



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Deviance and Social Control

2526-3-E4001N132

Learning objectives

By the end of the course, students will have acquired the following competencies:

1. Knowledge and Understanding (DD1)

- Understand core concepts in the sociology of deviance (norms, deviance, social control, stigma, labeling).
- Comprehend major socio-criminological theories (functionalism, conflict theories, rational choice approaches).
- Identify key data sources on crime (official statistics, self-reporting, victimization surveys).

2. Applying Knowledge and Understanding (DD2)

- Apply theoretical frameworks to analyze real-world cases of deviance (e.g., youth gangs, drug prohibition policies).
- Use research methodologies (self-report questionnaires, administrative data analysis) to investigate deviant behaviors.
- Critically assess the effectiveness of social control policies in specific contexts.

3. Making Judgments (DD3)

- Compare competing theories (e.g., functionalism vs. critical criminology) to interpret deviant phenomena.
- Analyze the impact of social factors (inequality, urban environments) on the construction of deviance.
- Discuss ethical implications of criminalization/decriminalization policies.

4. Communication Skills (DD4)

- Present technical concepts (e.g., "institutional anomie," "dark figure of crime") clearly and in a structured way.
- Communicate empirical findings (e.g., self-report data) using appropriate terminology.

- Engage in critical classroom debates, defending theoretical perspectives.

5. Learning Skills (DD5)

- Explore specialized topics (e.g., organized crime, digital deviance) through selected readings.
- Connect socio-criminological theories to contemporary issues (e.g., urban security, restorative justice).
- Design simple empirical research on deviance, identifying data sources and methodologies.

Contents

- Introduction to the course and assessment methods;
- Conceptualization of deviance and social control;
- Major socio-criminological theories of deviance and social control:
 - o Nature and causes of deviance and social control,
 - o Crime as a form of deviance,
 - o Political implications of specific theoretical perspectives;
- Case studies, methods, research findings, and in-depth discussions.

Detailed program

This course delves into the fundamental concepts of norms, laws, conformity, deviance, marginalization, criminality, labeling, social control, repression, and the construction of consensus and order. It explores the primary socio-criminological theoretical approaches to understanding these phenomena while also considering biological, psychological, and economic interpretive frameworks. Through critical analysis of these theories, the course guides students towards understanding and interpreting the socio-political causes of deviance, crime, and social control.

Prerequisites

- No prior knowledge of sociology of deviance or criminology is required.

Teaching methods

The course consists of 56 in-person hours, structured to develop all competencies outlined in the Dublin Descriptors (DD):

1. Expository Teaching (ET) – 28 hours

- Format: Lectures with slides, theoretical deep dives.
- DD Addressed:
 - o DD1 (Knowledge): Transmission of core concepts (e.g., deviance theories, social control).
 - o DD2 (Application): Practical examples linking theory to real cases (e.g., legalization policies).

2. Interactive Teaching (IT) – 28 hours

- Activities:
 - o Self-reporting workshops (data collection/analysis on deviant behaviors).
 - o Guided discussions on case studies (e.g., labeling theory, youth gangs).

- o Case study analysis on course topics.
- DD Addressed:
 - o DD3 (Critical Thinking): Analysis of controversial cases.
 - o DD4 (Communication): Oral presentations and debates.
 - o DD5 (Autonomous Learning): Group work on assigned topics.

3. Independent Study

- Mandatory and optional readings.
- DD Addressed:
 - o DD1/DD5: Individual study with critical reflections.

Assessment methods

Evaluation Structure

Students, both attending and non-attending, will be assessed through a **final oral examination** consisting of three questions that will evaluate:

1. **Theoretical understanding:** In-depth knowledge of sociocriminological theories
2. **Practical application:** Ability to apply theories to real-world cases
3. **Critical analysis:** Independent reasoning and interdisciplinary connections

Assessed Competencies (per question)

1. **Theoretical knowledge** (e.g., functionalism, labeling theory) – **DdD1** – score: 0–31
2. **Application to real cases** (e.g., legalization policies) – **DdD2** – score: 0–31
3. **Critical analysis and interdisciplinary links** – **DdD3-DdD5** – score: 0–31

Exam Format and Structure

- **Final assessment:** Individual oral exam (no midterm tests)
- **Duration:** 20–30 minutes
- **Preparation material:**
 - Lecture content
 - Required readings
 - Case studies discussed during interactive activities

The oral exam was chosen because:

- **DdD1/DdD2:** It allows direct assessment of theoretical knowledge and applications
- **DdD3/DdD4:** It stimulates independent judgment through open-ended questions
- **DdD5:** It rewards synthesis and personal re-elaboration skills

Detailed Grading Criteria

1. **Conceptual mastery (30%)**
 - Terminological accuracy
 - Theoretical completeness
2. **Application skills (30%)**
 - Relevance of examples
 - Originality of analysis
3. **Communication skills (20%)**
 - Clarity of presentation

- Appropriate use of technical language
- 4. Critical thinking (20%)**
 - Connections between theories
 - Personal insights

Grading Scale

- **Final grade calculation:** Arithmetic average of the three scores
- **Score per question:** 0–31 points

18–23: Sufficient

- Knowledge: Acceptable theoretical foundation but with significant gaps
- Application: Limited ability to connect theories to real cases
- Presentation: Simple language, occasional technical inaccuracies
- Example: Recognizes key concepts but lacks precise analysis

24–26: Satisfactory

- Knowledge: Complete topic coverage without depth
- Application: Relevant but unoriginal examples
- Presentation: Correct technical language, with some hesitation
- Example: Applies theories to standard classroom cases

27–28: Good

- Knowledge: Solid mastery with synthesis skills
- Application: Original links between theory and practice
- Presentation: Fluent and logically structured
- Example: Offers personal interpretations of complex phenomena

29–30: Excellent

- Knowledge: In-depth, with cross-disciplinary references
- Application: Innovative and well-supported analyses
- Presentation: Excellent use of language and reasoning
- Example: Critically compares various authors on controversial topics

30 cum laude: Outstanding

- Knowledge: Comprehensive and supported by independent study
- Application: Original and well-grounded interpretative proposals
- Presentation: Mastery of technical-scientific language
- Example: Creatively develops innovative interpretive frameworks

Sample Exam Questions

1. "Explain Messner and Rosenfeld's institutional anomie theory by applying it to contemporary urban inequalities."
2. "How would you interpret, through Goffman's concept of stigma, the social management of youth deviance?"
3. "Compare the functionalist approach and conflict theory in analyzing control policies."

Study Support Tools

- **Self-assessment quizzes** (non-graded):
 - Provided at the end of each unit with immediate feedback
- **Exam simulations:**
 - Group sessions during the course
 - Guided in-class evaluations

Textbooks and Reading Materials

The expected bibliography includes:

- Tim Newburn. *Criminology*. London: Routledge. 2017. Only the chapters indicated on the professor's web page.
Or
- Franco Prina. *Devianza e criminalità. Concetti, metodi di ricerca, cause, politiche*. Rome: Carocci. 2019. Only the chapters indicated on the professor's web page AND
Supplementary readings will be specified in the full course program and made available via the e-Learning platform.

Materials are available at the University's library.

Sustainable Development Goals

AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY | REDUCED INEQUALITIES | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS
