

# **Criminology**

## **1 INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

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## **2 COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is a general overview of the study of criminal behavior. We will examine the major theoretical explanations that have been developed in an effort to explain and predict why and how individuals break the law. We will examine the propositions, assumptions, and empirical validity of these criminological theories, as well as the social context in which they were developed and the influence of each theory on policy development. We will also discuss how theories and our understanding of criminal behavior shape our responses to crime and criminals. We will discuss both analytic, liberal views on crime and crime control and conventional, conservative views of crime and criminals as social problems. We will also investigate the nature and extent of crime in society, and how criminologists measure and study crime. We will conclude the course by focusing on new developments in the field of criminology.

## **3 COURSE GOALS**

The course will:

- Improve understanding of the nature and causes of crime
- Examine the research methods used in the field of criminology
- Understand the mechanisms and assumptions of different criminological theories
- Differentiate between various forms of crime in society
- Discuss the relationship of the public and larger society to crime
- Encourage students to think critically about the causes and consequences of crime

## **4 LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Upon successful completion of this course students will:

- Describe the scope and aims of criminology as a field of study
- Explain and critique key criminological theories and concepts
- Analyze the various ways to define, measure, and explain crime
- Critically evaluate crime and its causes, and how these are socially constructed
- Apply empirical findings to analyze crime

## **5 TEACHING METHOD**

Research has shown that students learn best when they actively participate in class discussion and projects. I believe that the role of an instructor is to facilitate an active learning environment through a combination of brief lectures, productive dialogue, teamwork, and creative thinking. As

such, the course will engage in a variety of activities in addition to lectures, including writing exercises, group work, and online class discussions. I value student opinions about the course, and will solicit feedback periodically.

To be successful in the course, students are required to read all assignments, translate their thoughts on the readings into effective written communications, and engage fully in both the in-person and online discussions and course activities.

## 6 COURSE EXPECTATIONS, REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

### 6.1 COURSE STRUCTURE

This is a hybrid course, meaning that we will meet in person half of the time and meet online half of the time. The dates for in person v. online are listed in the course schedule. The class will include brief lectures. There are some lectures that are not directly covered in the text, and portions of the readings that will not be covered in lecture. You are responsible for all material covered in both formats. We will also frequently discuss topics in class as a group (either in person or online), so your attendance and participation is key.

#### **Weekly Timeline - In Person Weeks**

Friday - The expectation is that you will have read all materials for that week and come to class with questions about the material and engage in discussion. Discussion leaders must email their questions to me by Thursday at 11:59 p.m. Three components will determine your participation grade each week: attendance, the quality and quantity of your engagement in discussion, and your involvement in class activities.

#### **Weekly Timeline - Online Weeks**

Monday - I will post the video lecture and activity for that week.

Wednesday - The expectation is that you will have read all materials for the week and watched the online video lecture. By 11:59 p.m., each student responsible for that weeks discussion must post 1 substantive discussion question to the course discussion board via Piazza. I may post questions as well.

Friday - By 3:50 p.m., all students who were not responsible for generating that weeks questions must respond to 3 questions on the discussion board (roughly 100 words each is ideal). The students responsible for that weeks discussion must then reply to 2 responses to their original question (again, roughly 100 words each is ideal). In short, every student must have at least 3 posts per week. Additionally, students will also email me the weeks activity.

• **Time due is based on Eastern Standard Time and date, regardless of where you may be located.**

• Discussion Boards via Piazza. When this class meets in cyberspace, our discussion board will run through Piazza. For those who are unfamiliar with Piazza, it is a free platform where students can post questions and collaborate to edit responses to these questions. Instructors can also answer questions, endorse student answers, and edit or delete any posted content. Piazza is designed to simulate real class discussion. It aims to get high quality answers to difficult questions, fast! You will find that at almost any time of day or night fellow students or I will be logged on or will have just posted something new or will respond to your postings or questions.

## 6.2 ASSESSMENT

### **Attendance and Participation (20%):**

**In Person Weeks:** This class works best with students are present and engaged. I expect that you will have read all assigned material. You should bring one-page total of notes for all of the readings each week in hard copy this may be used for activities or quizzes, which will contribute to your weekly participation grade. Each day, small groups of students will be responsible for posing discussion questions, which must be emailed to me by 11:59 p.m. on Thursday. Each student will be assigned two classes one in person and one online. I expect all other students to ask and respond to at least one question this is key for your grade. We will also do in-class activities that will contribute to this grade. Additionally, since we only meet once a week (only in person every other week, in fact), I expect that you will not miss class. See attendance policy for more details.

**Online Weeks:** After completing the reading and watching the short lecture, discussion leaders will each post 1 discussion by Wednesday at 11:59 p.m. By Friday at 3:50 p.m., the rest of the class must respond to at least 3 questions. Also by Friday at 3:50 p.m., the discussion leaders must respond to at least 2 responses to their original question. Posts and responses should be thoughtful, detailed, and connected with the readings, lecture, and other materials for that week. These must be written in a way that would be acceptable in a formal paper. The grading rubric is on Blackboard. You will also complete individual activities that will contribute to this grade.

