

**University of Toronto**  
**SOC499H1S: New Topics in Sociology – “Deviant” Careers**  
**Wednesday 2 p.m. – 4 p.m.**  
**Room FE 41 (basement at the Department of Sociology, 725 Spadina Avenue)**

**Instructor Information**

Instructor: Lawrence Williams  
Office location: Room 335 (725 Spadina Avenue, Department of Sociology)  
Email address: Lawrence.Williams@mail.utoronto.ca  
Office hours: Wednesday, 12:30 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.  
Blackboard/Course web site: Portal

**Course Description**

Why are some careers viewed as legitimate while others are not? Why do individuals opt into work which may be seen as illegitimate by many? How do these individuals think about their work and what it means for their broader identities and lives? To address these questions, this course examines a series of occupations which vary from being non-normative to widely stigmatized. From professional gamblers to more traditional “career criminals” such as persistent thieves, students will learn how different career paths become feasible for individuals due to a complex intersection of factors such as socio-economic status, race, gender, and ongoing life experiences.

Prerequisites: 1.0 SOC FCE at the 300+ level. Students without this prerequisite will be removed at any time they are discovered.

**Learning Outcomes**

After taking this course, students will be able to:

- (1) Critically analyze what makes a career “deviant” as well as why individuals enter into work of this kind.
- (2) Compare, contrast, and evaluate the distinctions and similarities between legal and illegal careers.
- (3) Understand the role that social stratification and ongoing personal experiences play in shaping individuals’ occupational choices.
- (4) Examine the impact of individuals’ career identities in shaping both their work and broader life choices
- (5) Critically assess and interpret ethnographic writing

**Textbooks and Other Materials**

Four ethnographies are required for this course. All four are available at the U of T Bookstore. The remainder of the readings will be posted on Blackboard.

Ditton, Jason. 1977. *Part-Time Crime: An Ethnography of Fiddling and Pilferage*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mullaney, Jamie L., and Janet Hinson Shope. 2012. *Paid to Party: Working Time and Emotion in Direct Home Sales*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Ouellet, Lawrence J. 1994. *Pedal to the Metal: The Work Lives of Truckers*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Shover, Neal. 1996. *Great Pretenders: Pursuits and Careers of Persistent Thieves*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

### **Class Format and Requirements**

This is an intensive reading and discussion-based course. All readings for the week are expected to have been read before class, and students should come prepared with questions to pose to the class.

***Please note that Weeks 2 and 3 (January 17 and January 24) will be held in room 240, Department of Sociology (725 Spadina) instead of in FE 41.***

### **Evaluation**

Participation.....	10%
Presentation.....	20%
Essay 1 (due: February 7).....	15%
Midterm (February 28).....	25%
Essay 2 (due: March 28).....	<u>30%</u>
	100%

#### **Participation: Ongoing – 10% of Final Grade**

As this is a small seminar, active participation is expected on a weekly basis. This requires that you read materials closely before each class and come prepared with discussion points: questions and/or ideas about the readings. Doing so will enrich the seminar experience by enabling students to learn from one another's perspectives.

#### **Presentation: 20% of Final Grade**

Each student must sign up to present a portion of the readings and lead discussion during one of the classes, as arranged with the instructor during the first week of the term. On the arranged day, you are expected to give a presentation about the readings you have selected. In this presentation, be sure to summarize the main points of the readings, define what you consider to be the key concepts used by the author(s), and provide at least 2 questions for the class to discuss.

#### **Essay 1: Career Identity and Crisis – Due Wednesday, February 7 at 2:00 p.m. – 15% of Final Grade**

The second week of the course was designed to introduce you to the role that identity plays in shaping how individuals think about their careers. In this assignment, I want you think about how individuals' actual career experiences impact this thought process. To do so, you must apply the concepts "provisional selves" and "frame breaks" to an individual's career experiences. In particular, you should utilize these concepts to explain how this individual has dealt with *unmet expectations* that they had about their career. This individual may be any of the following:

- a character presented in *The Great Pretenders*
- a character presented in a work of fiction, film, or other public document
- you
- someone you know
- a famous historical figure

You will be evaluated based on how well you apply these concepts to explain the career actions, contemplations, reflections, and, depending on the case chosen, future-oriented career aspirations and career planning of the individual in question.

Formatting:

-Essays must be between 1250 and 1500 words (12-point font, Times New Roman, double spaced).

-A bibliography must be provided. Please use ASA style formatting.

Please submit a hardcopy at the beginning of class on February 7 and upload your paper to Turnitin.com by Wednesday, February 7 at 2:00 p.m.

\*More details will be provided during class discussions.

### Essay 2: Career Comparison – Due Wednesday, March 28 at 2:00 p.m. – 30% of Final Grade

In this assignment, I want you to choose a career that you believe deviates from normative expectations about work and careers, but that was not focused on in the course. I then want you to develop an argument about why this career is seen as deviant, and why individuals enter into it. To further demonstrate your comprehension of your chosen career, you must compare your choice with one of the deviant careers covered in class. In this comparison, you are expected to delineate a selection of factors which contribute to both the selection and maintenance of employment in these careers.

