

Lassen Community College Course Outline

AJ 11-Youth Gangs in America

3.0 Units

I. Catalog Description

This course explores youth gang activity in the United States. Focusing primarily on contemporary street gangs. The social conditions that lead to their emergence are considered, as well as perceptions of the gang problem. Also considered are racial and ethnic differences between gangs and potential solutions to the challenges that youth gangs present. This course has been approved for correspondence, hybrid and online delivery.

Prerequisites: None

Recommended Preparation:

Successful completion of ENGL 105 or equivalent multiple measures placement.

Transfer Status: CSU/UC

51 hours lecture

Scheduled: Fall (odd)

II. Coding Information

Repeatability: Not repeatable, Take 1 time

Grading Option: Graded only

Credit Type: Credit - Degree Applicable

TOP Code: 210500

III. Course Objectives

A. Course Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Summarize the history and growth of youth gangs. Identify specific youth gangs their nature and origin, by characteristics, subculture, activities and structure.
2. Explain in detail the various theories and deterrence.
3. Provide detailed plans of community and national intervention strategies.

B. Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course the student will be able to:

1. Describe and discuss the history and various reasons for the creation of youth gangs in America.
2. Analyze and explain reasons for criminal activity.
3. Compare and contrast various different types of youth gangs.
4. Distinguish and list different types of youth gang activity.
5. Recognize and evaluate types of active youth gangs in America.
6. Understand and describe the various sociological theories related to gangs and why they exist.
7. Analyze and discuss the capitalist economic system, development of the underclass and how these changes relate to the growth of gangs in America.
8. Describe and discuss the origin of adult street gangs, prison gangs, and biker gangs.

9. Analyze and discuss the legal responses to the gang problem and its relationship to the community and national intervention strategies.
10. Examine and identify how the criminal justice system controls and deals with criminal youth gangs.

IV. Course Content

A. Introduction

1. Brief history of gangs
2. The growth of gangs

B. What is a Gang

1. How many Gangs and Gang members are there?
2. Gang Migration

C. What do Gangs and Gang members look like?

1. An Overview of Gang Structures
2. Types of Gangs
3. Types of Gang Structures
4. National-Level Gangs
 - a. Hybrid Gangs

D. The Gang Subculture

1. The Nature and Origins of and Socialization into the Gang Subculture
2. Joining a Gang
 - a. Reasons for deciding to join a gang
 - b. Gang Recruitment
 - c. Who does not join a Gang?

E. Criminal Activities of Gangs

1. How much crime do Gang Members commit?
2. Gang Violence
3. Gangs and Drugs
 - a. Drug dealing among Gang Members
4. Limitations of Skolnick's Study and Some Counter Evidence
 - a. Gangs as Entrepreneurs: Organized drug dealing
 - b. Crack Dealing as a Business: The Black Gangster Disciples
 - c. Chicago Drug Gang: The Diamonds

F. Girls and Gangs

1. Trends in Girl Gang Membership
2. Criminal Activities of Girls in Gangs
 - a. Types of female Gangs
3. Moving Beyond the Stereotypes: The Social Context of Girl Gangs
 - a. Class and race
 - b. Drug use
 - c. Reasons for joining the Gang
 - d. Relationship with males and male gangs
 - e. Family-related issues
 - f. School and work

G. Adult Gangs

1. Introduction to Adult Gangs
2. Prison Gangs
 - a. The basics of prison gangs
 - b. Prison gangs and misconduct

- c. Major prison gangs
- d. Classifying and managing prison gangs
- 3. Biker Gangs
 - a. The one per centers and the other 99 percent. A comparison
 - b. The criminality and Structure of OMGs
 - c. Prominent Motorcycle Gangs

H. Why are There Gangs?

- 1. The theory of Deterrence
- 2. Social Theory
 - a. Social Disorganization/Social Ecology Theory
 - b. Strain/Anomie Theory
 - c. Cultural Deviance Theories
 - d. Control Theory
 - e. Social Learning Theory
 - f. Rational Choice Theory
 - g. The Labeling Perspective
 - h. Critical/Marxist Perspectives

