

CCJ 6920 CRIMINOLOGICAL THEORY - Fall 2024
Mondays 3:00–6:00pm, TUR2346

Instructor: Dr. Abby Fagan, afagan@ufl.edu; (352) 294-7169
Office Hours: (in person at 3362 Turlington Hall and via Zoom)

- **Mondays: 1:00-3:00pm**
- **Tuesdays: 11:00-12:30pm**

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

- **Required:** Articles shown on the course schedule
- **Highly Recommended:** Ronald L. Akers, Christine S. Sellers, and Wesley G. Jennings. 2020. *Criminological Theories* (Eighth Edition). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- **Recommended:** Francis T. Cullen, Robert Agnew, and Pamela Wilcox. 2021. *Criminological Theory Past to Present: Essential Readings* (Seventh Edition). New York, 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 sensitive topics. If you have 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 should regularly check your email (the account that UF has assigned to you, unless you inform me otherwise) and understand how to 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 and arrive on time 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 class 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 3-15.
 - 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 rating of the theory's strengths and weaknesses based on its logical consistency, scope, parsimony, testability, utility for policy and practice, and empirical support. 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 your 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.
 - **You must submit your papers via Canvas by the start of class 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 articles published in the past five years in a top criminology journal** (see Resources for a list of journals) that relate to three theories covered this semester (one article per theory). The articles 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 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 the start of class 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 as well as your assessment of the theory's strengths and weaknesses. The summary should be about 5 pages, double spaced, and written so that you and others can easily understand the book's content. You may include any direct quotations you feel best capture the author(s)' points. **The notes and summary are due on the last day of 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. **The final exam will be given during finals week.**

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)

Although not listed after Week 1, students should read the relevant chapters in Akers et al. (2020) **Highlighted references are books** but I have uploaded to Canvas most of the book excerpts from Cullen et al. (2022). I strongly encourage you to read the entire book at some point.

Topic	Required Readings	Recommended Readings
Week 1: August 26 Introduction	Akers et al., 2020, Chapter 1 (Bernard, 1990) Wilson, 1974: https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/crime-and-the-criminologists/	“Resources” on Canvas
Week 2: September 2	No Class: Labor Day	
Week 3: September 9 Deterrence Rational Choice	(Apel, 2022) (Beccaria, 1764/1983) (Clarke & Cornish, 1985) (Loughran et al., 2016) (Nagin, 2013) - <i>skim</i> (Stafford & Warr, 1993) (Tyler, 2004)	(Becker, 1968) (Clear, 2008) (Cornish & Clarke, 1986) (Matsueda, Kreager, & Huizinga, 2006) (Nagin, 2014) (Paternoster, 1987)
Week 4: September 16 <u>Learning Theories</u> Differential Association Social Learning	(Akers, 1990) (Akers, 2009) (Anderson, 1999) (Becker, 1953) (Krohn, 1999) (Sutherland, 1947)	(Burgess & Akers, 1966) (Matsueda, 1988) (Patterson, Dishion, & Bank, 1984) (Sykes & Matza, 1957)
Week 5: September 23 Learning Theories	(Akers et al., 1979) (Li, 2022) (McGloin & Thomas, 2019) (Pratt et al., 2010) (Widom, 1989)	(Elliott & Menard, 1996) (Giordano, Cernkovich, & Pugh, 1986) (Haynie & Osgood, 2005) (Hoeben et al., 2016) (Kandel, 1996) (Kruis, Seo, & Kim, 2020) (Warr & Stafford, 1991)
Week 6: September 30 <u>Social Control</u> Social bond theory Self-control theory	(Akers, 1991) (Costello & Laub, 2020) (Gottfredson, 2019) (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990) (Hirschi, 1969) (Hirschi & Gottfredson, 2000) (Taylor, 2001)	(Burt, 2020) (Geis, 2000) (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 2019) (Marcus, 2004) (Reiss, 1951)
Week 7: October 7 Social Control	(Grasmick et al., 1993) (Krohn & Massey, 1980) (Moffitt et al., 2011) (Pratt & Cullen, 2000) (Kempf-Leonard, 2019)	(Cernkovich & Giordano, 1992) (Li et al., 2019) (Pratt et al., 2014) (Unnever et al., 2009) (Vazsony, Mikuška, & Kelley, 2017) (Wright et al., 1999)
Week 8: October 14 <u>Strain Theories</u> Anomie Institutional Anomie General Strain Theory	(Agnew, 1985) (Agnew, 2001) (Broidy & Agnew, 1997) (Merton, 1938) (Messner & Rosenfeld, 2008) (Unnever & Gabbidon, 2011)	(Agnew, 2006) (Agnew, 2019) (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960) (Cullen & Messner, 2007) (Messner & Rosenfeld, 1994)

Topic	Required Readings	Recommended Readings
Week 9: October 21 Strain Theories	(Agnew & White, 1992) (Barbieri et al., 2019) (Bunch, Iratzoqui, & Watts, 2018) (Simons et al., 2003) (Thaxton & Agnew, 2018)	(Broidy, 2001) (Collins & Menard, 2021) (Paternoster & Mazerolle, 1994) (Reid et al., 2022)
Week 10: October 28 Social Disorganization	(Bursik Jr. & Grasmick, 1993) (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997) (Sampson & Wilson, 1995) (Shaw & McKay, 1942) (Wilson & Kelling, 1982)	(Bursik Jr., 1988) (Kubrin & Weitzer, 2003) (Sampson, 2011) (Sampson, 2012) (Wilson, 1987)
Week 11: November 4 Social Disorganization	(Bellair, 1997) (Kirk & Papachristos, 2011) (Pratt & Cullen, 2005) (Kubrin, Branic, & Hipp, 2022) (Sampson & Groves, 1989)	(Browning, 2002) (Krivo & Peterson, 1996) (Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000) (Morenoff, Sampson, & Raudenbush, 2001) (Pattillo, 1998) (Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999) (Sharkey, Torrats-Espinosa, & Takyar, 2017)
Week 12: November 11	No Class: Veteran's Day	
Week 13: November 18 Life Course Developmental	(Blumstein, Cohen, & Farrington, 1988) (Broidy et al., 2003) (Cullen, 2011) (Moffitt, 1993) (Moffitt, 2018) (Paternoster & Bushway, 2009) (Sampson & Laub, 1990)	(Carlsson & Sivertsson, 2021) (Giordano, Cernkovich, & Rudolph, 2002) (Sampson & Laub, 1993) (Patterson, DeBaryshe, & Ramsey, 1989) (Pettit & Western, 2004) (Piquero, 2023) (Uggen, 2000) (Warr, 1998)
Week 14: November 25	No Class: Thanksgiving	
Week 15: December 2 Labeling Feminist	(Braithwaite, 1989) (Becker, 1963) (Bernburg & Krohn, 2003) (Chambliss, 1973) (Adler, 1975) (Daly & Chesney-Lind, 1988) (Kruttschnitt, 2013)	(Chesney-Lind, 1989) (Daly, 1992) (Heimer & De Coster, 1999) (Miller, 2008) (Pager, 2003) (Paternoster & Iovanni, 1989) (Steffensmeier & Allen, 1996) (Steffensmeier et al., 2005)
Book Summary: Due December 2 at 3pm Final Exam: Issued December 7 at 8am; Due December 9 at 11:59 pm		

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