

Weber State University – College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
MCJ 6120: Theories of Crime and Delinquency (Online) – Spring 2016

Contact Information:

Instructor: Molly Sween, Ph.D.

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Required Texts:

Cullen, Frances T., & Agnew, Robert (2011). *Criminological Theory: Past to Present* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc. ISBN: 978-0-19-538955-5.

Course Overview:

This class will cover the nature, extent, causes, and treatment of crime. One of the overarching goals of this class is to expose you to a variety of criminological theories that have been used to explain and study crime. More specifically, I hope you walk away from this class with the ability to:

1. Comprehend each of the major criminological theories and their interpretation in the literature
2. Compare and contrast each criminological theory's validity and application

Class Website-Canvas:

This class will be utilizing Canvas (a newer iteration of Blackboard and other web systems previously used at Weber). The bulk of important information you will need to help you succeed in this class can be found there, such as; grades, assignment write-ups, etc.

If you have technical difficulties at any point during the semester, please direct your questions to WSU's Information Technology helpdesk: (801) 626-7777

Technology Needs:

In order to succeed in this class, you will need:

- Hardware – Access to a computer and decent internet speed
- Hardware – A webcam and microphone
- Software – Current versions of Java and Windows Media Player

Assignments:

Assignment	Points
ScreenCast-O-Matic Slide	5 Points
Video Introduction	5 Points
Papers (1@50pts; 1@70pts)	120 Points
Notes Guide (14@5pts)	70 Points
Discussion Posts (13@15pts)	195 Points
Article Leader (1@40pts)	40 Points
Total Points	435 points

Papers:

Rather than have you write one larger end of the semester paper, I am having you write two smaller papers over the course of the semester. Each is discussed in turn below and additional information can be found on the Canvas website.

Paper 1 – Theory Application Paper

For this paper, we will be watching a film and you will be required to use two theories we've covered up to that point in the class to help explain the social phenomenon in the movie. This paper will be worth 50 points and must be between 5-7 pages in length and use appropriate referencing within as well as at the end of the paper. Please see Canvas for the full assignment write-up.

Paper 2 – Theory & Policy Argument Paper

For this paper, you will be required to discuss the usefulness of theory in shaping policy outcomes. The paper is a hybrid of research and argument based, so you will be required to form opinions that are backed by research (i.e. class materials and additional sources you track down). This paper will be worth 70 points and must be between 7-10 pages in length and use appropriate referencing within as well as at the end of the paper.

Additionally, you are required to use 6 “outside” sources to inform this paper and 2 weeks prior to the final submission date you will be required to submit a detailed outline. Please see Canvas for the full assignment write-up.

Notes Guide:

Throughout the course of the semester, you will be creating weekly notes guides. These guides are designed to help you prepare for writing the papers, so there are no specific page lengths, font, or structure requirements (i.e. bullets, outline, lists, etc.). However, I would assume that in order to fully cover that week's material, you would need to write at least 1-2 pages worth of double-spaced text (or comparable). Aside from the first one (please see Week 1 schedule below), **notes guides are due every Monday @ 11:59pm**. Please see Canvas for a grading rubric. Below are probing questions to get you thinking about the types of things you should take away from your readings:

1. What were the readings about (in a synthesis rather than summary format)?
 - a. Please go to the following [website](#) if you would like more information on summarizing versus synthesizing.
2. Does the current theory relate to previous theories discussed (if so how)?
3. What are key terms or concepts covered?

Discussion Posts:

Throughout the course of the semester you will be posting on the class discussion board. These posts are designed to help you “grapple” with the material as well as engage in academic banter with your peers. Each week, you will be making 2 posts: 1 in response to a question/comment that I raise, and one in response to a peer's comment. Please see Canvas for the grading rubric. The assignment dates and requirements are specified below:

1. Every Tuesday you will post a 350 word reply to a question/comment that I will post on the previous Friday by 5:00pm. **Initial replies are due every Tuesday @ 11:59pm.**
2. Every Friday you will post a 150 word reply to 1 peer's comment. Your comment should agree/disagree with their point or further expand upon it. Mainly, something more thought provoking than, "Good point" will be necessary to fulfill this assignment. **Peer replies are due every Friday @ 11:59pm.**

Article Leader:

Every student will be required to find a scholarly article about a particular theory and discuss it with your peers. You will do so through both a visual and audio presentation using Screencast-O-Matic (<http://www.screencast-o-matic.com/>). I'm open to you thinking outside of the box, but I envision the visual component of your presentation being either a power point presentation or word document. I am looking for you to do 3 things with this assignment: provide a 1) summary, 2) critique, and 3) reflection. The sub points below are probing questions to get you thinking. **This assignment is due by Friday @ 11:59pm on the week that you have been assigned the role of Article Leader.** Please see Canvas for a grading rubric.

