

Northwestern University
Sociology 376: Topics – The Gang
Fall 2009
T Th 9:30-10:50 Parkes 224

Prof. A. Hunter
rm 201 1812 Chicago Ave
847-491-3804
ahunter@northwestern.edu

THE GANG

This course explores the modern urban street gang. It looks at the long sociological tradition of theory and research on such gangs, much of it conducted right here in Chicago. It looks at the structure and activities of gangs and the response of local community institutions including local community organizations, schools, the police, and the media. It also looks at local and national urban and criminal justice policy with respect to street gangs. Some of the questions explored will include: Why do people join gangs? How are gangs similar to or different from other youth groups like sports teams, or fraternities? What are the neighborhood contexts that foster street gangs? What is the nature of their deviance including guns and drugs? How do class, race, ethnicity, and gender enter into an understanding of gangs? What are the “myths” and “stereotypes” of street gangs, how do these differ from the “reality” reported in research, and why do these myths exist?

Writing assignments will include reading responses of 1 page for each of 17 class meetings. These will be used to facilitate discussion. Each student will also write two 2 page reports on an outside book/article about gangs, and present an oral report and lead class discussion on the book/article. Finally, each student will write a final paper of 8-10 pages on a theme selected in consultation with the instructor. Students should submit both hardcopy and e-copy versions of all writing assignments and keep backup copies.

Grades:

Daily reading response 17x1p.	35%
1 st report 2p.	15%
2nd report 2p.	15%
Final paper 10p.	35%

Arlen Egley, Jr. et al., 3d ed., The Modern Gang Reader. LA,CA: Roxbury.2006.

Martin Sanchez Jankowski – Islands in the Street: Gangs and American Urban Society. Berkeley,CA: U. of Cal Press. 1991.

Sudhir Venkatesh – Gang Leader for a Day: A Rogue Sociologist Takes to the Streets. Penguin. 2008

Plus additional articles and books.

Week 1 – Introduction - The Urban Context

9/22-24

Jankowski – Introduction

Egley – 1. Defining and Researching Gangs

Week 2 - Theories of Gangs

9/29-10/1

Jankowski – Chapter 1 – A Theory of Gang Behavior

Egley – 2 – History of Gang Research

3 – A Multiple Marginality Theory of Gangs

Week 3 – Social Correlates of Gangs - Race, Class, Age, and Gender

10/6-8

Jankowski – Chapter – 6 – The Gang and the Community

Egley – 4 Antecedents of Gang Membership

14 Race and Gender Differences

15 Chinese Gangs and Extortion

17 Female Gangs

18 Impact of Sex Composition

Week 4 - Structure of Gangs

10/13-15

* PAPER TOPICS DUE

Jankowski – Chapter 3 – In the Organization

Egley – 7. Recent Patterns 1996-2002 National Youth Gang Surveys

8. The Evolution of Street Gangs

10. Gang Members on Move

11 Inside Fremont Hustlers

Week 5 – Gang Activities

10/20-22

Jankowski – Chapter 2 – Gang Involvement

Chapter 4 – Gang Business

Egley – 5. Getting Into Gangs

6. Leaving the Gang

19. Membership in Youth Gangs

24. Street Gang Crime in Chicago

Week 6 – Violence and Social Control of Gangs by Police

10/27-29

Jankowski – Chapter 5 – The Anatomy of Gang Violence

Chapter 8 – Gangs, Criminal Justice, and Public Order

Egley – 21. Situations of Violence Girl Gang Members

22. Defining Gang Homicide

23. Gang Homicide in LA

29. Study of Police Gang Units

Week 7 – Institutional Relationships and Response – schools, media, politics
11/3-5

Jankowski – Chapter 9 – The Media and Gangs
Chapter 7 – Gangs and Governments

Egley –

- 13. Prison Gangs
- 30. Gang Problems/Programs in Schools
- 31. G.R.E.A.T.

Week 8 – Local and National Policy, Gangs and Terror in the Future
11/10-12

Jankowski - Conclusion

Egley – 9. Street Gangs: Cross National

- 16. Patterns of Ethnic Violence in Frankfurt
- 26. Public Policy Responses to Gangs
- 28. New Approaches to Prevention
- 32. Antigang Legislation
- 33. For Sake of Neighborhood; Gang Injunction

Week 9 – Critiquing a Personal Case Study
11/17-19

Sudhir Venkatesh – Gang Leader for a Day

Week 10 – Discussion of Final Papers
11/24

11/27 THANKSGIVING

Week 11 – Reading Week

12/1-3 I am available for individual meetings

Week 12 – FINAL PAPER DUE

12/7 MONDAY OF EXAM WEEK BY 5 PM