**Be sure that you post to the correct folder, always post as a Note, and utilize tags throughout your discussion posts and responses. Do not post anonymously, I can see who posts and will deduct points for this. Also, you may want to change your settings to Daily Digest for post notifications so you do not get numerous email alerts each day.**

**Exams (50%):** There will be a midterm exam and a final exam (each 25% of the final grade), which will be non-cumulative. You will take the tests through Blackboard from home, they will be open note and open book, and will be timed at 90 minutes. You may not collaborate with classmates, and must study and prepare to do well. The tests are a combination of multiple choice, true/false, and essay. All material from the readings and lectures are fair game.

### **Research Paper (30%):**

**Option 1:** The primary goal of this paper is to produce a research paper. You will learn about many different criminological theories in this course. Some may be more persuasive to you than others. In this paper you will pick one crime that is of interest to you and you will then pick the criminological theory that you think best explains this crime and the criminological theory that you think is least suited to explain this crime (in general, there are always exceptions, of course). You should briefly describe the crime itself, and then thoroughly describe the theories including information about their origins, assumptions, propositions, scope, level of analysis, and basic causal model, specifically as this relates to the crime you have chosen. Find at least one scientific journal article for each theory that you chose. Conclude your paper by stating what challenges, unanswered questions, or future directions you see for the crime and the theories you chose moving forward. Refer to the Suggested Readings at the end of the syllabus for academic journals where scientific tests of the theories can be found. You are not limited to these journals, but are specifically restricted from using Wikipedia or similar encyclopedic sources. You may use the Internet for research and you must attach the articles to your assignment.

**Option 2:** The primary goal of this paper is to practice writing policy memos. You will first read “Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis” by Robert Putnam, and choose one of the issues discussed in this book that could have an impact on crime. Imagine that you’re tasked with suggesting a policy to tackle a social condition that leads to crime using theories(s) from class to inform the policy you would recommend to address the issue chosen. You will write 3 memos on the SAME issue policy, but for different hypothetical audiences. The first memo is for a think tank like Rand, Urban Institute, or Vera and has a 1,500-word limit. The second memo is for the Department of Justice and has a 1,000-word limit. The third memo is for the president and has a 300-word limit.

**Paper Components:** I encourage you to think about which option will serve you better in the future. We will engage in writing workshops to provide feedback and guidance on the paper. Prior to the writing workshops, you are required to watch the presentation on academic integrity and take the associated quiz by Week 3, which is worth 1% of your final paper grade. You will be **required** to bring a portion of your paper to the writing workshops. You must decide between these options by the first writing workshop in Week 4. You will bring your research question and abstract to the first writing workshop in Week 4, which is worth 1% of your final paper grade. You will then bring a working draft to the second writing workshop in Week 9, which is worth 3% of your final paper grade. A complete rough draft is due in Week 11 and will be returned with comments (that should be incorporated into your final paper!). The rough draft is worth 20% of the final paper grade. **If you fail to turn in any of these components, I will not grade your final paper, which is worth the remaining 75% of the final paper grade and is due in Week 13.** The rough draft and final paper will be graded using a strict rubric, which is available on Blackboard. Please consult this document (different versions for each option). **All assignments are due to Blackboard by the start of class with your last name as the first word of the file.**

### Grading

A = 95-100	A- = 90-94	
B+ = 87-89	B = 83-86	B- = 80-82
C+ = 77-79	C = 73-76	C- = 70-72
D+ = 67-69	D = 63-66	D- = 60-62
F = 59 or below		

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.

## 6.3 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.

### Skype

I will hold office hours once a week online at a mutually agreed upon time. If you cannot make this time, I can also be on Skype by appointment. If multiple students would like to speak with me simultaneously, we can use Google Hangout. If students have questions about class, they will be encouraged to ask them via the class discussion board on Piazza, as other students may have the same question and would benefit from the answers.

### Professionalism

Recently, my colleagues and I have noticed that some (by no means all) students email us using language and format more appropriate for friendly emails, not professional ones. I will only respond to emails that include: a subject, a salutation (Dear, Hello, etc.), a closing (at least your name), and proper grammar (no text speak). Additionally, if your question is about a due date, what the reading is for next week, or something else that is found in the syllabus or grading rubrics, I will not respond to your email. This is not to be harsh, but I want to make sure that all students are in the habit of corresponding professionally, which is what will be required of you in your future careers or in graduate school.

### Student Copyright Authorization

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 snow/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. If this happens, I record the lecture on Panopto and post the video on Friday for that week. Since we would not know of a cancellation in advance, the timeframe will shift slightly. You will have until Sunday at 11:59 p.m. to post your discussion question and until Tuesday at 11:59 p.m. to respond to the questions posed by your classmates. Everything else will remain the same as it would in a typical online week. 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 Exams, Assignments, and Notes

Copies of the PowerPoints will be available on Blackboard AFTER class. Handouts and returned assignments will be brought to class and distributed only once. Students who miss such items must schedule a time to pick them up. 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. Make hard copies of your papers as you go! No excuses will be accepted.

