

SOCI 388 Crime
Winter 2021
Tuesday and Thursday, 4:05pm-5:25pm

Please note: this version of the syllabus is temporary. Individual reading assignments may still change

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Office hours: Thursdays, 2-3pm

Please sign up online: <https://calendly.com/jandoering>

The Zoom link for office hours is available under the “Zoom” tab on MyCourses.

Teaching Assistant: TBD

Email: TBD

Office hours: TBD

Course Description

Our society is obsessed with crime, as any visit to a bookstore or an evening spent watching television easily confirms. Conversely, the study of crime is one of the most vibrant areas of social science. In this course, we will survey some major aspects of criminology, including causal explanations (the “etiology”) of crime, patterns of crime (in terms of age, race and ethnicity, sex, etc.) and crime statistics, societal contexts of crime and criminalization, and societal responses to crime (including policing, punishment, and politics). Criminology is an interdisciplinary field that includes psychology, anthropology, economics, political science, and more, but we will place particular emphasis on crime as a social phenomenon.

Learning Goals

After completing this course, you should:

- understand major theories that explain crime and delinquency.
- know key trends in crime rates.
- be able to apply criminological theories to interpret empirical cases.
- be able to critically analyze the political implications of various approaches to crime and criminal behaviour.

Remote Delivery Process and Procedures

This course will be conducted remotely in its entirety. I anticipate no need for in-person meetings or activities. Below, I describe the general weekly process for the course. Please note that changes in this process as well as the syllabus as a whole (including assignments and grading) may become necessary during the course as I am adjusting to the new situation just as you are.

During most weeks, your study process will involve the following steps:

1. Read the assigned readings. Aside from the textbook readings, all readings are available on MyCourses under the “content” tab. Beginning with the end of add/drop period (Friday, January 22), you must read the assigned readings on Perusall, a peer-based online reading tool. Perusall enables you to discuss the readings together with other students. Please note that engaging the readings on Perusall is a course requirement and will constitute part of your grade (see “Assignments and Grading”).
2. Watch the pre-recorded lecture(s) for the week. These lectures will be made available under the “lecture recordings” tab.
3. If you can and wish, attend the weekly course meeting via Zoom. This meeting will take place during class time on Tuesdays. The course meeting will provide opportunities for you to discuss and engage the readings and course materials as well as to ask questions. Attending the weekly course meetings is not mandatory, and all meetings will be recorded and shared on MyCourses. Sign into these meetings through the Zoom tab on the MyCourses course page. Before attending the weekly course meeting, you should watch all pre-recorded lectures and do the readings. If you cannot attend the weekly course meetings, you can ask questions about the readings and lectures on the MyCourses discussion board.
4. With the beginning of class time on Thursday, quizzes or group assignments will sometimes be made available to you. See the schedule below for dates. For completing group assignments, you can use class time work remotely with your group members, but it’s up to you and your fellow group members to decide when and how you want to complete group assignments.

I understand that the remote learning process can pose additional challenges for individual students. Me and the teaching assistants will do our best to accommodate you. For this purpose, it is essential that you contact me or the teaching assistants about challenges you might face as early as possible. Please do not contact us at the last minute about foreseeable problems.

Since the course takes place online, it is essential that you regularly check the MyCourses page for announcements and your email for course-related messages from me and the teaching assistant. If you have questions, ask them during course meetings, office hours, or post them on the MyCourses discussion boards. Do this instead of emailing me or the teaching assistant. This way, all students can benefit from your question and our answer. If you don’t receive a reply from us on MyCourses within 48 hours, you may email us. Always consult the syllabus for relevant information before posting questions or emailing us. If the answer to your question is on the syllabus, we reserve the right to ignore your query.

Readings

I expect you to read all of the assigned material. Please note that reading the assigned textbook will not suffice. Other required readings will be made available through *MyCourses*. In some cases, the syllabus highlights passages that you should focus on. Occasionally, we may work with the readings in class. In these cases, I will ask you to bring the course material to class.

Required textbook (available at the McGill bookstore): Schmalleger, Frank and Rebecca Volk. 2017. *Canadian Criminology Today: Theories and Applications*. Sixth edition. Toronto, ON: Pearson.

