Loyola University New Orleans
Criminal Behavior (SOCl A215- Z51)
Fall 2008

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Office Hours: Mondays 3:00-5:45 p.m. (and by appointment)

Course Meeting Information:
This class will meet during the second 8-week session on Monday evenings from 6:00-10:00 p.m. on October 20 and 27; November 3, 10, 17, and 24; December 1 and 8, 2008.

The class will meet in Bobet Hall 216.

Course Description:

With over 200 years of development, the field of criminology itself has become enormous and diversified. Contemporary criminology is interdisciplinary and multi-paradigmatic. It encompasses a wide spectrum of subjects including law, crime measurement, victimology, etiology, criminal typologies, the criminal justice system (i.e., law enforcement, courts, and corrections), cross-cultural criminology, and critical criminology. The express goal of this course is to offer a comprehensive description of the field of criminology and to probe the cultural meaning and significance of crime and criminal justice both in the United States and globally. For example, we will explore the legal and extra-legal nature of crime and review the various measures of crime and all of its manifestations. In addition etiological or causal theories of crime are considered along with social control systems and preventive models that have evolved historically. Academic and theoretical knowledge are combined with practical and applied implications, bringing together the main subject areas of criminology and criminal justice. The course also directs attention to larger social issues connected to crime such as differential life chances, poverty, gender and racial inequality, and the consequences of changes taking place in the family, school, workplace, and the society. Finally, the course is designed to help students master the skills necessary for critically consuming as well as producing criminological knowledge. Special attention is given to various approaches of criminological scientific research, the strengths and limitations of scientific evidence, and the ethics and politics of research. (Please review “Course Goals and Objectives” on page 11 of this syllabus.)

Required Readings


**Recommended Readings**


**Course Decorum**

- Please be sure to sign up on *Blackboard*. Routinely check our course *Blackboard* site for special class messages and handouts. You are also required to post your class presentation PowerPoint slides prior to your presentation. In the event that there is an interruption to our course due to the cancellation of courses by the university as a result of an emergency or hurricane, we will continue the course on *Blackboard*.
- Students are expected to come to class prepared and to actively participate in class.
- Questions and discussions are encouraged in class. Superior contributions to discussions and outstanding class presentations may result in extra credit points added to the final grade.
- **Assignments:** All assignments must be submitted in typed form in hardcopy (do not email assignments). Proofread and polish all work prior to submission. Assignments must be handed in on their designated due dates. Late submissions will result in grade penalties or failure. Due to strict scheduling this semester, there will be no opportunity to make up any missed scheduled class presentations. **A missed presentation may lead to failure or necessitate withdrawal from the course.**
- If for reasons of serious illness or other emergency you are unable to complete the course requirements as scheduled, you must speak with the professor regarding approval of a grade of “I” (Incomplete). Please note that grades of “I” change to “F” automatically if the course is not completed and the grade changed by the sixth week of the subsequent term, excluding summer terms. The resulting “F” grade remains the permanent grade for the course.
- Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the office of Disability Services at 504-865-2990 as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.
- The *University Honor Code* will be strictly enforced. All work must represent each student's own efforts.
- **Attendance:** Individuals are expected to be punctual and regular in their class attendance. Excessive absences (no more than 1 per term) will result in grade penalties or failure.
- All students are encouraged to come to office hours, Mondays 3:00 – 5:45 p.m. or by appointment. My office is in Stallings Hall 109.
Summary of Course Requirements

I. Class Presentation: The topic and date of presentation will be assigned during the 1st week of class. The presentation will represent 25% of final grade; it should be 10-15 minutes in length. In addition to the class presentation all students are required to submit a hardcopy of their PowerPoint slides with notes and bibliography to the professor at the time of the presentation (see details below).

II. Book review: Media, Crime, and Criminal Justice: Images, Realities, and Policies by Ray Surette. The book review will comprise 25% of final grade; it should be approximately 5-8 typed pages in length. See details below. **Due in class on November 10, 2008.**

III. Position Paper/Term Paper: Choose a debated topic in the field of criminology (see recommended topics on page 5). The paper will comprise 25% of final grade; it should be approximately 8-10 typed pages (see further details below). **Due in class on December 8, 2008.**

IV. Take Home Final Examination: The comprehensive final exam covering the entire semester’s work will comprise 25% of final grade; it should be approximately 5-8 typed pages in length. **Due on or before Friday, December 12, 2008,** between 9:00-11:00 a.m. or 1:00-3:00 p.m. Please submit your completed examination to Ms. Joy David in Sociology Department Office in 537 Monroe Hall. (Ms. David may be reached at jdavid@loyno.edu).

