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. Serious Illnesses or personal emergencies may be considered but you must discuss the situation with me.
  - Note: Two absences equal half of the attendance credit, three absences equal zero attendance credit. I will pass an attendance sheet around at the beginning of each class. **IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO SIGN THE ATTENDANCE SHEET BEFORE YOU LEAVE. YOU CAN’T SIGN THE SHEET DURING THE NEXT CLASS AND WRITE “I WAS HERE LAST WEEK AND FORGOT TO SIGN”.

- **Class Participation and Presentations:** (total of 10% of the overall course grade) – contains two components as follows:

  1) **Presentations (50% of participation grade):** One-two student(s) will be required to present a brief summary (10-12 minutes) and lead the discussion for each of the articles. The person(s) assigned to the article will also be responsible for 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 via email. This summary should also include criticisms, limitations, and weaknesses of the theoretical argument. Please bring on hard copy of the summary for me to look at during your presentation. **If you do not come to class on the day you are assigned to present you will lose half of the presentation points.**

  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 4 essays during the term. Students can decide which week they will turn-in an essay (read rules below, however). Each essay will be worth 25% of your total weekly essay grade. **No accommodations will be made for students who do not turn in the required number of essays.** 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 at least two of the readings that will be presented during the class period that you turn in the essay. 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). Essays are due at the beginning of class (hard copies, please).

IMPORTANT RULES ABOUT WEEKLY ESSAYS:

1. Papers turned in after the end of the class will not be accepted.
2. I need a hard-copy of the essay at the beginning of class.
3. Only one essay per week may be submitted.
4. Weekly essay may only be submitted on weeks you are not presenting a reading to the class.
5. You may only submit a weekly essay during weeks that we are discussing readings (i.e. not when final papers are being presented at the end of the term)
6. Your essay must cover the material we are discussing the day you turn the essay in.

Final Research Paper (40% of final grade): Students are required to complete a seminar length paper (7,000-8,000 words – 12 point font, 1 inch margins, double spaced. WORD COUNT MUST BE ON PRESENTED ON YOUR FINAL PAPER). The paper will be due during the last class – April 16th. Students will need to pick a topic relevant to criminology for this paper. A draft of the first 2-3 pages of the final paper are due during class on February 26th. The proposal must include 2-3 relevant academic sources you will use in the final paper. Students turning their paper proposals in after February 26th (during class) will have their final paper grade reduced by 5%.

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 |
| 4 Weekly Essays                   | 40% of total grade |
| Final Paper                       | 40% of total grade |
| Final Paper Presentation          | 5% of total grade  |
| TOTAL                             | 100%               |

Grading is as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade Point</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
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<td>85-100</td>
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<td>80-84</td>
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<td>55-59</td>
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<td>D (Conditional Pass)</td>
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<td>50-54</td>
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<tr>
<td>F (Fail)</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0-49</td>
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WEEKLY COURSE TOPICS (all readings will be made available on MyCourses):

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 and other factors.

**Week 1: January 8th**
Introduction to the course.

**Week 2: January 15th. Deterrence/Personal/Biological/Psychological Traits and Crime**


**Week 3: January 22nd. Personality and Crime (cont.) and The Origins of Sociological Criminology**

*Biology/Personality and Crime Continued*


*The Durkheimian foundations of modern criminology*


Week 4: January 29th. Strain Theory (or Anomie Theory)

Classical Statements:


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

Strain Theory (cont): Contemporary reformulations:


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


Week 6: February 12th. Social Disorganization (cont)

Contemporary reformulations


**Week 7: February 19th. Routine Activity Theory and Learning Theory**

*K*outine Activity Theory


*Differential association*


**Week 8: February 26th. Social Learning Theory and Social Control Theory**

**PAPER PROPOSAL DUE**

*Social learning theory*


*Social control*


**READING WEEK ON MARCH 5th – NO CLASS**

**Week 9: March 12th. Self-Control Theory**

*Self-Control*


*Simultaneous Examination*


**Week 10: March 19th. Other Theories of Crime**

*Containment Theory*


*Neutralization Theory*


*The Seduction of Crime*

**Critical Criminology**


**Week 11: March 26th. Developmental theories and Class-Based Theories**

*Life course theories*


*Labeling theory*


**EASTER HOLIDAY – NO CLASS**

April 9th and April 16th for Paper Presentations – FINAL PAPER DUE ON THE LAST DAY OF CLASS (April 16th). 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/](http://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/](http://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).