History of Criminological Thought (CCJS 654)

Term: Fall 2018
Time and Place: LeFrak 2165E, Mon 4:00pm to 6:45pm

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

Course Description
This course will provide the opportunity for guided, careful study of most major theoretical perspectives and schools of thought on crime causation. I will assume you already have a basic knowledge of the concepts and propositions of specific theories within each school of thought, as you should have taken Introduction to Criminology (CCJS 651) or a comparable MA-level course prior to this course.

You Have Four Primary Learning Objectives in This Course
1. Review the concepts and propositions of each major theory
2. Become familiar with the intellectual development of each theory
3. Understand the methodological and statistical challenges in testing each theory
4. Evaluate each for its potential contribution to criminological knowledge and policy

Required Readings
Many of our readings throughout the semester will come from this book:

I have made this and several others available through the UMD bookstore. You will need to find most of the remaining required readings (listed below) on your own using the UMD Library tools or Google Scholar. Some articles and chapters will be also be made available on ELMS. Where full books are assigned, I suggest purchasing them online. Please let me know as early as possible if you have any trouble finding what you need.

Additional Readings
In addition to the required readings, you may find the following books helpful in your study:

Course Requirements

1. **Exams.** You will be required to complete two essay exams in class. The first will be held October 22, for 20% of your final grade. The second will be held December 10, for 30% of your final grade. Arrive on time. If you must miss an exam (excused absence only), you should let me know well in advance and with appropriate documentation. Make-up exams should be administered prior to the exam date.

2. **Presentation.** You will be responsible for presenting on three perspectives or schools of thought to the class. These presentations should include (1) the “guts,” or core concepts and propositions of the theories we discuss in class and (2) a detailed overview of the intellectual history and development of the theories. These presentations will account for 15% of your final grade. Assignments will be made in the first week of class. You are required to meet with me at least three days before your assigned presentation (please email me to set up a time) to review the material you have prepared to present.

3. **Study Guide Writing Assignments.** I have provided a weekly study guide to help you focus on what is most important in the readings (and prepare for exams). I encourage you to work in groups to complete it before class each week. You are only required to submit three for a grade (as writing assignments) on each of your three presentation days. For these, you should show evidence of having read well beyond the five or six required readings each week. These three assignments will be 15% of your final grade.

4. **Participation.** For full points, you should be an active participant in class discussions. This means you should come to class having completed the assigned readings and study guide. You should also ask questions and avoid activities not related to class material (sleeping, social media, etc.). Participation will be 20% of your final grade.

As a UMD Graduate Student, You Are Committed to Academic Integrity
I require absolute academic integrity in this course and 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. For more information on academic dishonesty and the accompanying procedures and consequences, visit [http://www.shc.umd.edu/code.html](http://www.shc.umd.edu/code.html)

Information for Students with Disabilities
Students seeking accommodations for a disability should contact Accessibility and Disability Service (ADS) at 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.

Graduate Course Related Policies and Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities
The Graduate School has prepared a guide in order to provide you with information about graduate course policies, other policies related to graduate study, and relevant on-campus resources. Your syllabus applies specifically to a given course. The guide at the following link applies in general to your graduate coursework and experience at UMD: [https://gradschool.umd.edu/course-related-policies](https://gradschool.umd.edu/course-related-policies).
**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 via email if the course schedule changes for any other reason.

Reading assignments should be completed prior to arriving to class on the date listed in the current schedule. This reading list may be used as a tool for careful study of each theory and the development of each school of thought. Our time in class together is limited, so I have marked with an asterisk four or five required readings we will discuss in class. You should also read at least one more of your choice and be prepared to share what you learned in class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 26</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 2</td>
<td>No class (Labor Day)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 9</td>
<td>Theory construction and evaluation</td>
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a) What are definitions of crime, criminality, delinquency, and deviance?
b) What is a theory of crime causation? What is its purpose? How is it structured?
c) What is causality? How can it be established?
d) How should theories of crime causation be evaluated in criminology?
e) In what ways do theories of crime causation develop? Do we need all of them?


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**Sep 16 Biological and Biosocial**

**Early**


**Contemporary**


*Criminology* 53(1):101-31 [multiple articles]


Sep 23  Social disorganization

Early


Contemporary


Sep 30  Anomie and strain

Early


Contemporary


Oct 7  Social control

**Early**


[https://archive.org/details/socialcontrolas04rossgoog](https://archive.org/details/socialcontrolas04rossgoog)


**Contemporary**


Oct 14  Self-control

Early


Contemporary


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Oct 21 Midterm exam
Oct 28  Deterrence and rational choice

Early


Contemporary


Nov 4  Routine activity and environmental/opportunity

Early


Contemporary


Nov 11  Differential association, social learning

Early


Miller, Neal E. and John Dollard. 1941. *Social Learning and Imitation*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. [excerpt on ELMS]


Contemporary


Nov 18  Culture and subculture theories

Early


Contemporary


Nov 265 Conflict and beyond

Early


King, Martin Luther, Jr. 1963. “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.”


Contemporary


Dec 2  Labeling, shame and stigma

Early


Contemporary


Dec 9 Final exam
Weekly Study Guide

Do what you can to answer these questions before class. You should then expand your answers during and following our class lecture and discussion.

Answer these questions for at least two of the theories you study in the required readings. For example, in reading about anomie and strain, answer these questions for (1) Merton’s classic strain theory, as well as for (2) Agnew’s general strain theory or Messner and Rosenfeld’s Institutional Anomie theory.

1. What is the context in which this theory emerged? To what ideas or perspectives of the time are the author(s) responding?
2. What are the core concepts and propositions the author(s) lay out? Do the author(s) clearly define these concepts? Are their propositions logically stated? Explain.
3. Try to draw the conceptual model the author(s) are proposing.
4. What methodological or statistical challenges might researchers face in attempting to test these theoretical propositions, as stated by the author(s)? In what ways, if any, has recent research tried to address these challenges? What challenges remain?

Answer these questions pertaining to all of the week’s readings together:

1. Briefly describe the evolution of this major theory or school of thought, from the early writings to contemporary theories. What do you feel are the most important modifications that have been made along the way?
2. After carefully reading some of the more recent tests and reviews of these theories, what is your sense of the overall empirical validity of this school of thought? Explain.
3. What do these theories imply for policy and practice? Provide specific examples of how they have been or might be applied. How useful are they for guiding policy and practice?