I. Gangs in Context: Inequality in American Society

- 1. The Capitalist Economic System
 - a. Class Distinctions
 - b. Changes in the U.S. Economy
- 2. The Development of the Underclass
 - a. Poverty and family structure
- 3. How these Changes Relate to the Growth in Gangs

J. Legal Responses to the Gang to Problem

- 1. Legal Response to youth Gangs
 - a. Legislatures
 - b. Law Enforcement
 - c. The Courts

K. Community and National Intervention Strategies

- 1. Gangs are not just a Criminal Justice Problem
- 2. Types of Intervention Strategies
 - a. Spergel and Curry's Typology of Intervention
 - b. The perceived effectiveness of these strategies
 - c. Other intervention typologies
- 3. A Risk-Focused Approach
 - a. The Social Development Strategy
 - b. Evaluations
 - c. National Guard Youth Challenge Program
- 4. Components of Successful Programs
 - a. Some community based interventions
 - b. Gang resistance, education and training
 - c. L.A. Bridges
 - d. Homeboys Industries
 - e. Evidenced Based Practices
- 5. Board based National Strategies

V. Assignments

A. Appropriate Readings

Required reading assignments will be from the textbook on a weekly basis. In addition, students will be required to utilize media articles from newspapers, magazines, websites, and the internet to answer critical essay questions.

Writing Assignments

Students will be required to complete weekly exams, essay composition, a term paper and final exam.

B. Expected Outside Assignments

Students will be required to complete two hours of outside-of-class homework for each hour of lecture.

C. Specific Assignments that Demonstrate Critical Thinking

This course is expected to cause students to evaluate why gangs have become a major problem in the U.S. Sociological theories will critique factual information as to the courses of gang behavior. Common but misleading ways of thinking about gangs are identified, consequences to self, family and community are assessed and actions taken or proposed to correct or resolve the problems are evaluated for adequacy and/or effectiveness

VI. Methods of Evaluation

Traditional Classroom Delivery

1. Objective multiple choice
2. Examinations using mixed format
3. Term Paper
4. Final Exam
5. Critiques and Summary, Instructor and Student

Correspondence Delivery

Same as face to face with the exception of the desired use of proctored exams and exclusion of participation in classroom activities. Students will be expected to complete assignments and activities equivalent to in-class assignments and Activities. Written correspondence and a minimum of six opportunities for feedback will be utilized to maintain effective communication between instructor and student.

Online Delivery

A variety of methods will be used, such as: research papers, asynchronous and synchronous discussions (chat/forum), online quizzes and exams, postings to online website, and email communication.

Hybrid Delivery

All quizzes and exams will be administered during the in person class time. Students will be expected to complete online assignments and activities equivalent to in class assignments and activities for the online portion of the course. Electronic communication, both synchronous and asynchronous will be evaluated for participation and to maintain effective communication between instructor and students.

VII. Methods of Delivery

Check those delivery methods for which, this course has been separately approved by the Curriculum/Academic Standards Committee.

Traditional Classroom Delivery Correspondence Delivery

Hybrid Delivery Online Delivery

Correspondence Delivery

Same as face-to-face with the exception of the desired use of proctored exams and exclusion of participation in classroom activities. Students will be expected to complete assignments and activities equivalent to in-class assignments and activities. Written correspondence and a minimum of six opportunities for feedback will be utilized to maintain effective communication between instructor and student.

Online Delivery

Online written lectures. Participation in forum-based discussions. Online exercises/assignments contained on website. Discussion papers, email communications, postings to forums, and web-links will comprise the method of instruction.

VIII. Representative Texts and Supplies

Howell, James C., and Griffiths, Elizabeth. *Gangs in America's Communities*, 3rd edition, 2019, Sage Publishing, ISBN# 9781544300221

IX. Discipline/s Assignment

Administration of Justice

X. Course Status

Current Status: New

Original Approval Date: 10/07/2014

Revised By: Thomas Downing

Board Approval Date: 11/12/2014

Chancellor's Office Approval Date: 11/20/2014

Curriculum/Academic Standards Committee Revision Date: 02/19/2019

Reviewed for IPR, no changes recommended: 09/21/2021