

CJ 584: Criminological Theory, Fall 2019

Department of Criminology & Criminal Justice
University of Alabama

1 INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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or by appointment

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*emails must originate from your university email account with CJ 584 in the subject line

2 COURSE INFORMATION

Time: 2pm - 4:50pm Thursday

Location: Farrah Hall 418

3 COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will provide an overview of criminological theory at an advanced level. We will read original works from classic and modern criminological theory, and examine the research evidence that has accumulated over time to aid in our understanding of the development, and progression of these theories over time. Special attention will be paid to modern developments in criminological theory over the past few decades.

4 STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

As an advanced graduate-level course, I expect that students will come into class with a basic understanding of the major criminological theories. I also expect that this seminar will be largely discussion-based. Given these expectations, the learning outcomes for the course are as follows:

- Demonstrate a thorough understanding of the major areas in criminological theory
- Expand their analytical skills in assessments and critiques of various theoretical areas
- Enhance their reading-based discussion skills, developing questions for class and facilitating discussions about material
- Develop their critical writing skills, employing the academic journal articles model in the creation of a research paper

5 TEACHING METHOD

Research shows that students learn best when they actively participate in class. I believe that the role of a professor is to facilitate an active learning environment. As such, I will serve as the moderator and occasional discussion leader, but the bulk of the responsibility falls on the students. To be successful in the course, you are required to read all assignments, come to class prepared, and engage fully in discussions and other activities. I value your opinions about the course and will solicit feedback periodically.

6 COURSE EXPECTATIONS, REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

6.1 ASSESSMENT

Attendance and Participation (20%):

This class works best when students are present and engaged. This a seminar course where all students are expected to contribute meaningfully to discussion throughout each class. I expect that you will have read all assigned material thoroughly before class. You should come to class each week with: the readings, your notes, thoughtful questions, and critiques of the materials. To receive full points, you need to be present and be an active contributor to advancing the class dialogue.

Attendance

- You are permitted 1 absence for whatever reason without penalty.
- Missing class hinders learning - yours and your classmates':
 - Missing 2 classes → your overall grade will be no better than a B
 - Missing 3 classes → your overall grade will be no better than a C
 - Missing 4 classes → your overall grade will be an F
- Serious matters or extenuating circumstances beyond your control should be discussed privately with me at the earliest possible opportunity.

Participation Guidelines

- Evaluate the evidence based on the readings and other empirical works
- It is absolutely okay (even encouraged) to update your position with new information
- Contribute as much as you want, but do not interrupt when someone else is speaking
- Build on what others have said to advance the discussion
- Stay on topic so that comments don't ramble
- Provide warning if you want to discuss a new topic so we can wrap up the current topic
- Encourage each other! It is okay to share partially formed thoughts or questions
- Diversity of thought is a good thing - respect and build off of this

Student Discussion Leaders (10%):

Students will rotate as discussion leaders. The student(s) leading discussion will act as the moderator(s) that week. The student(s) will: introduce the material, discuss how it relates to what we have already read and discussed in previous weeks, analyze and evaluate the readings, and pose thoughtful discussion questions. Student discussion leader(s) will send me at least 8 discussion questions (not the ones from the book!) at least 48 hours in advance of class. I will provide feedback on the questions, which the discussion leader should consider and revise. Finalized questions will be shared with the class each Thursday morning. All other students should bring at least one question each class. We may not get to all questions, but we should never run out of questions to discuss.

Journal Article Review (10%):

Students will select one of the following empirical journal articles that tests a theory of crime. Article reviews are intended to be brief (maximum of four pages, double-spaced, 12 pt Times New Roman with 1 inch margins) but thoughtful evaluations of the research in question. The review should discuss: the research question and formal hypotheses; the methods and data; the findings and conclusions; the implications; and lingering questions or critiques.

I am a tough grader and give students a lot of comments on their writing. Writing of any sort is

a process—whether it’s an important email, a memo, a final paper, or a thesis. In an effort to encourage you to engage with writing as an iterative process, you are allowed to “revise & resubmit” your JAR. You have 3 weeks from the original due date to email me a revised version of the JAR.