NOTE: Prior editions of the textbook are similar, with the obvious exception of reported crime rates. An older version may suffice for your studies, but I cannot guarantee this. Your safest option is to purchase the most recent edition. Two copies of the current version are available on reserve at the library.

Assignments and Grading

A) Final exam: 40%

The final exam will take place remotely via MyCourses during the final exam period in April according to the university's exam schedule, which will become available during the semester. The exam will cover all course content, including the material covered in the readings, lectures, and in-class exercises, and it may consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

B) Perusall reading grade (average of pass/fail credit per assigned reading): 15% total

After the end of add/drop period (Friday, January 22), you are required to engage the course readings by using Perusall, a browser-based, collaborative reading tool. Perusall enables you to discuss the readings together with other students. Perusall will grade your reading engagement on a pass/fail basis for each single reading. It considers the quantity and quality of comments and the degree to which your comments engage and also inspire other students.

In order to receive credit for completing a reading, you have to a) complete the reading in full before the weekly course meeting (Tuesdays) for which I have assigned it (deadline: 4pm), and b) engage the reading by substantially commenting on passages, asking pertinent questions, and addressing the comments and questions that other students have logged. Note that you won't receive credit if you complete your reading late or if you do not substantially engage the reading by logging comments on questions on Perusall.

At the end of the course, your overall Perusall reading grade will be the simple average of your pass/fail grades for each assigned reading. For example, if I had assigned only four readings and you would have received credit for three readings, your reading grade would be 75%.

C) Three in-course quizzes (10% each): 30% total

Throughout the semester, we will hold three short quizzes through the MyCourses platform. Quizzes will become available at the beginning of class time on Thursdays. For the dates, please see the schedule below. You will have 48 hours to take the quiz. Once you open a quiz, you will have 60 minutes to complete it. The quizzes are designed to take about 15 minutes so you will have ample time to complete them even if your internet connection breaks down or you face other challenges. There is no make-up option for missed quizzes. If you miss a quiz, I will shift the weight of the quiz (10%) onto your final exam.

D) Group work: 15% total

Group work is an important component of this course. Throughout the semester, you will complete several tasks together with three other students. Please note that assignments to groups will be strictly random—no reassignments will be made. The only exception to this rule is that we will try to match students approximately by time zone. Note also that the division of labour within your group is up to you and your fellow students. If you have to miss a group exercise, you should therefore communicate with your group members rather than the instructor or teaching assistant. Your overall group work grade comprises the following items:

- Three group exercise reports: 10% total. Over the semester, we will do three group exercises. For each exercise, your group must submit a short report (graded pass/fail, each worth 3.33% of your overall course grade). The exercise instructions will be made available with the beginning of class time on Thursday, and you will have 48 hours to submit your group report. For the dates, see the schedule below. Please note that late submissions will not be accepted.
- Peer evaluation grade: 5%. To encourage everyone's participation in the making of the exercise reports and short paper, you will have the opportunity to evaluate your group members' contribution by the end of the class. Instructions will be shared with you after the final group exercise. Each student's peer evaluation grade will be computed as the simple average of the peer evaluations they receive. Do not complain to me about your peer evaluation grade—I will not alter it. It is up to you to take a productive role within your group that ensures a favorable peer evaluation. Please note that submitting your peer evaluation grades is mandatory and late submission will not be accepted. If you do not submit a complete evaluation for all of your group members before the deadline (to be announced), you will receive a zero for own participation grade, independent of the grades your group members may have given you.

Course Policies and Statements

- **Inclusive learning environment:** As the instructor of this course I endeavour to provide an inclusive learning environment. If you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the [Office for Students with Disabilities](#), 514-398-6009.
- **Recording of live sessions:** To make lectures and other course sessions accessible to students who cannot attend class, I will record course meetings. You will be notified through a 'pop-up' box in Zoom that a session is being recorded. By remaining in the session, you agree to the recording, which implies that your image, voice, and name may be disclosed to classmates and that recordings will be made available in MyCourses to students registered in the course.
- **Copyright and the reproduction of course material:** Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., lectures, notes, summaries, exam questions) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without the explicit permission of the instructor. Specifically, you may not reproduce or place in the public domain lecture and course session recordings. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject

