

Survey of Criminological Theory
CCJ5606, Section 01
Spring 2021
Monday 12:30-3:00 p.m.

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COURSE OBJECTIVES

The goal of this course is to help students understand and evaluate major criminological theories, develop their own perspectives and interests in criminological theory, and identify how theory and policy can or do inform one another. The objectives and learning outcomes—what students should be able to do by the end of the semester—are to:

- trace the history of major criminological theories;
- describe the main concepts and causal logic of the theories;
- summarize the evidence in support of them;
- identify and apply types of causality to crime theories;
- classify theories using different criteria (e.g., the units of analysis to which they apply);
- evaluate theories using different criteria (e.g., predictive accuracy, scope, range);
- develop policy implications from crime theories; and
- describe ways in which theory and policy can inform one another.

Classes will be structured around discussions of class readings. I will facilitate these discussions and ensure that we cover as full a range of issues as possible. We will rely on several books (see below) and a number of articles (which will be available via Canvas). Given the amount of reading, you must learn to skim and focus on critical points and issues. Taking notes on your observations and discussing the readings with others will help you to absorb the material. I may include additional readings as the semester progresses. Please bring the assigned material to class, as we will collectively wrestle with specific passages in the readings. Depending on student interest, we can focus on additional or different topics of interest to the class.

Classes will be conducted synchronously via Zoom. Each week, check the Canvas website and click on the Zoom link just prior to the start of class.

REQUIRED TEXTS

There are three required texts for the course and, separately, a set of readings that will be available online through the course library. The required books are:

Akers, Ronald L., Christine S. Sellers, and Wesley G. Jennings. 2020. Criminological Theories: Introduction, Evaluation, and Application. 8th edition. New York: Oxford. Paperback ISBN-13: 9780190935252. *(If you cannot obtain this version, go with the 7th edition.)*

Decker, Scott H., and Kevin A. Wright, eds. 2018. Crime and Public Policy: Putting Theory to

Work. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press. ISBN-13: 9781439916582.

Lilly, J. Robert, Francis T. Cullen, and Richard A. Ball. 2019. Criminological Theory: Context and Consequences. 7th edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. ISBN-13: 9781506387307.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

These are a selection of books that are not required but that you might find interesting and informative in learning about criminological theory.

Agnew, Robert. 2005. Why Do Criminals Offend? A General Theory of Crime and Delinquency. Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury Press.

Snipes, Jeffrey B., Thomas J. Bernard, and Alexander L. Gerould. 2019. Vold's Theoretical Criminology. 8th edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Observations (5 percent): Each week, a 1-page, single-spaced (Times New Roman, 12-point font, 1-inch margins) observation is due via Canvas by the start of class. There will be a separate discussion board each week where you can post your observation. Please post the observations as PDF files to ensure that everyone can open them. Each observation should discuss (1) a key idea that interested you in the assigned readings, with citations as appropriate to specific passages, *and* (2) two questions that you have about the readings that you would like the class to discuss. Observations are not due on exam weeks.

Exam 1 (45 percent): A take-home essay-based exam that covers material from the first part of the course.

Exam 2 (50 percent): A take-home essay-based exam that covers material from the second part of the course.

The goal of both exams is to help you understand and develop a critical perspective on the course material. In class, we will discuss the types of questions that may appear on the exam. Priority will go to questions that overlap with the readings and class discussions. The grade will be based on how well you: address all parts of each question; present the logic and evidence to support your answers; incorporate all relevant material that was assigned (including material that we discuss and material that we may not have had time to discuss in class); present your answers (i.e., the quality of writing—clear and complete sentences, word choice, etc.); adhere to the formatting requirements. The grading rubric can be found at the end of this syllabus.

GRADING SCALE

The grading scale for each element of the course and for the course overall is as follows:

A = 93.0 to 100

A-	=	90.0	to	< 93.0
B+	=	87.0	to	< 90.0
B	=	83.0	to	< 87.0
B-	=	80.0	to	< 83.0
C+	=	77.0	to	< 80.0
C	=	73.0	to	< 77.0
C-	=	70.0	to	< 73.0
D+	=	67.0	to	< 70.0
D	=	63.0	to	< 67.0
D-	=	60.0	to	< 63.0
F	=	<60.0		

