

CCJS 451-0201 - Crime & Delinquency Prevention

- Meeting time: Tuesday/Thursday 12:30-1:45
- Classroom: EGR 0108
- Instructor: Robert Brame (rbrame@umd.edu)
- Office: LeFrak 2139
- Standing office hours: Tuesday/Thursday 10-11 (meetings also available by appointment).

Class overview

- Catalog course description: methods and programs in prevention of crime and delinquency.
- My description: This class will cover a series of case studies examining a range of crime and delinquency prevention programs/practices. We will consider the theoretical assumptions, program design, and evaluation evidence pertaining to each initiative.

Prerequisites

- CCJS 105
- CCJS 300 (which itself has the prerequisite of CCJS 200 or equivalent)

Course materials

- This [webpage](#) will be the online hub for this course; please bookmark it and check regularly for course materials, updates, and announcements.
- Course grades will be posted on ELMS throughout the semester.
- There is no textbook for this course.
- There will be regularly assigned readings (see links in the course outline below).

Learning outcomes

A student who is proficient in the material covered in this course will be able to:

- explain key terminology and vocabulary related to crime and delinquency prevention
- describe the strengths and weaknesses of measurement methods used in crime and delinquency prevention research
- describe the strengths and weaknesses of different research designs commonly used to evaluate prevention programs
- interpret and critically analyze empirical studies of crime and delinquency prevention initiatives

- assess the connections between theory and policy in prevention programming

UMD course-related policies

In this class, we will follow all of the guidance and requirements described on the University's [Course-Related Policies and Resources for Undergraduate Students](#) webpage. Please review the webpage and let me know if you have any questions.

Course grades

Note: Plus/minus grading is not used in this course. Grades will be based on your performance on 3 in-class exams and 2 written prevention reports. Each of the 3 exams will be graded on a 0-100 point scale. Each of the 2 writing assignments will be graded on a 0-50 point scale. This means you can earn up to 400 points. The letter grade scale is: A = 360 and higher; B = 320-359; C = 280-319; D = 240-279; and F = 239 and lower. I will post grades on ELMS throughout the semester.

Exams

Each exam will be closed book/closed note and will be comprised of a combination of multiple choice, true/false and short-answer questions. We will have time for review during the last class period before each exam. After exams have been graded, you can come to office hours or schedule an appointment to review your exam. Please note that exams 2 and 3 are not designed to be cumulative but some ideas and concepts covered early in the semester will be relevant for understanding the studies we discuss in the middle or near the end of the semester (for example, the virtues of matching and experimental research designs). Please keep that in mind as you prepare for each exam.

Prevention reports

For each report, you should identify a prevention program or practice from the [Crime Solutions website](#) that is not discussed in class. If you have any questions about whether the program you've identified is a prevention program or whether the peer-reviewed study you're planning to use is appropriate, you should consult with me (so you don't lose points). Your written submission will then be graded according to the following equally weighted 10-item rubric:

- Describe the problem the program is targeting for prevention (including whether the prevention problem is developmental, situational, or community-oriented).
- Identify a peer-reviewed empirical study evaluating the prevention program (will be important to check with me about this if you're not sure it's appropriate!).
- Explain the peer-reviewed evaluation study's theoretical motivation.
- Identify the concepts that were measured in the peer-reviewed evaluation study.
- Describe 1 significant strength and 1 significant weakness of the measurement strategy that was used in the peer-reviewed evaluation study.

- Explain the research design that was used in the peer-reviewed evaluation study.
- Describe 1 significant strength and 1 significant weakness of the research design used in the peer-reviewed evaluation study.
- Explain the peer-reviewed evaluation study's findings.
- Consider the peer-reviewed evaluation study's policy and research implications.
- Assessment is typed and formatted with appropriate headings for each of the above items; good grammar, syntax, spelling, and writing form.

Student conduct

- Academic integrity: if credible evidence of a rule violation materializes, it will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct in accordance with the University's [academic integrity policy](#). Please note that an academic integrity referral does not mean that you have been found responsible for a violation or that I have concluded you are responsible for a violation. It means that an issue of concern has been noted and that the Office of Student Conduct will examine it. A determination of responsibility will only be reached after the Office of Student Conduct has completed its investigation with appropriate due process; as an instructor, my role in the process is a limited one.
- Artificial intelligence assistance (TerpAI, ChatGPT, Gemini, Grammarly, etc.) is not permitted for coding, research, writing, editing, or any other part of the assignment process. Even though you may use these tools in the future, this approach will help you build a solid understanding of the subject matter. If you have questions or suggestions for potential exceptions, please contact me, and I would be happy to talk more.
- Classroom recording: I will not be engaged in any audio or video recording in this class and students are not permitted to conduct any audio or video recording without my permission. There may be particular circumstances approved by the University where I am compelled to permit recording but these are handled on a case-by-case basis. Because one or more individual students may have permission to record, you should assume you are being recorded in this class. However, any student who is granted permission to record must also abide by the rules for handling the content including no sharing or distribution of recorded materials, no submission of recorded materials to any external (to the student) computer system such as an artificial intelligence tool or other online service, and that recorded materials will be destroyed at the end of the semester.
- Absences: If you need to miss an exam or submit a late report for an excused reason, please ensure you follow [standard University procedures](#). Unless there are exceptional circumstances (approved by me within 24 hours of the exam date or project due date), any missed exams or late submission of assignments must be fully resolved within 1 week of the exam date or project due date. If you ask for this kind of consideration, please be prepared to provide appropriate documentation to support your request.

