

# Law and Social Control

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## Overview

This online, graduate-level course uses a problem-based learning approach to help you understand the problem of maintaining social order in contemporary society and the complexities of solving that problem. By the end of the course, you will be able to make a well-reasoned and empirically supported argument about the best way to control crime in the United States.

## Objectives

During this course, you will:

1. Distinguish between formal and informal social control;
2. Compare theories about the effects of law on behavior;
3. Explain historical and contemporary trends in crime control;
4. Evaluate the effects of various social control methods on crime and non-crime outcomes;
5. Propose and defend an original, evidence-based argument about how we should control crime in contemporary society.

## Course Web Site

This course is run through Canvas. The Canvas course site includes all information related to the course, including the syllabus, assignment instructions, readings not in the required books, important announcements, and a discussion board. Each module (accessed via the “Modules” link on the home page) includes all relevant assignments and readings.

You can access Canvas at <http://canvas.weber.edu>. When prompted, log in using your Wildcat name and password.

If you have technical difficulties at any point during the semester, please direct your questions to WSU’s Information Technology help desk at (801) 626-7777 or [csupport@weber.edu](mailto:csupport@weber.edu).

## Required Materials

Chriss, James J. 2013. *Social Control: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Choice of one other approved book for book review. Details forthcoming in Module 2.

Additional readings and multimedia content posted on Canvas.

## Important Dates

All assignments are due by 5:00pm on the due date unless otherwise specified.

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January 29, 2016

Module 1 portfolio due

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February 19, 2016

Module 2 portfolio due

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March 14, 2016

Module 3 portfolio due

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April 4, 2016

Module 4 portfolio due

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April 4, 2016

A- or B-track paper draft due

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April 25, 2016

Module 5 portfolio due

A- and B-track final paper due

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April 30, 2016

All revisions due

## Evaluation and Requirements

Your performance in this course will be evaluated based on adult-learning theory, which tells us that adults learn better in flexible and challenging environments that allow for self-directed learning. You will have a choice about which grade to pursue in the course depending on your personal learning objectives. Your learning will take place through a series of five modules that you will complete online. I have carefully designed these modules to guide you toward achieving each of the course objectives.

Each module consists of a set of five basic items and a set of A- and B-track items. The basic items include activities and assignments designed to help you understand basic concepts (items 1 and 2), analyze those concepts in relation to what's in the news (item 3), apply those concepts to the idea of controlling crime in contemporary society (item 4), and assess what you have learned by completing items one through four in the module (item 5). The A and B-track items in each module lead to the completion of a final paper in which you will propose and defend an original, evidence-based argument about how we should control crime in the contemporary United States. More details about the final paper are available on Canvas.

Each item in each module has a specific purpose and I promise that the items are never just “busy work.” If you ever find yourself working on an item without understanding what the purpose of the item is, please contact me so I can clarify the purpose of the item in relation to the course. Similarly, if you are ever unsure about what I am looking for with a specific item in a module, please contact me via email or Canvas messaging.

You will have three weeks to complete each module. Consistent with the amount of work required for graduate level courses, each module should take approximately 27 hours for the basic items. The A- and B-track items will take additional time. The amount of time will depend on the extent to which you have previously researched information related to the paper. The table below provides tentative due dates for each module. Any changes to the scheduled due dates will be announced on Canvas.

Module	Dates	Due Date (by 5:00pm)
<b>Module 1:</b> Distinguish between formal and informal social control	January 11-January 29	<b>January 29</b>
<b>Module 2:</b> Compare theories about the effects of law on behavior	January 29-February 19	<b>February 19</b>
<b>Module 3:</b> Explain historical and contemporary trends in crime control	February 19-March 14	<b>March 14</b>
<b>Module 4:</b> Evaluate the effects of social control methods on crime and non-crime outcomes	March 14-April 4	<b>April 4</b> (Paper draft also due)
<b>Module 5:</b> Propose and defend an argument about how to control crime	April 4-April 25	<b>April 25</b> (Final paper also due)

You will submit your completed modules through Canvas as a portfolio with every assigned item in one document. Students pursuing an A or B in the course will submit a separate portfolio consisting of the A- and B-track items in the module. Each portfolio will be graded as complete or incomplete.

A portfolio will be considered complete when it demonstrates ALL of the following:

1. Sound academic effort, as measured by completeness and attention to detail. Completeness means that the portfolio clearly responds to all parts of all assigned items with a level of complexity and in-depth critical thinking appropriate to graduate level work. Attention to detail means that the portfolio has few errors.
2. Professional presentation, meaning that text and visuals are neat and well-organized with each item clearly labeled in the portfolio.
3. Synthesis of ideas in your own words, with adherence to APA citation style (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>). This includes referencing sources where appropriate, properly formatting in-text citations, and including a works cited page at the end of the portfolio.
4. Timeliness, measured by submission by the stated deadline. Technical difficulties do NOT warrant an extension on an assignment. When submitting your assignments, please leave yourself enough time to deal with any technical difficulties or life emergencies you may encounter.

More details on these criteria can be found in the Portfolio Grading Criteria information sheet on Canvas. If one of your portfolios receives an incomplete, you have the option of revising for a complete by using a token. Please see details about the token system following the next section. Note that all revisions must be complete by 5:00pm on Saturday, April 30.

