

SOCI 1080
Deviant Behavior

Constructionist
Theories of Deviance



“Deviance is not a property inherent in certain forms of behavior; it is a property conferred upon these forms by the audiences which directly or indirectly witness them. The critical variable in the study of deviance, then, is the social audience rather than the individual actor”.

- Kai T. Erikson (1964)

Constructionist Theories of Deviance

- ▶ *stress relativity of deviance (time, place, circumstance) and how society controls deviance*
- ▶ *shift emphasis from rule breakers to rule makers*
- ▶ *shift perspective from the individual to the group or audience*
- ▶ *urge that deviance stems from social reaction*
- ▶ *are concerned with the effects of labels*