COURSE POLICIES

- University attendance policy.** If you miss class, you will not receive credit for the assignments unless exceptional circumstances exist or you provide prior written notice that attendance to the class is not possible for legitimate reasons, as defined by the University. Students must provide, when possible, advance notice of absences. After an absence, students must provide relevant documentation within one week of missing class; the missed assignment also must be completed within one week of missing class. The University’s attendance policy will be followed in determining whether a missed assignment is due to legitimate reasons. The University’s attendance policy (<http://facsenate.fsu.edu/Curriculum-Resources/syllabus-language>) states: *“Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.”*
- Late assignment policy.** Late assignments will not be accepted unless: (1) Notification is provided to the instructor within 24 hours of a missed assignment, and (2) a legitimate reason is provided for why the assignment was late. Written documentation for the excuse may be required. *If you do not follow this procedure, you will receive a zero on the assignment.* When there is a legitimate reason, the assignment must be submitted within one week of the due date for the original assignment.
- Academic honor policy.** The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University’s expectations for the integrity of students’ academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to “. . . be honest and truthful and . . . [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University” (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at <http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics/Academic-Honor-Policy>).
- Americans with Disabilities Act.** Florida State University (FSU) values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. Our goal is

to create learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive, and welcoming. FSU is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities in a manner that is consistent with academic standards of the course while empowering the student to meet integral requirements of the course. To receive academic accommodations, a student: (1) must register with and provide documentation to the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS); (2) must provide a letter from OAS to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type; and (3) should communicate with the instructor, as needed, to discuss recommended accommodations. A request for a meeting may be initiated by the student or the instructor. Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from the Office of Accessibility Services has been provided. This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request. For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Office of Accessibility Services
874 Traditions Way
108 Student Services Building
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167
(850) 644-9566 (voice)
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)
oas@fsu.edu
<https://dsst.fsu.edu/oas>

- **Courtesy, respect, and professionalism.** Please arrive at class on time prepared to discuss the materials assigned. During class, please do not be disruptive or engage in side conversations or activities. Instead, actively contribute to and engage in class discussions.
- **Recording.** Students are not permitted to record (audio or video) class without prior permission from the instructor.
- **Free tutoring from FSU.** On-campus tutoring and writing assistance is available for many courses at Florida State University. For more information, visit the Academic Center for Excellence (ACE) Tutoring Services' comprehensive list of on-campus tutoring options—see <http://ace.fsu.edu/tutoring> or contact tutor@fsu.edu. High-quality tutoring is available by appointment and on a walk-in basis. These services are offered by tutors trained to encourage the highest level of individual academic success while upholding personal academic integrity.
- **Syllabus change policy.** Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

COURSE CALENDAR

Readings assigned for a given week should be read by the start of class (e.g., the week 2 readings should be read by the start of class in week 2).

Week	Date	Topics
Week 1	1/11 (M)	<p>Overview of course and overview of theories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Akers and Sellers (Ch. 1) • Lilly et al. (Ch. 1) <p><i>Note that today's class will be held synchronously via Zoom for everyone. Next week, classes will begin being held simultaneously in person and synchronously via Zoom.</i></p>
<i>MLK Day (January 18) = No Class this Week</i>		
Week 2	1/25 (M)	<p>Deterrence and rational choice theories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Akers and Sellers (Ch. 2) • Lilly et al. (Chs. 12-13)
Week 3	2/1 (M)	<p>Biological and psychological theories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Akers and Sellers (Chs. 3-4) • Lilly et al. (Chs. 2 and 14-15) • Wright, John P., and Kevin M. Beaver. 2005. "Do Parents Matter in Creating Self-Control in their Children? A Genetically Informed Test of Gottfredson and Hirschi's Theory of Low Self-Control." <u>Criminology</u> 43:1169-1202.
Week 4	2/8 (M)	<p>Social learning theory, social bonding, and control theories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Akers and Sellers (Chs. 5-6) • Lilly et al. (Chs. 5-6) • Haynie, Dana L., and D. Wayne Osgood. 2005. "Reconsidering Peers and Delinquency: How Do Peers Matter?" <u>Social Forces</u> 84:1109-1130.
Week 5	2/15 (M)	<p>Labeling theory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Akers and Sellers (Ch. 7) • Lilly et al. (Ch. 7) • Bernburg, Jon Gunnar, and Marvin D. Krohn. 2003. "Labeling, Life Chances, and Adult Crime: The Direct and Indirect Effects of Official Intervention in Adolescence on Crime in Early Adulthood." <u>Criminology</u> 41:1287-1318.
Week 6	2/22 (M)	<p>Social disorganization, strain, and anomie theories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Akers and Sellers (Chs. 8-9) • Lilly et al. (Chs. 3-4) • Sampson, Robert J., Jeffrey D. Morenoff, and Thomas Gannon-Rowley. 2002. "Assessing 'Neighborhood Effects': Social Processes and New Directions in Research." <u>Annual Review of Sociology</u> 28:443-478.
Week 7	3/1 (M)	<p>Conflict, Marxist, critical, and feminist theories</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Akers and Sellers (Chs. 10-13) • Lilly et al. (Chs. 8-11) <p>EXAM 1 DISTRIBUTED</p>
Week 8	3/8 (M)	<p>A new horizon: Developmental “life-course” theories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Akers and Sellers (Ch. 14) • Lilly et al. (Ch. 16) • Sampson, Robert J., and John H. Laub. 2016. “Turning Points and the Future of Life-Course Criminology: Reflections on the 1986 Criminal Careers Report.” <u>Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency</u> 53:321-335. • Uggen, Christopher. 2000. “Work as a Turning Point in the Life Course of Criminals: A Duration Model of Age, Employment, and Recidivism.” <u>American Sociological Review</u> 65:529-546.
Week 9	3/15 (M)	<p>Theoretical integration, causation, and units of analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Akers and Sellers (Ch. 15) • Bernard, Thomas J., and Jeffrey B. Snipes. 1996. “Theoretical Integration in Criminology.” <u>Crime and Justice</u> 20:301-348. • Lieberman (1985) (Chs. 4-5)
Week 10	3/22 (M)	<p>Theory and policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gottfredson, Michael R., and Travis Hirschi. 2016. “The Criminal Career Perspective as an Explanation of Crime and a Guide to Crime Control Policy: The View from General Theories of Crime.” <u>Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency</u> 53:406-419. • Decker and Wright (Chs. 1-7)
Week 11	3/29 (M)	<p>Criteria for evaluating theories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gibbs, Jack P. 1997. “Seven Dimensions of the Predictive Power of Sociological Theories.” <u>National Journal of Sociology</u> 11:1-28. • Decker and Wright (Chs. 8-14)
Week 12	4/5 (M)	<p>Cumulative knowledge, science, and policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mears, Daniel P., and Mark C. Stafford. 2002. “Central Analytical Issues in the Generation of Cumulative Sociological Knowledge.” <u>Sociological Focus</u> 35:5-24. • Miller, Walter B. 1973. “Ideology and Criminal Justice Policy: Some Current Issues.” <u>Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology</u> 64:141-162. • Kulig, Teresa C., Travis C. Pratt, and Francis T. Cullen. 2017. “Revisiting the Stanford Prison Experiment: A Case Study in Organized Skepticism.” <u>Journal of Criminal Justice Education</u> 28:74-111.
Week 13	4/12 (M)	<p>Theorizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corbin, Juliet, and Anselm Strauss. 1990. “Grounded Theory

