Course Description

Gender and crime, as a subject of intellectual curiosity, did not gain much attention until the late 1960s and the 1970s. Previously, female offenders were an object of curiosity, often understood and treated as an aberration to their sex. Female offenders and, in particular, female victims of male violence, moved front-and-center in the field of criminology as a consequence of the women's movement. Feminist scholars launched critical assessments of the field's neglect, both in terms of empirical research and theoretical developments. These efforts produced a solid body of scholarship revealing gender to be a critical factor (some argue “the” critical variable) that informs who participates in crime, why and how offenders participate, the duration of their criminal career, and what happens to them once discovered. Over time, scholarship shifted away from “women” as a category in favor of intersectional approaches (i.e., gender, race, class, ethnicity, and sexuality), a focus on gender differences, and postmodern theorizing (e.g., discourse analysis, rejection of structure, sexed bodies). Nonetheless, debates about how best to study gender (positivism versus other epistemological approaches), whether males and females have distinct pathways into crime (including violence and the potential link between early victimization and the risk of later criminality and victimization), the need for gender neutral intervention and treatment strategies, and the impact of crime prevention policies (imprisonment, mandatory arrest) remain unresolved.

In this course, we will examine both the historical framing and contemporary understanding of gendered crime and justice. Specifically, we will cover: (1) the socio-historical and legal context in which gendered crime has been defined and conceptualized; (2) variations and patterns in female criminality vis-a-vis male; (3) gendered social organization and female victimization; (4) criminal justice sanctioning of crime by and against women; (5) theoretical interpretations of crime and victimization—gendered assumptions, biases, and relative strengths and weaknesses of criminological theories; and (6) gender and the criminal justice professions.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented physical or learning disability, I am willing to make the necessary accommodations. If this is the case, please let me know your needs by February 10th and we can discuss the best way in which to handle your specific situation. If you need test accommodations, I will need the testing form 1 week before each exam in order to get the exam to DSS in a timely manner.

I am unable to accommodate students who are not registered with Disability Support Services or who do not provide me with documentation that has been reviewed by DSS.
Academic Integrity

All students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity. Plagiarism, passing other’s work off as your own (e.g., buying or downloading papers or reports), cheating on examinations, submitting fraudulent documents or forged signatures, and so forth will not be tolerated. Students who violate these standards will be reported to the Office of Judicial Programs. Please refer to the Code of Student Conduct in the current edition of the *Undergraduate Catalog* for additional information.

Inclement Weather Policy

On occasion, classes may be cancelled due to inclement weather. If the University is closed on the day a midterm exam is scheduled or an assignment is due, the exam will be scheduled the next class meeting in which the University is open. Assignments will be due the next day that the University is open (turned into my mailbox in 2220 LeFrak Hall by close of business). If the final exam is cancelled, we will follow University rules for rescheduling.

Course Design, Expectations, and Requirements

Because the subject matter will be relatively unfamiliar to many students, the course is designed to provide a general overview of the field. The class format, therefore, will be primarily lecture and discussion. The success of the course depends on student engagement with reading materials and active class participation. Keeping up-to-date with the weekly reading assignments is especially important to the learning process.

Attendance.

Students are expected to attend class, keep up-to-date on reading materials and assignments, and participate in all class activities. *Students who miss class due to illness or medical necessity* will provide a self-excusal note for the absence upon return to class. This note should explain the reason for the absence and acknowledge that the information provided is accurate. I will accept one self-excusal, but any subsequent absences must be excused by written documentation from a health care provider.

Guided discussions.

Each student (including auditing students) will be expected to guide discussion of select required reading materials during one course meeting. Assignments will be made on a random basis during the first class meeting.

Exams.

There is a *midterm* and *final examination* scheduled for this course. Exams are an essay in format and worth 100 points each. Test questions will be based on required reading and class-based materials.
Research Paper.

Students are also expected prepare a research paper (15-20 pages typewritten) on a relevant topic of interest. An in class presentation of the paper is required. Presentations will be scheduled during the last two meetings of the course (the paper is worth 100 points, presentation 25 points).

Make-up policy.

According to University policy, there are a limited number of circumstances under which major graded scheduled events (i.e., exams, in-class presentation, and paper) can be made up: (1) serious illness, (2) a death in the immediate family, (3) religious holiday observance, (4) participation in University activities at the request of university authorities, and (5) circumstances beyond the student’s control. Advanced notice is required (i.e., prior to missing a class or an exam). Notify me, via e-mail or telephone message except in the case of religious observance. Notice of religious observance conflicts must be given no later than the second class meeting (February 3rd). Official documentation from a health care professional is also required and must be provided no later than the first day of class upon your return if not sooner.

