CCJS651: Seminar in Criminology (3 to 5:45 pm)
LeFrak 2207
Spring 2019

PROFESSOR: María B. Vélez
Office: 2145 Samuel J. LeFrak Hall
Office Hours: Mondays and Fridays 12 – 2 pm; or by appointment
Office Phone: 301.405.4716
e-mail: velezmb@umd.edu

Course Objectives:

This course introduces dominant explanations of the study of the causes of crime. The central focus centers on the major theories of crime causation developed over the past two hundred years. We will also discuss key advancements in theory and related research over recent years.

Learning Goals:

The major objectives of the course are to become familiar with the foundations of key theoretical traditions and effectively apply them to the explanation of crime; to understand current theoretical debates; and to critically evaluate the theoretical approaches considered in light of their basic assumptions, causal propositions and empirical evidence.

Required Texts:


2. All other readings are available on ELMS.

Requirements:

Along with attending class and reading all of the required material, the following constitute course requirements:

1. Class Participation (10% of your grade). Participation in class discussions is a vital component of the course and so I expect every student to participate fully in each and every class meeting. Note that coming to a particular class unprepared or missing class will result in a 10-point deduction for that day’s participation grade. Students will be graded on participation, and missing class is discouraged (see below discussion on excused absences). In order to promote useful class discussion, each student should prepare one question about the week’s readings (i.e., as a totality) prior to class. The question will be emailed by noon of class day to the entire class and myself, and will help serve to stimulate the class discussion. In the end, there are no shortcuts to doing the reading. Take extensive notes, jot down ideas, etc. Please see section on reading below.

2. Presentations (20% of your grade)
Student will be responsible for providing a 15 to 20-minute presentation in Power-Point on a theory of their choice. The presentation will focus on providing other students with a brief overview of the theory, two key articles that have tested the theory, the theory’s key contribution,
its central challenge to study it both conceptually and empirically. The idea behind this assignment is that this presentation can serve as a foundation for teaching criminological theory to undergraduates. You are required to meet with me at least three days before your assigned presentation (please email me to set up a time) to review the material you have prepared to present.

3. Precis (10% each). Each student will put together 2 precis. Each precis will introduce and connect the readings within an area (i.e., each week). The precis is a 2–4 page single-spaced summary of the theory, data, methods, and argument of the readings that are essential to the area. Based on the readings, the precis should identify the core concepts, assumptions, and ideas of the tradition, and provide a sense of its current empirical status (i.e., to what degree is it supported with evidence) and policy implications. One is due before the midterm and the second is due before the final.

4. Exams. Midterm and final exams (50% of your grade; each exam is worth 25 percent). The midterm and final exams are designed for you to demonstrate a solid understanding of the various theoretical frameworks covered throughout the semester and to exhibit your ability to think critically and to synthesize material.

**Expectations for a graduate level course on criminological theory:**

1) Read, Read, and Then Read Some More– This is a graduate-level theory course and this course demands significant reading. While I have done my best to keep the readings to a manageable length, it is imperative, not only for your grade, but for the quality of the discussion, that you read them carefully and actively. To elevate the level of the discussion, everyone is expected to engage deeply with the texts. Please come to class prepared.

2) Offer Arguments, not Opinions – While the notion that “everyone is entitled to their opinion” is the trend now, this does not apply to academic discussions. In this class, you ARE NOT entitled to your opinions; you are only entitled to what you can argue for in a thoughtful way based on reading materials. Remember the purpose of theory is not to reach definitive answers, but to keep the conversation going.

**Other Business:**

1. **UMD course related website:** The University has created a UMD Course Related Policies website:  
   [http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html](http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html)

2. **Attendance:** On May 10, 2011, the Campus Senate amended the University of Maryland Policy for A Student’s Medically Necessitated Absence from Class V-100 (G). Under this new policy, instructors are expected to accept as an excused absence a self-signed note from a student who has missed a single lecture, recitation, or laboratory, attesting to the date of the illness. This note must also contain an acknowledgement by the student that the information is true and correct and that providing false information is prohibited under the Code of Student Conduct. The student is also obligated to make a reasonable attempt to inform the instructor of his/her illness in advance. A student is allowed only ONE self-signed note per class for the semester, but this DOES NOT apply to days of major grading events. Please note that multiple unexcused absences will affect your participation grade.
3. **Missed/Late Assignments:** Make-up exams or extensions for presentations or exams will not be given except in cases of a significant medical problem, a death in the immediate family, or a religious holiday. Proper written documentation is required. In such cases, the student must contact the Professor before the exam or presentation due date. If you do not show up for an exam or presentation, you will lose 10 points for every 24 hours past the due date/time.

