Course Description: The media has traditionally portrayed phenomena such as gangs, ghettos, and violence in sensationalized and over-simplified terms. In this class, we will problematize common stereotypes related to these terms, spaces, people, behaviours, morals, and representations. We will explore questions like: What is a ‘gang’? How do we conceptualize ‘ghettos’? Are ghettos entirely lawless places? What broader structural issues contribute to gang emergence and sustenance? What is the relationship between neighbourhood gangs and prison gangs? How do gangs enact informal social control in ghettos and behind bars? By sociologically and criminologically examining these issues, we will gain a more nuanced appreciation for the complexities surrounding gangs, ‘ghettos,’ and violence. We will also critically analyze responses to ghettos, gangs, and violence, and challenge taken-for-granted assumptions about impoverished, racialized areas and their relationship to gangs.

Course Objectives:

- Understand the debates surrounding what is a “gang” and what is a “ghetto”
- Critically examine the existence of gangs in poor communities and their relationships to these communities
- Understand the complex nature of gang presence, and unmask how social context impacts criminal decision-making and behaviour
- Problematize how the intersection of socioeconomic status, race, immigration status, and gender affects/creates impoverished and criminalized neighbourhoods
- Critically assess police responses to gangs and disadvantaged areas
- Understand how violence influences communities
- Become a critical consumer of the media and political discourse about ghettos, gangs, and violence

Course Prerequisite: SOC 225 or consent of the instructor.

Readings: All mandatory and suggested readings will be available via E-Class 😊

Teaching Approach: This course mainly consists of class discussions. Every class, I will give a brief introduction to the topic, and students will present on readings relevant to the meeting’s topic. However, the bulk of the class will consist of discussion and debate. We will treat the
seminar room as a “learning community,” where expressing thoughts and debating important points is a primary component of the learning process. Since this is a 4th year seminar, you are expected to come to class prepared and ready to share your thoughts on the assigned readings.

Seminar Atmosphere: The seminar room will be a dynamic and lively place of learning, discussion, and debate. We will be learning with and from each other, so it is important that we all come to class with an open mind, ready to share ideas and – potentially – have them challenged by someone else (you should also feel free to question me!). When we discuss different points of view, it is imperative that we always do so respectfully and professionally, so please respect whoever is speaking and refrain from chatting and distracting other students. This class will ignite many thought-provoking questions, so let’s focus and make the most of our learning experience!

Grade Evaluation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Throughout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Questions</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Individuated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Individuated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper Abstract</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>October 17th (beginning of class)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>December 5th (beginning of class)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grades are unofficial until approved by the Department and/or Faculty offering the course.

Grading Scale: Marks are given in percentages, to which letter grades are also assigned, according to the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Grade Value</th>
<th>Grade Point Value</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>95-100</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Excellent. Considerable evidence of original thinking; demonstrated outstanding capacity to analyze and synthesize; outstanding grasp of subject matter; evidence of extensive knowledge base.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-94</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>Good. Evidence of grasp of subject matter, some evidence of critical capacity and analytical ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with the literature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Satisfactory. Evidence of some understanding of the subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Good. Evidence of grasp of subject matter, some evidence of critical capacity and analytical ability; reasonable understanding of relevant issues; evidence of familiarity with the literature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>75-79</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>Satisfactory. Evidence of some understanding of the subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>70-74</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Satisfactory. Evidence of some understanding of the subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>66-69</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Satisfactory. Evidence of some understanding of the subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>62-65</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>Satisfactory. Evidence of some understanding of the subject</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participation: Participation grades evaluate the intellectual contribution students make to the class and are not a measure of whether students conform to expected classroom conduct. As a baseline, students are expected to show respect for classmates, the instructor, and for the method of shared inquiry. This means participating in class discussion. Critiques should be addressed to ideas rather than individuals.

Each class, each student will receive a grade out of 10 and the average of these grades will be used to calculate the student’s participation grade. Note: simply attending class and making required presentations will count for a grade of 0 for classroom participation. Students may miss up to two classes without affecting their participation grade. The following rubric will be used.

