

Department of Justice, Law and Society
School of Public Affairs
The American University

Spring 2004

JLS-103-003 - CRITICAL ISSUES IN JUSTICE

Tuesdays and Fridays 9:55 AM - 11:10 AM,
Ward 107

Faculty: Dr. Jeffrey A. Schaler

jschale@american.edu

<http://www.schaler.net>

Office: Dept. of Justice, Law, and Society,
257, Ward Building, 2nd Floor

Telephone: (202) 885-3667

Office hours: (by appointment)

Course Description

[From the catalog: "Political, legal, economic, and social problems of justice emphasizing crime, deviance, and other conduct resulting in such socially disapproved labels as mentally ill, delinquent, and criminal. Moral and theoretical issues involved and mechanisms for remedying injustice and controlling socially disapproved behavior."]

Scapegoating is a way members of a society try to expel what they consider evil and affirm the dominant ethic. Scapegoating is often achieved through labeling, the social construction of deviance, and the use of stigma—a deeply discrediting attribute. People have always scapegoated others in order to boost their own self esteem, and they will likely continue to do so. A myth operating in contemporary civilized society is that scapegoating no longer exists, especially in what conventional wisdom dictates as compassionate policy. Whenever we regard people in terms of what they are, as compared to who they are, we may be suspicious that some form of scapegoating and discrimination is in motion.

A major focus of this course is on how people are deprived of justice (and similarly liberty) through the activity of scapegoating. We examine the persecution of people labeled "witches." We examine the way people diagnosed (labeled) "mentally ill" have been and are currently persecuted. We then expand our focus to include the medicalization of socially deviant behavior generally. This includes labeling of people as "alcoholic," "drug addict," "attention deficit hyperactive," and "homosexual." It also includes the perennial search for a biological basis of criminal behavior.

With this as our intellectual context, we shift gears during the second half of the semester to study contemporary issues concerning a new vision of race in America. Through the writings of Shelby Steele and Ward Connerly, among others, we examine how attempts to remedy racial persecution may be forms of "reverse discrimination." In particular, we examine the criticism of affirmative action and the criticism of those critical of affirmative action. Lecture and discussion format.

Course Objectives

1. To improve the student's legal, philosophical and policy-oriented thinking about critical issues in justice.
2. To comprehend the meaning and function of scapegoating in past and contemporary societies.
3. To comprehend the meaning and function of social construction with regard to socially deviant behavior.
4. To comprehend the meaning, practice and purpose of medicalizing behavior and its relation to scapegoating.
5. To comprehend the nature of controversy regarding social attempts to remedy racial discrimination.
6. To examine and identify subtle forms of racial discrimination and prejudice.
7. To develop skill in debating controversial legal and public policy issues concerning scapegoating and justice.

Required Texts

Connerly, W. (2001). *Creating equal: My fight against race preferences*. San Francisco: Encounter Books.

Conrad, P. & Schneider, J.W. (1992). *Deviance and medicalization: From badness to sickness. expanded edition*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Steele, S. (1991). *The content of our character: A new vision of race in America*. New York: Harper Perennial.

Szasz, T.S. (1997). *The manufacture of madness: A comparative study of the Inquisition and the mental health movement*. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press.

Course Requirements and Grades

Mid-term examination	30%
Final examination	35%
Paper	25%
Class participation	10%
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Total =	100%

Paper

Write an 8 to 10 page paper on any contemporary issue you believe involves scapegoating. Include principles we've covered in class. State the problem, as you see it, clearly. Differentiate between fact and your opinion. You're encouraged to express your opinion, just make sure you articulate the difference between fact and opinion. Discuss a solution to this problem. Describe possible problems created by your solution. Typed. Double-spaced. In text references like this (Schaler, 2000). References as the books are listed on this syllabus. Make sure your paragraphs are not too long. Make sure there is proper transition between paragraphs and ideas. Make sure you don't introduce new ideas in your conclusion. Make sure your spelling is accurate. Don't rely on colloquialisms. Use a dictionary. You must write complete sentences. Don't begin a sentence with "However," or "Therefore,".

→ Many readings and notices regarding class will be sent to you by the professor via email. Make sure you are receiving the emails and reading them.

→ You will be randomly assigned to groups with other students occasionally to present summaries of readings. This will contribute to your grade for participation.

→ Clear and accurate writing will be taken into account in assigning grades as well as participation in class discussions. Material discussed in class, or in films, and not in any of the readings, may form the basis for questions on the examinations. One grade reduction for over three class absences. (Save your absences in case you get sick.) Students are responsible for anything covered in class during their absence. Readings must be completed by the session to which they are assigned. Additional readings may be assigned during the course. Students are encouraged to form study groups on their own. Grades: A-=90, B+=89, B-=80, C+=79, C-=70, etc. If you're having trouble with this course or anything else, I strongly encourage you to make an appointment to talk with me about it.

Academic Integrity Code

"Standards of academic conduct are set forth in the University's Academic Integrity Code. It is expected that all examinations, tests, written papers, and other assignments will be completed according to the standards set forth in this code. By registering, you have acknowledged your awareness of the Academic Integrity Code, and you are obliged to become familiar with your rights and responsibilities as defined by the Code. Violations of the Academic Integrity Code will not be treated lightly, and disciplinary action will be taken should such violations occur. Please see me if you have any questions about the academic violations described in the Code in general or as they relate to particular requirements for this course."

CLASS SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Reading
January 13 & 16	The Manufacture of Madness	Chapters 1 - 4
January 20 & 23	The Manufacture of Madness	Chapters 5 - 8
January 27 & 30	The Manufacture of Madness	Chapters 9 - end
February 3 & 6	Deviance & Medicalization	Chapters 1 - 3
February 10 & 13	Deviance & Medicalization	Chapters 4 - 7
February 17 & 20	Deviance & Medicalization	Chapters 8 - end
February 24 & 27	Handout/film/catch up	
March 2	Review	
March 5	Mid-term examination	
Note: You must take the mid-term examination on the date assigned. No exceptions. Note: March 5 is the last day to drop this class		
March 9 & 12	Spring Break: Read The Content of our Character	
March 16 & 19	The Content of our Character	
March 23 & 26	Creating Equal (group presentation)	Chapters 1 & 2/ 3 & 4
March 30 Papers due		
March 30 & April 2	Creating Equal (group presentation)	Chapters 5 & 6/ 7 & 8
April 6 & 9	Creating Equal (group presentation)	
April 13 & 16	Creating Equal (group presentation)	Chapters 9 & 10/ 11 & 12
April 20 & 23	Film / review	
April 27	no class, study days	
April 30	Final Examination 8:30am to 11:00am	
Note: You must take the final exam on April 30. No exceptions.		