

SOCI 388 Crime

Winter 2024

Class time: Monday-Wednesday-Friday 8:35-9:25 am

Class Location: Arts Building, room W-120

Land Acknowledgement:

McGill University is on land which 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.

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Office Hours: Tuesday 12:30-1:30 Wednesday

1-2

LEA 822 A

Course Description

Crime! We may listen to podcasts, watch true-crime documentaries/shows, or stay up to date with the news in our city...but do we understand crime beyond a casual conversation? What does crime look like? How common is it, and what are the underlying factors that lead to criminal behaviour? These are the types of questions we will ask ourselves each week, as we cover major criminological theories and key theorists. Throughout the semester, we will explore 1) various theoretical explanations of crime, 2) the patterns of crime and statistics 3) criminalization and 4) social responses to crime.

Learning Goals

1. **Articulate Criminological Theories:** Demonstrate a thorough understanding of the evolution and application of criminological theories, from classical to contemporary models, and their relevance to the Canadian criminal justice system.
2. **Analyze Crime Sociologically:** Examine between social factors and criminal behavior, analyzing how elements such as gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status contribute to crime patterns.
3. **Evaluate Criminal Justice Systems:** Assess the development and function of criminal justice systems, with a focus on the adaptation of these systems in response to changing societal views on crime and morality.
4. **Theorize Contemporary Criminological Issues:** Employ criminological theories to analyze and interpret current criminological issues, utilizing a theoretical lens to understand phenomena such as cybercrime, neighborhood violence, and the effects of social policies.

Ethical Reflection in Criminology: Explore the ethical and moral underpinnings of criminological practices, fostering an understanding of the balance between the greater societal good and individual rights within the context of criminology.

Readings

I expect you all to read the assigned readings each week... it is your knowledge on the line! The readings will be made available on *MyCourses*.

Lecture

All weekly lectures will be in person in Arts Building, room W-120. Slides will be posted on MyCourses before class. Lectures will be a mix of presenting/discussing the readings, class discussions and audio/visual presentations.

Assignments and Grading

All assignments and quizzes are mandatory. Your grade will be based on the following:

1) In-class quiz (30%)

There will be 3 quizzes throughout the semester, including content read and taught before that class. It will not be open book.

- Wed Jan 31
- Wed Feb 28
- Monday April 8

2) Criminological Event Analysis (30%)

In a 3-4 page double-spaced response, analyze a criminological event through the lens of the criminological theories and concepts discussed in class. Explain how the event illustrates these theories in practice and discuss any broader societal implications.

DUE: March 1 at 11:59 pm

3) Final paper proposal (10%)

You will be required to write a brief essay proposal (2-3 pages). You are welcome to write on any topic related to the course and may use the course topics for inspiration. The proposal must include: your essay topic, how it relates to the course, your thesis statement (clearly indicated) or what idea you intend to explore, a summary of the literature, and your intended outcomes. An outline will be provided on *mycourses* later in the semester.

DUE: March 22 at 11:59 pm

4) Final Paper (30%)

DUE: APRIL 12 11:59

For the final paper, you will need to write an 8-10-page essay on a topic of your choice, in relation to the course. You need to find and use a minimum of 10 academic sources (either books or articles...use Google Scholar!) that are not required readings for the class. You will lose grades if your paper does not include the requisite number of academic sources. Late penalties will apply.

Assignment	Date	Weight
Quiz #1	January 31	10%
Quiz #2	February 28	10%
Event Analysis	March 1 at 11:59 pm	30%
Essay Proposal	March 22 at 11:59 pm	10%
Quiz #3	April 8	10%
Final Essay	April 12 11:59	30%

Grading (VERY IMPORTANT)

Your final grade for this course will depend on how well you meet the competencies described previously. There will be no opportunities for extra credit. Should you find a discrepancy in your grade computation, please reach out to the teaching assistant. If you feel that the grade you have been awarded does not accurately reflect your performance, you are required to follow the steps outlined below:

- 1) Meet with Michaela about your grade, and walk through the feedback with them
- 2) Upon receiving a detailed account of the feedback, if you feel you deserve a higher grade, please write a 1-page summary of where and why you believe you deserve the extra credit.
- 3) Note: Upon review, your grade may either increase or decrease.

