



Sociology 2267a (570)
Youth in Conflict with the Law
Fall/ Winter 2025-2026

Instructor: Joseph Michalski

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Course Information

Calendar Description:

This course will review sociological perspectives on youth criminal offending and on the legal and moral regulation of youth. Canadian social policies with respect to the criminal behaviour of young persons will also be examined.

Prerequisite(s): 1.0 from Sociology courses at the 1000 level.

Extra Information: 3 lecture hours.

Course Weight: 0.50

Breadth: Category A

Subject Code: SOCIOLOG

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Youth in Conflict with the Law
Sociology 2267A, Section 570 (Fall 2025)
King's University College at Western University
Department of Sociology

ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Instructor: Dr. Joseph H. Michalski (jmichal2@uwo.ca)

Office Hours: Mondays (10:30-11:30am), Tuesdays (10:30am-11:30am), Wednesdays (5:30-6:30pm)

***Prerequisites:** 1.0 from Sociology courses at the 1000 level.

***Anti-Requisites:** None

***Please note:** Students must ensure that their course selections are appropriate and accurately recorded, that all course prerequisites have been successfully completed, and that they are aware of any anti-requisite course(s) that they have taken. Consult an academic counselor to clarify if needed. If students do not have the prerequisites for a course (and no written special permission from the Dean to enroll in the course), then the University reserves the right to cancel their registration in the course. This decision may not be appealed. Normal financial and academic penalties will apply to a student who is dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course introduces students to the sociological study of youths in conflict with the law by evaluating dominant theories, methodological approaches, and research on the subject. Most of the materials deal with the etiology, patterns, and sociological explanations of youth in conflict with the law. While alternative perspectives will be considered, we will focus mainly on the dynamic environments and social contexts associated with families (especially parenting issues and family risks), schooling, peer groups, “gangs,” and communities. Students will further consider special groups of at-risk youth, as well as the influence of gender, families, schools, peers, media and the government in creating, maintaining, and controlling deviance among youth by examining current research. Finally, we will consider the current Canadian juvenile justice system and various alternative responses to at-risk and offending youth.

Key Course Learning Objectives. By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Assess critically the demographic correlates and extent of youth crime in Canada
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of multiple methods currently used to identify youth in conflict with the law and to measure youth crime more generally
- Identify, apply, and evaluate the various theories used to explain youth offending behavior
- Understand the role of the social contexts and cultural circumstances that shape young people’s life course trajectories, including various social influences such as families, schools, and peers
- Interrogate the role of the media in perpetuating negative images of youth
- Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of Canada’s youth justice system in responding to and perhaps at times perpetuating youth offending behaviors

REQUIRED READINGS

The main text for the lectures and discussions will be:

Gorkoff, Kelly, Daniel Antonowicz, and John Winterdyk (Editors). 2024. *Youth Justice: A Canadian Overview*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press (4th edition). **Cost: \$112.20**

Students can purchase a hard copy from the UWO Book Store to have shipped, or the e-book version, which the bookstore has available as well.

In addition to the main text, selected articles will be posted on Brightspace as “supplemental readings” for certain lectures. Students must know their unique UWO username and password. Anyone who has forgotten the information should consult the Registrar’s office immediately (do not ask the instructor, as only the Registrar or IT specialists at the university have the information).

COURSE EVALUATION

Mini-Assignments:	30% (3 x 10% each)
Midterm Exam:	25%
Final Exam:	35%
Attendance/Participation:	10%

Mini-Assignments (30%): There will be 3 “mini-assignments” on designated topics that will consist of students evaluating course information and reflecting on the focal issue under discussion. These will be two-page assignments, each worth 10% of one’s final mark. Additional details will be provided prior to each assignment. These will be due on October 7, November 18, and December 9, respectively.

Midterm Exam (25%): There will be an hourly midterm covering the lectures and reading materials from the first five weeks of class. The in-class, one-hour midterm exam will be on October 21.

Final Exam (35%): The final exam will cover the readings and lecture materials from the second half of the course, administered during the final exam period on the date assigned by the Registrar. The final exam will include multiple-choice questions, as well as 4-5 short-answer questions.