4. **Academic Integrity:** Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in any form and any violations will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. Academic dishonesty includes cheating, fabrication of information used in assignments, plagiarism, and knowingly facilitating the academic dishonesty of another.

5. **Disability Support:** I will make every effort to accommodate students who are registered with the Disability Support Services (DSS) Office and who provide me with a University of Maryland DSS Accommodation form which has been updated for the Spring 2019 semester. This form must be presented to me no later than February 13, 2019. I am not able to accommodate students who are not registered with DSS or who do not provide me with documentation that has not been reviewed by DSS. DSS students who are requesting to take their exams at the DSS Center need to provide me with a testing form for each exam that must be turned in to me no later than 1 week prior to each exam. The student is expected to take the exam at the same time as the rest of the class.
# CLASS SCHEDULE

## WEEK 1 (1/28-2/1) Wednesday

- Intro to the course (pass out and discuss syllabus, why we need theory)
- Overview of early classical/positivist conceptions of crime
- Tools for evaluating theory

**Readings:**


## WEEK 2 (2/4-2/8) Wednesday

**Topic: (Neo) Classical Theories**

**Readings:**

Bernard, Snipes and Gerould: Chapters 1 and 3.


## WEEK 3 (2/11 – 2/15) Wednesday

**Topic: biological, psychological, developmental and life course theories**

**Readings:**

Bernard, Snipes and Gerould: Chapters 4, 5, and 14.


Extend Contemporary Understandings of Women’s Desistance from Crime. *Journal of Developmental and Life-Course Criminology, 3*(2), 102-125.


**WEEK 4 (2/18-2/22) Wednesday**

**Topic: Early and Modern Anomie and Strain Theories**

Readings:

Bernard, Snipes and Gerould: Chapters 6, 8


Durkheim “Suicide and Social Cohesion” excerpts from Chapter 2: Egoistic Suicide from Suicide (pp. 156-161; 169-71; 208-212).


**WEEK 5 (2/25-3/1) Wednesday**

**Topic: Early and Modern Anomie and Strain Theories Cont.**

Readings:


**WEEK 6 (3/4-3/8) **Wednesday

**Topic:** The Chicago School and early ecological/social disorganization approaches to crime.

Readings: Bernard, Snipes and Gerould: Chapter 7.


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**WEEK 7 (3/11-3/15) **Wednesday

**MIDTERM EXAM**

**FIRST PRECIS DUE BY TODAY**

**WEEK 8 (3/18-3/22) **Wednesday

**SPRING BREAK**

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**WEEK 9 (3/25-3/29) **Wednesday

**Topic:** Contemporary reformulations and/or extensions of social disorganization theory

Readings:


**One page proposal of theory presentation - DUE**

**WEEK 10 (4/1-4/5) Wednesday**

**Topic: Early approaches to social control and self-control theories**

**Readings:**

Bernard, Snipes and Gerould: Chapter 10.


**WEEK 11 (4/8-4/12) Wednesday**

**Topic: Contemporary approaches to social control theory/general theory of crime**


**WEEK 12 (4/15-4/19) Wednesday**

**Topic: Subcultural, differential association and social learning theories**

Bernard, Snipes and Gerould: Chapter 9.


**WEEK 13 (4/22-4/26) Monday**

**Topic: Tests of differential association/social learning theory and social control/self-control**

Readings:


**PRESENTATIONS**

**WEEK 14 (4/29-5/3) Monday**

**Topic: Labeling, Conflict, Critical and Feminist Theory**

Bernard, Snipes and Gerould: Chapters 11, 12, and 13.

Lemert, Edwin. “Primary and Secondary Deviation.”

Quinney, Richard. “Class, State, and Crime.”


Chesney-Lind, Meda. “Girls’ Crime and Woman’s Place: Toward a Feminist Model of Female Delinquency.”

Braithwaite, John. “Crime, Shame and Reintegration.”

Maruna, Shadd. “Making Good.”

**PRESENTATIONS**

**WEEK 15 (5/6-5/10) Monday**

**Final Exam**

**SECOND PRECIS DUE BY TODAY**