

Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice
SOC4432: Criminology
Spring 2015

Class: Mondays/Wednesdays 6:30-7:45pm
Instructor: Jenny Petersen
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Office Hours: By appointment

Textbook:

No textbook is required for this course. Materials will be provided through D2L.

Prerequisite: CRJU 1101 or SOCI 2201

Course Description:

This course provides an overview of theory and practice, the nature and cause of crime, and the etiology of criminal offenses and offenders. We will look at the nature and extent of crime. We will look at different methods for measuring and understanding crime, different types of crime and different theoretical explanations for crime. We will introduce the nature, extent and factors related to criminal behavior, and the etiology of criminal offenses and offenders. Topics will include: Sociological, psychological and biological causes of crime; the effectiveness of theories in explaining crime; theory integrations; and application of theory to selected. This is such an interesting field.

Course Objectives:

1. Sociological Theories

- Describe the uniqueness of sociological theories of crime.
- Characterize the development of the sociological theories of crime from past to present.
- Explain the principles of theories that emphasize social structure.
- Describe the theories and principles of the theories that stress social process.
- Describe theories and principles of theories that emphasize critical perspectives.
- Describe the principles of emerging sociological theories of crime causation.

2. Effectiveness of Sociological Theories

- Evaluate the effectiveness of sociological theories in explaining criminal offending.
- Describe policy implications of sociological theories of crime causation.

3. Individual Emphasis

- Describe the main elements of psychological theories of crime.
- Describe the policy implications of psychological theories of crime.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the main elements of biological theories of crime.
- Describe the policy implications of biological theories of crime.
- Describe the resurgence in biological theories caused by improvements in technology.

4. Theory Integration

- Explain the benefits of integrating multiple theories into a single paradigm.
- Describe theories that can be merged to create integrated theories.

5. Theory Application

- Explain the application of various theories to violent and property crimes.

- Describe the utility of theories in explaining crime against special populations such as the homeless and children.

Method of Instruction:

Lectures, Films, Class Discussions

Course Requirements:

- Three in-class exams each worth 100 points
- Thinking About Crime essay worth 100 points
- Criminology in the Movies essay worth 100 points
- Quizzes, short assignments worth 50 points

Grading Scale:

A	90-100% Excellent (495-550 points total)
B	80-89% Good (440-494 points total)
C	70-79% Satisfactory (385-439 points total)
D	60-69% Passing (330-384 points total)
F	0-59% Failing (below 329 points)

Classroom Expectations:

I expect students to attend class. If you are unable to attend class, you are responsible for getting the missed materials. You should speak with your classmates to get the notes. Students are responsible for any material presented in class including lectures, discussions, and films shown in class.

It is your responsibility to be in class for exams. If you miss a pop quiz or other assignment, you will not be allowed to make it up. Make up exams are at the discretion of the instructor, based on a legitimate medical/family emergency. Documentation may be requested.

Student Conduct:

Students should familiarize themselves with the University's Student Code of Conduct. Additionally, I have the following requirements in my classroom:

- Please be on time to class. It is disruptive to come in late.
- Please turn off all electronic devices or place them on silent.
- Please be respectful of your classmates and not carry on side conversations while others are speaking.

Sensitive Topics:

The topics covered in any Criminal Justice course can be sensitive in nature. I appreciate hearing every student's thoughts and ideas, but request that all thoughts are shared with respect. Most students will already have preconceived notions concerning the justice system and law enforcement and we will challenge those in this course.

Accommodations:

This course will be conducted in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you are a student with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation, please inform me at the beginning of the semester and make the appropriate arrangements with Disabled Student Support Services located in Suite 267 of the Carmichael Student Center Addition, 770-423-6443

Course Outline: I reserve the right to make adjustments to the proposed schedule as needed. We may find that as a class we need additional time in some areas and less in others. It is your responsibility to keep up with any changes, which will be announced in class.

