Instructor: Dr. Lauren Porter
Office: 2220G LeFrak Hall
Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:00-12:30pm or by appointment
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Course Description:

“*A neighborhood is where, when you go out of it, you get beat up.*” – cited in Bursik and Grasmick, 1993: p.5

This course will focus on the following two questions:
(1) *Why does crime vary across communities?*
(2) *Why does crime vary within communities?*

We will take an interdisciplinary approach to explore these questions, discussing perspectives and research from sociology, criminology, psychology and geography. The first half of class will largely focus on perspectives that treat neighborhoods as social environments, while the second half of class will focus on perspectives that highlight the physical aspects of neighborhoods. Because this is an advanced course, there will be more emphasis placed on class discussion based on readings. Each week, I will send out a handful of discussion questions for you to think about before class. You should come to class prepared to discuss these questions. By the end of this course you should have a firm grasp of relevant theory, research, and limitations/future directions in this area.

All readings will be available on Canvas.

Prerequisites: CCJS 100, CCJS 105, and CCJS 300.

Course Requirements and Evaluation:

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Exams: Exams will include multiple choice and short answer questions. They will be closed-book.
Field Work Assignment: Your field work assignment will entail spending 1-2 hours traveling down Rte 1 from College Park to Washington D.C. Along the way, you will make observations about your surroundings. You cannot drive and take notes at the same time, obviously, so you will need to take a bus or have a friend drive. You will then write a 1-2 page summary of your observations and relate these to relevant theory from class. We will draw on your experiences for class discussion as well. More details will be provided later in the semester.

Google Earth Assignment: For this assignment you must first select two U.S. cities. They can be any cities, but cannot be counties, suburbs, or towns. Once you have selected your cities, you will look up the recent local news those places. Then, track down the most recent shooting-related deaths in each city (one per city) – the report must include the location of the crime. Your assignment is to research these locations using Google Earth. Find each location using the software and immediate environment around the crime. You will write a 2-3 page report in which you relate these observations to theory and research covered in class, compare and contrast the two environments, and review the utility of Google Earth for visual criminology. More details will be provided later in the semester.

In-Class Assignments: Most in-class assignments will take the form of group-work. They will be related to assigned readings and will also entail applying theory to real-world problems or questions.

SCHEDULE

1-30 Introduction: What is a Neighborhood?

2-6 The Chicago School and Social Ecology

2-13 Social Disorganization Theory

2-20 Extensions of Social Disorganization Theory


2-27 Routine Activities and Theories of Opportunity


3-6 Structure and Culture

**FILM: SIDEWALK**

- Elijah Anderson and The Code of the Street


3-13 Midterm

3-20 Spring Break – NO CLASS

3-27 Immigration, Social Capital, and the Changing Nature of “Place”

*GUEST LECTURER*

- Sampson: 2012: “Placed.”


4-3 Incarceration and Communities: The Revolving Door


4-10 Disorder and Incivility


4-17 Disorder and Incivility, Cont’d


**FIELD WORK ASSIGNMENT DUE**

4-24 The Criminology of Place


5-1 Environmental Criminology: Crime Pattern Theory


5-8 The Criminology of Place and Offender Decision-making


**GOOGLE EARTH ASSIGNMENT DUE**

5-19 Final Exam – 1:30pm