

Intro to Sociology Students:

Today's class is going to be conducted online. To begin, I want to review Friday's discussion of deviance from the two macro-theoretical perspectives.

According to the **Functionalist Perspective**, deviance can be viewed in two ways, depending on the circumstances.

On the one hand, deviance is **dysfunctional** when it prevents the system running in a balanced way. When functionalists view deviance in this way, they often focus on the **costs of deviance**. For example, in our society, the patrolling and punishment of serious deviance is **expensive**. It costs billions of dollars every year to pay for police officers, the courts system, and the prison system. This money could be spent in other ways (such as on education, health care, or even national defense) if we did not have to pay for law enforcement and punishment. In addition to financial cost, we could also talk about the **emotional costs** of being fearful of crime. In our society, we spend a lot of time worrying about crime. As a result, we put alarms on our personal items, we take personal defense classes, and we train our children to be aware of strangers as a personal threat. Again, all of this energy could be spent in other ways if we were not afraid of crime.

On the other hand, deviance can also be viewed as **functional**. When functionalists focus on the functions of deviance they think about how social responses to deviance can remind us as a society what the rules are. Think about some of the recent deviants who have received a lot of news coverage lately – Nadia Suleman (a.k.a. “Octomom”) and her 8 babies, Craig Garrido as the kidnapper of Jaycee Duggard, and even Jon and Kate Gosselin going through their public divorce (and various indiscretions). In all of these cases, functionalists argue that we dedicate so much media coverage and water cooler conversation to these cases because we want to **remind ourselves and each other that some kinds of behaviors are unacceptable** and that we do not want to engage in such behaviors. In addition, all of this discussion about deviants and how bad they are helps the rest of us to build **solidarity** in society – increasing the connections among us.

By contrast, according to the **Conflict Theorists**, the **ability to define and respond to deviance is a form of social control by more powerful groups over the powerless**. Those who are the powerful in our society (people like lawmakers and CEOs) have the capacity to declare what is deviant in our society. As you might expect, they decide what is deviant based on their own interests. For example, think about the tax code. Officially, all of us should pay taxes according to our income. But the tax code is written in a way that the most wealthy can find loopholes to avoid paying some taxes while the middle and working classes often do not qualify for such loopholes (and are even unaware that such provisions exist). Additionally, if a rich person gets caught committing tax fraud, the rich person will probably be able to afford a good attorney who can help her/him avoid punishment. But a poor person who commits tax fraud is more likely to face punishment for such a crime (even though the relative cost of such a crime is much lower). A conflict theorist would argue that this situation exists because the powerful have arranged the system in a manner that advantages the rich and powerful over everyone else.

On Friday, we started watching the film **Medicating Kids** on the treatment of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). We watched parts 1 & 2. For today, I want you to watch part 3 (“The Promoters of ADHD”). You can view this portion of the film online at the following link. The video lasts almost 7 minutes.

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/medicating/watch/>

(If you would like, you can review parts 1 & 2. And, of course, feel free to watch the final 2 segments of the film if you are enjoying it!) Don’t forget to download and complete the Reading Guide (available under the “Syllabus & Assignments” link on our class website - http://introsoc.kimberlymbaker.com/?page_id=2).

After watching this film, you should participate in a class discussion board on our Blackboard Website (<http://courses.ithaca.edu>). I have created this discussion board as a substitute for the discussion we would ordinarily have in class after watching this film.

By participating in the discussion board, you can earn up to 3 bonus clicker points (1 point for each substantial comments). Here are a few guidelines:

1. The discussion board will be open for participation until the start of class on Wednesday, Oct 21.
2. I have posted a series of questions on the discussion board. You may respond to my questions, respond to other students’ comments, or ask your own question.
3. All comments that are thoughtful and engaged will receive 1 bonus “clicker point”
 - a. Comments that will not receive credit include simple statements like “I agree” that include no further elaboration.
 - b. Bonus clicker points will be added to your final clicker point count at the end of the semester. Thus, participation in the discussion board will help make up for absences and clicker problems that you may have had this semester.
 - c. A maximum of 3 points can be earned on the discussion board.

Finally, please note that it is likely that I will draw exam questions from the film clip for today and also from the discussion board.