

Contemporary Criminological Theory (CCJS 454)

Term: Fall 2019

Time: MWF 10:00am to 10:50m

Place: Susquehanna Hall, [SQH 1117](#)

Instructor Dr. Wade C. Jacobsen

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Office Hours Mon and Wed 11:00am to 12:00pm, or by appointment

Course Description

This course is designed to provide students with an overview of major contemporary criminological theories. For each theory, we will cover the major concepts and propositions, review the empirical evidence, and discuss implications for policy and practice.

You Have Four Primary Learning Objectives in This Course

1. Know the major concepts and propositions of contemporary criminological theories
2. Demonstrate an ability to apply these theories to the explanation of criminal behavior
3. Show familiarity with early and recent research on these theories
4. Describe ways these theories have informed or could inform policy and practice

Required Text

Cullen, Francis T., Robert Agnew, and Pamela Wilcox (Eds.). 2017. *Criminological Theory: Past to Present*, 6th edition. New York: Oxford University Press. [ISBN-13: 978-0190639341](#)

Course Website

We will use ELMS for access to the syllabus, assignments, additional readings, and other course materials and information. Class announcements and individual grades will also be posted on ELMS. *I strongly encourage you to use ELMS often throughout the course.* Go to <http://elms.umd.edu> and log in with your Directory ID (login ID) and password.

Office Hours and Email

I want you to do well in this class. To this end, I will be available during my regularly scheduled office hours to discuss assignments, answer questions, or provide additional clarification on class material. If circumstances prevent me from being available during my office hours, I will try to notify the class in advance. If you are not available during my office hours, please email me to schedule another time to meet as needed. I will try to respond to email within 24 hours during the workweek (not after 5pm) or by the following Monday if you email me on the weekend. I may not respond to emails sent within 24 hours before an exam until after the exam has ended.

Attendance

You are expected to attend class. If you don't, you will miss graded in-class exercises and lecture material that will help you prepare well for exams. I will give you an exam study guide but will not distribute lecture notes. If you have to miss class, I suggest getting notes from a classmate.

Course Grading Scale

Your final grade for this course will be based on the following scale:

A+	=	97% +	C	=	73% to 76%
A	=	93% to 96%	C-	=	70% to 72%
A-	=	90% to 92%	D+	=	67% to 69%
B+	=	87% to 89%	D	=	63% to 66%
B	=	83% to 86%	D-	=	60% to 62%
B-	=	80% to 82%	F	=	below 60%
C+	=	77% to 79%			

To calculate final grades, weight the raw scores on your assignments by the percentage value in the table below and sum the categories. I will round the percentage to the nearest whole number, rounding up at .5 (for example, 86.4% will be a B and 86.5% will be a B+). If you have questions or concerns about a grade on an assignment and believe I should review it, please describe your concern in detail via email, within 48 hours of the assignment due date. If you have questions or concerns about your final grade, please email me as early as possible after grades are posted. For more information on grade complaints, visit:

<https://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>

Graded Materials

Assessment	Percent of Final Grade	Date
<i>Exams</i>		
In-class Exam 1	10%	Oct. 2 nd
In-class Exam 2	20%	Nov. 4 th
Final Exam	35%	Dec. 17 th (8:00-10:00am)
<i>In-class Exercises</i>	5%	Periodically
<i>Reading Assessments</i>	3%	Due before each lecture
<i>Term Paper</i>		
Thesis statement/Outline	2%	Oct. 4 th
First Draft	0%	Nov. 6 th (optional, no grade)
Final Draft	25%	Dec. 9 th

Exams

There will be three exams in this course: two in-class exams (one for each of the first two sections in the course schedule) and one comprehensive final. All three will include multiple choice and short answer questions. Makeup exams will *only* be given in cases of [university-excused absences](#), and official documentation is required. Exams are considered “major scheduled graded events.” Therefore, the University medical excuse policy, which allows one student-signed honor statement attesting to illness, does not apply. Excused absences are: illness with a doctor's note, death in the immediate family, religious observances, required school activities, and required court appearance. I will not accept a Health Center honor statement to verify an illness. If you go to the Health Center and a doctor will not write you a note, you will need to get a copy of your medical record from them to verify your illness. By law, you are entitled to get a copy of this, and it is your responsibility to do so. I must be notified in person or by phone *prior* to missing an exam for me to consider giving you a makeup, and you are expected to take the make-up exam *prior* to the exam date. If you have a problem on the day of an exam, call me and I can advise you what to do.

