Gangs and Gang Violence in America  
Sociology 3570-001

Instructor: Bruce Rigby Summer 2012

Class Meetings: M/W/F 8:35 –9:25 AM, BEHS 102

Office: BEHS 311

Office Hours: Before/After class or by appointment on campus

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1. Course Description

This course will examine the history and development of gang culture in America. From the beginnings of immigrant gangs in the 1800’s to present day gang activity, classified as “organized crime” by many in law enforcement, we will examine the development of modern gang activity and violence in contemporary society.

The course will explore the effects of race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, and family structure on the growth of gang affiliation and activity. Sociological theory will be used to gain an understanding of gangs and gang activity historically and in contemporary society.

The increased attention on gang activity by law enforcement and the legal system will be examined and the effectiveness of their efforts will be discussed.

The primary goals of the course are:

1. To understand the historical development of gangs in America.
2. To define gangs and gang membership.
3. To develop a sense of how gangs have evolved into large networks of organized crime in our society.
4. To evaluate and discuss theories explaining the social factors leading to gang membership and activity.
5. To examine the role of law enforcement, the legal system, and the prison system regarding gang membership and activity.
2. **Grading Procedures**

   The final course grade will be determined by your performance on 2 equally weighted objective/short answer type examinations. The examinations will cover materials from the text, lecture, assigned readings, guest speakers, and class discussions. These examinations will contribute 2/3 towards your final grade with the remaining 1/3 being determined by 5 brief reflection papers on topics assigned by your instructor.

   The exams will consist of both multiple choice and short answer type questions.

3. **Class Participation**

   Participation in class discussions is an important part of the learning experience. Attendance is necessary to participate in class discussions and the presentations by various gang professionals from the community. You will not be graded on class participation or attendance, but the format of this class is designed to encourage the sharing of ideas. These class discussions and presentations will enhance the learning experience for each of us throughout the semester.

4. **Tentative Schedule**

   Week 1 (May 14 - 18) Introduction to the course and Part 1: Understanding and Defining Gangs

   Week 2 (May 21 - 25) Part 2: Gender Issues in Gangs

   Week 3 (May 28 – June 1) Part 2 continued

   ***Memorial Day Holiday Monday, March 28th***

   Week 4 (June 4 - 8) Part 3: Race and Ethnicity in Gangs

   Week 5 (June 11 - 15) Part 4: Gangs in Prisons and Schools

   Week 6 (June 18 - 22) ***Review and Exam #1 on Friday, June 22nd***

   Week 7 (June 25 - 29) Part 5: Violence, Drugs, and Gangs

   Week 8 (July 2 - 6) Part 5 continued

   ***Independence Day Holiday, Wednesday, July 4th***

   Week 9 (July 9 - 13) Part 6: Gang Victimization

   Week 10 (July 16 – 20) Part 7: Gang Prevention and Intervention
Week 11 (July 23 - 27) Part 7 continued and course summary

***Pioneer Day Holiday, Tuesday, July 24th***

Week 12 (July 30 – August 3) ***Review and Exam #2, Date TBA***

5. Reflection Papers

The required papers for this course will be on assigned readings in the class and should explore the student’s reactions and feelings about that specific topic. Each paper should be 3-4 pages in length and be a thoughtful analysis of the topic. These reflection papers will be due approximately every 2 weeks.

6. Notice: University guidelines for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) require the following to be included in all syllabi: “The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services, and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.”

7. Student Code:
All students are expected to maintain professional behavior in the classroom setting, according to the student code, spelled out in the student handbook. Students have specific rights in the classroom as detailed in Article III of the code. The code also specifies proscribed conduct (Article XI) that involves cheating on tests, plagiarism, and/or collusion, as well as fraud, theft, etc. Students should read the code carefully and know they are responsible for the content.

According to Faculty Rules and Regulations, it is the responsibility of the faculty to enforce responsible classroom behaviors. Violations of the student code may result in a written warning, dismissal from the class, a failing grade, or dismissal from the university. Students have the right to appeal such action to the Student Behavioral Committee.

***THIS IS A PRELIMINARY SYLLABUS. SOME MINOR CHANGES MAY BE MADE PRIOR TO CLASSES BEGINNING ON May 14, 2012***