimization and fear of crime
10/10: P&S, Introduction to part three, pp. 289-302
Reading set 5: Additional readings: Madriz
- B) General violence against women & Radical feminist theory
10/12-10/17: Reading set 6: P&S 27 (Wijers), 28 (Newsday) additional: Caputi, Sheffield, Stato
- C) Rape
10/17-10/26: Reading set 7: P&S, Readings 18 (Websdale and Chesney-Lind),
19 (Feltey), 20 (Wriggins) additional: Brownmiller
Reading set 8 (questions mandatory): Lefkowitz, *Our Guys*
Video: Dreamworlds 2
Video: Rape in the military

D) Violence against women in families

10/31 - 11/7: Reading set 9: P&S, Readings 21 (Browne), 22 (Das Gupta), 24 (Griggs), and 25 (Presser and Gaarder)
Video: Defending Our Lives

Unit III: Women as workers in the Legal System

A) Introduction

11/9-11/14: Reading set 10: Britton, *At Work in the Iron Cage*, chapters 1 - 3

B) Women as CO's

11/16-11/21: Reading set 11 (required): Britton, chapters 4-7

C) Women in policing

11/28- 11/30: Reading set 12: P&S Reading 31 (Schulz), 32 (Harrington), 33 (Miller et al.), and 34 (Martin)

D) Women in law

12/5-12/7: Reading set 13: P&S, Readings 29 (Schafran) and 30 (Toobin), additional: Pierce

Final exams will be due on Thursday, December 14th in my mailbox (Waters 204) or in my office (Waters 213) by 5:00 P.M.

* Please note well: This schedule is exceedingly tentative. Actual reading assignments will therefore always be made at the beginning of each class period.

Britton: Sociology 665, Women & Crime
Citation list for additional articles

1. The law and female offenders

MacKinnon, Catharine A. 1987. Difference and dominance: On sex discrimination. Pp. 32-45 in *Feminism Unmodified: Discourses on Life and Law*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

2. Female offenders in prison

Britton, Dana M. 1999. Cat fights and gang fights: Preference for work in a male-dominated organization. *The Sociological Quarterly* 40(3): 455-474.

3. Representing female offenders

Holmlund, Christine. 1994. A decade of deadly dolls: Hollywood and the woman killer. Pp. 127-151 in Helen Birch (ed.) Moving Targets: Women, Murder, and Representation. Berkeley: University of California Press.

4. Fear of crime

Madriz, Esther. 1997. Fear of crime as social control. Pp. 42-70 in Esther Madriz, *Nothing Bad Happens to Good Girls: Fear of Crime in Women's Lives*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

5. General violence against women

Caputi, Jane. 1993. The Sexual Politics of Murder. Pp. 5-25 in Pauline B. Bart and Eileen Geil Moran (eds.), *Violence Against Women: The Bloody Footprints*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Sheffield, Carole J. 1993. The invisible intruder: Women's experiences of obscene phone calls. Pp. 73-78 in Bart and Moran (eds.), op. cit.

Stato, Joanne. 1993. Montreal gynocide. Pp. 132-133 in Bart and Moran, (eds.), op. cit.

6. Rape

Brownmiller, Susan. 1975. Rape and war: Vietnam. Pp. 87-118 in *Against our will: Men, women, and rape*. New York: Bantam Books.

7. Women in law

Pierce, Jennifer. 1995. Rambo Litigators: Emotional Labor in a Feminized Occupation. Pp. 50-82 in *Gender Trials: Emotional Lives in Contemporary Law Firms*. Berkeley: University of California Press.