In-Class Exercises

There will be in-class exercises throughout the course, and several of them will be graded. These will not appear on the class schedule. Your participation on each in-class group exercise will be rated by the other members of your group. I do not allow students to make up missed in-class exercises without a university-excused absence (same as the exam policy above).

Reading Assessments

To prepare for each lecture, you should come to class having completed the assigned readings and accompanying reading assessment on ELMS. Each assessment has only one or two questions (multiple choice) and is due before class (9:50 a.m.). You can complete assessments at any time throughout the semester up until the due date. Therefore, make-up reading assessments are not possible, but your two lowest assessment scores will be dropped at the end of the semester.

Term Paper

You will be required to write a term paper in this class. I have listed potential topics in the table below. This paper is divided into three separate assignments, which are due *before class* (submit Microsoft Word document online via ELMS by 9:50 a.m.):

- (1) Clear presentation of thesis with a detailed outline (no more than two pages)
- (2) First draft of your term paper for feedback (**optional** – no grade, not required)
- (3) Final term paper (no more than 1,500 words, excluding references).

I strongly recommend that you write multiple drafts. You will not do well on the final paper (25% of final grade) if it is a first draft. I will grade your final paper based on how well you have done the following:

- (1) Clearly present the thesis of your paper in the opening and concluding sections.
- (2) Compare and contrast the major propositions of two theories from our discussions this semester. Make sure you demonstrate a solid understanding of the core components of each theory and accurately define important concepts. You may need to read ahead in the course schedule if we have not already covered the theories you choose in class lectures. Be sure to appropriately cite class readings.
- (3) Provide the reader with a sense for how much each of your two theories is supported empirically. For this, you should cite findings from prior research (minimum of ten), including recent studies. You may find other relevant articles online ([UMD library](#) or [Google Scholar](#)). Do not cite class lectures or the textbook; instead, cite the original works that are included in the textbook (references at the bottom of each article).
- (4) Make sure your paper has a clear organization and natural flow. It should include an introduction section, transition sentences to connect major ideas, and a conclusion section. It should also have few, if any, grammatical or spelling errors, and the use of passive voice should be kept to a minimum.
- (5) Use 12-point Times New Roman (double-spaced) and 1-inch margins. Follow [APA](#) (American Psychological Association) or a similar [style guide](#) for in-text citations and references/bibliography. I have no preference, but you should be consistent.
- (6) Demonstrate an ability to apply the two theories you choose, by following the instructions in the Term Paper Topic Options presented below:

Term Paper Topic Options

Option 1	Many schools in the United States are interested in improving the safety and learning environment they provide for their students. One strategy is to use strict discipline policies such as suspension or expulsion in response to violent or otherwise disruptive behaviors. Another strategy is to increase security measures by installing metal detectors and keeping a police officer present. Still, other strategies may involve approaches that are very different from these, or they may include some combination of multiple approaches. With the theories you choose in mind, describe at least three features of a hypothetical strategy for improving the safety and learning environment of a school. I understand you may not be familiar with school programs or policies. What is important is that you demonstrate how the theories you choose could be applied to school crime and misbehavior.
Option 2	Read the book <i>Les Misérables</i> by Victor Hugo (abridged or unabridged) enough to understand the early part of the story of Jean Valjean: his initial arrest, time in prison, and the events following his release that led to his desistance from crime. Use the theories you choose to explain (1) Valjean’s initial theft of bread, (2) his subsequent theft of silver, and (3) his eventual desistance from crime. I understand you may not be an expert on 19 th century French fiction. What is important is that you demonstrate how these theories can be used to explain this criminal behavior.
Option 3	You are at a dinner party at your uncle’s home. He lives in a wealthy suburban neighborhood just outside a large city with a relatively high crime rate. He asks how your semester is going and you mention your class on criminological theory. This piques his interest and he asks you to share your insights on the recent rise in the number of burglaries in his neighborhood. He says some of the neighbors are lobbying for harsher sanctions for burglary offenses, but he questions whether this would be an effective solution. With the theories you choose in mind, give your uncle at least three specific suggestions for strategies that may help to address the burglaries in his neighborhood.
Option 4	Choose another topic with my approval. Please share your idea with me in person during my office hours prior to the due date for the term paper thesis statement. Only topics that allow you to include all the required content and that are consistent with the course objectives will be approved.