If you have questions about specific items in a portfolio, post your question to the appropriate portfolio help discussion board. If you see a classmate post a question to which you may know the answer, please answer their question. You may also use the Canvas chat room to see if other students may be able to answer your questions.

## Grade criteria

The following list explains the tasks you must complete to earn specific grades in this class. Please note that failure to satisfactorily complete any of the requirements for a particular assignment will result in an incomplete on that assignment. For instance, if you complete all but one item in a module, your module portfolio will receive an incomplete.

- To earn an A in this class, you will demonstrate exemplary mastery of the material by meeting all course objectives at a high level of thinking. To do so, you must 1) successfully complete all five basic items and each A- and B-track item in all five learning modules by the stated due date, and 2) successfully complete the final paper at the A level.
- To earn a B in this class, you will demonstrate good mastery of the material by meeting the first four course objectives and beginning to meet the fifth objective. To do so, you must 1) successfully complete all five basic items and each A- and B-track item in all five learning modules by the stated due date, and 2) successfully complete the final paper at the B level.

- To earn a C in this class, you will demonstrate decent mastery of the material by showing your understanding of the foundational knowledge necessary to achieve all five objectives. You will meet the first four course objectives. To do so, you must successfully complete all five basic items in all five learning modules by the stated due date.
- To earn a D in this class, you will demonstrate minimal mastery of most material, including some of the foundational knowledge necessary to achieve all five objectives. To do so, you must successfully complete four of the five basic items in all five learning modules by the stated due date.
- To earn an F in this class, you will fail to meet the minimum requirements for a D in the course.

## Tokens

Each student will begin the course with three virtual tokens that you can use to make the course more flexible for you. One token can be exchanged to:

- Revise one incomplete criterion in a portfolio. (Note that you may revise the portfolios for module one for free. After that, you will need to use tokens to revise incomplete criteria.)
- Revise the final paper.

Please note that all revisions must be submitted no later than 5:00pm on April 28, 2016.

During the semester, you may earn one additional token by doing any of the following. For each, see the requirements on Canvas.

- Posting to a discussion board on Canvas a 500-word summary that analyzes the main arguments and findings in an academic article related to the course (but not assigned in a current or previous module).
- Attending an event on campus or in the community that relates to our course and writing a 500-word essay connecting that event to our course.
- Writing a 750-word essay that connects course material to a current event.

You will lose one token for each instance of the following:

- Violating online etiquette policies
- Minor academic dishonesty

If you have at least five tokens at the end of the semester, your remaining tokens will be automatically exchanged for a bump in your letter grade. For instance, if you earn a B in the course and you have five tokens at the end of the semester, your final grade will be a B+.

## Course Policies

### Online Etiquette

My virtual classroom is a safe space for everyone (students and myself) to be treated with respect and dignity. I expect every person in the class to honor differences in people, ideas, and opinions. Questions and

comments by others should be treated with civility at all times. In responding to your peers, it is only appropriate to address the substance of their arguments; I will not tolerate any personal attacks. Also, it is inappropriate to expect a student to explain or defend the views or positions of a racial, ethnic, religious, or political group with which they may be associated. If you prefer an alternate name or gender pronoun, please advise me of your preference and I will happily honor your request. If at any time, you feel personally attacked or otherwise uncomfortable in the class, please let me know so that I can rectify the situation. Behavior that disrupts the online learning environment (including discussion boards) may be cause for discipline under the student code. If your comments on the discussion board violate any of the above policies or otherwise disrupt the learning environment, I reserve the right to ask you to modify your behavior, deduct accordingly from your reflection paper and discussion post grades, and delete any offending posts.

## Email

I will make every attempt to respond to emails within one business day.

## Grading

Grading criteria for all assignments are available on Canvas. Those who wish to submit a graded assignment for a second evaluation must prepare a detailed written statement explaining why particular sections of the assignment warrant re-evaluation. This does not require a token. Your appeal must specifically reference particular comments I made on the assignment and explain how/why you believe your assignment addresses those comments. Your appeal should be emailed to me within one week of the date that grades are posted on the assignment.

## Disabilities

If you have a documented disability that requires assistance, please contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) (Student Services Bldg, Rm. 181; 801-626-6413; <http://www.weber.edu/ssd>) as soon as possible. SSD can also arrange to provide course materials (including this syllabus) in alternative formats upon request.

## Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and may result in your suspension from the university. As specified in PPM 6-22 IV D, cheating and plagiarism violate the Student Code. Plagiarism is “the unacknowledged (uncited) use of any other person’s or group’s ideas or work.” Students found guilty of cheating or plagiarism are subject to failure of a specific assignment, or, in more serious cases, failure of the entire course. WSU subscribes to Turnitin.com, an electronic service that verifies the originality of student work. Enrollment in this course requires you to submit some of your assignments to Turnitin. Documents submitted to Turnitin are retained, anonymously, in the company’s databases.

## Emergency Closures

If for any reason the university is forced to close for an extended period of time, we will continue to conduct our class via Canvas. In the event of a closure, you will be expected to login to Canvas on a regular basis to keep up with coursework. Code Purple is a good way to receive alerts about campus closures, and I encourage you to sign up for it at <http://www.weber.edu/codepurple/>.