1. Article summary
 - a. What was this article about? What did the author(s) do? Etc.
2. Article critique
 - a. Methodological issues? Did author(s) fall short in one section of the paper? Etc.
3. Article reflection
 - a. Overall likes/dislikes? Would you suggest that your peers read it? Did it further your understanding of the theory that week? Etc.

Grading Scale:

Final grades will be based on a point system; your total points/435pts. I use the following grading scale in assigning final course grades.

A = 93%-100%	B+ = 87%-89%	C+ = 77%-79%	D+ = 67%-69%
A- = 90%-92%	B = 83%-86%	C = 73%-76%	D = 63%-66%
	B- = 80%-82%	C- = 70%-72%	D- = 60%-62%
			E = 0%-59%

Policy Descriptions

Syllabus Flexibility:

The syllabus is intended to be used as an outline of course requirements and expectations. I reserve the right to change the layout of the class and assignments at any time for any reason. Substantial changes will be announced during lecture and on the Canvas class webpage.

Academic Accommodation Policy:

Please contact me if you have a documented disability that requires assistance, and work with the [Services for Students with Disability](#) office for coordination of your academic accommodations. The SSD is located in the Student Services Building, room 181. Their number is 801-626-6413.

Late Assignment Policy:

The only assignment that I will accept late is the Discussion Posts since initial posts must be made so that peers can reply. For each deadline on the discussion post that you miss, you will be deducted 1 point per day the assignment is late. All other assignments will lock immediately after their due date/times (which means that you are unable to upload them past the due date/time) and late assignments will result in a score of 0. As such, plan accordingly to allow ample time to upload assignments should you run into any technical glitches or personal/professional emergencies.

Student Code Policy:

Academic dishonesty is a serious offense. As a graduate student, it is your responsibility to be familiar with and adhere to the University's [Student Code](#). Violators will be referred to the Graduate Director for academic review and sanctions may be administered by the Department of Criminal Justice, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, or the University. If I suspect academic dishonesty, you will receive an E in the class and I will report you to the Department Chair and the Graduate Director for further review.

If you are unfamiliar with what plagiarism is or how to properly reference within a paper or bibliography, I have provided some helpful resources below for you:

- What is [plagiarism](#)?
- What is the software program [Turnitin.com](#) (which will be used to cross reference my exams) and how does it catch plagiarism?
- How do I properly [reference](#) within my paper and in a bibliography?

Tentative Reading/Assignment Schedule

C/A=Cullen & Agnew

C=Reading on Canvas

Module 1: The Classics

Week 1 (1/11-1/15) – Theory, Research and Policy

Reading(s)

- C/A – pg. 1-17
- C – Akers (2005) Start pg. 3 with heading APPLICATION OF THEORY: FORMAL AND INFORMAL SOCIAL CONTROL

Assignments

- Notes Guide 1 due 1/16 @ 11:59 pm
- **Video Introduction Due 1/15 @ 11:59 pm**
- **ScreenCast-O-Matic Slide Due 1/15 @ 11:59pm**

Week 2 (1/18-1/22) – Classical and Positivism

Reading(s)

- C/A – pg. 21-31
- C – Book chapter(s) – Classical School & Positivism

Assignments

- Notes Guide 2
- Discussion Post 1

Module 2: Mainstream Theories

Week 3 (1/25-1/29) – Social Disorganization

Reading(s)

- C/A – pg. 89-111
- C – Sampson, Robert J., S.W. Raudenbush, and F. Earls. 1997. “Neighborhoods and Violent Crime: A Multilevel Study of Collective Efficacy,” *Science* 277(5328): 918-924.

Assignments

- Notes Guide 3
- Discussion Post 2
- Article Leader (if you were assigned this week)

Week 4 (2/1-2/5) – Anomie/Strain and GST

Reading(s)

- C/A – pg. 155-172 & 189-197
- C – Wright, John Paul, F.T. Cullen, R.S. Agnew, and T. Brezina. 2001. “The Root of All Evil”? An Exploratory Study of Money and Delinquent Involvement,” *Justice Quarterly* 18(2): 239-268.