to follow-up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

- **Make-up policy:** If you miss a quiz, I will shift the weight of that quiz onto your final exam. Thus, if you miss one quiz, your final exam will account for 50% rather than 40% of your final course grade. There are no make-up options for Perusall reading assignments or for group work components. If you have to miss group assignments, communicate with your group members rather than the course instructor.
- **Regrading policy:** You have the right to request that your exam be regraded. If you request a regrade, please note that I will regrade your entire assignment, not just specific passages that you may have flagged. Regrading may improve or lower your grade.
- **Academic integrity:** McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information). If a student is caught engaging in fraudulent activity, the student may fail the assignment in question or the entire course, and I will report that student to the Dean of Students. Note that to support academic integrity, your assignments may be submitted to text-matching software to check for plagiarism.
- **Language:** In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté.
- **Land acknowledgment:** McGill University is on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. We acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous people whose footsteps have marked this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.
- **Attendance:** I do not take attendance. It is up to you to decide whether you want to attend course meetings or not. However, please note that exams and exercises will test not only the readings but may also include material covered only during course meetings. Furthermore, your group members may base their peer evaluation in part on whether you attended group work meetings.
- **Policy regarding extra credit and "rounding up" grades:** Regardless of circumstances, I never give extra credit, because extra credit is unfair to the rest of the class. I also never "round up" grades, even if a student tells me that they need this for applying to law school or similar things. Please don't ask for it.
- **Course communication:** You have to regularly check your email and read course-related email communication. Before emailing me or the teaching assistant, consult the syllabus for relevant information. If the answer to your question is in the syllabus, we reserve the right to ignore your email.

Schedule

Week 1. Thursday, January 7. Course meeting: introduction.

Week 2. Tuesday, January 12. Crime, deviance, and criminology.

- Textbook chapter 1 (“What is Criminology”).
- Erikson, Kai T. 1966. *Wayward Puritans: A Study in the Sociology of Deviance*. Chapter 1 (“On the Sociology of Deviance”). New York: Wiley.

Week 2. Thursday, January 14. No course meeting or assignment.

Week 3. Tuesday, January 19. The emergence of criminology: the classical school and positivism.

- Textbook chapter 5 (“Classical and Neoclassical Thought”).
- Feeney, Floyd. 1986. “Robbers as Decision-Makers.” Pp. 53-71 in Cornish, Derek and Ronald Clarke (eds.), *The Reasoning Criminal. Rational Choice Perspectives on Offending*. New York: Springer.
- Textbook chapter 6 (“Biological Roots of Criminal Behaviour”). Only pp.148-158 (just up to “Twin Studies”) are required. Read the rest of the chapter if you like.
- OPTIONAL: Gould, Stephen Jay. 1993. *The Mismeasure of Man*. New York, NY: Norton. Chapter 4 (“Measuring Bodies: Two Case Studies on the Apishness of Undesirables”). Read pp.122-145, skim the rest.

Week 3. Thursday, January 21. No course meeting or assignment.

Week 4. Tuesday, January 26. The explanation of crime (1). NOTE: You must engage these and all subsequent readings (aside from textbook chapters) on the Perusall platform.

- Textbook chapter 9 (“The Meaning of Crime: Social Process Perspective”).
- Akers, Ronald L. and Christine S. Sellers. 2009. *Criminological theories: introduction, evaluation, and application*. Chapter 5 (“Social Learning Theory”), pp.85-122. New York: Oxford University Press. Read pp.85-96. You can skim the rest.
- Hirschi, Travis. 1969. *Causes of Delinquency*. Chapter 2 (“A Control Theory of Delinquency”), pp.16-34. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Week 4. Thursday, January 28. No course meeting or assignment.

Week 5. Tuesday, February 2. The explanation of crime (2).

- Textbook chapter 8 (“The Meaning of Crime: Social Structure Perspective”).
- Agnew, Robert. 1992. “Foundation for a General Strain Theory of Crime and Delinquency.” *Criminology* 30(1):47–88. Read 47-61. You can skim the rest.
- Gottfredson, Michael R. and Travis Hirschi. 1990. *A General Theory of Crime*. Chapter 5 (“The Nature of Criminality”), pp.85-120. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Week 5. Thursday, February 4. Group exercise 1 will be made available at class time. It will be due 48 hours later.

Week 6. Tuesday, February 9. Crime over the life-course.

