

SOCI 388 Crime

Winter 2020

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:05-5:25pm
Arts Building, room W-120

Instructor: Dr. Jan Doering

Email: jan.doering@mcgill.ca

Office hours: Mondays, 3-4pm, Leacock Building 826

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

Teaching Assistant: Colby Pereira

Email: colby.pereira@mail.mcgill.ca

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, 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.

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

Your grade will be based on a midterm exam, a final exam, several in-class exercises, and a peer evaluation.

A) Midterm exam: 40%

The midterm exam provides you with an opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of course content, including the material covered in the readings, lectures, and in-class exercises. The midterm exam will consist of a set of short answer questions. It will be held in class on Tuesday, February 11 (week 6).

B) Final exam: 50%

The format for the final exam will resemble the midterm. The exam will be cumulative and thus include any material covered in class up to that point. It will be held in class on Thursday, March 26 (week 11).

C) In-class exercises: 10%

Over the semester, we will do four in-class exercises (one individual and three group-based). The exercises will require you to apply course concepts to an empirical prompt, such as a set of newspaper articles. By the end of the class session, you or your group will submit one written report via MyCourses. Each of these reports will be graded on a pass/fail basis, accounting respectively for 1.5% of your overall course grade. Late submissions will not be accepted. This means that you will have to collaborate effectively with your group members and use your time efficiently. Assignments to groups will be strictly random—no reassignments will be made under any circumstances.

To encourage everyone's participation during the exercises, you will be given the opportunity to evaluate your group members' contribution (4% of your overall course grade). Each student's peer evaluation grade will be computed as the average of the grades that group members assign to that student. 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 good peer evaluation. Note: If you do not submit peer evaluation grades for one or more of your fellow group members by the deadline, you will receive a zero for your own peer evaluation grade, independent of the grade your group members may assign to you.

Policies

- **Make-up policy:** Exams for this course are scheduled for Tuesday, February 11 and Thursday, March 26. Do not take this course if you have a conflicting commitment (Model UN, etc.) on any of these days. Accommodations will be provided only in case of a medical emergency that clearly prevents you from taking the exam. You must present me with evidence in the form of a valid doctor's note issued on the day of the exam. I reserve the right to reject your request for a make-up exam if I remain unconvinced that you had to miss the exam. If you have to miss the midterm exam for acceptable medical reasons, the weight of that exam will be shifted onto the final exam, which will then count for 90% of your course grade.
- **Inclusive learning environment:** As the instructor of this course I endeavor 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. If you want to write your midterm or final exam at OSD, you have to contact OSD several weeks in advance of the exam so the necessary arrangements can be made.
- **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 you are caught engaging in fraudulent activity, I will report you to the Dean of Students, who will take appropriate disciplinary measures.
- **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.
- **Attendance:** I do not take attendance. It is up to you to decide whether you want to come to class or not. However, please note that exams and exercises will test not only whether you have done the readings but will also include material covered only during the lectures and exercises. Neither the teaching assistant nor me will make this material available to you through alternative channels. If you attend class, please ensure that you arrive on time and that you do not have to leave early in order to avoid disrupting class. Furthermore, note that your group members may base their peer evaluation in part on whether you were present during group exercises.
- **Extra credit, "upgrading" requests, etc.:** Your grade will be the arithmetic result of the performance criteria listed above. I never give extra credit and I never raise grades in response to student inquiries, no matter what their reasons may be. I follow this policy because tailoring grades to student requests is fundamentally unfair to all other students. Please do not ask me to do so.
- **Regrading policy:** You have the right to request that your exam be regraded. In order to do so, you must submit a written notice that explains and justifies your grievance in detail. A hard copy of this notice should be submitted within a week of the date that we first returned the exams. Please note that I will regrade your entire exam, not just specific passages that you may have flagged. Regrading may improve or lower your grade.

- **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. Jan. 7 and 9. Introduction.

- 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. Jan. 14 and 16. The emergence of criminology: the classical school and positivism.

- Textbook chapter 5 (“Classical and Neoclassical Thought”).
- Foucault, Michel. 1995. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Chapter 1 (“The body of the condemned”), pp. 3-16.
- 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. 148-157 are required. Read the rest of the chapter if you like.
- 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. You can skim the rest.

Week 3: Jan. 21 and 23. The explanation of crime (1).

Thursday session: in-class exercise.

- 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*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Week 4: Jan. 28 and 30. The explanation of crime (2).

Thursday session: in-class exercise.

- 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: Feb. 4 and 6. Crime over the life-course.
Thursday session: review for midterm exam.

- 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: Feb. 11 and 13. Crime and power (1).
Tuesday session: midterm exam.

- Textbook chapter 10 ("The Meaning of Crime: Social Conflict Perspective").
- Sutherland, Edwin. 1940. "White-Collar Criminality." *American Sociological Review* 5 (1):1-12.

Week 7: Feb. 18 and 20. Crime and power (2). Race, ethnicity, and migration (1).

- 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.
- Rusche, Georg. 2014. "Labor Market and Penal Sanction: Thoughts on the Sociology of Criminal Justice." *Social Justice* 40:252–64.
- 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.
- Morenoff, Jeffrey D. and Avraham Astor. 2006. "Immigrant Assimilation and Crime: Generational Differences in Youth Violence in Chicago." Pp.36–63 in *Immigration and crime: Race, ethnicity, and violence*, edited by R. J. Martinez and A. J. Valenzuela. New York, NY: New York University Press.

Week 8: Feb 25 and 27. Race, ethnicity, and migration (2). Gangs, violence, drug crime.

- 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.
- Venkatesh, Sudhir. 2008. *Gang Leader for a Day: A Rogue Sociologist Takes to the Streets*. Chapter 4 ("Gang Leader for a Day"), pp.113-143. New York: Penguin.
- 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.
- Bourgeois, Philippe and Jeffrey Schonberg. 2009. *Righteous Dopefiend*. Chapter 8 ("Everyday Addicts"), pp.241-270. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

March 2-8: No classes (study break).

Week 9: March 10 and 12. Patterns and perceptions of crime.
Thursday session: in-class exercise.

- 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 10: March 17 and 19. 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.
- Doering, Jan. 2016. “Visibly White: How Community Policing Activists Negotiate Their Whiteness.” *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 2(1):106–19.
- Selection of newspaper articles.

Week 11: March 24 and 26. Final.
Tuesday session: review for final exam.
Thursday session: final exam.

Week 12: March 31 and April 2. Prosecution and punishment

- Lemert, Edwin M. 1972. *Human Deviance, Social Problems, and Social Control*. Chapter 3 (“The Concept of Secondary Deviation”), pp. 62-74. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- 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 13: April 7 and 9. Politics and policy
Thursday session: in-class exercise.

- 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.
- Flores, René D. 2015. “Taking the Law into Their Own Hands: Do Local Anti-Immigrant Ordinances Increase Gun Sales?” *Social Problems* 62(3):363–90.