Attendance/Participation (10%): Students are expected to attend class regularly, participate, ask questions, engage in discussion, and contribute in positive ways. Students will sign a weekly attendance form.

GRADING ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments will be marked using the standard policies of King’s University College’s Department of Sociology. Assignments will be read “blindly,” i.e., without knowing the identity of the author. Please consult the King’s University College Academic Programs website for additional details. If a student must miss an assignment due to a medical emergency, please review the “Course Outline Policies” below to make alternative arrangements if necessary.

SESSION OUTLINE

The following symbols are used to refer to readings cited under the Required Readings section below:

G: Selected chapters/pages from the Gorkoff et al. text

S#: Supplemental online readings (posted on Brightspace)

2025 SESSION OUTLINE: DATES, TOPICS, AND REQUIRED READINGS

Date	Topic	Required Readings
Sep 9	Course Organization and Administrative Issues Historical Overview	G: Chapter 1
Sep 16	Measuring Youth Crime: Official Statistics and Alternative Methods	G: Chapter 2
Sep 23	Earliest Life Experiences, Parenting, Attachment: Vulnerability and “High Risk” Contexts	S#1, S#2
Sep 30	National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (no classes)	(no new readings)
Oct 7	Anomie and Control Theories Mini-Assignment #1 Due	G: Ch. 5 (pp. 110-119) S#3, S#4
Oct 14	Differential Coercion Theory, Life Course Perspective, and Labelling Theory	G: Ch. 5 (pp. 122-138) S#5, S#6
Oct 21	Mid-Term Hourly Exam (8:30-9:30am) Critical Criminology and Youth Justice: Power and Control Dynamics	G: Chapter 6 S#7
Oct 28	Social Media Influences on Youth Behaviour <i>and</i> Social Construction of Moral Panics	G: Chapter 8 S#8, S#9
Nov 4	Fall Reading Week (no classes)	(no new readings)
Nov 11	Young Women, Sexual Exploitation, and Feminist Critiques: A Gendered Analysis of Youth Offending	G: Chapters 9 <i>and</i> 14 S#10
Nov 18	Indigenous and Racialized Youth Crime: The Canadian Context...and Beyond Mini-Assignment #2 Due	G: Chapters 11 <i>and</i> 12
Nov 25	I. Adolescence, Delinquency, and Gang Involvement II. Toxic Environments and Cumulative Disadvantages	S#11, S#12, S#13
Dec 2	Youth Substance Use and Abuse... (and) Street-Involved Youth	G: Chapters 10 <i>and</i> 13
Dec 9	Criminal Justice Responses to Youth Offenders: The YCJA and the “Sociology of Law” Mini-Assignment #3 Due	G: Chapters 3 <i>and</i> 4
Dec 11-22	Final Exam Period	TBA

KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

GENERAL COURSE POLICIES

2025-2026

1. Academic Accommodations, Consideration for Absences

Academic Accommodation (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate), they should follow the procedures below.

In some cases, where instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs.

Requests for academic consideration should be directed to the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration. Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration. For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate is available at https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/courses_enrollment/exams_and_tests/SMC-Feb-2025.pdf.

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per course.

Instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline for each course.

For further information, please see:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

Absences from Final Examinations

If you miss the Final Exam, contact the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under [Special Examinations](#)).

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

2. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King’s University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services/>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King’s University College: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-support-services/personal-counselling/>

Good2talk is a good online and phone 24/7 resource for students and is available in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help:

https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/

Academic Support Services at King’s University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/>

GBSV Support:

King’s is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

You can reach someone supports at Kings by emailing Care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a social worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western’s Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by [email](#) or by calling 519-661-3568.

Further supports can be found on this website: <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

See also https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html

University Students' Council offers many valuable support services for students, including the health insurance plan: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

3. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-affairs/code-of-student-conduct1/>

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

4. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Check with your instructor on what tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in the course. Because a tool is permitted in one course, that does not mean it is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see <https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/Originality Reports - TurnItIn.html>.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

5. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

6. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

7. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.