

McGill University
Department of Sociology

Sociology 514—Criminology
(in Leacock 917 from 9:35-11:25 on Wednesdays)

Winter 2017

Professor Jason T. Carmichael
Office: Leacock 814
Office Hours: Wednesdays 11:30 -1:30

Course Overview:

This class exposes each student to the intellectual discussion related to the nature of criminal behavior that has taken place over the last several hundred years. We will explore in detail the major schools of thought that have been developed to help us understand why some individuals are more likely to commit crime and why variations in crime exist both spatially and temporally. Because an understanding of why some individuals deviate from legal and normative expectations are so fundamental to the understanding of society, each student should also gain a greater appreciation of the mechanisms through which a peaceful society is maintained. To accomplish this, we will examine in detail the development of 20th century criminological perspectives including human ecology/social disorganization, strain, differential association/learning, social control, developmental, labeling, and conflict theories. While the course will focus on sociological contributions to criminological theory, psychological and biological theories will also be considered.

The major objectives of the course are as follows:

- To become familiar with the foundations of current theoretical debates in criminology.
- The ability to apply these theoretical approaches to the explanation of deviance and crime.
- To critically evaluate the theoretical approaches.

Course Requirements:

Attendance and Class participation (15% of final grade): Participation in class discussions and small group work is a vital component of the course. Students will be graded on participation, and you can't participate unless you **attend class** and do the readings. In order to promote useful class discussion, each student should have read all the required readings prior to class. Students should be prepared to share their thoughts and comments during class.

- **Attendance:** (5% of the grade) I will take attendance at the beginning of each class (after the first class). You will be allowed one absence during the term without penalty.

Illnesses or personal emergencies may be considered but you must discuss the situation with me.

- ***Class Participation and Presentations:*** (total of 10% of the overall course grade) – contains two components as follows:
 - 1) *Presentations* (50% of participation grade): **One student will be required to present a brief summary (10-12 minutes) and lead the discussion for each of the articles.** For each reading you are responsible for presenting, you must write a 1-2 page single-spaced summary of the article or chapter and make this available to the rest of the class prior to your presentation. This summary should also include criticisms, limitations, and weaknesses of the theoretical argument.
 - 2) *Class Participation* (50% of participation grade): There is a subjective element to participation but it must be considered in a seminar course. When determining your overall grade for the course, I will consider your level of overall ‘engagement’ in the class discussions to determine your score for this component of the grading.

Important Note: I would prefer you not have laptops out during the class. You may choose to ignore this preference but distracting laptop use will result in a reduction of your class participation grade up to a maximum of your entire class participation grade.

Weekly Essays (40% of final grade): You will be required to write 6 essays during the term. Students have discretion as to which weeks they do not turn in an essay. Each essay will be worth roughly 16.5% of your total essay grade. No accommodations will be made for students who do not turn in the required number of essays (that’s why I give students four ‘free passes’ during the term). Each essay should be **roughly 750 words in length but no more than 1,000 words** (please state the word count on each essay). In the essay, describe the broader argument of the set of readings for that week’s readings. Discuss whether you found the arguments of the work compelling (here would be a good place to discuss strengths and weaknesses of a theory and/or empirical work). Sloppy work will be marked down so proof read before turning it in. Essays are due at the beginning of class (hard copies, please). **Papers turned in after the end of the class will not be accepted.**

Final Research Paper (40% of final grade): Students are required to complete a seminar length paper (between **6 and 7,000 words**). The paper will be due during the last class – **April 5th**). Students will need to pick a topic relevant to criminology for this paper. A short paper proposal (1/2 page or so) which summarizes your intended paper topic is due on the 6th week of class. This should include two relevant academic sources you will use in your paper.

Presentation of Final Research Paper (5% of final grade): Students will present a summary of their research paper to the class for roughly 10 minutes during the last two weeks of the term.

FINAL GRADES: So, putting it all together the grading allocation will look like this.

Attendance and class participation	15% of total grade
6 Weekly Essays	40% of total grade
Final Paper	40% of total grade
Final Paper Presentation	<u>5% of total grade</u>
TOTAL	100%

Grading is as follows:

Grade	Grade Point	Percentages
A	4.0	85-100
A-	3.7	80-84
B+	3.3	75-79
B	3.0	70-74
B-	2.7	65-69
C+	2.3	60-64
C	2.0	55-59
D (Conditional Pass)	1.0	50-54
F (Fail)	0.0	0-49

WEEKLY COURSE TOPICS (all readings will be made available on WebCT):

Note: Readings below may be modified during the course (i.e. some may not be covered and others may be added depending on the pace of the course). This schedule is tentative. The pace of the course varies depending on length of discussions.