V. Extra Credit: Critical analysis of White-Collar and Corporate Crime by Gilbert Geis (3 to 5 typed pages) – for a maximum of 5 points extra credit to final grade. Your critical review is due along with your final examination on **December 12, 2008.**

Detailed Description of Course Requirements

I. Class Presentation: Each student will be assigned to one of the types of crime, which will be considered during this semester (e.g., one of the types of crime associated with violent crimes, property crimes, public order crimes, white collar and corporate crimes, organized crime, and political crimes). A class presentation based on a summary of the materials in Siegel's Criminology and on additional library research conducted on the assigned topic will be expected from each student on an individually appointed due date. For the list of topics and corresponding due dates see pages 8-10 of this syllabus. Each student is required to follow the following outline in his/her presentation:

- Definition of the crime type (including legal definitions and criminological definitions);
- Measurement and extent of the problem (including a discussion of quality of statistics and data);
- Description of typology (e.g., typical perpetrators and victims and a consideration of the social construction of the specific form of crime);
- Relevant causal theories (including a consideration of which perspectives dominate);
- Consideration of common myths (including any factual misconceptions);
• Prevention, treatment or solutions (including a consideration of which agencies or institutions control treatment or solutions);
• List of references; and
• Questions and answers (Q&A). (Class members should come prepared to class with questions to ask each presenter.)

Your main task is to provide an informed and well documented overview of your topic and to dispel some of the myths associated with your topic. In your presentation, be sure to cite references for your statistical and factual data - keep your statistics current! It is important that you cite the sources of information that correspond to your major points along with the data contained in your PowerPoint slide presentation. A brief period of questions and answers (Q&A) will follow each presentation. Prior to each class presentation, students are required to post their PowerPoint slides on Blackboard, so that each member of the class can download a handout and prepare questions for the Q&A. At the appointed time of the class presentation, each presenter will be asked to submit to the professor a hardcopy of his/her PowerPoint slides including notes and a comprehensive bibliography (in correct style and format). Grades will be determined on the basis of: (1) the quality of information presented (make sure you address all of the points in the outline), (2) the overall effectiveness of the presentation, and (3) the comprehensiveness of the bibliography. The bibliography should be representative of the scope and breadth of your literature review (i.e., do not depend on one or two sources for your presentation). While popular magazine and newspaper articles may be included among your sources of information, be sure you do not rely on such information exclusively. Your bibliography should mainly be comprised of authoritative books, monographs, reports from government agencies and national research centers, and articles from scientific or professional journals (e.g., Criminology; Criminal Law and Criminology; Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency; Homicide Studies; American Journal of Sociology; American Journal of Psychology; Violence and Victims; Journal of Drug Issues; Journal of Crime and Justice; American Journal of Police; and Criminal Justice Review; etc.).

Please remember that due to strict scheduling this semester, there will be no opportunity to make up any missed scheduled class presentations. Failure to do a presentation on the appointed date may lead to failure or necessitate withdrawal from the course.

II. Book Review: Media, Crime, and Criminal Justice: Images, Realities, and Policies by Ray Surette. Your book review should be approximately 5-8 typed pages in length. It will comprise 25% of your final grade. It is due in class on November 10, 2008. Please address all of the questions below:

1. According to Surette why should we study crime and justice and their relationship to the media?
2. What is meant by social constructionism? What role do the media play in social constructionism? Describe the social construction process in the media. Be sure to define and discuss the associated concepts/elements of constructionism? What
significance does social constructionism in the media have for our understanding of crime and justice?

3. To illustrate your understanding of social constructionism in the media, select a newspaper, newsmagazine, or television newscast story about crime. Deconstruct the story. Identify the claimsmakers, the factual and interpretative claims, and as many concepts related to social constructionism as possible. For example, note if any symbolic crimes or crime and justice narratives are employed. Was linkage utilized? Which of the five common crime frames did the story best support? (Be sure to include a copy of your crime story along with your book review.)

4. Surette claims that “the single most significant social effect of media crime-and-justice content is not its direct generation of crime or other behavioral effects, but its effect on criminal justice policies.” Please discuss the implications that this has for our society now and in the future. Does Surette offer any suggestions for dealing with this reality?