In an extraordinary circumstance, a make-up test can be scheduled. To qualify for a make-up, the student must notify me by email in advance of the absence and provide documentation. The make-up exam must be schedule within a week of the original test date. You will receive a 0 for unexcused absence from an exam. 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. The instructor reserves the right to exercise discretion in this matter so that individual predicaments may be considered.

### **Classroom Courtesy**

I expect all members of the classroom community to be active participants who learn from others and contribute, in turn, to the learning of others. Therefore, all members of the community agree to work together in every academic activity to create an educational environment of responsibility, cooperation, respect and civility.

To create such an environment, all members should contribute to the learning environment by arriving on time and leaving when dismissed. Repeatedly arriving late or departing early is not acceptable. Students who must arrive late or leave early from an individual class should notify the professor before the scheduled class and should enter and/or leave class with minimal disruption.

During class, all electronic devices should be shut off unless required in a class activity. Those whose work or family obligations require them to remain in contact should inform the instructor in advance and use the devices least intrusive setting.

Classroom courtesy is essential for learning. The classroom - both face-to-face and virtual - is a professional setting where appropriate behavior is expected. Every participant should focus on the educational activity and contribute to it. Electronic communication among participants should be conducted professionally. 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. All other use of cell phones is prohibited. Laptop and tablet use is restricted. Unless you have a documented learning need, laptops and tablets may only be used to take notes. It is your responsibility to arrive on time and stay for the entire class period. If you need to leave early, tell the instructor 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 (this includes attacks on a persons appearance, demeanor, or political beliefs)
- include interrupting the instructor 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
- may include using raised tones, yelling, engaging in arguments with other students and being threatening in any manner
- include ignoring the instructor's authority to maintain the integrity of the classroom

## 7 REQUIRED TEXTS

### REQUIRED BOOK

Bernard, Thomas J., Jeffrey B. Snipes, and Alexander L. Gerould. 2010. *Volds Theoretical Criminology*. 6th edition. New York: Oxford University Press. (listed as BSG on the Course Schedule)

Kubrin, Charlis E., Thomas D. Stucky, and Marvin D. Krohn. 2009. *Researching Theories of Crime and Deviance*. 1st edition. New York: Oxford University Press. (listed as KSK on the Course Schedule).

### ADDITIONAL READINGS

Mandatory supplemental readings will be posted to Blackboard. These readings are denoted with a \* on the Course Schedule. Students are required to do all the assigned reading. Due to the topical nature of the course material, additional reading will come from newspapers, magazines, et cetera. You are expected to read a newspaper regularly and bring in interesting and relevant articles for discussion throughout the semester.

### SUGGESTED READINGS ACADEMIC JOURNALS

The following journals are available either in print or through the library's electronic resources. Some of these may be useful for your research paper.

Criminology; Criminology & Public Policy; Criminology & Criminal Justice; American Journal of Sociology; American Sociological Review; Justice Quarterly; Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency; Journal of Quantitative Criminology; Journal of Experimental Criminology

## 8 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. **Online weeks are noted.**

Week	Topic	Assignments
1	Overview & Introduction to Criminology	BSG 1; KSK 1; Hagan 2*
2	Choice-Based Theories: Deterrence, Rational Choice & Routine Activities <b>Online</b>	BSG 2; KSK 2
3	Biological and Psychological Theories <b>Online</b>	BSG 3 & 4; KSK 3 <b>Writing Workshop 1: Topic &amp; Abstract</b>
4	Early Neighborhood-Level Control Theories	BSG 7 (133-140); KSK (82-87) <b>Academic Integrity Quiz Due</b>
5	Modern Neighborhood-Level Control Theories <b>Online</b>	BSG 7 (141-153); KSK (87-106)
6	Anomie and Strain Theories	BSG 6 & 8 (154-159; 162-171); KSK 5  <b>Midterm Exam online</b>
7	Sub-cultural Theories	BSG 8 (159-161) & 10 (206-208); Kirk & Papachristos 2011* <b>Writing Workshop 2: Working Draft</b>
8	Individual-Level Control Theories <b>Online</b>	BSG 10; KSK 7
9	Learning Theories	BSG 9; KSK 6 <b>Rough Draft Due</b>
10	Labeling & Societal Reaction Theories	BSG 11; KSK 8
11	Feminist, Critical & Conflict Theories <b>Online</b>	BSG 12 & 14; KSK 9 <b>Final Paper Due</b>
12	Developmental & Life-Course Theories <b>Online</b>	BSG 15; Farrington 2003*
13	Integrated Theories & Future Directions	BSG 16 & 17; KSK 10  <b>Final Exam, online</b>