

Introduction to Criminology – SOCI 211S

Autumn 2017

Tuesday & Tuesday, 11:00–12:20, Charles H. Clapp Building 131

Instructor Information

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Teaching Assistant

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Course Overview

In this course, we will survey many of the major issues in criminology, including the nature of crime, causes of crime, and societal reaction to crime. In the first section of the course, we will examine how crime is measured, who commits crime, as well as discuss why certain types of behaviors are considered “criminal.” We will also discuss characteristics of major categories of crime, including property crime, violent crime, victimless crime, and white-collar crime. In the second section of the course, we will focus on the causes of crime. Here, we will study several theories of crime, comparing evidence between the theories and applying the theories to real-life events. Finally, we will briefly discuss the criminal justice system and efforts to control crime. Throughout the course, you will be encouraged to think critically and to weigh the evidence for and against various perspectives. In this way, the ultimate goal for the course is to provide you with the necessary tools to understand the complex issues of crime, as well as to evaluate crime-control strategies.

The syllabus is a general plan for the course. Deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Required Readings:

Crime Profiles: The Anatomy of Dangerous Persons, Places, and Situations (3rd Edition) by Terrance Miethe, Richard McCorkle, & Shelly Listwan.

Criminological Theories: Introduction, Evaluation, and Application (5th Edition) by Ronald Akers & Christine Sellers.

Additional readings will be available online on Moodle.

You are expected to complete the assigned readings before class each day. The readings establish the foundation for the lectures and class discussions, so do not expect to be taught the information that appears in the readings during class. Instead, our in-class time will be spent going beyond the readings.

Course Requirements

Three Exams

You will have three exams of increasing value (worth 15%, 25%, and 30% of your grade). Exams focus upon (and therefore you are responsible for knowing) material presented in the readings and in class. No exam, including the “final,” is cumulative in the traditional sense. It is impossible, however, to avoid concepts and material presented in earlier units as the semester unfolds. Exam dates are indicated on the course outline.

Quizzes and In-Class Activities

In addition to the exams, you will also have periodic quizzes and in-class exercises/group activities. These will account for the remaining 30% of your grade. The quizzes will assess your comprehension of the assigned readings and will be given within the first 5 minutes of class. If you arrive late or are absent for any reason, you will be unable to make-up that day’s quiz. There will be approximately 7 to 10 of these reading quizzes. We will also have several in-class group activities. They will be graded in terms of “pass/fail” (either you do it or you don’t); consequently, if you aren’t in class on the day of a given assignment, there will be no way to make-up the points. If you show up late or leave early during a day in which we have a quiz or activity, you will not receive credit for that quiz or activity. I will drop your **two** lowest quiz/activity grades.

Grading

Course grades will be based on the following:

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| Quiz/Activity | 30% |
| Exam 1 | 15% |
| Exam 2 | 25% |
| Exam 3 | 30% |
| Total | 100% |

Final grades for the course are based on the following scale:

| Letter Grade | Number Grade |
|--------------|-----------------|
| A | 93 to 100 |
| A- | 90 to 92.99 |
| B+ | 88 to 89.99 |
| B | 83 to 87.99 |
| B- | 80 to 82.99 |
| C+ | 78 to 79.99 |
| C | 73 to 77.99 |
| C- | 70 to 72.99 |
| D+ | 68 to 69.99 |
| D | 63 to 67.99 |
| D- | 60 to 62.99 |
| F | 59.99 and below |

Course grades are not rounded up to the next letter grade.

Class Participation and Attendance

While I have no official attendance requirement, I strongly encourage you to attend all class sessions. And, because this class will emphasize class discussion, it is important that you come to class prepared to discuss the readings. Students who attend regularly and participate in class discussions tend to perform better on exams than those who do not. We will also have in-class exercises and quizzes that you will not be able to make-up.

You should be aware that we will discuss a number of subjects that you may find controversial. In all of our class discussions, you will be expected to be respectful toward your classmates, despite any disagreement you may have with a classmate's ideas. In this way, we will foster an atmosphere in which each student feels comfortable presenting his or her thoughts, as well as critiquing the arguments presented by others. You should not worry that your grade will be affected if you express opinions different from what you perceive the professor's opinions to be. Instead, focus upon using evidence and logic to present your own arguments and in critiquing the arguments of others. In following these ground rules, I expect our discussion to be lively, interesting, and intellectually challenging.

Classroom Courtesy

Please plan to arrive on time for all class sessions and to stay for the entire class. If you **must** arrive late or leave early, please notify me in advance and sit near the door so as not to disturb your classmates. Cell phones should be muted before entering the classroom. When class begins, please put away all other materials. As a general rule, I do not allow laptops in class, as these devices are distracting for other students. If you would like to discuss using a laptop, please make arrangements to meet with me. Finally, wait until the end of class before putting away your books.