Research: Procedures, Canons, and Evaluative Criteria.”
Qualitative Sociology 13:3-21.

- Watts, Duncan J. 2014. “Common Sense and Sociological Explanations.” American Journal of Sociology 120:313-351.
- Turco, Catherine, and Ezra Zuckerman. 2017. “Verstehen Sociology: Comment on Watts.” American Journal of Sociology 122:1272-1791.
- Watts, Duncan J. 2017. “Response to Turco and Zuckerman’s ‘Verstehen for Sociology.’” American Journal of Sociology 122:1292-1299.
- Swedberg, Richard. 2019. “How Do You Make Sociology Out of Data? Robert K. Merton’s Course in Theorizing (Soc 213-214).” The American Sociologist 50:85-120.

Concluding discussion about criminological theory

EXAM 2 DISTRIBUTED

EXAM GRADING RUBRIC

Each objective below is worth a maximum of 20 percent of the exam grade (per question)	20 points =	10 points =	0 points =
1. Effectively addresses all parts of question(s).	Excellent job of directly answering all parts of question logically, completely, and in detail; reasoning is explained and defended through reference to theory, logic, and research.	Addresses only some parts of the question, the logic is incomplete, and/or provides insufficient detail.	Does not address the question being posed.
2. Cites all relevant assigned readings.	All relevant assigned readings are included in posting. Any additional material is directly relevant to the question.	Some relevant assigned readings are cited, but others are missing. Extraneous information included.	No assigned readings are cited.
3. Discusses all relevant cited and assigned readings.	All cited materials are discussed and coherently integrated into the answer. Logical and clear and complete, using theory, research, and other evidence to support answer.	Some of the cited materials are discussed, but other relevant readings not discussed. Unclear logic and incomplete explanation of argument and supporting theory, research, or other evidence.	None of the cited materials are discussed.
4. Writing is clear, concise, and professional in nature; no grammatical errors.	Clearly expressed ideas. No grammatical errors or other writing problems.	Difficult-to-follow post; disorganized; some grammatical errors and writing problems.	Major grammatical errors; incomplete sentences; difficult to understand.
5. Organization.	Exam is well-organized, using clear headings, sub-headings, and transitions. Answers flow in a linear manner that addresses the question directly.	Exam is choppy and lacks coherent organization. Limited or no headings or sub-headings or clear transitions. Question not directly answered.	Exam is difficult to follow; ideas are not well linked together. No headings, sub-heading, or transitions. Question not answered or not directly answered.
Total possible points	100 points		