

CRM 320-001: Criminological Theory

Professor: Ethan Amidon, Ph.D.

Course Meets: TR 12:30 – 1:45 pm

Office Hours: 9 am – 12 pm (Tues -Thurs) or by appointment

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Location: Strong Hall 0202

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Fall 2018

Course Description

This course examines the nature and various dimensions of criminality through the lens of the social and behavioral sciences. Historical and contemporary explanations of crime rooted in a range of biological, psychological, and sociological perspectives are explored as well as their implications for individuals, social systems, and organizations. Students will learn how various institutions have experimented with and adopted crime-reduction policies and practices over time.

Student Learning Outcomes & Methods of Assessment

The core objectives of this course are described by the following goals and learning objectives. Students who complete this course should be able to:

1. Understand the causes of crime and delinquency,
2. Articulate the historical and contemporary explanations of crime,
3. Critically analyze the strengths and weaknesses associated with the social and behavioral approach to studying crime,
4. Articulate the scientific methods used to assess the prevalence and incidence of criminal behavior,
5. Explain the relationship between theory, research, and practice in addressing and reducing crime.

All of these learning objectives will be assessed using journal assignments, quizzes, and exams.

Required Materials

There is one textbook required for this course, and it is available in the MSU bookstore or online (e.g., www.amazon.com or www.half.com):

Cullen, Francis T., Robert Agnew, and Pamela Wilcox. 2017. *Criminological Theory: Past to Present*, 6th edition. New York City: Oxford University Press.

***Additional required readings and articles will be assigned throughout the course and will be provided by the professor on Blackboard.

Grading

Your final grade for this class will be based on your performance on three exams, eleven quizzes, and four journal assignments. The breakdown of your final grade is as follows:

3 Exams	300 points
11 Quizzes	110 points
4 Journal Assignments	60 points
<hr/> Total	470 points

Exams (~64%): There will be four exams worth 100 points each given throughout the course. These exams will cover the material conveyed in the assigned readings and the course lectures. Each exam will consist of a combination of multiple choice and essay questions. Students' overall exam grade will be determined by their performance on **only three** out of the four exams. *A **non-mandatory** cumulative final will be given at the end of the semester that can be used to substitute for the student's lowest test grade.*

Quizzes (~23%): There will be **twelve quizzes** given over the course of the semester. These quizzes are worth 10 points each, and they will cover the required reading(s) for the week. ***The lowest quiz grade will be dropped.***

Journal Assignments (~13%): There will be four assignments worth 15 points each that will be due throughout the semester. These assignments will consist of short thought papers that will require students to correctly interpret and apply the core concepts covered in the textbook and the course lectures. Across the four assignments, students will be expected to identify the key propositions within a criminological theory of their choosing, assess the strengths and limitations associated with this perspective, discuss potential methods for capturing the key concepts within this perspective, and to apply the chosen perspective to real world issues. Assignments will **generally** be graded in terms of: **1)** the clarity of the student's response (i.e., whether the student clearly articulates their point using proper punctuation and grammar), **2)** the correct identification and application of core theoretical and methodological concepts, **3)** the quality of the justifications offered to support the student's position, and **4)** the overall thoughtfulness of the student's response. ***Additional grading expectations may be included in the instructions for the journal assignments, which are available on Blackboard.***

Make-up Policy and Late Assignments: Make-up exams or the acceptance of late assignments will only be given/accepted in emergency situations and only when the student has received permission from me prior to the due date. If an emergency situation should arise, please contact me via email before the scheduled due date. **Students who fail to notify me before the due date will not be allowed to make up the course work. Students will also be required to provide documentation regarding their absence.**

The grading scale for this class is as follows:

- A = 90% - 100%
- B = 80% - 89%
- C = 70% - 79%
- D = 60% - 69%
- F = Below 60%

Course Policies and Expectations

Attending lectures is strongly suggested if you expect to perform well in this class. In order to properly prepare for in-class meetings, students are expected to have completed the assigned chapter(s) for the week, reviewed the lecture notes posted on Blackboard, and come to class ready to discuss the material. Given the importance of attending lectures and preparing for class discussions, the weekly quizzes and assignments are designed to ensure that students regularly attend classes and stay up to date with the assigned readings.