Make-Up Exam Policy

Make-up exams will be given at the instructor's discretion. The only times in which a make-up exam will be considered are when the student experiences a serious illness or family situation that prevents him or her from being physically present during the exam. Please understand that offering a false rationale for a make-up exam is an act of academic dishonesty and amounts to cheating on an exam. In all cases, it is the student's responsibility to contact the professor to request a make-up. The failure of the student to request the make-up within 24 hours of the missed exam will be sufficient cause for the professor to deny the request. If the request is denied, then a score of zero is entered for that exam. If the instructor elects to permit a make-up, then the format of the make-up exam may vary from the original exam and must be taken as soon after the missed exam as possible.

Academic Honesty

All students are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in every phase of their academic careers. A few examples of academic dishonesty are copying answers from another student during an exam or quiz, signing in for another student on an attendance sheet or having another student sign in for you, giving a false excuse

for failing to show up for an exam, making use of old exams from this course, or taking a copy of an exam from our classroom. Students who assist other students in academically dishonest acts are in violation of the policy of academic honesty. All students must be aware of and carefully adhere to the provisions defining and prohibiting academic misconduct in the UM Student Conduct Code (http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php). The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe and ignorance is not an acceptable defense.

Course Outline

The Nature & Extent of Crime

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| Thursday 8/31 | What is Crime No new readings today |
| Tuesday 9/5 | Measuring & Classifying Crime Read <i>Crime Profiles</i> Chapter 1 and “The Nation’s Two Crime Measures” |
| Thursday 9/7 | Measuring & Classifying Crime Review <i>Crime Profiles</i> Chapter 1 |
| Tuesday 9/12 | Illicit Drugs Read <i>Crime Profiles</i> Chapter 9 |
| Thursday 9/14 | Costs of the War on Drugs Reading TBA |
| Tuesday 9/19 | Costs of the War on Drugs No new reading. |
| Thursday 9/21 | Exam 1 This exam covers the approaches to defining crime, the measurement of crime, and victimless crimes. |
| Tuesday 9/26 | Homicide, Aggravated Assault, & Sexual Assault Read <i>Crime Profiles</i> Chapters 3 & 4 and "Federal Rules on Rape Statistics Criticized" |
| Thursday 9/28 | Robbery Read <i>Crime Profiles</i> Chapter 5 & "Up It Up: Gender and the Accomplishment of Street Robbery" |
| Tuesday 10/3 | Burglary & Motor Vehicle Theft Read <i>Crime Profiles</i> Chapters 6 & 7 |
| Thursday 10/5 | Larceny-Theft & Violent/Property Crime Conclusion Read “Establishing Connections: Gender, Motor Vehicle Theft, and Disposal Networks” |
| Tuesday 10/10 | White-Collar Crime Read <i>Crime Profiles</i> Chapter 8 |
| Thursday 10/12 | White-Collar Crime: Enron Read “Denying the Guilty Mind: Accounting for Involvement in White Collar Crime” |
| Tuesday 10/17 | White-Collar Crime: Enron No new readings today |

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| Thursday 10/19 | Exam 2 This exam covers violent crime, property crime, and white-collar crime |
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Causes of Crime

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| Tuesday 10/24 | Classical Criminology Read <i>Criminological Theories</i> Chapter 2 |
| Thursday 10/26 | Biological Theories Read <i>Criminological Theories</i> Chapter 3 |
| Tuesday 10/31 | Social Disorganization Theory Read <i>Criminological Theories</i> Chapter 8 |
| Thursday 11/2 | Strain Theories Read <i>Criminological Theories</i> Chapter 9 |
| Tuesday 11/7 | Learning Theories Read <i>Criminological Theories</i> Chapter 5 |
| Thursday 11/9 | Control Theories Read <i>Criminological Theories</i> Chapter 6 |
| Tuesday 11/14 | Review of Theories No new readings today |

Societal Responses to Crime

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| Thursday 11/16 | Race and Incarceration Reading TBA |
| Tuesday 11/21 | Race and Incarceration Reading TBA |
| Thursday 11/23 | No Class: Thanksgiving Break |
| Tuesday 11/28 | Incarceration in America Reading TBA |
| Thursday 11/30 | Criminal Justice Special Topics Readings TBA |
| Tuesday 12/5 | Criminal Justice Special Topics Readings TBA |
| Thursday 12/7 | Criminal Justice Special Topics Readings TBA |
| Tuesday 12/12 | Criminal Justice Special Topics Readings TBA |

FINAL EXAM: Monday, December 18, 10:10–12:10, CHCB 131

This exam covers criminological theories and the criminal justice system.