### Participation Rubric:

**Excellent 9-10**
The student comes to class prepared with questions and critiques of the readings.

The student deepens the conversation by going beyond the text.

The student actively attends to what others say and responds to points raised by others.

**Good 7-8**
The student comes to class prepared with questions and critiques of the readings.

The student takes steps to check comprehension by asking clarifying and probing questions. In general, the student’s comments and ideas contribute to the group’s understanding of the material and concepts.

**Satisfactory 5-6**
The student has read and understood the readings as evidenced by oral contributions.
The student generally listens well and takes steps to check comprehension by asking clarifying and probing questions.

The students’ contributions to the discussion are sometimes based on opinion or unclear views rather than on informed arguments.

**Poor 1-4**
The student does not listen well as indicated by the repetition of comments posed earlier or by off task activities.

The student’s comments indicate that the student didn’t read assigned material or misunderstood many points.

The student’s comments are off topic, difficult to understand or without substantiation.

**Unacceptable 0**
Student shows a lack of respect for members of the group and the discussion process by dominating the discussion or disengaging from the discussion.

OR

Student is Absent

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**Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:** Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult “Attendance Section” of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result. Approval for an excused absence from term work (e.g. classes, assignments, quizzes, term papers, reports, or term examinations) is at the discretion of the instructor. There is no guarantee that an excused absence will be granted. Misrepresentation of Facts to gain an excused absence is a serious breach of the *Code of Student Behaviour*.

**Discussion Questions:** During the course of the term, each student will develop six discussion questions on the mandatory readings for that week. Since there are always TWO mandatory articles for each class, you need to develop 3 questions for EACH article. Students will sign up for discussion questions during the first week of classes. Discussion questions are due before 5:00 pm on the day before the respective class for which their reading is assigned, and must be a) emailed to the instructor and b) posted on E-Class before 5:00pm on that day.

I.e.: If you are developing discussion questions for a reading on October 4th, your discussion questions must be posted on E-Class (so that other students can have a chance to look at them before class), and emailed to me by 5:00pm on October 3rd.
Discussion questions must go beyond asking for clarification of the readings. Instead, students should pursue multifaceted questions of the following sort: What ideas about gangs, ghettos, or violence does the author take for granted, and how might that affect the author’s argument? What problems do the current policies addressing the specific issue pose? How does this reading fit in with, or deviate from another course reading, and what additional knowledge does it add to our understanding of a specific phenomena?

Students will sign up for Discussion Questions during the first week of classes.

Presentations: Student presentations should be about 12-15 minutes long. You are to present on ONE of the recommended readings during the course of the semester. Your classmates may not have read the text that you are presenting on, so make sure that you present the main points of your assigned reading, discuss methodology (if applicable), and also go beyond the text in posing relevant and critical questions about the reading. Your presentation should end with one or more questions you will pose to your classmates, for the purposes of opening up the class discussion. Presenters are expected to take on additional responsibility for promoting class discussion during the seminar in which they present. If a student is absent for their scheduled presentation, a mark of 0 will be given for this assignment. Students will sign up for class presentations during the first week of classes. You may or may not use power point, may or may not provide handouts and may employ any other presentation style that suits you 😊

Final Paper Abstract: On October 17, 2018 (at the beginning of class!), each student will submit a 500-word abstract outlining their plan for their final paper. The abstract is worth 15% of the final grade. It will specify the research question your paper will address and provide a thesis statement to summarize your argument. What is the problem or debate you are taking up? What readings and other articles will you draw on? What novel way of thinking or new practical approach to the issue do you propose? This should be considerably advanced beyond a “I hope to look at…” style of summary. Instead, it should be a concise abstract of the argument you will be making in your final paper and identification of the sources you will potentially be drawing from.

Final Paper: Your final paper is due on December 5, 2018 (at the beginning of class). The final paper will be from 12-15 pages long (double-spaced), and will draw on academic sources. More detail will be provided on a separate assignment sheet (which will be made available on E-class during the first week of classes). Please use APA citation style.