Lecture notes in the form of PowerPoints will be made available online before the class in which the topic is scheduled to be discussed. These lecture notes are designed to highlight the key concepts covered in every chapter and to assist students with their preparation for in-class lectures, online journal assignments, quizzes, and exams. **I strongly suggest that students review the lecture notes before coming to class because they contain additional information not covered in the textbook.** If you are unable to attend a class, please contact another student for their notes on the material that you missed.

Students are also responsible for ensuring their ability to access and complete all of the requirements associated with this course. In order to perform well in this class, students will likely need to access Blackboard on a regular basis. **It is the responsibility of the student to make sure they will be able to frequently access a computer with Internet capabilities throughout the semester.** Furthermore, if technical difficulties should arise when using Blackboard, students will be expected to actively address these issues by contacting the **help desk (417-836-5891)** and myself (either in-class, via email, or during office hours) for assistance with these problems. **Missing submission dates for online assignments based on either of these issues will rarely be excused.**

It is also expected that students will demonstrate respect for their fellow classmates' views and opinions. This means avoiding the use of abusive, harassing, or insulting language toward other students both online and in class. One of the goals of this class is to create a collaborative environment in which students are able to communicate with one another to increase their knowledge of the course material. In order to attain this goal, we must all strive to be respectful of each other and to create an atmosphere that encourages student participation and discussion. **If a student is found to be in violation of these expectations, the minimum sanction will consist of either being excused from class or receiving a zero for the online assignment in which the violation occurred.**

Finally, as a member of the learning community, each student has a responsibility to other students who are members of the community. When cell phones or pagers ring and students respond in class or leave class to respond, it disrupts the class. Therefore, the [Office of the](#)

[Provost](#) prohibits the use by students of cell phones, pagers, PDAs, or similar communication devices during scheduled classes. All such devices must be turned off or put in a silent (vibrate) mode and ordinarily should not be taken out during class. Given the fact that these same communication devices are an integral part of the University's emergency notification system, an exception to this policy would occur when numerous devices activate simultaneously. When this occurs, students may consult their devices to determine if a university emergency exists. If that is not the case, the devices should be immediately returned to silent mode and put away. Other exceptions to this policy may be granted at the discretion of the professor.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Missouri State University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution and maintains a grievance procedure available to any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against. At all times, it is your right to address inquiries or concerns about possible discrimination to the [Office for Equity and Diversity](#), Park Central Office Building, 117 Park Central Square, Suite 111, (417) 836-4252. Other types of concerns (i.e., concerns of an academic nature) should be discussed directly with your instructor and can also be brought to the attention of your professor's Department Head. Please visit the OED website at www.missouristate.edu/equity/.

Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a disability and anticipate barriers related to this course, it is important to request accommodations and establish an accommodation plan with the University. Please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) (<https://www.missouristate.edu/disability/>), Meyer Library, Suite 111, 417-836-4192, to initiate the process to establish your accommodation plan. The DRC will work with you to establish your accommodation plan, or it may refer you to other appropriate resources based on the nature of your disability. In order to prepare an accommodation plan, the University usually requires that students provide documentation relating to their disability. Please be prepared to provide such documentation if requested. Once a University accommodation plan is established, you may notify the class instructor of approved accommodations. If you wish to utilize your accommodation plan, it is suggested that you do so in a timely manner, preferably within the first two weeks of class. Early notification to the instructor allows for full benefit of the accommodations identified in the plan. Instructors will not receive the accommodation plan until you provide that plan, and are not required to apply accommodations retroactively.

Academic Dishonesty

Missouri State University is a community of scholars committed to developing educated persons who accept the responsibility to practice personal and academic integrity. You are responsible for knowing and following the university's student honor code, *Student Academic Integrity Policies and Procedures*, available at www.missouristate.edu/assets/provost/AcademicIntegrityPolicyRev-1-08.pdf and also available at the Reserves Desk in Meyer Library. Any student participating in any form of academic dishonesty will be subject to sanctions as described in this policy. Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive zero points for the assignment.

