

CCJ 4014-01A4 CRIMINOLOGICAL THEORY – SPRING 2025
Tuesdays 1:55-2:45 pm and Thursdays 1:55-3:50 pm (FLG 220)

Instructor: Dr. Abby Fagan

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 12:50-1:50pm and 5:10-6:10pm

OVERVIEW

This course will familiarize students with the major theories that explain involvement in crime. We will review classical (early) and contemporary theoretical explanations of crime, examine the empirical evidence for these theories, and discuss application of the theories to criminal justice policies and practices. There will be an emphasis on developing critical thinking skills when evaluating theories. This means that, in addition to understanding the basic facts associated with each theory, we will compare and contrast the assumptions, strengths, weaknesses, and relevance of these theories in class discussions, written assignments, and exams.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the semester, you will be able to:

- Summarize each of the major criminological theories in one sentence.
- Explain the processes each theory identifies to explain why individuals become involved in crime and why they may recidivate or desist from offending.
- Understand how theories influence criminal justice policy and practice.
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of each theory and decide which theory(ies) you think best explains crime.

REQUIRED READINGS

- Ronald Akers, Christine Sellers, and Wesley Jennings. 2021. *Criminological Theories (8th Edition)*. Oxford University Press.
- Articles on e-learning/Canvas (under the “Files” tab)

COURSE POLICIES

- The attendance policy is consistent with UF policy; see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>. I will not take attendance, but your absence may harm your ability to do well in the class and complete all assignments. I will post abbreviated copies of my lecture slides on Canvas, but you should consult with other students, not me, to obtain information missed if you are absent.
- Recording of Classes. UF policy states that students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the only purposes for which these recordings may be used are: (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited, and students may not publish or distribute recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.
- Communication. I will use announce changes to the course schedule in class and on Canvas. You should regularly check your UF email account and the Canvas course site to obtain this information. The best way to communicate with me is to message me in Canvas.
- Course Evaluation: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals at the end of the semester. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.
- On exam days, students:
 - cannot use ear phones/buds of any kind
 - must have no visible class materials nearby
 - must not have a cell phone turned on or visible
 - are not allowed to leave the room until they have turned in their exam. If you are sick during an exam and must leave, your grade will be based on the portion of the exam you completed.
 - must show up on time. If you arrive after the first student has completed the exam and left the room, you will not be allowed to take the exam.
- Missed Exams. Consistent with the UF policy, students who miss an exam due to a documented family or medical emergency, *and who discuss this problem with me in advance of the scheduled exam date*, will have the opportunity to complete a make-up exam, **which may be given during the final exam period.**
- Plagiarism/Cheating. I provide many opportunities to help students do well in this course so **DO NOT CHEAT!** *If you cheat, you will receive an F and may be subject to other sanctions consistent with UF policy; see:* <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>.

GROUND RULES FOR BEHAVIOR DURING CLASS

During our discussions and written assignments, we will all agree to:

- 1) Be an active participant. This does not mean you must verbally participate in every session, but it does mean paying attention, thinking critically, and doing more than just showing up.
- 2) Acknowledge that we all have different experiences based on race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender or sexual preference, age, physical disability(ies) and so on. Realize that some of your classmates may have been involved in or have close ties to people involved in the juvenile and/or criminal justice system(s) as victims or offenders. Please be respectful of others' experiences, do not judge, do not interrupt or insult others, and do not make others feel embarrassed or ashamed of their views. We do not have to agree with each another, but let us acknowledge and discuss our differences of opinion in a respectful manner. These expectations are consistent with the UF Student Conduct Code: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>.
- 3) Refrain from rude behavior, including arriving late or leaving early, sleeping, reading outside materials, or making comments under your breath. **If you are chatting with, emailing, or texting others during class, I may ask you to leave the classroom.** Please be considerate.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should meet with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://disability.ufl.edu/>). Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter that must be presented to Dr. Fagan. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

SENSITIVE TOPICS AND CAMPUS RESOURCES

In this class, we will discuss crime, victimization, and other topics that may be sensitive and could generate strong emotions. Should you encounter serious emotional challenges with the course content, or if you are aware of other students in such a position, please consider contacting one of the following support services for students:

- Health Care Center: <http://shcc.ufl.edu/>
- Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>
- U Matter, We Care: <https://umatter.ufl.edu/>; email: umatter@ufl.edu; 352-294-2273.
- Office of Victims' Services: <http://www.police.ufl.edu/victim-services/>
- University Police Department: <https://police.ufl.edu/>; 352-392-1111.

GRADING

- **Exams:** 75% of final grade (25% each).
 - Three non-cumulative exams will be given and will test knowledge in the first, second, and third sections of the class. Each exam will have 50 multiple choice and true/false questions.
 - Final exam: The final exam is optional and cumulative, with 50 questions covering content from the entire semester. Students who take the final exam will have their lowest exam score dropped.

