

CCJ 6920-3360 CRIMINOLOGICAL THEORY - Fall 2023

Tuesdays 9:35am – 12:35pm, UST 105

Instructor: Dr. Abby Fagan, afagan@ufl.edu; (352) 294-7169

Office Hours: (in person at 3362 Turlington Hall and via Zoom; see Canvas for link)

- **Wednesdays: 1:00-2:30pm**
- **Thursdays: 12:00-1:30pm**

OVERVIEW

This course will familiarize students with the major theories proposed to explain involvement in crime and the operation of the criminal justice system. We will review these theories to understand the causes of crime identified as important, the mediating processes and mechanisms that lead from these causes to criminal behavior(s), and the moderating factors that may amplify or mitigate the likelihood that these causes will result in crime. The course will help students prepare for the theory comprehensive exam and develop critical thinking skills by comparing and contrasting the tenets, strengths, weaknesses, and empirical support for criminological theories and understanding how they can inform criminal justice policies and practices. Knowledge will be obtained through lecture, classroom discussions, and written assignments.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- Summarize in one sentence the basic premise of each major criminological theory
- Explain the causal mechanisms identified in each theory as influencing involvement in crime, victimization, and/or the criminal justice system
- Evaluate the strength and weaknesses of the theories, including how well they have been tested and their empirical support
- Identify and explain how criminological theories can be used to prevent/reduce involvement in crime and improve the criminal justice system
- Determine which criminological theory(ies) will inform your research
- Be better prepared to pass the criminological theory comprehensive exam

READINGS

- **Mandatory:** Articles shown on the course schedule
- **Optional:** Ronald L. Akers, Christine S. Sellers, and Wesley G. Jennings. 2020. *Criminological Theories* (Eighth Edition). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

EXPECTATIONS FOR CLASS BEHAVIOR

- **Be an active participant.** This class is a seminar. As such, my role is to provide information, promote your learning, and facilitate discussion. Your role is to engage with the material, no matter how familiar or unfamiliar it is to you, and to share your ideas with the class. Every class, I expect that you will be fully prepared, paying attention, thinking critically, and participating. *You need to do more than just show up.*
- **Be considerate and refrain from rude behavior,** including arriving late or leaving early, sleeping, reading outside materials, making comments under your breath, or emailing or texting others. To avoid temptation, WE WILL ALL TURN OFF CELL PHONES WHILE IN CLASS.
- **Respect 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 we need to acknowledge that we all have different experiences based on race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender and sexual preferences, age, physical disability(ies) and so on. Also, realize that some of your classmates may have been involved in or know others involved in the juvenile and/or criminal justice system(s).

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 shared with 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/>
- Office of Victims' Services: <http://www.police.ufl.edu/victim-services/>
- U Matter, We Care: <https://umatter.ufl.edu/>; umatter@ufl.edu; 352-294-2273
- University Police Department: <https://police.ufl.edu/>; 352-392-1111.

COURSE POLICIES

- Communication. The best way to communicate with me is through email; you can also message me in Canvas. I will use Canvas to post assignments, readings, and lecture slides, and to send announcements to the entire class. I will email individual students when issues pertain only to that person. It is your responsibility to pro-actively communicate with me with any problems, requests for assistance, or questions. You are also responsible for regularly checking your email (the account that UF has assigned to you, unless you inform me otherwise) and for understanding how to access and navigate Canvas.
- Attendance. This seminar meets only once per week and relies heavily on class discussion and interaction. I expect each student to attend every class unless a significant and legitimate reason prevents you from doing so (e.g., serious illness, death of a family member, religious holiday, conference attendance). Students who are absent must still submit required written assignments on time and should obtain notes from other students (not Dr. Fagan). **Unexcused absences will affect your final grade and three absences will earn you a failing grade.**
- Recording of Classes. UF policy states that students are allowed to record video or audio of lectures. 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.

