

# **SOCI 388 Crime**

Winter 2017

Monday and Wednesday: 8:35-9:25am, Stuart Biology Building N2/2

Friday conferences:

1) 8:35-9:25am, Stuart Biology Building N2/2

2) 9:35am-10:25am, Arts Building 145

Instructor: Dr. Jan Doering

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Office hours: Leacock Building, room 826, Mondays, 10:00-11:30am

Please sign up online: <https://calendly.com/jandoering>

Teaching Assistant: Kirsten Gerrie

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Office hours: TBD

## **Course Description**

Our society is obsessed with crime, as any visit to a bookstore or an evening spent watching television easily confirms. Conversely, the study of crime is one of the most active areas of social science. In this course, we will survey some of the many sociological approaches to crime. We will examine patterns of crime, theories that help to explain criminal behaviour, and societal responses to crime, such as political mobilization and policing.

## **Learning Goals**

After completing this course, you should:

- know key trends in crime rates.
- understand major theories that explain crime and delinquency.
- be able to apply criminological theories to interpret empirical cases.
- be able to critically analyze the political implications of various perspectives on crime and criminal behaviour.

## **Readings**

I expect you to read all of the assigned material. Please note that reading the assigned textbook will not suffice. Other required readings will be made available through *MyCourses*.

Occasionally, we may work with the readings in class. In these cases, I will ask you to bring the course material to class.

Required textbook (available at the McGill bookstore): Schmalleger, Frank and Rebecca Volk. 2014. *Canadian Criminology Today: Theories and Applications*. Fifth edition. Toronto, ON: Pearson.

## Assignments and Grading

Your grade will be based on your attendance of conference sessions and three assignments: a midterm exam, a final exam, and a short paper.

### A) Midterm exam: 25%

The midterm exam provides you with an opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of course content, including the material covered in the readings, lectures, and in-class exercises. The midterm exam will consist of a list of course concepts that you will explain in a few sentences. It may also contain some multiple choice questions. The midterm exam will be held in class on Friday, February 17 (week 7). Make-up exams will be available only to students who can present proof of a medical emergency.

### B) Short paper: 25%

I will ask you to write a short paper (4 double-spaced pages plus bibliography) that analyzes a biographical account of criminal behaviour and demonstrates your ability to correctly and creatively apply concepts from the readings and lectures. The paper will be due in class on Monday, March 13 (week 11). Late papers will receive a penalty of one letter grade for each 24-hour period (whether completed or not) that follows the due date.

### C) Final exam: 40%

The final exam allows you to demonstrate your mastery of course content. You will write a short essay, applying your knowledge to a particular issue. The exam may also include multiple choice and short answer questions. Please note that the final exam is cumulative and thus covers the entire course. The exam will be held during finals period. Its exact date and place will be communicated during the semester.

### D) Participation in conference sessions: 10%

## Policies

- Inclusive learning environment: As the instructor of this course I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. If you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the [Office for Students with Disabilities](#), 514-398-6009.
- Academic integrity: 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). If you are caught engaging in fraudulent activity, you may fail the assignment in question or the entire course, and I may report you to the Dean of Students.
- Language: 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.

- Attendance: Aside from Friday conference session, I will not take attendance. It is up to you to decide whether you want to come to class or not. However, please note that course assignments will test not only whether you have done the readings, but will also include material covered only in course lectures and in-course exercises. Neither the teaching assistant nor me will make this material available to you through alternative channels. If you attend class, please ensure that you arrive in time and that you do not have to leave early in order to avoid disrupting class.
- Make-up policy: The midterm exam is scheduled for 8:35am on Friday, February 17. If you know you will miss that day, do not take this course. Exceptions can be made only if you provide a valid medical notice that demonstrates your inability to complete the exam. If you have to miss the final exam, you must contact the university (see <http://www.mcgill.ca/students/exams/dates/supdefer>).
- Regrading policy: You have the right to request that your exam or paper be regraded. However, in order to request this, you must submit a written notice that explains and justifies your grievance in detail. A hard copy of this notice must be submitted within a week of the date that we first returned the exams or papers. Please note that I will regrade your entire exam or paper, not just specific passages that you may have flagged. Regrading may improve or lower your grade.

### Course Communication

- You have to regularly check your email and read course-related email communication.
- Before emailing me or the teaching assistant, please consult the syllabus for relevant information. If the answer to your question is in the syllabus, we reserve the right to ignore your email.

### Conferences

On most Fridays, the teaching assistant will hold conference sessions that include exercises and provide opportunities for discussing and reviewing course content. You will have the opportunity to sign up for one of two conference sessions on a first-come, first-serve basis. NOTE: each conference session will be capped at 60 students. If one conference session has filled up, you have to sign up for the other one.

### Schedule

Week 1. Jan. 2-8. **Wednesday session only.**

Week 2. Jan. 9-15. *Introduction: deviance, crime, and criminology.*

- Textbook chapter 1 (“What is Criminology”).
- Erikson, Kai T. 1966. *Wayward Puritans: A Study in the Sociology of Deviance*. Chapter 1 (“On the Sociology of Deviance”). New York: Wiley.

- Foucault, Michel. 1995. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Chapter 1 (“The body of the condemned”), pp. 3-16.

Week 3. Jan. 16-22. *Classical criminology*.

Add/drop deadline on Tuesday. Friday **conferences begin** this week.

- Textbook chapter 5 (“Classical and Neoclassical Thought”).
- Textbook chapter 6 (“Biological Roots of Criminal Behaviour”). ONLY pp. 139-148 are required. Read the rest of the chapter if you like.
- Feeney, Floyd. 1986. “Robbers as Decision-Makers.” Pp. 53-71 in Cornish, Derek and Ronald Clarke (eds.), *The Reasoning Criminal. Rational Choice Perspectives on Offending*. New York: Springer.