Journal Article Review Options:

- Dugan, L., & Chenoweth, E. (2012). Moving beyond deterrence: The effectiveness of raising the expected utility of abstaining from terrorism in Israel. *American Sociological Review*, 77(4), 597-624.
- Kirk, D. S., & Papachristos, A. V. (2011). Cultural mechanisms and the persistence of neighborhood violence. *American Journal of Sociology*, 116(4), 1190-1233.
- McGloin, J. M. (2009). Delinquency balance: Revisiting peer influence. *Criminology*, 47(2), 439-477.
- Pogarsky, G., & Piquero, A. R. (2003). Can punishment encourage offending? Investigating the “resetting” effect. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 40(1), 95-120.
- Tyler, T. R., Sherman, L., Strang, H., Barnes, G. C., & Woods, D. (2007). Reintegrative shaming, procedural Justice, and recidivism: The engagement of offenders’ psychological mechanisms in the Canberra RISE Drinking-and-Driving Experiment. *Law & Society Review*, 41(3), 553-586.

Media Depictions of Criminality Paper (10%):

Watch an episode of any TV show related to crime or crime control - seriously, watch TV! Using the theories we have studied so far, discuss what theory or theories best explain why a criminal in the episode engages in this behavior. Be sure to identify the show, season & episode!

Research Paper (30%):

Students will research and write a critical examination of a major issue relating to criminological research, crime measurement, criminological theory, or crime prevention policy.

Papers should be between 15 and 20 double-spaced pages, excluding references. Papers must:

- Demonstrate conceptual clarity
- Be well organized
- Come to some conclusions about the state of knowledge in the area you select to examine
- Reference at least 6 journal articles beyond those assigned in class
- Be well written

Below are some potential paper topics to give you an idea of how to approach this assignment:

1. **Criminological Research/Crime Measurement:** For example, you can examine the research evidence regarding a suspected correlate of crime (e.g. I.Q., poverty, unemployment, broken homes, etc.). Or you can assess trends for a particular type of crime like homicide, robbery, or burglary. Or you can examine some aspect of the social context of crime (e.g. family, school, or community). Or you can assess the validity and reliability of available data on crime in general or for a specific offense like domestic violence or sexual assault.
2. **Criminological Theory:** For example, you can evaluate empirical tests of a specific theory of crime (e.g. Hirschi’s social control theory). Or you can discuss one of several hot topics in the field like the prospects for multi-level theoretical integration, aspects of criminal careers (e.g. specialization in offending), continuity and changes in offending over time, or the necessity of crime-specific theories (e.g. theories of violence v. general theories of crime). Or you can

investigate the life and work of one of the pioneers of criminology, for instance, Beccaria, Quetelet, Lombroso, the Gluecks, Shaw and McKay, Sutherland, etc.

3. **Crime Prevention Policy:** For example you can examine the research evidence on a specific crime prevention program (e.g. DARE, Nurse Home Visits, Big Brother/Big Sister). Or you can assess a particular area of crime prevention (e.g. retail security or school security). Finally, you can assess some of the methodological/research design issues in crime prevention research.

You must submit a brief description of your topic (one page maximum) along with at least three sources of literature you will be using for your paper. This assignment will not be graded, but it is very important in order to ensure that you are proceeding along on the right track. At that time, I may also be able to direct you to important publications that you will need to examine for your paper. I urge you to do this assignment as soon as possible, but no later than 9/26.

Final Exam (20%):

There will be a final examination which will consist of questions in the style of the comprehensive exams for masters students in the Criminology & Criminal Justice department. The exam will consist of essay questions covering material presented in our seminar meetings and in the readings. Students will be allowed to bring a list of citations listed alphabetically for use during the exam, which will be collected and checked by myself.

You must complete the Academic Integrity Quiz due 8/27. Failure to do so will result in ZEROs on all written assignment until this is completed.

NOTE FOR ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: You must use the APA style for your references. A guide on how to use this format can be found at: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01>.

6.2 GRADING

A = 100 - 90	B = 89 - 80	C = 79 - 70	D = 69 - 60	F = 59 or below
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If you have questions or concerns about a grade(s) and believe I should review them, you should submit a written request over email to me describing your concern in detail. You must take 24 hours to reflect on the grade before contacting me, but you must submit the request within one week of the date that grades for that assignment are disseminated. The exception is an addition error, which should be pointed out immediately.

