

Contemporary Criminological Theory (CCJS 454)

Term: Fall 2021
Time: MWF 10:00am to 10:50am
Location: [ARC 1101](#) (Architecture Building)

Instructor Dr. Wade C. Jacobsen
Email wcj@umd.edu
Office Hours MW 11:00am to 11:50am, or by appointment
2220H LeFrak Hall, or on [Zoom](#).

TA	Kathy Fatoullah	TA	Monica Borsella
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Office Hours	TTh 1:00pm to 1:50pm, Zoom	Office Hours	MW 2:00pm to 2:50pm, Zoom

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

Recommended 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](#)
A more affordable e-book version is available [here](#) for \$41.58.

Course Website

Apart from the textbook, we will use ELMS for access all course materials and class announcements. *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. Our TAs, Kathy and Monica, and I will each be available during our respective office hours to discuss assignments, answer questions, or provide additional clarification on class material. If circumstances prevent us from being available during regularly scheduled office hours, we will try to notify the class in advance. If you are not available during office hours, please email us to schedule another time to meet as needed.

Attendance

You are expected to attend class. If you don't, you may miss quizzes 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	15%	Oct 6 th 10am to 10:50am
In-class Exam 2	20%	Nov 8 th 10am to 10:50am
Final Exam	30%	Dec 21 st 8am to 10am
<i>Reading Assessments</i>	3%	Due 9:50am most class days
<i>Term Paper</i>		
Thesis statement/Outline	2%	Oct 8 th 9:50am
First Draft	0%	Nov 10 th 9:50am (optional)
Final Draft	30%	Dec 10 th 10pm

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 serious problem on the day of an exam, email or call me so that I can advise you what to do.

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.

Group Work

During class lectures, there will be many opportunities for low-stakes, informal group work. I encourage you to take advantage of these very important opportunities to learn from and share what you learn with your peers. Group work is not permitted on the term paper or exams.

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 2,000 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 **six** requirements:

- (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 on the next page.

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. I will 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 purpose outside of this class.** For more information on academic integrity, visit <https://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, and refraining from other disrespectful or distracting behavior (reading outside material, browsing the internet, text-messaging, having side conversations, sleeping, etc.). 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 **as soon as possible** (preferably the first week of class) to provide a copy of the *Accommodations Letter* and for my signature on the *Acknowledgement of Student Request* form. Together, we will plan 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>

Masking Requirements

President Pines has provided clear [expectations](#) about the wearing of masks. Face coverings over the nose and mouth are required while you are indoors at all times. Students not wearing a mask will be given a warning and asked to wear one. Students who have additional issues with the mask expectation after a first warning will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for failure to comply with a directive of University officials.

Course Reserves

Two physical copies of the recommended textbook (one of them, from an earlier edition) are available on Course Reserves (see the course page on ELMS for more information). Please let me know if you have any trouble getting access to the recommended textbook.

Course Schedule

I will notify you if the course schedule changes for any 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	Read before Class	Reading Assessment
	Introduction to the Course				
	1	M	Aug 30	Syllabus	No
Section 1	Crime Trends, Correlates, and Data Sources				
	2	W	Sep 1	Criminal Victimization 1990, 2019; Travis et al. 2014	Yes
	3	F	Sep 3	Fagan 2002; Rocque et al. 2016	Yes
		M	Sep 6	Labor Day. No class or office hours.	No
	4	W	Sep 8	Alexander 2020; Phillips 2002	Yes
	Criminological Theory Evaluation and Testing				
	5	F	Sep 10	Akers, Sellers, and Jennings	Yes
	6	M	Sep 13	CAW pp. 5-17	No
	7	W	Sep 15	Kubrin, Stucky, and Krohn	Yes
	Biological and Biosocial Theories, Parts 1 and 2				
	8	F	Sep 17	Part 1: CAW pp. 30-32; Hooton 1939	Yes
	9	M	Sep 20	Part 2: CAW pp. 441-450, 468-486; Choose 1 of 4 ARs	Yes
	Social Disorganization Theory, Parts 1 and 2				
	10	W	Sep 22	Part 1: CAW pp. 33-41, 45-51; Sampson and Groves 1989	Yes
	11	F	Sep 24	Part 2: CAW 52-57	Yes
	12	M	Sep 27	Part 2: Choose 1 of 4 ARs	No
Anomie and Strain Theories, Parts 1 and 2					
13	W	Sep 29	Part 1: CAW pp. 105-110, 116-123	Yes	
14	F	Oct 1	Part 2: CAW pp. 140-149	Yes	
15	M	Oct 4	Part 2: Broidy 2001	Yes	
16	W	Oct 6	In-class Exam 1	No	
	Writing Successfully				
17	F	Oct 8	Writing a Great Paper (Thesis statement/Outline due on ELMS)	No	
Section 2	Control Theories, Parts 1 and 2				
	18	M	Oct 11	Part 1: CAW pp. 150-168	Yes
	19	W	Oct 13	Part 1: CAW pp. 169-177; Wiatrowski, Griswold, and Roberts 1981	Yes
	20	F	Oct 15	Part 2: CAW pp. 178-190	Yes
	21	M	Oct 18	Part 2: Moffitt et al. 2011	Yes
	Developmental and Life Course Theories				
	22	W	Oct 20	CAW pp. 487-499	Yes
	23	F	Oct 22	CAW pp. 523-528	Yes
	24	M	Oct 25	CAW pp. 503-522; Choose 1 of 4 ARs	Yes
	Deterrence and Rational Choice Theories				
	25	W	Oct 27	Beccaria 1764	Yes
	26	F	Oct 29	CAW pp. 353-362, 367-372; Choose 1 of 4 ARs	Yes
	27	M	Nov 1	CAW pp. 373-388; Paternoster and Pogarsky 2009	Yes
	Routine Activity Theory				
28	W	Nov 3	CAW pp. 390-391, 402-412	Yes	
29	F	Nov 5	Osgood et al. 1996	Yes	
30	M	Nov 8	In-class Exam 2	No	
	Research Presentations				
31	W	Nov 10	Guest research presentations (Optional first draft due on ELMS)	No	
Section 3	Learning Theories, Parts 1 and 2				
	32	F	Nov 12	Part 1: CAW pp. 67-71, 75-78; Warr and Stafford 1991	Yes
	33	M	Nov 15	Part 2: CAW pp. 79-91	Yes
	34	W	Nov 17	Part 2: McGloin 2009; Prerecorded lecture. No class.	Yes
	Subculture Theories				
	35	F	Nov 19	CAW pp. 125-129; Prerecorded lecture. No class.	Yes
	36	M	Nov 22	CAW pp. 93-104; Choose 1 of 4 ARs	Yes
		W	Nov 24	Thanksgiving Recess. No class or office hours.	No
		F	Nov 26	Thanksgiving Recess. No class or office hours.	No
	Theories of White Collar Crime				
	37	M	Nov 29	CAW pp. 319-330; Sutherland 1940	Yes
	Labeling Theories Parts 1 and 2				
	38	W	Dec 1	Part 1: Lemert 1951; CAW pp. 193-201	Yes
	39	F	Dec 3	Part 1: Sherman 1993; Sampson and Laub 1997	Yes
40	M	Dec 6	Part 2: Liberman et al. 2014	Yes	
41	W	Dec 8	Part 2: Choose 1 of 4 ARs	No	
42	F	Dec 10	Paper workshop; bring laptop/questions. Final draft due on ELMS, 10pm.	No	
43	M	Dec 13	Review; come prepared by bringing questions	No	
	T	Dec 14	Reading Day	No	
	T	Dec 21	Final Exam 8am to 10am.	No	

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