Week 1: January, 4th.

Introduction to the course.

Week 2: January 11th. Deterrence/Personal/Biological/Psychological Traits and Crime

Nagin, N. (2013). "Deterrence in the Twenty-First Century". *Crime and Justice*, 42(1), 199-263.

Ellis, Lee and Anthony Walsh. 1997. "Gene-based Evolutionary Theories in Criminology." *Criminology*. 35: 2

Burt, C. and R. Simmons (2014). "Pulling Back the Curtain on Heritability Studies: Biosocial Criminology in the Postgenomic Era". *Criminology*, 52(2): 223.

Herrnstein, Richard J. and Charles Murray. 1994. *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life*. Chapter 11 pages 235-252.

Week 3: January 18th. Personality and Crime (cont.) and The Origins of Sociological Criminology

Personality and Crime Continued

Mears, D. and J. Cochran (2013). "What is the effect of IQ on offending?". *Criminal Justice & Behavior*, 40(11): 1280-1300.

Caspi, Avshalom et al. 1994. "Personality and Crime: Are some people crime prone?". *Criminology*. 32: 2

The Durkheimian foundations of modern criminology

Durkheim, Emile. 1982. *The Rules of Sociological Method*. New York: The Free Press. Chapter III: "Rules for the Distinction of the Normal from the Pathological."

Durkheim, Emile. 1979. *Suicide*. New York: The Free Press. Chapter 5: "Anomic Suicide."

Week 4: January 25th. Strain Theory (or Anomie Theory)

Classical Statements:

Merton, R. (1938). "Social Structure and Anomie". *American Sociological Review* 3(5): 672-682.

Cohen, Albert K. 1955. *Delinquent Boys: The Culture of the Gang*. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press. Chapters 4-5.

Cloward, Richard A. and Lloyd Ohlin. 1960. *Delinquency and Opportunity: A Theory of Delinquent Gangs*. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press. Chapters 4-6. (2 students)

Farnworth, M. and M. Leiber (1989). "Strain Theory Revisited: Economic Goals, Educational Means, and Delinquency". *American Sociological Review*, 54(2): 263-274.

Week 5: February 1st. Strain (Cont) and Social Disorganization Theory

Strain Theory (cont): Contemporary reformulations:

Messner, Steven F. and Richard Rosenfeld. *Crime and the American Dream*. Chapters 1 and 4.

Agnew, Robert. 1992. "Foundation for a General Strain Theory of Crime and Delinquency." *Criminology* 30: 47-87.

The Chicago School and early ecological/social disorganization approaches to crime

Glueck, Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck. 1950. "Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency." Commonwealth Fund.

Shaw, Clifford R. and Henry McKay. 1969. *Juvenile Delinquency in Urban Areas*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (pp. 43-89).

Week 6: February 8th. Social Disorganization (cont) – PAPER PROPOSAL DUE

Contemporary reformulations

Sampson, Robert J., Stephen W. Raudenbush, and Felton Earls. 1997. "Neighborhoods and Violent Crime: A Multilevel Study of Collective Efficacy." *Science* 277: 918-24.

Kirk, D. and J. Laub (2010). "Neighborhood Change and Crime in the Modern Metropolis". *Crime and Justice*, 39(1): 441-502.

Pattillo-McCoy, Mary. 1999. *Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril Among the Black Middle Class*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 4: "Neighborhood Networks and Crime."

Bellair, Paul. 1997. Social Interaction and Community Crime: Examining the Importance of Neighborhood Networks. *Criminology* 35: 677-704.

Week 7: February 15th. Routine Activity Theory and Learning theory

Routine Activity Theory

Cohen, Lawrence E. and Marcus Felson. 1979. "Social Change and Crime Rate Trends: A Routine Activity Approach." *American Sociological Review*: 588-608.

Mustaine, E. and R. Tewksbury (1998) "Predicting Risks of Larceny Theft Victimization: A Routine Activity Analysis Using Refined Lifestyle Measures" *Criminology*, 36 (4): 829.

Differential association

Sutherland, Edwin H. and Donald R. Cressey. 1966. *Criminology*, 7th edition. Philadelphia, PA: J. B. Lippincott Company. Chapter 4.

Matsueda, Ross L. 1988. "The Current State of Differential Association Theory." *Crime & Delinquency* 34(3): 277-306.

Thomas, Kyle J. 2015. "Delinquent Peer Influence on Offending Versatility: Can Peers Promote Specialized Delinquency?" *Criminology* 53: 280-308.