Policy for Late Final Papers: Late Papers will not be accepted unless special arrangements have been made with the instructor. If a final paper is not handed in for reasons of potentially excusable illness or domestic affliction the student must provide the instructor with supporting documentation pertaining to the absence within two working days following the due date or as soon as the student is able having regard to the circumstances underlying the absence. If a student chooses to provide a medical note to support the request for an excused absence, the University of Alberta Medical Statement Form may be downloaded from the Online Services section of www.registrar.ualberta.ca. In the absence of a University of Alberta Medical Statement, or where the reason for the absence is something other than illness, a student must present a completed Statutory Declaration. Statutory Declaration forms can be obtained from
your Faculty office or the Office of the Registrar. A copy of the Statutory Declaration is submitted to the instructor, and the original Statutory Declaration remains in the student’s permanent academic file in the faculty office.

Email: Email works well for communicating simple information (Oftentimes answers can be found right on this syllabus!), but extended conversations are better conducted in person. Please make the subject of all emails SOC 420 so that I can prioritize your email and get back to you as quickly as possible. I will generally reply to email inquiries from students within 72 hours (not including weekends). If you do not receive a reply within this period, I may have missed your email so please resubmit your question(s).

Course policies: Policy about course outlines can be found in Course Requirements, Evaluation Procedures and Grading of the University Calendar

Recording: Consistent with University guidelines, “Audio or video recording, digital or otherwise, of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).”

Accessibility Resources: If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of the term so that appropriate arrangements can be made. If you are not already registered with Accessibility Resources, contact their office immediately (1-80 SUB; Email sasrec@ualberta.ca; Email; phone 780-492-3381; WEB https://www.ualberta.ca/current-students/student-accessibility-services/).

Academic Integrity: “The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at www.governance.ualberta.ca) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.” Please note that submitting the same paper for this course as for a different course is considered plagiarism and will be reported to the Dean. For further information about Academic Integrity, visit https://www.ualberta.ca/current-students/academic-resources/academic-integrity.

Territorial Statement: “The University of Alberta acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, and respects the histories, languages, and cultures of the First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community.”

September 5: Course Introduction
No readings 😊
September 12: What is a Gang?  
**Mandatory:**

Wood, Jane, and Emma Alleyne. “Street gang theory and research: Where are we now and where do we go from here?.” *Aggression and Violent behavior* 15.2 (2010): 100-111.

**Recommended:**

Decker, Scott H., Chris Melde, and David C. Pyrooz. “What do we know about gangs and gang members and where do we go from here?.” *Justice Quarterly* 30.3 (2013): 369-402.


September 19: What is a Ghetto?  
**Mandatory:**


**Recommended:**


September 26 : Gangs and Communities  
**Mandatory:**


**Recommended:**


**October 3: The Street Code**

*Mandatory:*

Urbanik, Marta-Marika, Sara K. Thompson, and Sandra M. Bucerius. "‘Before there was danger but there was rules. And safety in those rules’: Effects of Neighbourhood Redevelopment On Criminal Structures." *The British Journal of Criminology* 57.2 (2017): 422-440.

**Recommended:**


**October 10: The Role of Gender**

*Mandatory:*

Recommended:


October 17: Neighbourhoods and Violence
Mandatory:


Recommended:


October 24: Gangs in Canada
Mandatory:

**Recommended:**


**October 31: Prison Gangs**

**Mandatory:**


**Recommended:**


**November 7: Gang Exit and Disengagement**

**Mandatory:**


**Recommended:**


***No class on November 14, 2018: Fall Reading Week 😊 ***

**November 21: Gangs and Social Media**

**Mandatory:**


**Recommended:**


**November 28: Racialized Policing Practices**

**Mandatory:**


**Recommended:**
Wortley, Scot, and Akwasi Owusu-Bempah. "Unequal before the law: Immigrant and racial minority perceptions of the Canadian criminal justice system." *Journal of International*


**December 5: Gang Interventions/ Responses**

**Mandatory:**


**Recommended:**


- This schedule is tentative and may be adjusted as we move through the material-