

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**

**MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY**

**Sociology 4099-001  
Victimology  
Winter 2010**

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**Office Hours: Wed 1-2P.M.**

**Term Paper Information:**

For your term paper, you are asked to critically discuss an issue relating to victims of crime. While **I strongly encourage specific requests by students wishing to pursue particular interests**, I will also suggest the following as possible paper topics:

1. Theoretical approaches in victimology tend to focus either on the *interactions* between victim and offender, or on various *structural*, cultural, and institutional factors. Explain how this has distinction has evolved throughout the history of victimology, how it has influenced research, and give your opinion as to whether it may be transcended as the discipline matures.
2. Discuss, compare and critically contrast the various theoretical approaches to a particular type of victimization (e.g. domestic abuse). Which of these do you prefer? Give reasons.
3. Critically evaluate the available statistics on a particular type of victimization (e.g. child abuse). Given your analysis, are these likely to underestimate or overestimate the incidence of this crime? Explain.
4. Discuss, with reference to available sources, the initial impact of victimization with regard to a particular type of crime (e.g. property crime, assault, etc., and how this changes over time). Compare this to the “stage models” outlined by Bard & Sangrey, Riedel and Young. In your opinion, do these formulations adequately describe the impact on victims of this crime? Why or why not?
5. “Metaphors of Loss” were initially noted in the study of homicide survivors. Examine, by surveying victims of another type of crime, the extent to which these can be found beyond the homicide context. If so, explain the similarities and differences that emerge.
6. Examine, by interviewing victims of a particular type of crime, the extent to which they

*initially* saw themselves as victims (i.e. before dealing with the justice system and support workers). With particular attention to their rationales, compare and contrast these findings with Prof. Kenney's research in this area. **Note: if you choose this topic, you will need to apply for and obtain university ethics approval first.**

7. Critically discuss the relative impact of the crime vs. social reaction on the long term psychological adjustment of victims of crime. Give examples.

8. A parallel labelling process has been suggested for victims of crime in their dealings with extended family, friends, acquaintances, strangers, and the community. With reference to a particular type of crime (e.g. B & E), interview victims with regard to their experiences in this regard. How are their experiences similar to, and different from, this earlier formulation? Do your data suggest conceptual reformulation is necessary?

9. It has been noted by Holstein and Miller that victimization has a number of "practical objectives" in interaction - much as Prof. Kenney has noted that the victim role can be utilized as a "sword" or as a "shield," and Clark has observed that emotion can be used in a tactical manner. Critically discuss, with reference to victims' statements in the media, their rhetorical, self-presentational use of the victim role. Give examples.

10. Apply, using examples, Candace Clark's theoretical discussion of sympathy to the varying dynamics of self-help and support groups. Is Clark's formulation sufficient to explain these? If not, what other theoretical concepts would be useful?

11. Some authors take the position that self-help organizations operate better with professional supervision. However, a critical literature also exists on the role of medical professionals dealing with victims. Critically compare these positions. To what extent do you feel that professional supervision of support groups can be helpful? Give reasons.

12. Critically discuss the victims' traditional role in the criminal justice system in relation to a particular stage in or aspect of the criminal justice process (e.g. bail, evidence, legal standing, cross-examination, sentencing, parole, etc.) Examine the victims' legal position in this regard vis-a-vis the offender, and discuss any recent changes in this area. In your opinion, have these significantly changed the victims' rights? Give reasons.

13. Critically discuss, with reference to the various stages of the criminal justice process, the traditional response of the Canadian criminal justice system to a particular type of crime (e.g. domestic abuse, child abuse, violent vs. property crime, etc.). Have there been any recent changes that significantly change your opinion in this regard? Explain.

14. Outline and critically evaluate criminal injuries compensation tribunals as a response to the victim's position in the traditional criminal justice system. Would recent changes to these tribunals change your position in this regard? Why or why not?

15. Outline and critically evaluate provincial Victims Services programs as a response to the

victim's position in the traditional criminal justice system. Would recent changes to these tribunals change your position in this regard? Why or why not?

16. Outline and critically evaluate restorative justice as a response to the victim's position in the traditional criminal justice system. Do you feel that this represents an improvement? Why or why not?

17. Critically discuss a current medical term applied to victims (e.g. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, False memory Syndrome, Battered Woman Syndrome, Rape Trauma Syndrome, etc.). In your analysis, bring out both the positive and negative implications of this label for victims - and for the interests of those set up to help them. Ultimately, do you feel that this label is more of a help than a hindrance for victims to whom it is applied? Give reasons.

18. Critically discuss the impact of false memory syndrome on the official statistics on abuse.

19. Critically discuss the role of gender with regard to (i) incidence; (ii) victims' reactions; and (iii) official organizational responses to domestic abuse.

20. Critically discuss the alleged relationship between victimization, gender roles, and violent behavior among male victims of violent crime.

21. Critically discuss the relationship between the use of child pornography and the victimization of children.

22. Critically discuss the relationship between violence in the media and the overall incidence of crime. Give examples.

23. Critically examine the public and private services, if any, available to male victims of violence.

24. Critically examine the paradox between the implicit powerlessness of the victim role and its subtle power. Use examples.

25. If you desire, critically discuss a personal experience of victimization in relation to any three of the concepts we have discussed this term. (Note: if you choose this topic, your work will be strictly confidential).