- Chambliss, William J. 1973. "The Saints and the Roughnecks." *Society* 11(1):24–31.
- Laub, John H. and Robert J. Sampson. 2003. *Shared Beginnings, Divergent Lives: Delinquent Boys to Age 70*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Chapter 6 ("Why Some Offenders Stop"), pp.114-149.

Week 6. Thursday, February 11. Quiz 1 will be made available at class time. It will be due 48 hours later.

Week 7. Tuesday, February 16. Crime, conflict, and power.

- Textbook chapter 10 ("The Meaning of Crime: Social Conflict Perspective").
- Ferrell, Jeff. 1995. "Urban Graffiti: Crime, Control, and Resistance." *Youth & Society* 27(1):73–92.
- Hagan, John, John Simpson, and A. R. Gillis. 1987. "Class in the Household: A Power-Control Theory of Gender and Delinquency." *American Journal of Sociology* 92(4):788–816.

Week 7. Thursday, February 18. No course meeting or assignment.

Week 8. Tuesday, February 23. Race, ethnicity, and immigration.

- Wilson, William J. 1987. *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*. Chapter 2 ("Social Change and Social Dislocations in the Inner City"). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Read pp.20-26 and 46-62. You can skim the rest.
- Sampson, Robert J., Jeffrey D. Morenoff, and Stephen Raudenbush. 2005. "Social Anatomy of Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Violence." *American Journal of Public Health* 95(2):224–32.

Week 8. Thursday, February 25. No course meeting or assignment.

Week 9 (March 1-7): Study break.

Week 10. Tuesday, March 9. Gangs and drug crime.

- Bourgeois, Philippe. 2003. *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio*. Chapter 3 ("Crackhouse Management"), pp.77-113. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Felson, Richard, Jukka Savolainen, Mikko Aaltonen, and Heta Moustgaard. 2008. "Is the Association Between Alcohol Use and Delinquency Causal or Spurious?" *Criminology* 46(3):785–808.

Week 10. Thursday, March 11. Quiz 2 will be made available at class time. It will be due 48 hours later.

Week 11. Tuesday, March 16. Patterns and perceptions of crime.

- Textbook chapter 2 (“Crime Statistics”).
- Textbook chapter 3 (“Patterns of Crime”).
- Warr, Mark. 2000. “Fear of Crime in the United States: Avenues for Research and Policy.” Pp. 451–89 in *Criminal Justice 2000: Measurement and Analysis of Crime and Justice*, vol. 4, edited by D. Duffee. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.
- OPTIONAL: Ouimet, Marc. 1999. “Crime in Canada and in the United States: A Comparative Analysis.” *Canadian Review of Sociology* 36(3):389–408.

Week 11. Thursday, March 18. Group exercise 2 will be made available at class time. It will be due 48 hours later.

Week 12. Tuesday, March 23. Policing and social control.

- Moskos, Peter. 2009. *Cop in the Hood: My Year Policing Baltimore’s Eastern District*. Chapter 5 (“911 Is a Joke”), pp. 89-110. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Wortley, Scot and Akwasi Owusu-Bempah. 2011. “The Usual Suspects: Police Stop and Search Practices in Canada.” *Policing and Society* 21(4):395–407.
- TBA: Selection of newspaper articles

Week 12. Thursday, March 25. Movie screening: The Force.

Week 13. Tuesday, March 30. Politics and policy.

- Textbook chapter 11 (“Criminology and Social Policy”)
- Western, Bruce. 2006. *Punishment and Inequality in America*. Chapter 3 (“The Politics and Economics of Punitive Criminal Justice”), pp. 52-81. New York, NY: Russell Sage.
- TBA: Party manifestos regarding criminal justice police

Week 13. Thursday, April 1. Group exercise 3 will be made available at class time. It will be due 48 hours later.

Week 14. Tuesday. April 6. Prosecution and punishment.

- Braithwaite, John and Stephen Mugford. 1994. “Conditions of Successful Reintegration Ceremonies: Dealing with Juvenile Offenders.” *British Journal of Criminology* 34(2):139-171.
- Frohmann, Lisa. 1991. “Discrediting Victims’ Allegations of Sexual Assault: Prosecutorial Accounts of Case Rejections.” *Social Problems* 38(2):213–26.

Week 14. Thursday. April 8. Quiz 3 will be made available at class time. It will be due 48 hours later.

Week 15. Tuesday. April 13. Course wrap-up.