Week 8: March 1st. Social Learning Theory and Social Control Theory

Social learning theory

Akers, Ronald L. 1998. *Social Learning and Social Structure: A General Theory of Crime and Deviance*. Boston: Northeastern University Press. Chapter 3.

Haynie, D. (2001). "Delinquent Peers Revisited: Does Network Structure Matter?". *American Journal of Sociology*, 106(4): 1013-1057.

Haynie, D. and D. Osgood (2005). "Reconsidering Peers and Delinquency: How do Peers Matter?". *Social Forces*, 84(2): 1109-1130.

Social control

Hirschi, Travis. 1969. *Causes of Delinquency*. Berkeley, CA.: University of California Press. Chapters 1-2; 6-8. (**2 Students**)

Agnew, Robert. 1993. Why do they do it? An Examination of the Intervening Mechanisms Between "Social Control" Variables and Delinquency. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*. 30: 245-266.

Johnson, Byron et al. 2001. Does Adolescent Religious Commitment Matter? A Reexamination of the Effect of Religiosity on Delinquency. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 38: -44

Week 9: March 8th. Self-Control Theory

Self-Control

Gottfredson, Michael and Travis Hirschi. 1990. *A General Theory of Crime*. Stanford, CA.: Stanford University Press. Pp. 1-15, 85-120, 123-168. (**2 Students**)

Baron, Stephen. 2003. Self-Control, Social Consequences, and Criminal Behavior: Street Youth and the General Theory of Crime. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*. 40: 403-425.

Pratt, Travis and Francis Cullen. 2000. The Empirical Status of Gottfredson and Hirschi's General Theory of Crime: A Meta-Analysis. *Criminology*. 38: 931-964.

Simultaneous Examination

Hoffmann, John Pr. 2003. A Contextual Analysis of Differential Association, Social Control, and Strain Theories of Delinquency. *Social Forces* 81: 753-785.

Week 10: March 15th. Other Theories of Crime

Containment Theory

Reckless, Walter. et al. 1957. “‘The Good Boy’ in a High Delinquency Area.” *Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science*. 48: 18-25.

Neutralization Theory

Sykes, G. & David Matza. 1957. “Techniques of Neutralization: A Theory of Delinquency.” *American Sociological Review*. 22: 664-670.

The Seduction of Crime

McCarthy, Bill. 1995. Not Just “For the Thrill of It”: An Instrumentalist Elaboration of Katz’s Explanation of Sneaky Thrill Property Crimes. *Criminology* 33: 519-538.

Critical Criminology

Chambliss (Whose law What Order)

Week 11: March 22nd. Developmental theories and Class-Based Theories

Life course theories

Sampson, Robert J. and John H. Laub. 1993. *Crime in the Making: Pathways and Turning Points Through Life*. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press. Pp. 1-24, 123-178. (2 Students)

Moffitt, Terrie. 1993. “Adolescence-Limited and Life-Course Persistent Offending: A Complementary Pair of Developmental Theories” in *Developmental Theories of Crime and Delinquency*, ed. Terence P. Thornberry. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction.

Kanazawa, Satoshi. 2003. Why Productivity Fades with Age: The Crime Genius Connection. *Journal of Research in Personality*. 37: 257-272.

Labeling theory

Becker, Howard S. 1963. *Outsiders—Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*. Glencoe: Free Press. Chapter 1-4 (2 students)

Paternoster, R. and L. Iovanni (1989). “The Labeling Perspective and Delinquency: An Elaboration of the Theory and an Assessment of the Evidence”. *Justice Quarterly*, 6(3): 359-394.

Bernburg, Jon, Marvin Krohn, and Craig Rivera. 2006. Official Labeling, Criminal Embeddedness, and Subsequent Delinquency: A Longitudinal Test of Labeling Theory. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 43: 67-88.

March 29th and April. 5th for Paper Presentations – FINAL PAPER DUE ON THE LAST DAY OF CLASS (April 5th). THEY MUST BE TURNED IN DURING THE CLASS. ANY PAPERS TURNED IN AFTER THE END OF THE LAST CLASS WILL BE MARKED DOWN.

Additional Points:

- 1) *McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).*

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/).

- 2) *In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.*

Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l'un des objets est la maîtrise d'une langue).

- 3) *In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.*
- 4) *If you have a disability that requires special accommodations please contact the instructor to arrange a time to discuss your situation. It would be helpful if you contact the [Office for Students with Disabilities](#) at 514-398-6009 before you do this.*
- 5) **There will be no incompletes given in this course except in the most extreme, documented medical circumstances (at the discretion of the instructor).**