

SOC 399 Women and Crime Course Syllabus: Spring 2014

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed to provide students with an in depth understanding of the relationship between females (women and girls) and crime, both as victims and offenders. The course examines basic theories of crime and delinquency, as well as how the criminal and juvenile justice systems function. Focusing on the females' specific pathways into crime and delinquency, students will examine contemporary prevention and intervention strategies designed to either prevent such behaviors from happening in the first place or from reoccurring once they have been exhibited. There are two required texts: Stacy Mallicoat's reader, Women and Crime, and Robert Kolker's Lost Girls.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, a successful student will be better prepared to intelligently contribute to the larger public conversation about the effectiveness of criminal and juvenile justice systems in the United States and the needs of women, as victims and as offenders. Assignments are designed to build and/or strengthen all of the following:

- **Analysis and Problem Solving Skills:** Defining problems, identifying causes, forming and defending independent conclusions, and formulating solutions.
- **Project Management and Organizational Skills:** Managing projects from beginning to end; identifying goals and tasks to achieve those goals with realistic timelines; and prioritizing tasks while maintaining flexibility.
- **Research and Information Management Skills:** Identifying and organizing reliable sources of information applicable to identified problems.
- **Self- Management and Work Habits:** Working under pressure; meeting deadlines; comprehending and organizing new material quickly; working effectively with limited supervision; and objectively evaluating the quality of your own work.
- **Written and Oral Communication Skills:** Preparing concise and logically well written material; organizing and communicating ideas effectively in oral presentations; using logical arguments to persuade others; and evaluating the work of others in a collegial and respectful manner.

ATTENANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

This course is structured in a format that blends lectures, films, in-class discussions, and student presentations. As a student in this class, you become a part of an intellectual community actively involved in exploring sensitive, sometimes controversial issues relating to women and crime. The expectation is that the classroom will be a safe, supportive environment in which ideas and differences can be shared in a respectful and positive way.

It is essential that everyone faithfully attend and come to class prepared. More than one unexcused absences (missing one week of class) will impact the attendance and participation portion of your final grade. For an absence to be considered "excused" an email must be received prior to the class with an explanation as to why you cannot attend (i.e., illness, family emergency, etc.) and proper documentation

must be received upon your return to class. **Attendance and participation will be worth 10 percent of your final grade.**

ASSIGNMENTS:

Topics and Reading Assignments (in Chronological Order): Students will be expected to read all of the following, keeping in pace with the class lectures and films. All relevant readings must be integrated into the assigned papers:

- Crime and the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Systems: Read pages 1-78; 279-342; and 407-460 in Mallicoat.
- Women and Victimization: Read pages 79-278 in Mallicoat.
- Girls and Women as Offenders: Read pages 343-406 in Mallicoat.
- The Incarceration and Reentry of Women Offenders: Read pages 461-512 in Mallicoat.

Papers (60 percent of the final grade): You will be expected to write four (4) papers (no more than 5 pages each, double-spaced, 12 point font), **each paper being worth 15 percent of your final grade.** Each paper will focus on the real life stories of the women in the book Lost Girls. The paper topics and due dates are listed below (all written work is due via email no later than 4 p.m. on the date it is due):

- **First Paper:** This paper will identify the common links shared by each of the five women in Lost Girls, integrating relevant course readings and lectures, and independent research on the demographics of female (girls and women) offenders. **Due January 30.**
- **Second Paper:** Each student will be assigned to focus on the case of one specific woman in Lost Girls: Maureen/Marie; Melissa/Chloe; Shannon/Angelina; Megan/Lexi; or Amber/Carolina. This paper will identify that woman's specific pathway into crime, and a theory that best explains her behavior, integrating relevant course readings and lectures, and independent research. **Due February 27.**
- **Third Paper:** Still focusing on the one woman you have been assigned, this paper will focus on how this woman's path into criminality during her early years may have been prevented. Each system (economic, educational, family, human services, etc.) that failed the woman needs to be identified and then a prevention strategy needs to be posited. In other words, what could have been done differently to prevent the woman's eventual pathway into crime? Relevant course readings, lectures, and independent research should be used to identify a specific prevention strategy or strategies. **Due April 3.**
- **Fourth Paper:** Again, still focusing on the one woman you have been assigned, this paper will focus on the fact that the woman eventually did become involved in the juvenile and/or criminal justice systems. At that point in the woman's pathway (the point or points at which she became involved with the justice system), an intervention strategy needs to be posited. In other words, what could those professionals involved in the juvenile and/or criminal justice systems who came in contact with the woman have done differently? What programs might they have referred her into that would have saved her life? Relevant course readings, lectures, and independent research should be used to identify a specific intervention strategies and programs. **Due April 3.**

Class Presentations (30 percent of the final grade): Beginning on April 10 and continuing through April 24, students will be scheduled to do two presentations, one on the prevention strategy or strategies identified and one on the intervention strategy or strategies identified for their assigned woman. Each student will be given 15 minutes for each presentation. All students will begin with the presentation on the prevention strategies, and then follow-up with the intervention strategies. **Each presentation will be worth 15 percent of the final grade.** During the last day of class, students will be asked to identify which of the strategies they think would have been most effective in saving the lives of the women.