Unless otherwise stated in class, there are no extra credit assignments for this class. Assignments will be graded on accuracy, depth of expression, grammar, neatness, punctuation, quality, spelling, and thoroughness. Rubrics are available on BlackBoard for all graded assignments. Please note that Blackboard shows unweighted grades.

As per the Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA), grades will not be posted, given out over the phone or email, or released to anyone other than the student.

7 COMMUNICATION

EMAIL

I will send emails on a regular basis to remind students about upcoming events, due dates, important news, et cetera. These messages will come to your official university email. Students are responsible for the contents of these messages. I will respond to email within 24 hours during the week and within 48 hours on the weekend unless otherwise specified in advance.

8 COURSE POLICIES

STUDENT COPYRIGHT

For the benefit of future students, work in this course may be used for educational critique, demonstration, samples, presentations, and verification. Outside of these uses, work shall not be sold, copied, broadcast, or distributed for profit without student consent. Items submitted for this course also may be submitted to TurnItIn.com for analysis.

THE MISCELLANEOUS CALAMITY CLAUSE

As you may know, each class is required to meet for a specified number of hours in a semester. When class is cancelled due to ice/hurricane/plague/zombies, these hours need to be made up. Instead making up hours at the end of the semester when you are very busy, we will simply hold class online for any week in which class is cancelled. Since we would not know of a cancellation in advance, the timeframe will shift slightly. Discussion leaders and I will post questions on Blackboard and you will have until the next class to respond to 5 of them. Additionally, I am occasionally required to be out of town for professional conferences. I will give you as much advanced notice as possible and we will simply move the class online for that week.

MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENTS & NOTES

If you are absent, you will need to get the notes from a classmate, so find a reliable source now.

All assignments are due by the beginning of class on the date indicated and will receive a 0 if not provided at that time. I WILL NOT accept late papers or papers submitted in hard copy or email. Papers MUST be submitted to Blackboard. No excuses will be accepted.

In an extraordinary circumstance, I accept late work. To qualify for this exception, you must notify me by email, provide documentation, and receive my permission in advance of the deadline. Examples of extraordinary circumstances include, but are not limited to: medical problems that require bed care or surgery (including yourself and immediate family members), subpoena for court or jury duty, or in-service training. Oversleeping and other personal events do not qualify. I reserve the right to exercise discretion in this matter so that individual predicaments may be considered.

CLASSROOM COURTESY

Classroom courtesy is essential for learning. All students have the right to learn without unneeded distractions such as: cell phones, talking out of turn, reading, falling asleep, entering and leaving the classroom, etc. If you need cell phone for emergency purposes, it must remain on vibrate. Cell phone use is prohibited. Laptops and tablets may only be used if you have a documented learning need. It is your responsibility to arrive on time and stay for the entire class period. If you need to leave early, tell me beforehand. Repeated disruptions will lead to a reduction in your final grade.

Most importantly, as the topics addressed in this class can lead to strong feelings and heated discussion, please remember that class discussion must be respectful and scholarly at all times.

Scholarly Comments:

- are respectful of diverse opinions and open to follow up questions and/or disagreement
- are related to class and/or the course material
- are focused on advancing the discussion about issues related to the course and/or course material rather than personal beliefs
- are delivered in normal tones and a non-aggressive manner

Unacceptable Comments:

- are personal in nature (includes attacks on a persons appearance, demeanor, or beliefs)
- include interrupting the professor or other students
- often use the discussion to argue for political positions and/or beliefs. If political discussions arise in the context of the research discussed, they must be discussed in a scholarly way
- include using raised tones, yelling, arguing, or being threatening in any manner
- include ignoring the professor's authority to maintain the integrity of the classroom

SEVERE WEATHER GUIDELINES

Please see the latest Severe Weather Guidelines in the Online Catalog.

POLICY ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the official Code of Academic Conduct provided in the Online Catalog.

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

UA's primary communication tool for sending out information is through its web site at www.ua.edu. In the event of an emergency, students should consult this site for further directions. Additional course information will be posted using Blackboard Learn.

