



Code: SPS/12

Credits: 9

Matter: Sociology of deviance

Main language of instruction: Italian

Other language of instruction: English

Teaching Staff

Head instructor

Prof. Diana Olivieri - diana.olivieri@unicusano.it

Dr. Giuseppe Bruno - giuxbru93@gmail.com

Introduction

1. Objective of the course :

The course “Sociology of deviance” aims to analyze in detail the processes involved in the social construction of deviance in contemporary society, considering deviance as multidimensional and produced by the normative expectations of society itself.

An important premise is that by making behaviors predictable, rules and laws actually make social life possible. In particular, the sociological perspective looks at the social factors that lie outside the individual, to investigate the motivations that drive some people to violate rules and regulations.

By shifting attention to the outside world, sociological analysis helps us to interpret deviant acts as a result of a disturbance of the relationship between the individuals and their cultural and social context.

Since deviance is inevitable, objective of the course is to analyze the question of conformity and deviation, entering into the specifics of some controversial contemporary issues, such as juvenile suicide, sexual violence, cybercrime and school victimization, with particular attention to the phenomenon of bullying.

The final sections of the course are dedicated to the possible paths of intervention in deviant contexts through social work, as a necessary practical complement to the theoretical explanations of deviant behaviour.

Objectives

2. Course Structure:

The course is organized in nine subjects. The first two subjects are an introduction to deviance in sociology, and to the concept of anomie, the following subjects are



about functionalism and deviance (subject 3), the victimization process (subject 4), sexual and school victimization as examples of relevant social alarm (subject 5), positive deviance (subject 6), cyber-deviance (subject 7), Psychodynamic, systemic, interactionist, learning and conflict theories applied to social work (subjects 8 and 9).

To facilitate a focus on students' acquisition of critical thinking skills, the course offer two parallel activities to promote a critical analysis about how the media (newspapers, films, television, websites, etc.) portrays deviance in all its facets.

Competencies:

- To be able to understand how deviance is socially defined and produced.
- To be able to analyze the main differences sociology recognizes to the concepts of norm and deviance.
- To be able to describe how sociology of deviance was born.
- To be able to analyze the characteristics of deviant identity in the juvenile population.
- To be able to define the main features of deviant behavior.
- To be able to describe the principles of the anomie tradition in sociology.
- To be able to critically discuss Durkheim's groundbreaking study of suicide.
- To be able to analyze the different types of social suicide outlined by sociological studies.
- To be able to understand the process that leads to suicide.
- To be able to describe Merton's theory of social structure and anomie.
- To be able to distinguish between the concept of conformity and deviance.
- To know the most important sociological theories of deviance, making reference to the concepts of strain, control, social bond, differential association, labelling and conflict.
- To be able to explain what is meant by "white collar crimes".
- To be able to explain the concept of "victim precipitation".
- To be able to analyze the victimization process, in relation to the social context.
- To know the main theories of victimization.
- To be able to recognize the features, dynamics and risk factors of sexual victimization, through the male peer-support model.
- To be able to describe the process of offender's target/victim selection.
- To be able to describe the features, dynamics and risk factors of school victimization, with particular reference to the social construction of bullying.
- To be able to analyze the "career" of both bully and victim.
- To be able to define what is meant by "culture of secrecy" with reference to school victimization.



- To be able to classify the main categories of positive deviance.
- To be able to define the so-called “deviant heroism”.
- To be able to define cyber-deviance, in its particular forms of hacking and deviance in cyber-communities, such as the Social networks.
- To be able to describe the characteristics and risk factors of victimization in cyberspace.
- To be able to explain why cybercrimes pose a challenge to criminal justice.
- To be able to describe the main approaches to social work.
- To be able to describe the historical evolution of social work.
- To be able to define the main areas of application of social work in deviant contexts.
- To demonstrate a critical understanding of the phenomenon of deviance from a sociological perspective.
- To be able to search for, interpret and convey mass media information about social deviance.
- To be able to define the possible path that leads some young people to develop a deviant identity first, and then a deviant behavior.
- To be able to describe the relationship between particular family functionings and deviant outcomes.
- To be able to apply the construct of positive deviance at school.
- To be able to define the best approach for working with people who are experiencing trauma.
- To set up work on parent-child interaction for preventive and re-educational purposes in case of social deviance.
- To be able to describe what role school and teachers can have as causal or control agents for one or more students’ victimization.
- To be able to critically discuss the “building blocks” of positive deviance.
- To be able to critically assess institutional responses to deviance, through social work.
- To be able to discuss and critically evaluate the nature of social reactions to deviance.
- To be able to descriptively summarize information and relate apparently distant concepts.
- To acquire the ability to put knowledge into practice.
- To acquire skills for independent learning.
- To be able to create arguments which are conducive to critical and self-critical thinking.
- To be able to retrieve and manage information.

Syllabus

3. Programme of the course:

Subject 1. The sociological understanding of deviance.

Subject 2. The sociological tradition of anomie.

Subject 3. The functionalist perspective on deviance.

Subject 4. The victimization process.

Subject 5. Types of victimization: sexual harassment and school victimization.

Subject 6. Positive deviance.

Subject 7. Cyber-deviance.

Subject 8. Psychodynamic, systemic and interactionist theories applied to social work.

Subject 9. Learning and conflict theories applied to social work.

Evaluation system and criteria

The assessments of course is based on the following criteria:

I) Final exam:

This exam will be based exclusively on the material covered in the online material and assigned activities. Written exams will be 90 minutes in length.

All written examinations will include a combination of three multiple choice quizzes (where the student should tick the only right answer), and three essay-style questions.

The evaluation of the written essay-style questions will be determined by the degree of knowledge, and terminological rigor that is manifested in the response to the question and, not least, also assess the correction in the expression of legal language. It will also be considered in the final evaluation the participation to one or both the assigned activities.

Bibliography and resources

4. *Materials to consult:* there is no textbook for this course. All required readings will be posted on the course site.