Assignments

- Notes Guide 4
- Discussion Post 3
- Article Leader (if you were assigned this week)

Week 5 (2/8-2/12) – Differential Association

Reading(s)

- C/A – pg. 118-129 & 143-154
- C – Hochstetler, Andy, H. Copes, and M. DeLisi. 2002. “Differential Association in Group and Solo Offending,” *Journal of Criminal Justice* 30: 559-566.

Assignments

- Notes Guide 5
- Discussion Post 4
- Article Leader (if you were assigned this week)

Week 6 (2/15-2/19) – Control

Reading(s)

- C/A – pg. 198-206 & 215-236
- C – Beaver, Kevin M., J.P. Wright, M. DeLisi. 2007. “Self-Control as an Executive Function: Reformulating Gottfredson and Hirschi’s Parental Socialization Thesis,” *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 34(10): 1345-1361.

Assignments

- Notes Guide 6
- Discussion Post 5
- Article Leader (if you were assigned this week)

Module 3: Critical Theories

Week 7 (2/22-2/26) – Labeling

Reading(s)

- C/A – pg. 239-252 & 262-269
- C – Bernburg, Jon Gunnar and M.D. Krohn. 2003. “Labeling, Life Chances, and Adult Crime: The Direct and Indirect Effects of Official Intervention in Adolescence on Crime in Early Adulthood,” *Criminology* 41(4): 1287-1318.

Assignments

- Notes Guide 7
- Discussion Post 6
- Article Leader (if you were assigned this week)

Week 8 (2/29-3/4) – Critical/Conflict & Peacemaking

Reading(s)

- C/A – pg. 270-279 & 288-319
- C – Sheley, Joseph F. 1991. “A Conflict Theory of Criminal Law,” in Goode, Eric. 1996 *Social Deviance*.

Assignments

- Notes Guide 8
- Discussion Post 7
- Article Leader (if you were assigned this week)
- **Paper 1 Due 3/4 @ 11:59pm**

Week 9 (3/7-3/11)

NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

Week 10 (3/14-3/18) – Marxist

Reading(s)

- C/A – pg. 280-287
- C – Book chapter – Marxist and Critical Theories
- C – Stop pg. 486 with heading THE RADICAL CRIMINOLOGIST AND ALLOPLASTIC INTEREST - Klockars, Karl B. 1979. "The Contemporary Crises of Marxist Criminology," *Criminology* 16(4): 477-515.

Assignments

- Notes Guide 9
- Discussion Post 8
- Article Leader (if you were assigned this week)

Week 11 (3/21-3/25) – Feminist

Reading(s)

- C/A – pg. 320-340 & 348-356
- C – Britton, Dana M. 2000. "Feminism in Criminology: Engendering the Outlaw," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 571: 57-76.

Assignments

- Notes Guide 10
- Discussion Post 9
- Article Leader (if you were assigned this week)

Module 4: Conservative Theories

Week 12 (3/28-4/1) – Rational Choice/Routine Activity

Reading(s)

- C/A – pg. 381-393 & 400-427
- C – Becker, Gary S. nd. "The Economics of Crime," *Cross Sections: A Review of Business & Economic Developments*.

Assignments

- Notes Guide 11
- Discussion Post 10
- Article Leader (if you were assigned this week)

Module 5: Integrated Theories

Week 13 (4/4-4/8) – Developmental

Reading(s)

- C/A – pg. 451-503
- C – Laub, John H. and R.J. Sampson. 1993. “Turning Points in the Life Course: Why Change Matters to the Study of Crime,” *Criminology* 31(3): 301-325.

Assignments

- Notes Guide 12
- Discussion Post 11
- Article Leader (if you were assigned this week)
- **Paper 2 Outline Due 4/8 @ 11:59pm**

Week 14 (4/11-4/15) – Integrated

Reading(s)

- C/A – pg. 550-558
- C – Thornberry, Terence P. 1987. “Toward and Interactional Theory of Delinquency,” *Criminology* 25(4): 863-891.

Assignments

- Notes Guide 13
- Discussion Post 12

Week 15 (4/18-4/22) – Biosocial

Reading(s)

- C/A – pg. 32-77

Assignments

- Notes Guide 14
- Discussion Post 13
- **Paper 2 Due 4/22 @ 11:59pm**