Please also note that in the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme of this course is subject to change.

please note, if you email me a question that is clearly stated in the syllabus, we will not answer

Late submissions: The consequence of submitting an assignment late is a 5% penalty for every day late.

Grade breakdown:

A	4.0	85 – 100%
A-	3.7	80 – 84%
B+	3.3	75 – 79%
B	3.0	70 – 74%
B-	2.7	65 – 69%
C+	2.3	60 – 64%
C	2.0	55 – 59%
D	1.0	50 – 54%
F	0	0 – 49%

NOTE: There is no possibility for extra credit in this course.

McGill Policy Statements

Language of submission: In accordance with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French written work that is to be graded. This does not apply to courses in which acquiring proficiency in a language is one of the objectives. (Approved by Senate on 21 January 2009)

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, sauf dans le cas des cours dont l’un des objets est la maîtrise d’une langue. (Énoncé approuvé par le Sénat le 21 janvier 2009)

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” (Approved by Senate on 29 January 2003)

L’université McGill attache une haute importance à l’honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l’on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l’étudiant et procédures disciplinaires. » (Énoncé

approuvé par le Sénat le 29 janvier 2003).

Week 1 (Jan 4-10): Introduction

Class: Jan 5, 8 & 10

Friday, January 5: Syllabus Overview

Monday, January 8 [Readings start]

- 1) Chapter 1: The Study of Crime (textbook)
- 2) Garland, David. 2011. "What Is Criminology?" in *Criminology's Place in the Academic Field*. Oxford University Press.

Week 2 (Jan 11-17): The Evolution of Criminal Theory and Punishment

Class: Jan 12, 15, 17

- 1) Chapter 2: Classical Theories (textbook)
- 2) Chapter 4: Positivism
- 3) Chapter 1: Foucault, Michel. 1995. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Chapter 1 ("The body of the condemned")
- 4) Chapter 2: West, Henry R. 2006. *The Blackwell Guide to Mill's Utilitarianism*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.

Explanations of Crime

Week 3 (Jan 18- 24): Theoretical Foundations of Crime

Class: 19, 22 & 24

- Robert K. 1938. "Social Structure and Anomie."
- page 1-19 Merton Agnew, Robert. 1992. "Foundation for a General Strain Theory of Crime and Delinquency."
- skim: Shaw, Clifford R. and Henry D. McKay. 1969. "Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas."

Week 4 (Jan 25- 31): Social Learning and Crime Patterns

Class: Jan 26, 29 & 31

- Burgess, Robert L. and Ronald L. Akers. 1966. "A Differential Association-Reinforcement Theory of Criminal Behavior."
- Cohen, Lawrence E. and Marcus Felson. 1979. "Social Change and Crime Rate Trends: A Routine Activity Approach."
- read first 5 pages, then skim: Pratt, Travis C., Kristy Holtfreter, and Michael D. Reising. 2010. "Routine Online Activity and Internet Fraud Targeting: Extending the Generality of Routine Activity Theory." *The Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 47(3):267-96. doi: 10.1177/0022427810365903.

QUIZ #1: January 31st

Week 5 (Feb 1-7): Understanding Their Impact on Crime

Class: Feb 2, 5 & 7

- : Hagan, John, John Simpson, and A. R. Gillis. 1987. "Class in the Household: A Power-Control Theory of Gender and Delinquency." **788-798 + discussion and conclusion (812-815)**
- Kruttschnitt, Candace. 2013. "Gender and Crime."

→ Blau, Judith and Peter Blau. 1982 “The Cost of Inequality: Metropolitan Structure and Violent Crime.”

Week 6 (Feb 8- 14): Spatial Justice

Class: Feb 9, 12 & 14

→ Krivo, Lauren J., Ruth Peterson, and Danielle C. Kuhl. 2009. “Segregation, Racial Structure, and Neighborhood Violent Crime.”