- **Assignments:** 25% of final grade. Assignments will test your understanding of the course content and your ability to apply the material to your own life and to criminal justice policy and practice. Doing well in this part of the course requires you to regularly attend class and complete assignments on time.
 - In-class assignments will occur throughout the semester, with no advanced warning. Each assignment will be graded as not completed (=0) or completed (=1). *Students must be in class to receive a grade.*
 - Out-of-class assignments require short (< 1 page) responses to a question(s) or activity, as listed on the course schedule and described on the Canvas e-learning site. *These must be completed and submitted through Canvas **by the start of class on the day they are assigned.*** They will be graded as not completed (=0) or completed (=1). Assignments are graded as “completed” if students make a thoughtful attempt to answer the question(s).
 - Assignments will be graded by Rachel Chen. Please contact her with questions about assignments and grading.
 - Your overall grade for the assignments is based on the number you complete, as shown:

Number Completed	Grade
19, 20	100
18	97
17	94
16	91
15	88
14	85
13	82
12	80
11	77
10	75
9	72
8	70
7	65
6	62
5	60
0-4	50

- **Extra Credit.** I will provide a few opportunities for extra credit, usually quizzes based on the reading assignments, conducted during class time. *No other extra credit options will be offered; do not ask for extra credit at the end of the semester as I will not provide it.*
- **Questions About Grading:** I am happy to review and/or discuss your performance in this class, but you must contact me within ONE week after a grade is posted to request a meeting about your grade on a quiz, exam or assignment. After that time, the grade will not be changed. For questions about the UF grading policy, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>.
- **Final Grade:** I will calculate your final grade based on the scale below. You should calculate your own final grade based on this formula. **Do NOT use the final grade shown on Canvas** as Canvas does not follow my formula. *Also, I do not round up, curve, or add extra points to grades at the end of the semester, so do not ask me to do so.* Also, be aware that a minimum grade of a “C” is required to receive credit for this class if you are a Criminology and Law major.
 - 93-100%=A
 - 90-92.9%=A-
 - 87-89.9%=B+
 - 83-86.9%=B
 - 80-82.9%=B-
 - 77-79.9%=C+
 - 73-76.9%=C
 - 70-72.9%=C-
 - 67-69.9%=D+
 - 63-66.9%=D
 - 60-62.9%=D-
 - 0-59.9%=F

COURSE SCHEDULE AND TOPICS

NOTE: This is a tentative schedule subject to revisions. All readings must be completed and written assignments must be submitted by the start of class (1:55pm) on the due date.

TOPIC	DATE	ASSIGNMENT (T: textbook; A: Article on Canvas)
Week 1: Introduction	Tues 1/14	Buy the textbook and read the syllabus
	Thurs 1/16	T: Chapter 1
Week 2: Deterrence, Rational Choice, and Routine Activities Theories	Tues 1/21	T: Chapter 2, pp. 14-32 Written assignment #1
	Thurs 1/23	A: Wright and Decker, 1997: <i>Armed robbers in action</i> Written assignment #2
	Tues 1/28	T: Chapter 2, pp. 33-44
Week 3: Biological and Biosocial Theories	Thurs 1/30	T: Chapter 3
	Tues 2/4	A: Caspi et al., 2002: <i>The role of genotype in the cycle of violence</i> Written assignment #3
Week 4: Social Learning Theories	Thurs 2/6	T: Chapter 5
	Tues 2/11	A: Anderson, 1999: <i>The code of the street</i> Written assignment #4
Week 5: Social Learning Theories	Thurs 2/13	Written assignment #5
	Tues 2/18	EXAM 1
Week 6: Social Control Theories	Thurs 2/20	T: Chapter 6, pp. 123-133
	Tues 2/25	T: Chapter 6, pp. 133-148 A: Intravia, 2023: <i>Low self-control and social media posting</i>
Week 7: Social Disorganization Theories	Thurs 2/27	T: Chapter 8
	Tues 3/4	A: Weisburd et al., 2022: <i>Procedural justice and hot spots policing</i> Written assignment #6
Week 8: Strain Theories	Thurs 3/6	T: Chapter 9
	Tues 3/11	A: Unnever and Gabbidon, 2011: <i>A theory of African American offending</i> Written assignment #7
	Thurs 3/13	EXAM 2
Week 9: SPRING BREAK	Tues 3/18	NO CLASS
	Thurs 3/20	NO CLASS
Week 10: Feminist Theories	Tues 3/25	T: Chapter 13 Written assignment #8
	Thurs 3/27	A: Morash and Haarr, 2011: <i>Women police officers</i>

Week 11: Labeling Theories	Tues 4/1	T: Chapter 7
	Thurs 4/3	A: Chambliss, 1973: <i>The Saints and the Roughnecks</i> Written assignment #9
Week 12: Life Course Theories	Tues 4/8	T: Chapter 14
	Thurs 4/10	A: Moffitt, 1993: <i>Pathways in the life course to crime</i> Written assignment #10
Week 13: Integrated Theories	Tues 4/15	T: Chapter 15 Written assignment #11
	Thurs 4/17	Written assignment #12
Week 14: Wrap Up	Tues 4/22	EXAM 3
FINAL EXAM (OPTIONAL): May 2: 8:00-9:15am		