Week 1 January 7	Course Introduction Syllabus Overview What is Criminology?
Week 2 January 12 January 14	What is Criminology?
Week 3 January 19- No Class January 21	The Nature and Extent of Crime January 21- Thinking About Crime essay Due
Week 4 January 26 January 28	Explanations for Criminal Behavior Biological Theories
Week 5 February 2 February 4	February 2- Test 1 Psychological Explanations for Crime
Week 6 February 9 February 11	Psychological Explanations for Crime (cntd)
Week 7 February 16- No Class February 18	Sociological Explanations for Crime
Week 8 February 23 February 25	Sociological Explanations for Crime Ref Chapters 8-9
Week 9 March 2 March 4	Sociological Explanations for Crime (cntd) March 4- Test 2
Week 10 March 9 March 11	Crimes of Violence
Week 11 March 16 March 18	Property Crimes
Week 12 March 23 March 25	Organizational Criminality
Week 13 March 30 April 1	Public Order Crimes
Week 14- Spring Break April 6 April 8	NO Class this week, Spring Break
Week 15	April 13- Criminology in the Movies essay Due

April 13 April 15	Public Order Crimes
Week 16 April 20 April 22	Victims and Victimology
Week 17 April 27 April 29	Victims and Victimology
Week 18 May 4	Final Exam

Assignments:

Thinking About Crime Paper: The 'thinking about crime' paper will be a brief (2-3 page) essay where you will discuss your own views on crime causation. In particular, you will be asked to describe (1) your general thoughts on why people break the law, and (2) the events and processes in your life that have shaped these views. In other words, I want you to provide an explanation as to why your thoughts on crime causation are the way they are (i.e., why do you feel the way you do about the cause(s) of crime?).

Criminology in the Movies Paper: Complete an essay, 4-6 pages (1,500 to 2,000 words) in length (including the cover sheet and bibliography pages). Your assignment will be to view one of the following films listed below and to answer one selection of questions. Your essay should consider the historical foundations of the study of criminal behavior; and examine ways in which society responds to criminal behavior in terms of prevention and punishment. The paper should be written in APA format and have at least four sources, three of which should be sources not covered in the course. The essay should contain a title page and a reference. You are not required to prepare an abstract for this assignment.

Select a Movie:

1. American Beauty
2. American History X
3. Clockers
4. Crime and Punishment in Suburbia
5. Basketball Diaries
6. Cheaters

Once you select a movie and watch it, you will need to answer one of the questions listed below. You DO NOT need to answer all of them, only one question!

1. Cultural Transmission Theory- Based upon your viewing of your selected movie, consider the process by which the main character(s) become involved in deviant and criminal behavior: is the behavior the product of learning, operant conditioning, lack of containment, or failure of self control? Which theory do you believe best accounts for the character's thought process and actions? Do you see examples of learned techniques as well as learned motivations? Conclude by analyzing the agents of socialization- parents, media, peers, schools, etc.- that facilitated the

cultural transmission. Is there any way to break the cycle from generation to generation? (Best for American Beauty, American History X and Clockers)

2. Structural Strain Theory- Based upon your viewing of your selected movie, consider the socially-endorsed goals that the main character(s) is seeking to achieve? Do you consider these goals normal and desirable? What specifically happened in the story that interfered with the achievement of these goals? Using Merton's theory of strain, determine whether the actions of the characters represent conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism, and rebellion; keep in mind that you might find a number of these modes of adaptation throughout the film, depending on the specific obstacles and circumstances. Conclude by determining if the criminal innovation and rebellion that resulted from the strain is understandable and should be excused, or so deviant that it should be prosecuted. (Best for American History X and Clockers)
3. Control Theory- Consider Travis Hirschi's Control Theory in the characters depicted in your movie. Give specific examples of how the main (or various) character(s) had bonds of attachment, commitment, involvement and belief. Which bonds are missing, weakened or broken, and what were the specific results for that character? If you were a policy-maker, what would you do to ensure that the crucial bonds that give control to teenager's lives are not broken- and what can you do for those who lose control and resort to crime? (Best for all of the movies)
4. Based upon your viewing of your selected movie, consider the role of labeling in the social interaction and life choices of the movie's main character(s); give three specific examples from the movie using dialogue and scene description to explain the labeling process and its repercussions on the character. Who were agents of socialization that labeled the character? In what way were they "significant others" or "Moral entrepreneurs"? Did you see examples of primary deviance which transformed into secondary deviance? Was the character an example of "self fulfilling prophecy?" (Best for American Beauty, American History X and Cheaters)