Grades

Final grades are determined on a percentage basis using the following breakdowns: A+ are not given in this course.

A=94-100%; A-=90-93 %;  
B+= 88-89%; B=84-87%; B-= 80-83%  
C+=78-79%; C=74-77%; C-=70-73  
D+=68--69% ; D=64-67%; D-= 60-63%  
F= below 60%

Required Readings


And articles listed in bold. Articles designated with an asterisk (*) are recommended, but not required. Students who are thinking of writing a thesis or dissertation in the area, however, should consider familiarizing yourself with all suggested reading materials.
Important Dates

March 10, Midterm Examination
March 16-20, Spring Break
May 12, Research papers due
May 19, Final Exam
COURSE OUTLINE

January 27 & Feb. 3

I. Course Review and Introductory Remarks

II. Groundwork
   A. The Socio-Legal Context of Female Crime
   B. Historical Interpretations of Female Crime
   C. Critical Assessment: Challenges to conventional wisdom


Feb. 10

III. Re-adjusting the Lens: Wave II Feminism
   A. Simon and Adler
   B. A New Female Offender?
      1. Liberation/Emancipation thesis
      2. Economic marginalization


*Freda Adler, 1975, Sisters in Crime.

Feb. 17

IV. The Empirical Reality of Female Crime
   A. Measurement
   B. Patterns and Trends: Class, Age, and Racial Differences.
C. Gender ratio gap; generalizability problem
D. Criminal Careers
E. White-Collar Crime


Feb. 24

IV. Interpretations and Perspectives on Female Crime: Traditional and Feminist Frameworks

Mainstream Theories
A. Biological
B. Strain, Opportunity, Learning, and Control Theories
C. Deterrence, Routine Activity

Readings: Peggy Giordano, Legacies of Crime. Zahn, Chapters 1, 2, and 4-10.


March 3

V. Theoretical Perspectives Continued.....

Views from the Left
D. Labeling
E. Marxist, Critical Race Theory, and Power-Control Perspectives

Feminist Contributions
F. Intersectionality (Gender, Race, Class)
G. Pathways
H. Sexed Bodies
I. Doing Gender
J. Post-Modern Approaches

Journal of Youth and Adolescence.


March 10 *********************Midterm Examination******************************

March 16-20 Spring Break

March 24

VI. Women’s Victimization
   A. Historical circumstances of Abuse
   B. Measurement
   C. Fear of Crime
   D. Victimization of Women and Social Control
   E. Corporate Crime and Victimization of Women

Readings: Britton, Chapter 4.
Messerschmidt, Gender Heterosexuality, and Youth Violence.


*Susan Brownmiller, 1975, Against Our Will: Men Women and Rape.
*Diana E.H. Russell, 1982, Rape in Marriage.
March 31

VII. The Second Victimization: Victims' Experiences with the Criminal Justice System
   A. Different Standards of Justice?
   B. Policy Implications: Law, Arrest and Domestic Violence (Victim Reporting, Deterrence or Deviance Amplification?)

**Laura J. Hickman and Sally S. Simpson,** 2003, “Fair Treatment or Preferred Outcome? The Impact of Police Behavior on Victim Reports and Domestic Violence Incidents” *Law & Society Review.*


April 7

VIII. Processing the Female **Offender**
A. Overview of Criminal Justice Processing
B. Decisions to Arrest: What matters?

Readings: Britton, Chapter 3;

*Maureen Cain, 1989, Growing up good: Policing the behavior of girls in Europe.

April 14

C. Harsh or Lenient, Offenders before the Courts.

Readings: Zahn, Chapter 11.
Hill, Harris, and Miller, 1985; The etiology of bias: Social heuristics and rational decision making in deviance processing.” Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency.

April 21

D. Incarceration: The Deprivations of Imprisonment for Females
   1. The History of Prisons and Reformatories for girls/women.
   2. Correctional Philosophies
   3. Disparate Treatment
   4. Assessing the Assessments: Classification and Risk
   5. Special Problems: Gender specific programming; Reentry

Readings: Kruttschnitt and Gartner, Marking Time in the Golden State.

*Pat Carlen, 1986, Women's Imprisonment.
*Anne Worrell, 1990, Offending Women.
*Mary Eaton, 1986, Justice for Women?

April 28

IX. Gender and Work in the Criminal Justice System

A. Penetrating the Professions: Police officers, guards, attorneys and judges.
B. Gendered justice: Does a female voice matter?

Readings: Britton, The Gender of Crime: Chapter 5
Joanne Belknap, 2001, Chapters 9 and 10 from The Invisible woman: Gender, Crime, and Justice.
Curry


May 5 & May 12

Presentations

**Readings:** *Britton*, Chapter 6.

May 19 *************** Final Examination**********