Course Synopsis:

This course provides a general introduction to the study of the causes of crime from an interdisciplinary perspective. The central focus centers on the major theories of crime causation developed over the past two hundred years. Significant issues in criminology -- for example, the role of age, race, gender, and social class in crime causation as well as explanations of specific forms of crime such as violence and white collar crime -- are highlighted and discussed. In addition, special attention is devoted to the measurement of crime and what is known from the available empirical data on the nature and extent of crime in the United States.

Required Readings:


Course Requirements:

(1) An in-class midterm examination will be given on March 24, 2015. This exam will account for 30% of your final grade. More information on this exam will be provided in class.

(2) A paper of 10-15 typed pages is due at the start of class on April 21, 2015. This paper will account for 30% of your final grade. More information on this assignment will be provided in class.

(3) An in-class final examination will be given on May 19, 2015. This exam will account for 30% of your final grade. More information on this assignment will be provided in class.

(4) Class participation will count for the remaining 10% of your grade. Class participation is measured by class attendance, class preparation (e.g., completing the assigned readings prior to class), and active participation during class discussions (e.g., asking questions, answering my questions, and not sleeping, reading a newspaper, surfing the web, etc.).
Office Hours and Class Meeting Times:

My office is located in 2135 LeFrak Hall. Office hours are Tuesday mornings from 10:00 to 12:00 and Thursday mornings from 10:00 to 12:00. All other days and times are by appointment only. Contact info – phone: 301-405-8070 and email: jlaub@umd.edu.

This class meets Tuesdays, 4:00 to 6:45, in Tydings 1118.

Academic Dishonesty and Honor Pledge:

The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. This Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit http://www.shc.umd.edu. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Any student suspected of academic dishonesty will be referred to the Honor Council.

To further exhibit your commitment to academic integrity, remember to sign the Honor Pledge on all examinations and assignments: “I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment/examination.”

Students with Disabilities:

Any student with a documented disability who wishes to discuss academic accommodations, please contact me by February 10, 2015.

Course Outline:

Jan. 27   Introduction and Overview of the Course: The Idea of Theory in Criminology
Readings: Bernard, Snipes, and Gerould, Ch. 1
Cullen, Agnew, and Wilcox, Introduction and Part I

Feb. 3, 10   Sources of Criminological Data and the Correlates of Crime
Readings: Mosher, Miethe, and Hart, whole book
Bernard, Snipes, and Gerould, Ch. 15, pps. 305-311

Feb. 17   Classical and Neo-Classical School Perspectives
Readings: Bernard, Snipes, and Gerould, Ch. 2
Cullen, Agnew, and Wilcox, Parts XI and XII

Feb. 24   Biological and Psychological Theories
Readings: Bernard, Snipes, and Gerould, Ch. 3 & 4
Cullen, Agnew, and Wilcox, Part II
Mar. 3 Social Disorganization Theories and Contemporary Theories of Community Processes
Readings: Bernard, Snipes, and Gerould, Ch. 7
        Cullen, Agnew, and Wilcox, Part III

Mar. 10 Strain Theories
Readings: Bernard, Snipes, and Gerould, Ch. 5, 6 & 8
        Cullen, Agnew, and Wilcox, Part V

Mar. 17 SPRING BREAK

Mar. 24 MIDTERM EXAMINATION

Mar. 31, Apr. 7 Cultural Deviance, Differential Association, and Social Learning Theories
Readings: Bernard, Snipes, and Gerould, Ch. 9
        Cullen, Agnew, and Wilcox, Part IV

Apr. 14 Control Theories
Readings: Bernard, Snipes, and Gerould, Ch. 10
        Cullen, Agnew, and Wilcox, Part VI

Apr. 21*, 28 Labeling, Conflict, Critical, and Feminist Theories
Readings: Bernard, Snipes, and Gerould, Ch. 11-14
        Cullen, Agnew, and Wilcox, Parts VII-IX

May 5, 12 Current Issues in Theory and Research: A Focus on Developmental/Life-Course Theories of Crime, Integrated Theories of Crime, and the Future of Criminological Theory and Research
Readings: Bernard, Snipes, and Gerould, Ch. 15-17
        Cullen, Agnew, and Wilcox, Parts XIII, XV

May 19 FINAL EXAMINATION

* Reminder: All papers are due at the start of class.
Sources of Criminological Data and the Correlates of Crime