Late Work

Turn in your term paper writing assignments on time. If you don’t you will lose 10% of a perfect score for every weekday (Mon-Fri) it is late. For example, if you score 90/100 on your term paper first draft but turn it in two weekdays late, your final score will be 70/100. Late assignments should be submitted on ELMS (no hardcopies please).

As a UMD Student, You Are Committed to Academic Integrity

I require absolute academic integrity in this course. The [University of Maryland Honor Pledge](#) reads: *I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment/examination. We are each responsible for keeping this pledge. You should write (not type) this pledge on the front cover of all papers and assignments submitted in this course, and include your signature.* I will ask students who fail to write and sign the pledge to confer with me. I will also refer any suspected cases of academic dishonesty to the University Honor Council. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, plagiarizing, cheating, having unauthorized possession of an examination, fabricating citations or other information, submitting or tampering with the work of another person, and aiding another person in doing any of these things. You are permitted to take notes in the class and to share these notes with other students currently in the class. However, you may not record, reproduce, or distribute my lectures or course materials for any commercial purpose. For more information on academic integrity, visit <http://www.president.umd.edu/administration/policies/section-iii-academic-affairs/iii-100a>

Class Conduct

You are expected to adhere to the [Code of Student Conduct](#). I also expect you to arrive on time each day having read the assigned material, and to actively participate in class activities. You should be courteous and respectful to me and to other students in this class. This includes using appropriate language, keeping your cell phone silenced and put away during lectures, not wearing headphones, and refraining from other disrespectful or distracting behavior (reading outside material, browsing the internet, text-messaging, having side conversations, sleeping, etc.). Please limit the use of laptops to note-taking so that you don't distract the students sitting around you. Laptops and all other electronic devices are prohibited during exams and quizzes. If necessary, I may also ask all students to put them away during lectures or other class activities. For more information related to student conduct, visit <https://www.studentconduct.umd.edu/>

Information for Students with Disabilities

Students seeking accommodations for a disability should contact Accessibility and Disability Service (ADS) at [301.314.7682](tel:301.314.7682), or adsfrontdesk@umd.edu. After receiving an Accommodations Letter from ADS, you should meet with me in person within the first week of class to provide a copy of the *Accommodations Letter* and for my signature on the *Acknowledgement of Student Request* form. We will discuss a plan for how the accommodations will be implemented. Specific details must be documented and added to the Acknowledgment of Student Request form. You are responsible for submitting the signed original form to ADS and retaining a copy of the signed *Acknowledgment of Student Request* for your records.

University and Course Related Policies

For additional information on UMD course related policies (academic integrity, discrimination, course conduct, sexual misconduct, accessibility, attendance, grading and exams, resources, etc.), please visit: <https://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>

Course Reserves

Two copies of the textbook are available in the McKeldin Library through course reserves (see the Course Reserves link on ELMS). One copy of the textbook is the current edition we are using in class. The second copy is an earlier edition. The earlier edition includes a reference table on the inside cover indicating which page numbers correspond to each of the readings listed in the course schedule below. Keep in mind that not all of the readings in the current edition will be the same in the earlier edition. Also, please make sure to follow the library rules and policies regarding course reserves to avoid fees (I can't control this).

Course Schedule

In the event the university is closed on the date of an in-class exam due to a weather emergency or other unexpected event, please prepare to take the exam during the next class. I will notify you if the course schedule changes for any other reason. All reading assignments should be completed prior to arriving to class on the date listed in the current schedule. The complete course schedule is included on the next page. You will find additional readings (AR) that are not in your textbook on the ELMS website.