Accessibility and disability accommodations

- If you think you might need one or more academic accommodations, please contact the [Accessibility and Disability Service Office](#) for guidance and assistance.
- Please contact me to set up an appointment to discuss any accommodations that are authorized.

Course outline

- Introduction to the class
- Methodology overview ([journal article](#))
- Study 1: Washington DC gun study ([journal article](#))
- Study 2: Kansas City gun experiment ([published report](#))
- Exam #1: Tuesday 10/6/26
- Study 3: Kansas City preventive patrol experiment ([journal article](#))
- Study 4: Minneapolis domestic violence experiment ([journal article](#))
- Study 5: Treating vacant lots ([journal article](#))
- Study 6: Cambridge-Somerville youth study ([journal article](#))
- Study 7: Long-term effects of preschool programming ([journal article](#))
- Prevention Report #1 due on Thursday 10/22/26; submit on paper in class.
- Exam #2: Tuesday 11/3/26
- Study 8: Baltimore City drug court ([journal article](#))
- Study 9: Police officers in schools ([journal article](#))
- Study 10: Street lighting and crime in New York ([journal article](#))
- Study 11: Target hardening and residential burglary ([journal article](#))
- Study 12: Retail theft prevention ([journal article](#))
- Prevention Report #2 due on Tuesday 11/24/26; submit on paper in class.
- Last Class Day Thursday 12/10/26
- Exam 3: Friday 12/18; 4:00-5:15pm

Example prevention report

- Prevention problem to be addressed: A concern arising in the literature is that many people who smoke tobacco products as adults began smoking when they were young. Interventions that effectively limit the initiation of tobacco smoking during the adolescent years could lead to important lifelong health benefits. Because these interventions attempt to modify the onset and trajectory of substance use among individual young people to achieve life-span outcomes, they are best viewed as developmental prevention.
- Peer-reviewed study: R. Campbell, F. Starkey, J. Holliday, S. Audrey, M. Bloor, N. Parry-

Langdon, R. Hughes, and L. Moore (2008). An informal school-based peer-led intervention for smoking prevention in adolescence (ASSIST): a cluster randomised trial. *Lancet*, 371:1595-1602.

- Theoretical motivation: The authors raise the concern that there is an important link between adolescent onset of smoking and later adult smoking and health-related outcomes. They also recognize a long-standing pattern in the literature that one's own smoking behavior is correlated with peer smoking behavior. This correlation suggests that peers could become trusted messengers to convey health-related information to adolescents. The authors further argue that schools are a potentially useful setting for delivering health-related messages about smoking.
- Concepts measured in the evaluation: The study measured: (1) variation in specially trained staff instruction and peer support in communicating smoking related health messages outside the classroom setting; and (2) variation in smoking behaviors at the time of instruction and 1-2 years after the instruction occurred. The researchers also measured several demographic, cultural, economic, and social network characteristics of the schools and the students involved in the study.
- Strength and weakness of measurement strategy: A weakness of the measurement strategy is that a small percentage of the people (less than 10%) were not available to be studied at the 1- and 2-year follow-up points. A strength of the measurement strategy is that 2 different approaches were used to measure cigarette smoking: (1) self-reports of smoking on surveys; and (2) saliva samples to measure cotinine levels. The authors reported good agreement between the two measurement methods (page 1599).
- Research design: The study randomly assigned students at some schools to receive the ASSIST intervention (treatment schools) while students at other schools were randomly assigned to receive the normal smoking education programs that were already in place. Students' tobacco smoking behaviors were measured at the time of the initial intervention and then again at 1- and 2-year follow-up points.
- Strength and weakness of research design: The random assignment of schools to treatment and control groups is a strength. This ensures that the 2 groups of schools are mostly comparable to each other in terms of pretreatment characteristics. A weakness of the study is that despite the randomization, there were a few differences between the two groups of schools. One important difference (discussed on page 1598) is that students in the control schools reported more smoking behaviors than the treatment school students at the baseline assessment.
- Study findings: The research found that students in the schools receiving the treatment had lower cigarette smoking rates than students in the control group schools. The patterns persisted at each of the follow-up points.
- Research and policy implications: The study was carried out in the United Kingdom and replication projects would be necessary to determine the generalizability of the results to other settings. The results do support the idea that school-based interventions that are delivered outside the classroom and with peer support may lead to lower rates of

smoking initiation.