5. What is the most important lesson that you have learned from this book?

III. Position Paper/Term Paper: Select a debated crime topic in our society. Consider the opposing views on the topic and critically consider the various perspectives (some issues may have more than two positions). Your paper is due December 8, 2008. Below is a sample list of topics that you may choose from:

- Do tough sentences reduce crime?
- Should the death penalty be abolished?
- Does arrest deter domestic violence?
- Would repealing drug laws reduce drug-related crimes?
- Is the justice system biased against poor people? Minorities? Young people? Or Women?
- Does community-policing work?
- Should juvenile offenders be tried and punished as adults?
- Which best explains crime - nature or nurture?
- Can dangerousness be predicted?
- Would gun control help reduce violence crimes?

Begin by conducting a thorough literature search on your chosen topic. Uncover as many research articles as you can on your topic. Try to develop a general understanding of the topic. Become familiar with the main issues of the debate. To help in your general literature search you may conduct a search for reports produced by various national resource centers and government agencies, for example:

- Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS): www.ojp.usdoj.gov.bjs
- National Institute of Justice (NIJ): www.ojp.usdoj.gov.nij
- Source Book of Criminal Statistics: www.albany.edu/sourcebook
- Juvenile Justice: www.jrsa.org/resources/justicelink.htm
Then select at least two scientific articles, which best represent the opposing sides of your debated question. Clearly identify the issues of the opposing sides of your debated topic. It is important to understand the opposing perspectives as well as be able to critically analyze those perspectives. For example, in order to make an informed evaluation, one must be able to:

**Critically evaluate sources of information:** This entails a critical understanding of the relative strengths and weaknesses characterizing different types of information and forms of data. Knowledge and understanding of the scientific method and appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of scientifically derived data are critical in determining the quality of information.

**Separate fact from opinion:** This involves making the basic distinction between factual statements that can be demonstrated or verified empirically and statements of opinion, beliefs or attitudes that cannot be supported or proved.

In preparing your position paper or critical review of your selected articles that represent the opposing sides of the debate surrounding your topic, consider the following points:

- Briefly summarize the major thesis on each side and cite author(s).
- State, in your own words, the theories presented by each side.
- State, in your own words, the evidence presented by each side.
- Identify any logical and scientific fallacies on each side, for example:
  - Faulty cause and effect statements;
  - Faulty generalizations;
  - Faulty operationalization of concepts;
  - Faulty methodology;
  - Inadequate theoretical grounding;
  - Weak source or quality of supportive data (i.e., inappropriate conclusions drawn from statistics, or poorly designed research);
  - Distortion of information or oversimplification.
- All and all, which author(s) and which position(s) impressed you as being the most scientifically sound and offered the best empirically justified evidence?
• Now, after studying the issue and reviewing some of the opposing positions on the problem, what is your personal view?
• Bibliography – Be sure that your list of references adequately represents your literature research on your topic. Be sure to use proper bibliographic format or style.

Please note that the Position Paper/Term Paper should be approximately 8-10 typed pages in length. It is due in class on December 8, 2008.

IV. Take-Home Final Examination: The final examination will be comprised of a take-home examination that covers the entire semester's work. You will be asked to respond to 3-5 essay questions (approximate length 5-8 typed pages).
The take-home final examination will be due on Friday, December 12, 2008 in the Sociology Office in Monroe Hall 537. Please give your completed assignments to Ms. Joy David between 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 1:00-3:30 p.m. (contact Ms. David at jdavid@loyno.edu if you need to arrange another time to drop off your work).

V. Extra Credit: This assignment is optional. Using your knowledge of criminology and analytical skills, critically review the book entitled: White-Collar and Corporate Crime by Gilbert Geis. Your critical review should be approximately 3-5 pages in length. It is due along with your final exam on December 12, 2008. Up to a maximum of 5 extra credit points may be applied to your final grade.

Tentative Course Outline

Class 1: October 20, 2008

Introduction to the Study of Crime and Criminal Behavior

• Crime and culture
• A brief history of criminology
• The criminological enterprise
• How criminologists view crime
• Defining crime
• Competing Theoretical Models of Law and Social Control

Reading Assignment: Siegel's Criminology, chapter 1; Surette’s Media, Crime, and Criminal Justice

Class Discussion: What factors do you think have contributed to the high crime rate in the United States? What about in New Orleans?
Class 2: October 27, 2008

The Study of Crime and Criminal Behavior

- The scientific study of crime and criminal behavior
- The ethics and politics of the study of crime
- The measurement of crime: Official statistics (Uniform Crime Reports), victim surveys, self-report studies, and developmental analysis (cohorts and careers)

Reading Assignment: Siegel's Criminology, chapters 2 and 3. Please review the following sources of information in the library or on the Internet: Uniform Crime Report (UCR); National Crime Victims Surveys (NCVS); and Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics.