Just as for the first assignment, you should utilize case histories of specific individuals to demonstrate key differences between these careers. Doing so will help you signal the importance of individuals' senses of career identity in shaping career choices.

You should consider some of the following questions to develop your argument:

Who typically works in the careers I have chosen to compare?

What kinds of motivations do these individuals have? Are they similar or different? Are they shaped by early life experiences and/or ones which tend to occur later in life?

Are the two careers equally "deviant?" If not, why not?

What makes my chosen career particularly attractive to individuals?

Formatting:

-Essays must be between 2000 and 2500 words (12-point font, Times New Roman, double spaced).

-A bibliography must be provided. Please use ASA style formatting.

Please submit a hardcopy at the beginning of class on April 4 and upload your paper to Turnitin.com Wednesday, April 4 at 2:00 p.m.

\*More details will be provided during class discussions and posted on Blackboard.

### Midterm – February 28 – 25% of Final Grade

This test will cover class materials and readings from Week 1 to Week 6. It will consist of short answer and essay questions.

## **Procedures and Rules**

### **Attendance**

Attendance is mandatory and students are responsible for all material presented in class. Students who do not attend class are responsible for obtaining information about any announcements that may have been made in class. They are also responsible for obtaining any desired notes on class discussions and/or lectures from other students in the class.

Proper documentation from a University of Toronto Student Medical Certificate or college registrar is required to justify an absence.

### **Deadlines**

Late work will not be accepted unless submitted with proper documentation from your physician and a University of Toronto Student Medical Certificate, or from your college registrar. See below for details.

### **Documentation from your Physician or College Registrar**

If you miss a test or a paper deadline, do not contact the instructor unless you have followed the steps described here.

In case of illness, you must supply a duly completed Verification of Student Illness, or Injury form (available at [www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca](http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca)). A doctor's note is not acceptable. The form must be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to the instructor,

and submitted with your work at class or during office hours, within seven days of the missed assignment.

If a personal or family crisis prevents you from meeting a deadline, you must get a letter from your college registrar (it is a good idea anyway to advise your college registrar if a crisis is interfering with your studies). The letter must be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to the instructor, and submitted with your work at class or during office hours.

### **Make-Up Tests**

Students who miss the test for a valid reason and wish to take a make-up test must give the instructor a written request **within three days** of the missed test for special consideration which explains why the test was missed, accompanied by proper documentation from a physician or college registrar (see above). A student who misses a test and the subsequent make-up test for a valid reason will not have a third chance to take the test, and the mark assigned for the test will be a zero.

### **Late Assignments**

To request accommodation for a **late assignment** you must present your case to the instructor via email.

- In order not to be considered late, assignments must be submitted by the due date listed on the syllabus in-class as a hardcopy and on Turnitin.com. **You are expected to keep a back-up, hard copy of your assignment in case it is lost.**
- For lateness *beyond your control*, the documentation must indicate that you were unable to engage in school work *on the due date of the assignment* for a ONE day extension.
  - For a longer extension, you must prove that you were unable to engage in school work for a longer period or provide documentation that you encountered an exceptional, unforeseen circumstance. Note that all term work must be submitted *on or before the last day of classes*. Students who for reasons beyond their control wish to seek an extension of this deadline must obtain approval from their instructor for an extension of the deadline. This extension may be for no longer than the end of the final examination period. If additional time beyond this period is required, students must petition through the Office of the Registrar for a further extension of the deadline
- Late assignments for reasons that are *within your control* will be penalized 5% marks per day. The penalty will run from the day the assignment was due until the day it is submitted in the 400-level sociology assignment dropbox and Turnitin.com. The penalty period does include weekends and holidays. Assignments that are more than 7 days late will not be accepted.

### **Electronic Communication and Electronic Learning Technology**

Email communication is rapid, convenient, and efficient—and you are encouraged to use it to enhance your learning and experience in the course. With that said, it is

essential that you follow a few rules. **Note: Emails that do not follow these guidelines will not receive a response.**

- Assignments will not be accepted via email. See above for how to submit them.
- All course communication should be conducted through Blackboard or your utoronto account.
- All emails must include the course code (e.g., SOC 499) in the subject line.
- All emails should be signed with the student's full name and student number.
- Emails from students will generally be answered within 72 hours [or 3 business days] of receipt.
- Treat emails as you would any other professional communication. Proofread. Use appropriate language.
- Emails that ask questions that are answered in the course syllabus or website (e.g., "how much is assignment X worth") will not receive a response.

### **Classroom Etiquette**

Students are expected to arrive at class on time. Laptop usage is allowed in class, they should be used for notes only. Other uses (e.g., emailing, web surfing) will result in the student being required to turn off the laptop.

- Videotaping and recording class discussions is strictly forbidden without written permission from the instructor.

### **Essay Submission**

Papers are to be submitted at the beginning of the class on the due date in **two** forms: a hardcopy given to the instructor, and an electronic copy submitted on Turnitin.com.

“ Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to **Turnitin.com** for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the **Turnitin.com** reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. The terms that apply to the University's use of the **Turnitin.com** service are described on the **Turnitin.com** web site.”

Assignments not submitted through *Turnitin* will receive a grade of zero (0 %) **unless a student instead provides, along with their essay**, sufficient secondary material (e.g., reading notes, outlines of the paper, rough drafts of the final draft, etc.) to establish that the paper they submit is truly their own. The alternative (not submitting via *Turnitin*) is in place because, strictly speaking, using *Turnitin* is voluntary for students at the University of Toronto.

### **Plagiarism**

Cheating and misrepresentation will not be tolerated. Students who commit an academic offence face serious penalties. Avoid plagiarism by citing properly: practices acceptable in high school may prove unacceptable in university. Know where you stand by reading the “Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters” in the Calendar of the Faculty of Arts and Science.

### **Accessibility Needs**

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: [disability.services@utoronto.ca](mailto:disability.services@utoronto.ca) or <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>.

### **Equity & Diversity**

The University of Toronto is committed to equity and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect. As a course instructor, I will neither condone nor tolerate behaviour that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of any individual in this course and wish to be alerted to any attempt to create an intimidating or hostile environment. It is our collective responsibility to create a space that is inclusive and welcomes discussion. Discrimination, harassment and hate speech will not be tolerated.

### **Course Schedule**

#### **Jan 10. Week 1 – Introduction**

No readings

#### **Jan. 17, Week 2 – Careers, Identities, and Deviant Decisions**

##### ***Meeting in room 240, Department of Sociology***

Ibarra, Herminia. 1999. "Provisional Selves: Experimenting with Image and Identity in Professional Adaptation." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 44:764-791.

Katz, Jack. "Chapter 9: Seductions and Repulsions of Crime." *In Seductions of Crime: Moral and Sensual Attractions in Doing Evil*. New York: Basic Books.

Levi, Ken. 1981. "Becoming a Hit Man: Neutralization in a Very Deviant Career." *Urban Life* 10(1):47-63.

#### **Part I: Illegal Careers and "Part-Time Crime"**

#### **Jan. 24, Week 3 – Persistent Thieves I**

##### ***Meeting in room 240, Department of Sociology***

Shover, Neal. 1996. *Great Pretenders: Pursuits and Careers of Persistent Thieves*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press. Preface to Chapter 4 (pg. xi – 118).

#### **Jan. 31, Week 4 – Persistent Thieves II**

Shover, Neal. 1996. *Great Pretenders: Pursuits and Careers of Persistent Thieves*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press. Chapter 5 to Chapter 7 (pg. 119 – 187).

#### **Feb. 7, Week 5 – Fiddlers and Pilferers I**

## **ESSAY 1 DUE**

Ditton, Jason. 1977. *Part-Time Crime: An Ethnography of Fiddling and Pilferage*. London: Macmillan. Preface to Chapter 4 (pg. vii – 115).

### **Feb. 14, Week 6 – Fiddlers and Pilferers II**

Ditton, Jason. 1977. *Part-Time Crime: An Ethnography of Fiddling and Pilferage*. London: Macmillan. Chapter 5 to Conclusion (pg. 116-184).

### **Feb. 21 NO CLASS – READING WEEK**

### **Feb. 28, Week 7 – MIDTERM**

## **Part II: Non-Normative Careers**

### **March 7, Week 8– Narrating Our Lives: Professional Gambling, eSports, “Dirty Work,” and Identity**

BBC. 2016. The Supergamers. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qyPLVMPBUE4>

Ashforth, Blake E., and Glen E. Kreiner. 1999. “How Can You Do It?': Dirty Work and the Challenge of Constructing a Positive Identity.” *The Academy of Management Review* 24(3): 413-434.

Hayano, David M. 1984. “The Professional Gambler: Fame, Fortune, and Failure.” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 474: 157-167.

Ibarra, Herminia and Roxana Barbulescu. 2010. “Identity as Narrative: Prevalence, Effectiveness, and Consequences of Narrative Identity Work in Macro Work Role Transitions.” *The Academy of Management Review* 35(1): 135-154.

### **March 14, Week 9 – Truckers I**

Ouellet, Lawrence J. 1994. *Pedal to the Metal: The Work Lives of Truckers*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. Chapter 1 to Chapter 5 (pg. 1-128)

### **March 21, Week 10 – Truckers II**

Ouellet, Lawrence J. 1994. *Pedal to the Metal: The Work Lives of Truckers*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. Chapter 6 to Chapter 9 (pg. 129 – 224).

### **March 28, Week 11 – Direct Home Sales I** **ESSAY 2 DUE**



Mullaney, Jamie L., and Janet Hinson Shope. 2012. *Paid to Party: Working Time and Emotion in Direct Home Sales*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. Introduction to Chapter 3 (pg. 1 – 87).

**April 4, Week 12 – Direct Home Sales II**

Mullaney, Jamie L., and Janet Hinson Shope. 2012. *Paid to Party: Working Time and Emotion in Direct Home Sales*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. Chapter 4 to Conclusion (pg. 88 – 155).