Please note that these are *suggested topics* only. If you have a particular issue that you would like to pursue that is not listed above, I encourage you to discuss it with me either after class, via e-mail, or during my office hours. If contemplating a topic not listed above, it will be important for you to discuss your topic with me first to make sure it is both relevant and reasonably workable within the space that you have been allotted.

The following are guidelines for your paper. *Using sub-headings:*

1. Identify your topic briefly in an intro paragraph, outlining what order your paper will follow throughout.
2. Briefly indicate the literature that you have read to date on this topic, with a brief overview of the most significant theoretical issues and debates.
3. Identify a key issue that emerges, and provide a clear thesis statement indicating the position that you will be taking.
4. Data section: using various sources of data (e.g. theoretical works, empirical studies, statistics, interviews, etc.) consider the evidence for *all sides* of the issue that you have identified in 3.
5. Provide a reasoned conclusion linking the issue in 3 with the evidence in 4.
6. Provide a complete Bibliography at the end.

Your papers should be approximately *10 typed pages in length, double spaced*. Instead of APA style, ***I require you to use endnotes as your form of citation***. Please see my attached citation guide for details.

If reference is being made to my lecture notes, simply indicate this by stating: "Prof. Kenney, Lecture Notes, Month + date, 2010, at p.#\_."

Ensure that you include a full alphabetical bibliography of sources at the end of your paper.

I should point out that, for anything higher than an average grade, it goes without saying that you will have to do some library research over and above the course materials that have been provided. I will particularly welcome papers that discuss the issues with reference to original research. In addition to your understanding and *critical analysis* of the topics above, please be aware that *I mark for spelling, grammar, and overall clarity of presentation*.

As stated in the course outline, this essay is worth 40 percent of your final grade. **It is due on March 18, 2010**. You may hand your completed paper in to me at any time up to and including 3:15 PM on Thursday, March 18. ***After that time, I will deduct 10 percent of the grade per day that the paper is late, unless you produce a doctor's note or give other satisfactory evidence for the lateness of your work.***

Finally, I will be happy to discuss any of these matters with you. Please call, e-mail, or leave a message at my office if you have any questions or concerns.

## Citation Guide

In preparing your assignments, the following are examples for how to cite sources.

### **1. Books by one or more authors:**

Becker, Howard

1963 *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*. Glencoe: The Free Press.

Glaser, Barney, and Strauss, Anselm L.

1967 *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*.  
Chicago: Aldine

### **2. Academic Journals:**

Blanchard, GERALD

1987 "Male Victims of Child Sexual Abuse: A Portent of Things to Come." *Journal of Independent Social Work*, 1(1) Fall: 19-27.

Broussard, Sylvia D., and Wagner, William G.

1988 "Child Sexual Abuse: Who Is to Blame?" *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 12: 563-69.

### **3. Articles in Edited Books:**

Clark, Candace

1990 Emotions and Micropolitics in Everyday Life: Some Patterns and Paradoxes of  
A Place. In *Research Agendas in the Sociology of Emotions*, ed. Theodore D.  
Kemper. New York: SUNY Press.

Wortman, Camille B., and Lehman, Darrin R.

1983 "Reactions to Victims of Life Crises: Support Attempts that Fail" In *Social Support: Theory, Research and Applications*, ed. Irwin G. Sarason and Barbara  
R. Sarason, Boston: Martinus Nijhoff.

### **4. Cases, Statutes, and other legal materials:**

Look at:

Chin-Shih Tang: Guide to Legal Citation  
(1983) Toronto: DeBoo Publishers

J.A. Yogis and I.M. Christie: Legal Research and Writing Manual  
(1974) Toronto: Butterworths

Martins Annual Criminal Code (various years)

As I noted, **I require you to use *endnotes* as your form of citation.** If you are using Word or Wordperfect, go to the “insert” bar, pull down the menu and you will find this option under “footnote/endnote.” Endnotes are basically like footnotes, but appear consecutively on a separate page at the end of your paper. They should look something like this:

### **References:**

1. Stephen J. Pfohl, Images of Deviance and Social Control: A Sociological History (2nd ed.) (New York: McGraw-Hill Inc., 1994). at p.350-60.
2. Edwin M. Schur, Labeling Deviant Behavior (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), at p.10.
3. Ibid, p.11.
4. Pfohl (Supra), at p.370.

The first two citations above represent initial references to a particular book and page. The third reflects a subsequent citation to the book immediately above. The fourth is an example of what you should do when you refer to a book you cited earlier, but not immediately before this citation.

Remember, at the very end of your paper, I expect a *separate* bibliography where all of the sources you list in your paper (books, journals, and edited texts) are to be repeated, in alphabetical order by the last name of the author(s). This is to begin on a separate page following your endnotes. The following is an example:

### **Bibliography:**

Becker, Howard  
1963 *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*. Glencoe: The Free Press.

Berg, Bruce L.

1995 *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. (2nd ed.) Needham Heights, Mass: Allyn & Bacon.

Blanchard, GERAL

1987 "Male Victims of Child Sexual Abuse: A Portent of Things to Come."  
*Journal of Independent Social Work*, 1(1) Fall: 19-27.

Broussard, Sylvia D., and Wagner, William G.

1988 "Child Sexual Abuse: Who Is to Blame?" *Child Abuse and Neglect*,  
12: 563-69.

- and so on -

P.S. Internet sources are to be cited by giving the author (if available), year, title, and  
www address.