→ Sampson, Robert J. and Stephen W. Raudenbush. 1999. “Systematic Social Observation of Public Spaces: A New Look at Disorder in Urban Neighborhoods.” 603-616
+conclusion/discussion

→ Papachristos, Andrew V. 2009. “Murder by Structure: Dominance Relations and the Social Structure of Gang Homicide.” 74-90, *skim tables (optional), discussion*

Crime and Power

Week 7 (Feb 15-21): Power, Class, and Crime:

Class: Feb 16, 19 & 21

→ Chapter 6: Marxist Criminology

→ Pages 217-236: *Tombs, Steve and Dave Whyte. 2003. “Unmasking the Crimes of the Powerful.” Critical Criminology 11(3).*

→ *Movie: Sicario (in class)*

Week 8 (Feb 22-28): Intersectionality and Injustice

Class: 23, 26 & 28

→ Chapter 7: Feminist Perspective

→ *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. 46-62.*

→ *Tonry, Michael. 1997. “Ethnicity, Crime, and Immigration.” Crime and Justice (Chicago, Ill.) 21:1–29. doi: 10.1086/449248. 1-26*

QUIZ #2: February 28th

Week 11: (Mar 11-15): Contemporary Criminology:

Class: Mar 11, 13 & 15

1) Chapter 8: New Right Criminology

2) Ramsay, Gilbert. 2015. “Why Terrorism Can but Should Not Be Defined.” *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 8(2):211–28. doi: 10.1080/17539153.2014.988452.

3) Gary LaFree and Anina Schwarzenbach PhD. 2021. “Micro and Macro-Level Risk Factors for Extremism and Terrorism: Toward a Criminology of Extremist Violence.” *Monatsschrift Für Kriminologie Und Strafrechtsreform* 104(3):184–202.

Optional

4) Ganor, Boaz. 2002. “Defining Terrorism: Is One Man’s Terrorist Another Man’s Freedom Fighter?” *Police Practice & Research* 3(4):287–304. doi: 10.1080/1561426022000032060.

Week 12 (Mar 18-22)

Class: 18, 20 & 22

- 1) Jackson-Jacobs, Curtis. 2004. "Hard Drugs in a Soft Context: Managing Trouble and Crack Use on a College Campus."
- 2) Link, Bruce et al. 1997. "On Stigma and Its Consequences: Evidence from a Longitudinal Study of Men with Dual Diagnoses of Mental Illness and Substance Abuse"
- 3) Pescosolido, Bernice. 2013. "The Public Stigma of Mental Illness: What Do We Think; What Do We Know; What Can We Prove?"

Week 13 (Mar 25-28) NO class on March 29

Class: 25 & 27

Week 14 (April 2-8): Prejudice and Punishment

Class: April 3, 5 & 8

- 1) Barkan, Steven R., and Steven F. Cohen. 2005. "Why Whites Favor Spending More Money to Fight Crime: The role of racial prejudice."
- 2) Behrens, Angela, and Christopher Uggen. 2003. "Ballot Manipulation and the 'Menace of Negro Domination': Racial Threat and Felon Disenfranchisement in the United States, 1850-2002."
- 3) King, Ryan D., and Darren Wheelock. 2007. "Group Threat and Social Control: Race, Perception of Minorities and the Desire to Punish."
- 4) Pager, Devah. 2003. "The Mark of a Criminal Record."

QUIZ #3: April 8th

Week 15 (April 9-12): Judicial Discretion and Disparity

Class: April 10

- 1) Johnson, Drian D., Jeffery T. Ulmer, and John H. Kramer. 2008. "The Social Context of Guidelines Circumvention: The Case of Federal District Courts."
- 2) Steffensmeier, Darrell, Jeffery Ulmer, and John Kramer. 1998. "The Interaction of Race, Gender, and Age in Criminal Sentencing: The Punishment Cost of Being Young, Black, and Male."
- 3) Sampson, Robert J., and Dawn J. Bartusch. 1998. "Legal Cynicism and (Subcultural?) Tolerance of Deviance: The Neighborhood Context of Racial Differences."