Course Synopsis:

This seminar is designed to provide an intensive examination of crime and the life course. The life course will be examined as a theoretical orientation, a research methodology, and as an empirical field of study with special reference to crime and deviance. Key conceptual and research issues will be analyzed and discussed including the development of criminal behavior and criminal careers; stability and change in criminal behavior across developmental stages of the life course; trajectories, transitions, and turning points through life; quantitative and qualitative approaches to studying crime and the life course; and social change and its link to individual lives.

A single semester course can only provide a sampling of the range of theoretical and empirical work on crime and the life course. The most important objective is thus to acquire a new way of thinking that can serve as a potential point of departure for your future research and intellectual development. To accomplish this goal, I have selected a wide-range of readings that bear on multiple aspects of life-course inquiry, both quantitative and qualitative in nature.

Required Readings:


(11) Additional readings are available online, at McKeldin Library, or, if necessary, they will be distributed in class. All articles/book chapters noted with an "R" are required reading. Note the assigned articles that are contained in the required edited books are indicated with an “R*” for Piquero and Mazerolle and “R**” for Elder and Giele, respectively. The notation R*** is for the remaining required text.

Course Requirements:

1. A paper of 20 to 25 typed pages is due by 4:00 pm on Tuesday, November 26, 2013. This paper will account for 40% of your final grade. More information on this assignment will be provided in class.

2. A final examination will be given during final exam week (Tuesday, December 17, 2013). This exam will account for 40% of your final grade. More information on this examination will be provided in class.

3. This class is organized as a seminar. It is my expectation that you will come to each and every class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. In this type of class, I see class participation as an important component of a successful seminar. To facilitate dialogue and interpretation, students will be selected to act as “seminar discussion leaders” of the assigned reading material for a particular class. Class participation will account for the remaining 20% of your final grade. You will be graded on the quality of your presentation as seminar discussion leader and the quality of your participation in class discussions throughout the semester. More information on this assignment will be provided in class.

Office Hours and Class Meeting Times:

My office is located in 2135 LeFrak Hall. During the Fall semester, I will be holding office hours from 1:30 to 3:30 on Tuesdays and 10:00 to 12:00 on Thursdays. All other meeting times will be by appointment only. For your information, my office phone number is 301-405-8070 and my e-mail address is jlaub@umd.edu.

This class meets Tuesday, 4:00 to 6:45, in the large seminar room, 2165E LeFrak Hall.

Students with Disabilities:

Any student with a documented disability who wishes to discuss academic accommodations, please contact me by September 17, 2013.
INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF COURSE

THE LIFE COURSE PARADIGM

A. General Issues


B. Studying Lives in a Changing Society


C. “Ontogenetic” vs. “Sociogenic” Models of Development


RESEARCH METHODS AND ANALYTICAL APPROACHES

R** Parts One and Two in Elder and Giele, editors, The Craft of Life Course Research.

Ethnography and Human Development, Context and Meaning in Social Inquiry, edited by Richard 

R John H. Laub and Robert J. Sampson (2004). “Strategies for Bridging the Quantitative and 
Qualitative Divide: Studying Crime Over the Life Course.” Research in Human Development, 1: 
81-99.

EMPIRICAL AND THEORETICAL APPLICATIONS OF LIFE COURSE RESEARCH TO 
CRIME AND DEVIANCE

The books and articles listed below include both classic studies as well as more recent analyses of 
crime and deviance over the life course. These works introduce many important themes relating to 
the study of crime and the life course.

9/24


10/1, 10/8

Overview of Criminal Career, Developmental, and Life-Course Approaches

A. Criminal Career Approaches

American Journal of Sociology 89:552-584.


R* Blumstein, Alfred, Jacqueline Cohen, Jeffrey Roth, and Christy Visher (1986). “Introduction: 
Studying Criminal Careers.” Pp. 13-20 in Criminal Careers and "Career Criminals", Volume 1, 
edited by Alfred Blumstein, Jacqueline Cohen, Jeffrey Roth, and Christy Visher. Washington, 

R* Gottfredson, Michael and Travis Hirschi (1986). "The True Value of Lambda Would Appear to be 
Zero: An Essay on Career Criminals, Criminal Careers, Selective Incapacitation, Cohort Studies, 

R*** Piquero, Alex, David Farrington, and Alfred Blumstein (2007). Key Issues in Criminal Career 
Research: New Analyses of the Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development.

B. Developmental and Life-Course Approaches

Through Life. (Chapters 1-3)

Review of Sociology 18:63-84.


10/15, 10/22

Continuity and Change in Crime over the Life Course


10/29

Intergenerational Transmission of Crime


11/5

Gender Similarities and Differences over the Life Course


11/12

Desistance from Crime over the Life Course


11/19, 11/26 (Note: Papers are due at 4:00 on 11/26.)

Continuity and Change in Crime over the Full Life Course


**12/3, 12/10**

The Future of Life Course/Developmental Criminology


**12/17**

Final Examination