- Plagiarism/Cheating. Students are bound by the UF Honor Pledge and the Conduct and Honor Code: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>. Violations of the Honor Code include plagiarism, improper citation of sources, using another student's work, and any other form of academic misrepresentation. *If you do not uphold these standards and cheat or plagiarize in this course, you will fail the class.*
- 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.ua.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.ua.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

GRADING

- Late Assignments. Readings and assignments should be completed by the beginning of class on the date listed on the syllabus unless otherwise stated. Late work is penalized 5 points per day.
- Theory Summaries (n=5): 25% (5% each) of the final grade.
 - Students will submit **five** short (2-4 page, double spaced) papers that demonstrate their understanding of five theories reviewed during Weeks 3-14.
 - Papers should draw on the assigned readings and include the following:
 - A summary of the theory(ies) stated *in your own words*.
 - Identification of the key constructs, mediators, and/or moderators influencing involvement in crime, victimization, and/or the criminal justice system as posited in the theory.
 - An overall assessment of the theory's strengths and weaknesses based on its logical consistency, scope, parsimony, testability, and utility for policy and practice. Use a rating scale of 1-5, with a "1" corresponding to a very poor theory and a "5" indicating a very strong theory. Provide justification for each rating.
 - Summaries will be graded as an "A", "C", or "F". An "A" assignment is complete, clear, thoughtful, and includes citations. A "C" assignment is incomplete and/or not well developed. An "F" indicates that the assignment was not submitted or was written with little thought.
 - **Papers are to be submitted via Canvas by 9:30am on the first day the theory is discussed in class.**
- Empirical Article Summaries (n=3): 30% (10% each). Students will provide a written summary and critique of three contemporary (**past five years**) articles that relate to three theories covered this semester (one article per theory). One article must be a comprehensive literature review or meta-analysis of a theory. The other two must describe the results of an empirical test of a theory, in which the outcome (dependent variable) examined in the article is criminal perpetration or victimization. Papers cannot already be listed on the syllabus.
 - The summary of the literature review and/or meta-analysis should describe the number and types of studies included in the review, the degree to which the review has supported various concepts and propositions of the theory, and a summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the review.

- The summary of the empirical investigations should: a) identify how the study improves upon prior tests of the theory; b) explain the research study design, population(s), and key independent and dependent variables; c) identify the research question(s) and summarize the findings for each question; and d) evaluate how well the study tested the theory, including how well the measures reflect the theoretical concepts, the degree to which it supports the theory's hypotheses, and its major limitations.
 - Papers should be 4-6 pages, double-spaced.
 - **Papers are to be submitted via Canvas by 9:30am on the day the theory is discussed for the first or second time.**
- **Book Summary:** 15%. Students will read one book from a provided list of theory texts, then submit notes for each chapter (as an appendix) and a summary of the key tenets of the theory as detailed in the book. The summary should be at least 5 pages, double spaced, written so that you and others can easily understand the book's content, and include any direct quotations you feel best capture the author(s)' points. In addition to describing the theory, including your opinions as to its strengths and weaknesses. **The notes and summary are due on the same day the theory is covered in class.**
 - **Final Exam:** 30%. The final exam will be a "mock" comprehensive exam. Similar to a real exam, I will provide you with **four** questions, and you will have 72 hours to provide responses to **two** questions of your choice. Your two answers must differ in content and demonstrate that you have a comprehensive understanding of the theory(ies) selected. Papers will be no longer than 12 pages and double spaced with 12-point font, not including a bibliography.

FINAL GRADES WILL BE ASSIGNED USING THE FOLLOWING SCALE

- 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, TOPICS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

(SUBJECT TO REVISION AS THE SEMESTER PROGRESSES; CHECK CANVAS/EMAILS FOR UPDATES)

Although not listed, students should read the relevant chapters in Akers et al. (2020)

