What is important about risk is not risk itself, but the forms of knowledge that make it thinkable from statistics, sociology and epidemiology» (Dean, 1999; p.131).

Course description

This course will focus on the importance that risk management strategies have gained in the criminal justice system during the last three decades. Major themes will include the following: the emergence of the risk society; the spreading phenomena of the fear of crime in modern society and its impact on criminal policy; the social construction of crime as a risk instead of a moral transgression; the use of actuarial and statistical tools in the field of criminal justice and corrections.

The main objectives of the course are:

1. To provide a contextualized understanding of the social, cultural, political and economic implications of risks and risk technologies in society in general;
2. To review and analyze the place that risk management occupies in the field of criminal justice.

Course format

The course will combine lectures from the professor, student presentations, and class discussions using the texts from the Course Reader. This is a seminar class, and as such students are expected to arrive in class prepared to participate to discussions. Students should prepare for each
class by carefully reading the required material in advance.

Course materials

A Course Reader is available at Rytec Printing, 404 Dalhousie Street. The use of the Course Reader is required.

Student assessment

The final grade for the class will be based on a midterm exam, an oral presentation in class, two critical summaries, and a final essay.

Midterm Exam (worth 30% of the final grade): Students have to do a midterm take-home exam based on assigned readings and materials covered in class from week 1 to 7. Questions and requirements will be handed out in class on February 18th (just before the study break). Students have two weeks to complete the exam.

Two critical summaries (worth 20% of the final grade): Each student has to produce critical summaries based on two readings included in the Course Reader. Each student selects two readings of his or her choice; one from week 2 to 7, the other from week 8 to 13. Each summary (3-5 pages each) will be due before the discussion of the texts in class.

Oral Presentation (worth 20% of the final grade): Students have to make a presentation on one of the following topics: (I) risk and prevention, (II) risk and policing, (III) risk in court, (IV) risk in corrections, (V) risk assessment of special groups of offenders. Details about the organization of those presentations will be discussed in class. Presentations will take place from week 8 to week 12.

Final Essay (worth 30% of the final grade): Students will be required to produce a major paper from their oral presentation (15-20 pages). The essay is due at the end of the semester (see attached document).

Important note: Plagiarism is a serious matter and will be dealt with accordingly. Students are encouraged to consult the University Rules concerning this topic on the internet.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1: January 7, 2011.
  Introduction.
  The importance of risk in contemporary societies.

Week 2: January 14, 2011.
  Definitions: risk, danger, uncertainty.
  Cultural aspects of risk.
  Theoretical perspectives: realism vs constructionism.
  Readings:

**Week 3**: January 21, 2011.
Living in a Risk society.
Risk in High Modernity.
Readings:

**Week 4**: January 28, 2011.
Fear of crime.
Perception of crime and insecurity.
Commodification of security.
Readings:

**Week 5**: February 04, 2011.
New Penology and actuarial justice.
The government of crime as risk management.
Prudentialism.
Readings:

**Week 6**: February 11, 2011.
Technologies of risk (Part 1).
Insurance, risk analysis, risk assessment, risk management.
Readings:


**Week 7**: February 18, 2011.
Technologies of risk (Part 2).
Clinical vs actuarial prediction.
Readings:

**Study break**: February 21-25, 2011.

**Week 8**: March 04, 2011.
Crime prevention as a risk management strategy.
Students’ presentations (I).
Readings:

**Week 9**: March 11, 2011.
Risk and Policing.
Students’ presentations (II).
Readings:

**Week 10**: March 18, 2011.
Risk assessment in court and sentencing.
Students’ presentations (III)

**Week 11**: March 25, 2011.
Risk in corrections, parole and probation practice.
Students’ presentations (IV).
Readings:

Week 12: April 01, 2011.
Risk assessment and management of special groups of offenders: dangerous offenders, sexual offenders, drug users, juvenile delinquents.
Students’ presentations (V).
Readings:

Week 13: April 08. 2011.
Synthesis.
Criminal justice system as a risk producer.
Readings:

References


Final Essay

This research paper worth 30% of the final grade; it is due on April 18th, 2011. Students must reproduce in the paper the content of their oral presentation; they should try to make links between practical and theoretical issues, and to make links with concepts and theories we saw during the semester (from both lectures and readings).

Students should include a cover page and a reference list for all works cited in the paper. All materiel quoted or mentioned in the paper must be properly credited. References should appear in standard format (it can be sociological or psychological, as long as it’s consistent). The paper must be not less than 15 pages and not more than 20 pages in length (12pt, double-spaced), exclusive of your reference list.

The paper will be evaluated, considering the following points:

- The relevance of the sources that were used; you should used more than one or two sources (including readings from the course pack).
- The general organization of the text, clarity, and felicity of the writing.
  - Be sure that the outlines of the paper are announced in the intro.
  - Be sure that links between different sections are clear and well exposed.
- The quality of the reasoning, use of evidence and practical examples.
- Insightfulness, creativity and critical attitude. The paper should cover more than a description of some practices; you should be able to comment those practices, using theoretical tools we saw in class. Always try to add some personal and critical remarks about the topic of your essay, particularly in the conclusion. You should always try to impress the reader and grab his/her attention!!

Grading will follow this general guideline:

- A and A+ Outstanding and exceptional contribution in all points.
- B+ and A- Good paper, clear, well organized and documented; no major problems.
- B- and B Fairly good paper; but with minor problems.
- C Significant weaknesses in one or more areas.
- D Poor work overall.
- F Fail: Unacceptable quality of work.

Plagiarism is a serious matter and will be dealt with accordingly.

You can contact me by email if you need any additional information. Wishing you all the success you deserve.

Bastien Quirion
bquirion@uottawa.ca