

**COLLEGE**  
**Commerce**

**GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL**  
**Department of Arts, Education &**

**COURSE OUTLINE**  
**SOCIOLOGY 2240**  
**Deviance and Conformity**  
**3(3-0-0)**

**INSTRUCTOR:** Alan Segal, PhD  
**OFFICE:** C410  
**OFFICE HOURS:** TBA  
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

A study of the politics and social ramifications of conformity, deviance, and their relation to social change. The course examines how and why some behaviour patterns are defined as deviant or conformist, and factors that influence this. Many types of behaviour will be discussed.

**COURSE PRE-REQUISITE:** SO1000

**TEXT:** Images of deviance and social control - Pfohl

**ASSIGNMENT:**

**One Essay or Project**

Marked on a 9-point stanine scale. Lateness penalty is 1 stanine, per calendar day. Choose whatever topic that interests you that is relevant to sociology. Critically analyze the topic, using your own and others' ideas. Do not write a descriptive report; think about the ideas you express. Try to explain why these ideas persuade you. The expected standard is 1500 words. You can work individually or in groups. Any project can be selected on any topic pertinent to the subject matter of the course; if you are uncertain

about your choice, please speak with me about it.

While your own thinking is the most important requirement, research is valuable and obligatory. Theories of deviance and conformity should be considered in your discussion. References must appear in the main text of your assignment, and in a **Works Cited** section at the end of the paper.

### **Three Journals**

One journal is due the first class of each month. Each journal is worth a maximum of 1 stanine. Each journal must be one page if typed, and two pages if written out. All journals must be double-spaced. Ignore the last stipulation if you hand in a disk. Anything pertaining to sociology, class discussions or lectures, class interaction, or course observations and suggestions, is a suitable topic. No research is necessary or expected. The purpose is to allow informal communication with the instructor.

### **Tabulation of Marks**

The total of all stanine marks available for assignments is 15. Your marks will be totaled out of 15 and a final stanine grade given according to the following table.

<b>Stanine Grade</b>	<b>Percentage Equivalent</b>
9	90-100
8	80-89
7	72-79
6	65-71
5	57-64
4	50-56
3	45-49
2	26-44
1	0-25

**NOTE:** No class averaging will be done.

**NOTE:** Because class discussion is a vital aspect of this course, everyone may (but not necessarily will) receive a bonus mark for the **QUALITY** of your class discussion, based on a combination of the frequency and quality of the participation. You will be eligible only if you display commitment to the course by reading and completing the required assignments. The bonus mark will have a range of 1-3. If you receive a

bonus mark, it will be added to your overall grade total prior to its conversion to a percentage.

### Discussion Sequence

1. General Introduction to course : Conceptual dilemmas, conundrums, and intrigues.

Class Discussion: General perceptions of deviance and conformity. What behaviours do students consider deviant? Do they react to these similarly to how they respond to conforming behaviour? Do students rank deviant behaviours in a hierarchy of ascending \_transgressiveness\_, and if so, based on what criteria? Do sociologists contemplate such a hierarchy?

2. **Pfohl: Chapter 1**

Class Discussion: Why refer to "images" of deviance? Is this a casual phrasing, or does Pfohl communicate something more substantial? What does the author mean by "deconstructive viewpoint on theory?"

3. **Pfohl: Chapters 2 - 4**

Overview of theoretical perspectives of deviance and conformity, and of the ideas of Ian Hacking: constructing social categories of people.

Class Discussion: Do you think you embody categories of people? If so, what categories do you identify?

Prepare to identify the diverse categories of thought, intent, and conceptualization of the points made in these chapters. What practises do you perceive in society that could be placed in the various theoretical sets mentioned by Pfohl? What are hedonism and pathology? Why cite them when writing about deviance?

Does any theory strike you as being more explanatory than the others? What accounts for this - better reasoned, more encompassing, more politically astute, etc.?

4. Class Discussion: Problems of deviance and conformity. What counts as a social problem? Are conformity and deviance considered problematic? If so, are they equally problematic? What discourses of control and

deviance, and what vocabularies of categorization, control, and public judgment, can you identify?

5. **Pfohl: Chapters 5 & 6**

Class Discussion: In these chapters, how are social change, social disorganization, functionalism, and deviance linked conceptually? Are there points at which the logic of the linkages weakens or becomes untenable? Each of social change and disorganization, functionalism and deviance, cover a wide terrain. Do the conceptual connections change in some way depending on what we contemplate as we explore the terrain?

6. **Pfohl: Chapter 7**

Class Discussion: What is anomie? Explain deviance through the lens of Durkheim, Merton, Parsons, Cloward, Cohen, and Dubin.

7. **Pfohl: Chapter 8**

Class Discussion: How do we learn to be deviant? What particular meaning[s] does 'learning' have in this consideration? How does a person acquire deviance? Is deviance an identity, or a matter more of identification than of developing or adhering to, an identity? Is this question relevant?

8. **Pfohl: Chapter 9**

Class Discussion: Elements of social control: State and social institutions; social practices. Resistance and Response: Deviants contest social definitions. Agencies of assistance. What is meant by the social construction of deviance?

9. **Pfohl: Chapters 10 & 11**

Why entitle these final chapters "critical perspectives?" What is power? Of what sociological and conceptual value are the author's references

to knowledge, pluralism, authority, social structure, hegemony, agency, heterosexism, anarchism, feminism, and racism? How does each fit into a concluding analysis of conformity and deviance?