Topic	Required Readings	Optional Readings
Week 1: August 29 Introduction	Akers et al., 2020, Chapter 1 Bernard, 1990 Wilson, 1974	“Resources” on Canvas
Week 2: September 5 Deterrence Rational Choice	CAW Ch1: Beccaria CAW Ch32: Stafford and Warr CAW Ch33: Cornish and Clarke CAW Ch35: Tyler CAW Ch 29: Clear CAW Ch30: Alexander Apel, 2022 Loughran et al., 2016 Nagin, 2013 (skim)	Becker, 1968 Matsueda et al., 2006 Nagin, 2014 Paternoster, 1987
Week 3: September 12 <u>Learning Theories</u> Differential Association Social Learning	CAW Ch7: Sutherland and Cressey CAW Ch8: Sutherland CAW Ch9: Akers CAW Ch12: Anderson Akers, 1990 Krohn 1999	Matsueda, 1988 Becker 1953 Patterson et al., 1984
Week 4: September 19 Learning Theories	Akers et al., 1979 Haynie and Osgood, 2005 McGloin and Thomas, 2019 Pratt et al., 2010 Warr and Stafford, 1991	Elliott and Menard, 1996 Giordano, et al., 1986 Kruis et al. 2020 Unnever et al., 2006
Week 5: September 26 <u>Social Control Theories</u> Social bond theory Self-control theory	CAW Ch16: Hirschi CAW Ch17: Gottfredson and Hirschi Akers, 1991 Costello and Lab, 2020 Gottfredson, 2019 Taylor, 2001	Burt, 2020 Marcus, 2004 Reiss, 1951
Week 6: October 3 Social Control	Grasmick et al., 1993 Krohn and Massey, 1980 Moffitt et al., 2011 Pratt and Cullen, 2000 Unnever et al., 2009	Cernkovich and Giordano, 1992 Wright et al., 1999
Week 7: October 10 <u>Strain Theories</u> Anomie Institutional Anomie General Strain Theory	CAW Ch11: Merton CAW Ch12: Cohen CAW Ch13: Rosenfeld and Messner CAW Ch14: Agnew CAW Ch 31: Unnever and Gabbidon Agnew, 2001	Cullen and Messner, 2007 Messner and Rosenfeld, 2008
Week 8: October 17 Strain Theories	Broidy and Agnew, 1997 Isom and Grosholtz, 2019 Perez et al., 2008 Simons et al., 2003 Thaxton and Agnew, 2018	Agnew and White, 1992 Collins and Menard, 2021 Paternoster and Mazerolle, 1994 Reid et al., 2022

Topic	Required Readings	Optional Readings
Week 9: October 24 Social Disorganization	CAW Ch3: Shaw and McKay CAW Ch4: Bursik and Grasmick CAW Ch5: Sampson et al. CAW Ch6: Kirk and Papachristos CAW Ch29: Sampson and Wilson CAW Ch34: Wilson and Kelling	Bursik, 1988 Kubrin and Weitzer, 2003 Sampson, 2012
Week 10: October 31 Social Disorganization	Krivo and Peterson, 1996 Morenoff et al., 2001 Pratt and Cullen, 2005 Stewart and Simons, 2010 Sampson and Groves, 1989	Browning et al., 2002 Leventhal and Brooks-Gunn, 2000 Pattillo, 1998 Sampson and Raudenbush, 1999 Sharkey et al., 2017
Week 11: November 7 Routine Activities Biosocial	Belsky and Pluess, 2009 Caspi et al., 2002	
Week 12: November 14 Life Course Developmental	CAW Ch43: Moffitt CAW Ch44: Sampson and Laub CAW Ch45: Paternoster and Bushway Blumstein et al., 1988 Cullen, 2011 Giordano et al., 2002 Sampson and Laub, 1990	Broidy et al. 2003 Carlsson and Siverstsson, 2021 Moffitt 2018 Patterson et al., 1989 Pettit and Western, 2004 Uggen, 2000 Warr, 1998
Week 13: November 21 Labeling/Critical	CAW Ch18: Chambliss CAW Ch19: Braithwaite CAW Ch20: Maruna Becker, 1963 Bernburg and Krohn, 2003 Pager, 2003 Stewart et al., 2020 Weis, 2021	CAW Ch21: Bonger CAW Ch22: Currie Paternoster and Iovanni, 1989 Mitchell and Caudy, 2015
Week 14: November 28 Feminist	CAW Ch24: Adler CAW Ch25: Chesney-Lind CAW Ch26: Messerschmidt CAW Ch27: Miller Daly and Chesney Lind, 1988 Kruttschnitt, 2013 Rajah et al., 2022	Daly, 1992 Heimer and DeCoster 1999 Silverthorn and Frick, 1999 Steffensmeier et al., 2005
Week 15: December 5 Integrated Wrapping Up	Catalano and Hawkins, 1996 Elliott et al., 1979 Liska et al., 1989 Thornberry, 1987 Wheeldon et al., 2014	Bernard and Snipes, 1996 Wilson, 1974: https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/crime-and-the-criminologists/
Final Paper: Issued December 10 at 8am; Due December 12 at 11:59 pm		