Course Description

The seminar challenges adult-centered representations of urban youth, their problems, and the supposed solutions to those problems. It departs from the conceptualizations and methods used to study youth in mainstream criminology and developmental psychology. The seminar builds an alternative, youth-centered perspective, exploring what it means to put youth perspectives at the center of socio-legal inquiry. As a socio-legal endeavor, the seminar studies law as it is lived, shaped, and encountered by urban youth in their everyday lives. It illuminates the conceptual frames, methodological tools, and substantive findings that come to the front when the focus is on how youth make sense of their own lives, assert their own views of justice and law, and act on one another. Particular attention is given to youth conflict, peer relations, identity building, claims on space and territory, the salience of law and rights, and adaptations to adult authorities and practices in the contexts of urban neighborhoods and public schools.

Course Outline

Week 1: Introduction: Adult-Centered; Youth Centered Approaches to the Study of Youth, Justice and Culture


Week 2: Early Scholarly Bracketing of Youth: Delinquents, Adolescents, Gangsters, and Teenagers


**Week 3: Early Judicial Bracketing of Youth**

*Commonwealth v. Fisher* (1905) *(Case Reader)*.

*In re Sharp* (1908) *(Case Reader)*.

**Week 4: Early 20th Century Differencing: Class, Race and Gender**


**Week 5: Youth, Deviance and Class**


**Week 6: The Criminological Gaze: Deviance and Class Surrender to Youth-Gangster Violence, Criminalization and the Code of the Street**


Week 7: Aggressive Adult Street Policing of Youth: Building Distrust; Undermining Adult Legitimacy


Week 9: Courts and the Establishment of Youth Rights

In re Gault (1967) (Case Reader).


Goss v. Lopez (1975) (Case Reader).

Week 10: Examining Youth Rights in School


Week 11: **21st Century School Discipline and Safe Schools Movement**


**Week 12: Youth Cultures and Conflict in Schools: Making it Work amidst Relational Struggles and Adult Interventions**


**Week 13: Youth, Spatial Power, and Transnational Cultures**


**Week 14: Should Youth Be Protected by Adult Ordering? Judicial Re-Bracketing of Youth as Categorically Less Culpable**


**Grading Policy, Graded Assignments, and Grading Criteria**

Your course grade will be determined by an in-class midterm, a short take-home brief on a youth-centered artifact, and a take-home final socio-legal essay. Out of concern for fairness to all students, there will be neither make-up exams nor any extensions given to the due dates of exams and essays except in the case of documented extreme illness.

**In Class Midterm Examination: 100 Points**

The examination consists of four parts: short essay response to a question (20 points); writing paragraphs about paired concepts (50 points); writing sentences defining key concepts (20 points); and fill in the blanks (10 points). The purpose of the examination is not to surprise you but to give you an opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the course material. Therefore, study guides will be distributed in a timely manner ahead of the examination. Also, I will hold a review session in the second-half of the class the week before the in-class exam.
**Short Brief: 40 points**

You will research a youth-centered artifact (e.g., youth-generated video; music, website; photography; graffiti) that addresses a critical issue related to seminar readings. You will be encouraged to draw upon images over text, and are required to establish its relevance to a key theme or concept relevant to the course material, including the readings, in your presentation. You will submit a written brief (no more than 3-pages) about the artifact.

**Final Take-Home Essay: 100 Points**

The take-home essay is an exercise wherein you respond to questions about youth and adult-centered perspectives related to a simulated city, called Eldorado, to demonstrate comprehensively your knowledge and learning of the classroom material, including required readings, and critical reasoning abilities. I will introduce Eldorado early in the semester and we will add features to it over the course of the term. I will provide you with the final set of questions at least two weeks in advance of the take-home due date. **Your essay must be word-processed, double-spaced, use standard (one inch) margins, use 12 point font, and be no longer than 10 pages.**

**Grading Criteria of Written Material**

Grading criteria are as follows: clarity of your writing (using proper grammar, punctuation, spelling, legibility and organization); accuracy and comprehensiveness of your responses (defining all relevant terms/concepts, illustrating the terms/concepts, and including all key points); and creativity of your responses (demonstrating in your own words or with your own examples that you understand the terms, concepts and questions, and can reason critically about them).