Week 4. Jan. 23-29. *Crime and crime rates*.

- Textbook chapter 2 (“Crime Statistics”).
- Textbook chapter 3 (“Patterns of Crime”).
- Warr, Mark. 2000. “Fear of Crime in the United States: Avenues for Research and Policy.” Pp. 451–89 in *Criminal Justice 2000: Measurement and Analysis of Crime and Justice*, vol. 4, edited by D. Duffee. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.
- Ouimet, Marc. 1999. “Crime in Canada and in the United States: A Comparative Analysis.” *Canadian Review of Sociology* 36(3):389–408.

Week 5. Jan. 30-Feb. 5. *The explanation of crime (1)*.

- Textbook chapter 9 (“The Meaning of Crime: Social Process Perspective”).
- Akers, Ronald L. and Christine S. Sellers. 2009. *Criminological theories: introduction, evaluation, and application*. Chapter 5 (“Social Learning Theory”), pp.85-122. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hirschi, Travis. 1969. *Causes of Delinquency*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Week 6. Feb. 6-12. *The explanation of crime (2)*.

- Textbook chapter 8 (“The Meaning of Crime: Social Structure Perspective”).
- Agnew, Robert. 1992. “Foundation for a General Strain Theory of Crime and Delinquency.” *Criminology* 30(1):47–88. READ 47-61; you can skim the rest.
- Cohen, Lawrence E. and Marcus Felson. 1979. “Social Change and Crime Rate Trends: A Routine Activity Approach.” *American Sociological Review* 44(4):588–608.

Week 7. Feb. 13-19. *Crime, class, and status*.

The **midterm exam** will be held during the **Friday (Feb. 17) conference session**.

- Textbook chapter 10 (“The Meaning of Crime: Social Conflict Perspective”).

- Hagan, John, John Simpson, and A. R. Gillis. 1987. "Class in the Household: A Power-Control Theory of Gender and Delinquency." *American Journal of Sociology* 92(4):788–816.
- Sutherland, Edwin. 1940. "White-Collar Criminality." *American Sociological Review* 5 (1):1-12.

Week 8. Feb. 20-26. *The aesthetics of crime.*

- Katz, Jack. 1988. *Seductions of Crime*. Chapter 2 ("Sneaky Thrills"), pp. 52-79. New York: Basic Books.
- Anderson, Elijah. 1990. *Code of the Street*. Chapter 2 ("Campaigning for Respect"), pp. 66-106. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Ferrell, Jeff. 1995. "Urban Graffiti: Crime, Control, and Resistance." *Youth & Society* 27(1):73–92.

Week 9. Feb. 27-Mar. 5. No classes: **study break**.

Week 10. Mar. 6-12. *Gangs and their environments.*

On **Monday**, the instructions and material for the **short paper** will be made available.

- Vargas, Robert. 2016. *Wounded City: Violent Turf Wars in a Chicago Barrio*. Chapter 5 ("Silence and the Art of Arson"), pp.121-147. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Venkatesh, Sudhir. 2008. *Gang Leader for a Day: A Rogue Sociologist Takes to the Streets*. Chapter 4 ("Gang Leader for a Day"), pp.113-143. New York: Penguin.

Week 11. Mar. 13-19. *Fighting crime (1): policing and the police.*

**Monday** session: **short paper is due**.

- Kelling, George and James Q. Wilson. 1982. "Broken windows. The police and neighborhood safety." *The Atlantic*, March. (<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1982/03/broken-windows/304465/>)
- Moskos, Peter. 2009. *Cop in the Hood: My Year Policing Baltimore's Eastern District*. Chapter 5 ("911 Is a Joke"), pp. 89-110. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Wortley, Scot and Akwasi Owusu-Bempah. 2011. "The Usual Suspects: Police Stop and Search Practices in Canada." *Policing and Society* 21(4):395–407.

Week 12. Mar. 20-26. *Fighting crime (2): politics and policy.*

- Textbook chapter 11 ("Criminology and Social Policy")
- Western, Bruce. 2006. *Punishment and Inequality in America*. Chapter 3 ("The Politics and Economics of Punitive Criminal Justice"), pp. 52-81. New York, NY: Russell Sage.
- Chettiar, Inimai M. 2015. "The Many Causes of America's Decline in Crime." *The Atlantic*, February 11. (<http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/02/the-many-causes-of-americas-decline-in-crime/385364/>).

Week 13. Mar. 27-Apr. 2 *Drugs*.

- Becker, Howard. 1963. *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*. Chapter 3 (“Becoming a Marijuana User”), pp.41-58. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.
- Owen, Frank. 2007. *No Speed Limit. The Highs and Lows of Meth*. Chapter 4 (“A wonder drug is born), pp.79-106. New York: St. Martin’s Press.
- Bourgeois, Philippe and Jeffrey Schonberg. 2009. *Righteous Dopefiend*. Chapter 8 (“Everyday Addicts”), pp.241-270. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Week 14. Apr. 3-9. *Crime and communities*.

- Braithwaite, John and Stephen Mugford. 1994. “Conditions of Successful Reintegration Ceremonies: Dealing with Juvenile Offenders.” *British Journal of Criminology* 34(2):139-171.
- Pattillo, Mary. 2007. *Black on the Politics: The Politics of Race and Class in the City*. Chapter 7 (“Avenging Violence with Violence”), pp.259-295.

Week 15. Apr. 10-16. *Conclusion*.

**Monday session only.**

- Textbook chapter 12 (“Future Directions and Emerging Trends”)