**SC2212: SOCIOLOGY OF DEVIANCE  
Tutorial Questions  
Academic Year 2023-24 Semester 2**

**Department of Sociology and Anthropology**

**Lecturer: Assoc Prof Narayanan Ganapathy**   
**Tel: 65163826**   
**Office: AS1 04-22**  
**E-mail:** [**socng@nus.edu.sg**](mailto:socng@nus.edu.sg)

**Teaching Assistant:**  
**Rachyl Lim (**[**rachyl@nus.edu.sg**](mailto:rachyl@nus.edu.sg)**)**

**Tutorial 1 (Week 3 & 4): Introduction**

Part 1 – Housekeeping matters: Tutorial goals, scheduling, ground rules, form groups of 3-4 for the CA1 research assignment

Part 2 – What is deviance and what’s so sociological about it? This part of the tutorial aims to encourage you to think about deviance as a field of study – and how to go about studying it: What constitutes deviance? What is “normal”? How and why do we judge something as deviant? How do we study it?

For this class, we will closely examine Alexander Liazos’ essay, ‘Nuts, Sluts and Preverts’. Discussion questions:

1. What is Liazos’ main argument, and what is the basis of this argument? Specifically, what justification / evidence does he use to build this argument?
2. According to Liazos, what kinds of deviance do sociologists study? Why do they make these choices? What are some modern-day examples of crimes people study?
3. What are the theoretical and methodological consequences of such choices on their understanding of deviance?
4. In what way(s) does the approach taken by the author mark a departure from the more conventional way of how crime was understood in society?
5. Why is it that it is so difficult to study white-collar/corporate crime and white-collar criminals? Do you think this state of affairs is going to change anytime soon? Why? Why not?
6. Consider that this article was written in the early 1970s. What challenges do we face when studying the sociology of deviance in relation to more contemporary phenomena?

**Tutorial 2 (Week 5 & 6): Research Workshop for Group Project & Individual Assignment**

By this session, your project group should already have some substantial idea about your research project. To help everyone with fine-tuning your research questions and exchange feedback/ideas before starting their fieldwork and analysis, groups will take turns to present and discuss their research projects. TAs will go through the fundamentals of conducting fieldwork / research on the ground such as ethical considerations, privacy issues, groupwork and task allocations etc. At the same time, we encourage you to think about your individual assignment and having to interview a ‘deviant’.

No PowerPoint necessary, although you may find it easier to have some presentation aids to share with the class about:

* Your topic of study
* Your rationale or reason for choosing this topic (“Why is this important?”)
* Your research questions (1-3 good ones will suffice!)
* Research Design and Methodology: How are you going to collect your data? What kind of data? Is there fieldwork involved? What’s the process?

Students are highly encouraged to be attentive to other groups and provide constructive feedback as part of class participation!

**Tutorial 3 (Week 7 & 8): Medicalization of deviance & Social Control**

Thinking about the existing perspectives we’ve covered in class so far, consider the following questions both theoretically and methodologically:

1. Is there an increase in the medicalization and the use of medical vocabulary as a kind of objective justification for types of intervention, criminal justice or otherwise, in Singapore?
2. What are the implications of medicalisation for the individual and society at large?

Bring some examples or statistics to class for discussion! Please also feel free to make use of some of the following news articles as “ammo” for debate:

* **Mentally ill man jailed 2 years for killing wife has been in IMH since prison release (2018)**
* <http://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/courts-crime/mentally-ill-man-jailed-2-years-for-slashing-wife-has-been-in-imh-since>
* **Man who had delusional beliefs that wife had affair gets 5 years' jail for knife attack (2022)**
* <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/courts-crime/man-who-had-delusional-beliefs-that-wife-had-affair-gets-5-years-jail-for-knife-attack>
* **Woman with schizophrenia who killed 8-year-old daughter acquitted, to be confined indefinitely (2022)**
* <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/courts-crime/woman-with-schizophrenia-who-killed-daughter-8-acquitted-to-be-confined-indefinitely>
* **Justice, mercy and a long road to recovery: An in-depth look at criminals with mental illness in Singapore (2019)**
* <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/criminals-mental-health-singapore-courts-prisons-11535486>
* **People with mental disorders likelier to be criminals? IMH doctor debunks myth, talks about forensic psychiatry work (2022)**
* <https://www.todayonline.com/singapore/mental-disorders-criminals-imh-doctor-debunks-myth-forensic-psychiatry-1978556>

**Upper Bukit Timah killings: Father sentenced to 14 years' jail for strangling twin sons with autism (2023)**<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/father-admits-killing-twin-sons-upper-bukit-timah-greenridge-crescent-playground-3697706#:~:text=Singapore-,Upper%20Bukit%20Timah%20killings%3A%20Father%20sentenced%20to%2014%20years'%20jail,would%20%22relieve%22%20their%20burdens>.

\*Interesting topic for discussion: What happens when a minor with mental health issues commits a crime?

**A year after alleged murder of River Valley High student, school has more counsellors and wellness services hub (2022)**<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/year-after-alleged-murder-river-valley-high-student-school-counsellors-support-2815191>

**River Valley High School death: Teen sentenced to 16 years’ jail for killing schoolmate with axe in 2021 (2023)**

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/courts-crime/teen-pleads-guilty-to-killing-schoolmate-with-axe-at-river-valley-high-school-in-2021>

**Tutorial 4 (Week 9 & 10): Subcultural Theory and Social Reactionist perspectives**

For this class, we will be watching a 21-minute interview documentary together about subcultures in Southeast Asia. We will be splitting the class up various groups with each group taking a particular perspective or theory from the sociology of deviance and attempting to make sense of the video through perspectives assigned to your group.

To ensure we have a productive session, please make sure you read the following:

* ‘A General Theory of Subcultures’ by Albert Cohen (1997)
* ‘Techniques of Neutralization: A Theory of Delinquency’ by Sykes, Gresham and Matza, David (1990)
* ‘Humanistic Theories of Deviance’, Chapter 3 of Deviant Behavior by Alex Thio (1978)
* Other relevant theories covered in Topic 5: Subculture but you are encouraged to think out of the box and bring out theories from other weeks i.e Anomie or Moral Panics

At the end of the class, we hope to have a critical discussion about how the different theories understand subculture in the broader scope of the study of deviance and criminality – what are the assumptions of each perspective, points of agreement and disagreement.

**Tutorial 5 (Week 11 & 12): Review**

Review of all topics and exam preparation.