	Class	Day	Date	Topic/Exam/Assignment	Read before Class
Section 1	1	M	Aug 26	Introduction to the Course	Syllabus
	2	W	Aug 28	Crime Trends, Correlates, and Data Sources	Criminal Victimization 2004, 2015, 2017; Travis, Western, and Redburn
	3	F	Aug 30	Crime Trends, Correlates, and Data Sources	DeLisi and Vaughn (on ELMS)
		M	Sep 2	Labor Day. No class or office hours.	
	4	W	Sep 4	Criminological Theory Evaluation	Akers, Sellers, and Jennings
	5	F	Sep 6	Criminological Theory Testing	CAW pp. 5-17
	6	M	Sep 9	Criminological Theory Testing	Kubrin, Stucky, and Krohn
	7	W	Sep 11	Biological and Biosocial Theories	CAW pp. 30-32; Hooton
	8	F	Sep 13	Biological and Biosocial Theories	CAW pp. 441-450, 468-486; Choose 1 of 4 ARs
	9	M	Sep 16	Social Disorganization Theory	CAW pp. 33-51; Sampson and Groves
	10	W	Sep 18	Social Disorganization Theory	CAW 52-57
	11	F	Sep 20	SD Theory/Writing a good term paper	Choose 1 of 4 ARs
	12	M	Sep 23	Anomie and Strain Theories	CAW pp. 105-124
	13	W	Sep 25	Anomie and Strain Theories	CAW pp. 140-149
	14	F	Sep 27	Anomie and Strain Theories	Broidy 2001
	15	M	Sep 30	Review	
16	W	Oct 2	In-Class Exam 1		
Section 2	17	F	Oct 4	Control Theories Thesis statement/Outline due on ELMS.	CAW pp. 150-168
	18	M	Oct 7	Control Theories	CAW pp. 169-177; Wiatrowski, Griswold, and Roberts
	19	W	Oct 9	Control Theories	CAW pp. 178-190
	20	F	Oct 11	Control Theories	Moffitt et al. 2011
	21	M	Oct 14	Developmental and Life Course Theories	CAW pp. 487-499
	22	W	Oct 16	Developmental and Life Course Theories	CAW pp. 523-529
	23	F	Oct 18	Developmental and Life Course Theories	CAW pp. 503-522; Choose 1 of 4 ARs
	24	M	Oct 21	Deterrence and Rational Choice Theories	Beccaria
	25	W	Oct 23	Deterrence and Rational Choice Theories	CAW pp. 353-372; Choose 1 of 4 ARs
	26	F	Oct 25	Deterrence and Rational Choice Theories	CAW pp. 373-389; Paternoster and Pogarsky
	27	M	Oct 28	Routine Activity Theory	CAW pp. 390-391, 402-412
	28	W	Oct 30	Routine Activity Theory	Osgood et al. 1996
	29	F	Nov 1	Review	
	30	M	Nov 4	In-Class Exam 2	
Section 3	31	W	Nov 6	Learning Theories Optional first draft due on ELMS.	CAW pp. 67-78; Warr and Stafford
	32	F	Nov 8	Learning Theories	CAW pp. 79-92
	33	M	Nov 11	Learning Theories	McGloin 2009
		W	Nov 13	ASC Meeting. No class or office hours.	
		F	Nov 15	ASC Meeting. No class or office hours.	
	34	M	Nov 18	Subculture Theories	CAW pp. 125-129
	35	W	Nov 20	Subculture Theories	CAW pp. 93-104
	36	F	Nov 22	Theories of White Collar Crime	CAW pp. 319-341
	37	M	Nov 25	White Collar/Writing a good term paper	
		W	Nov 27	Thanksgiving. No class or office hours.	
		F	Nov 29	Thanksgiving. No class or office hours.	
	38	M	Dec 2	Labeling Theories	CAW pp. 193-201; Lemert
	39	W	Dec 4	Labeling Theories	CAW pp. 214-221; Sampson and Laub
40	F	Dec 6	Labeling Theories	Lieberman et al. 2014; Choose 1 of 4 ARs	
41	M	Dec 9	Review Final term paper due on ELMS.		
	T	Dec 10	Reading day		
	T	Dec 17	Final Exam 8-10am		

Notes: CAW = Cullen, Agnew, and Wilcox (required text); AR = additional readings (available on ELMS)