DISABILITY STATEMENT

Contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) as detailed in the Online Catalog.

PREGNANT STUDENT ACCOMODATIONS

Title IX protects against discrimination related to pregnancy or parental status. If you are pregnant and will need accommodations for this class, please review the University's FAQs on the UAct website.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

Under the Guidelines for Religious Holiday Observances, students should notify the instructor in writing or via email during the first two weeks of the semester of their intention to be absent from class for religious observance. The instructor will work to provide reasonable opportunity to complete academic responsibilities as long as that does not interfere with the academic integrity of the course. See full guidelines at Religious Holiday Observances Guidelines.

UACT: ETHICAL COMMUNITY STATEMENT

The UAct website provides an overview of The University's expectations regarding respect and civility.

9 REQUIRED MATERIALS

REQUIRED BOOKS

- Cullen, F., Agnew, R. & Wilcox, P. (2017). *Criminological Theory: Past to Present: Essential Readings, 6th Edition*. Oxford University Press. ISBN-13: 978-0190639341. [CAW]
- Rafter, N. & Brown, M. (2011). *Criminology Goes to the Movies: Crime Theory and Popular Culture*. NYU Press. ISBN-13: 978-0814776520. [RB]

ADDITIONAL READINGS

To do well, you should read everything before class and come prepared to discuss the materials. In discussing why crime happens, we will also discuss current events and media depictions of crime. You are expected to consume both news and entertainment media regularly. I highly recommend that you read papers with good national coverage, such as the New York Times www.nytimes.com, as well as local papers. If you are particularly interested in this topic and would like to do further reading on it, feel free to ask me for suggestions.

10 TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

This syllabus is a guide for the course. It is subject to change with advanced notice. Changes may come in class or may come via e-mail. You are responsible for all such communications.

THE RISE AND GROWTH OF AMERICAN CRIMINOLOGY

Class 1 (Thursday 8/22): Origins of Modern Criminology

- CAW, Introduction & Part 1
- RB, Chapter 1

Class 2 (Thursday 8/29): Chicago School: The City, Social Disorganization & Crime

- CAW, Part 2
- RB, Chapter 5

Class 3 (Thursday 9/5): Learning to be a Criminal

- CAW, Part 3
- RB, Chapter 7

Class 4 (Thursday 9/12): Anomie & Strain

- CAW, Part 4
- RB, Chapter 6

Class 5 (Thursday 9/19): Varieties of Control Theory

- CAW, Part 5
- JOURNAL ARTICLE REVIEW DUE

RETHINKING CRIMINOLOGY

Class 6 (Thursday 9/26): Labeling Theory

- CAW, Part 6
- RB, Chapter 8
- RESEARCH PAPER TOPIC DUE

Class 7 (Thursday 10/3): Critical & Conflict Theories

- CAW, Part 7 & Part 9
- RB, Chapter 9

Class 8 (Thursday 10/10): Feminist Theories

- CAW, Part 8
- RB, Chapter 10

CHOICE, OPPORTUNITY & CRIME**Class 9 (Thursday 10/17): Deterrence, Rational Choice & Environmental Theories**

- CAW, Part 10 & Part 11
- RB, Chapter 2

DEVELOPMENT & CRIME ACROSS THE LIFE COURSE**Class 10 (Thursday 10/24): Trait & Biosocial Theories**

- CAW, Part 12
- RB, Chapter 3 & Chapter 4

NO CLASS (Thursday 10/31): FALL BREAK**Class 11 (Thursday 11/7): Developmental & Life-Course Theories**

- CAW, Part 13
- RB, Chapter 11

CONTEMPORARY CRIMINOLOGY**Class 12 (Thursday 11/14): We will not meet in person this week**

- **MEDIA DEPICTIONS OF CRIMINALITY PAPER DUE**

Class 13 (Thursday 11/21): Contemporary Issues in Criminology

- CAW, Part 14 & Part 15

FINAL PAPER DUE - TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 26 @ 11:59 PM**NO CLASS (Thursday 11/28): THANKSGIVING BREAK****Class 14 (Thursday 12/5): Pulling It Together**

- CAW, Part 16 & Part 17
- RB, Chapter 12

FINAL EXAM - THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12 @ 8 AM