Class Discussion: How does the scientific research method compare with the evaluation model? What are the key ethical considerations in scientific research? How do official accounts of crime compare to the media's portrayal of crime including offender and victim profiles? What factors affect the fear of crime in our society?

Class 3 and Class 4: November 3 and 10, 2008

Theories of Crime Causation

- Choice theories
- Trait theories
- Social structure theories
- Social process theories
- Conflict theories
- Developmental theories

Reading Assignment: Siegel's Criminology, chapters 4-9.

Class Discussion: Are some people more dangerous than other? Are some places more dangerous than others? What effect do power and wealth have on our perceptions and the reality of crime and justice?
Class Presentations: The Patterns and Types of Criminal Behavior

Student class presentations will be given in class on November 17th, 24th, and December 1st, 2008. Each student will be assigned to one of the topics listed below. Please check the date corresponding to your topic in the schedule. Please note that there will not be any opportunity to make up a missed presentation.

Everyone is required to follow the following outline for the PowerPoint presentation:

- Definition of the crime (legal/scientific or criminological)
- Measurement: extent and seriousness of the problem
- Description of the typical perpetrators and victims/patterns of offense
- Relevant causal theories
- Common myths
- Prevention, treatment, or control
- References
- Q&A

Class 5: November 17, 2008

Class presentations include the following topics:

Criminal Violence

- Homicide
- Multicide: mass murder; serial murder
- Rape
- Robbery
- Assault/Battery

Domestic Violence

- Intimate/spousal violence
- Child abuse

Property Crimes

- Larceny/Theft
- Burglary
- Arson
- Automobile theft
Class 6: November 24, 2008

Class presentations include the following topics:

White Collar/Occupational Crime

Corporate Crime

Cyber Crime

Organized Crime and Violence

- Juvenile Gangs
- Organized Crime (e.g., Mafia, etc.)

Media Presentation: *Organized Crime in America*

Class 7: December 1, 2008

Class presentations include the following topics:

Public Order Crime

- Sexual crimes
- Pornography
- Substance abuse (alcohol/drug abuse)

Political Crime

- Hate crimes
- Terrorism
- Rebellion, insurgency, social unrest and civil disobedience

Class 8 (last class): December 8, 2008

Overview of the Criminal Justice System

- Law enforcement
- Courts
Reading Assignment: Siegel, chapter 14.

Concluding Comments

Please note:

(1) Your Position Paper/ Term Paper is due in class on Monday, December 8, 2008.

(2) Your Take-Home Final Examination and optional extra credit book review are due on December 12, 2008. Please bring your completed examination (and any other outstanding work) to the Sociology Department Office in 537 Monroe Hall. Be sure to give your exam/work to Ms. Joy David. Ask to have your work put in Dr. Voigt’s folder.

Happy Holidays!
Course Goals and Objectives

I. Cognitive Skills

This course should enable students to:

A. Understand the cultural, legal, and scientific conceptualizations of crime.
B. Understand the contemporary definition of criminology and the history of criminology.
D. Understand different approaches to law and social control:
   1. Consensus model
   2. Conflict model
E. Identify various bodies of data pertaining to different forms of crime, summarize information, and determine relative strengths and weaknesses.
F. Understand the biological, psychological, and sociological theories of crime, including the nature of scientific evidence supporting various perspectives.
G. Understand the nature and extent of various patterns of crime (i.e., note special conceptual and data differences, identify victims and offenders, and identify common causes and solutions):
   1. Criminal violence
   2. Property crime
   3. White collar and Organized crime
   4. Public order crime
   5. Political crime
H. Understand the fundamental elements of the criminal justice system: law enforcement, courts, and corrections.

II. Critical and Analytical Skills

This course should enable students to:

A. Formulate critical questions when examining a position, especially with respect to:
   1. Empirical quality of argument - fact vs. opinion
   2. Cause and effect relationships - cause vs. correlation
   3. Information distortion - bias, faulty logic, oversimplification, stereotyping, and faulty generalizations.
B. Understand the structure of social scientific thinking, various research methods, strengths and limitations of scientific evidence, and the ethics and politics of theory and research, including the ability to:
   1. Assess the validity and reliability of different forms of crime data.
   2. Assess the scientific merits of different causative theories of crime.

III. Knowledge Base and Resources for the Study of Criminology

This course should enable students to:

A. Uncover and access various forms of information, data, and research findings related to different types of crimes.
B. Run literature searches and use journal abstracts located in the University Library and online.
C. Develop personal bibliography on various topics.