Emergency Response Statement

At the first class meeting, students should become familiar with a basic emergency response plan through a dialogue with the instructor that includes a review and awareness of exits specific to the classroom and the location of evacuation centers for the building. All instructors are provided this information specific to their classroom and/or lab assignments in an e-mail prior to the beginning of the fall semester from the Office of the Provost and Safety and Transportation. Students with disabilities impacting mobility should discuss the approved accommodations for emergency situations and additional options when applicable with the professor.

For more information go to <http://www.missouristate.edu/safetran/51597.htm> and <http://www.missouristate.edu/safetran/erp.htm>.

Course Outline

- Week 1 (8/21):** **Introduction to the Course**
- Week 1 (8/23):** **The Role of Theory in Criminology**
Assigned materials are available on Blackboard
QUIZ #1
- Week 2 (8/28):** **Measuring Criminal Activity**
Assigned materials are available on Blackboard
QUIZ #2
- Week 2 (8/30):** **Measuring Criminal Activity (Cont.)**
- Week 3 (9/4):** **Classical Criminology**
Part I: Introduction and Chapters 1-2
QUIZ #3
- Week 3 (9/6):** **Social Disorganization & the Ecology of Crime**
Part II: Introduction and Chapters 3-5
QUIZ #4
- Week 4 (9/11):** **Social Disorganization & the Ecology of Crime (Cont.)**
- Week 4 (9/13):** **Review for Exam #1**
- Week 5 (9/18):** **Exam #1**
- Week 5 (9/20):** **Social Learning & Subcultural Theories (Cont.)**
Part III: Introduction and Chapters 6-8
QUIZ #5

- Week 6 (9/25): **Social Learning & Subcultural Theories (Cont.)**
- Week 6 (9/27): **Anomie and Strain Theories**
Part IV: Introduction and Chapters 9-12
QUIZ #6
- Week 7 (10/2): **Anomie and Strain Theories (Cont.)**
- Week 7 (10/4): **Control Theories**
Part V: Introduction and Chapters 13-15
QUIZ #7
- Week 8 (10/9): **Control Theories (Cont.)**
- Week 8 (10/11): **NO CLASS: FALL HOLIDAY**
- Week 9 (10/16): **Labeling, Interaction, and Crime**
Part VI: Introduction and Chapters 16-18
QUIZ #8
- Week 9 (10/18): **Labeling, Interaction, and Crime (Cont.)**
- Week 10 (10/23): **Journal Assignment Review Session**
- Week 10 (10/25): **Review for Exam #2**
ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE BY MIDNIGHT ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER
28TH
- Week 11 (10/30): **EXAM #2**
- Week 11 (11/1): **Critical Criminology**
Part VII: Introduction and Chapters 19-21
QUIZ #9
- Week 12 (11/6): **Critical Criminology (Cont.)**
- Week 12 (11/8): **Feminist Theories**
Part VIII: Introduction and Chapters 22-25
QUIZ #10
ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE BY MIDNIGHT ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER
11TH
- Week 13 (11/13): **Feminist Theory Cont.**

- Week 13 (11/15):** **Environmental Criminology**
Part XI: Introduction and Chapters 31-34
QUIZ #11
ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE BY MIDNIGHT ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER
18TH
- Week 14 (11/20):** **Environmental Criminology Cont.**
- Week 14 (11/22):** **NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING**
- Week 15 (11/27):** **Trait & Biosocial Theories**
Part XII: Introduction and Chapters 35-37
QUIZ #12
- Week 15 (11/29):** **Trait & Biosocial Theories Cont.**
ASSIGNMENT #4 DUE BY MIDNIGHT ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER
2ND
- Week 16 (12/4):** **Review for Exam #3**
- Week 16 (12/6):** **EXAM #3**
- Week 17 (12/11):** **FINAL EXAM (11:00 AM – 1:00 PM)**