Course Description
This seminar will introduce you to the subject of criminology and to major criminological theories. We will discuss the concepts of deviance and crime as well as some ad-hoc explanations for a few known correlates of crime. We will also trace the origins of criminological theories and examine their underlying assumptions and contributions to criminology, important empirical findings generated by theoretical research, and recent debates about criminological theory in the literature. Finally, we will evaluate some recent theoretical developments in criminology focusing on the extent to which they move us beyond traditional perspectives. Throughout, we will be especially concerned with the following issues: 1) evolution of central concepts in criminology over time; 2) unique contributions of each theory to our understanding of crime; 3) relationships among theoretical concepts; and 4) operationalization of theoretical concepts in empirical research and assessment of research findings relevant to these theoretical concepts.

Required Books


Additional required readings will be posted on Blackboard

Course Requirements and Grading

Class Participation (10% of final grade)
To facilitate achieving the course goals, all class participants should think about the following questions as we read: 1) What are the contributions of a given theory/perspective to the criminological literature? 2) How is this perspective related to other viewpoints that we have already discussed? (if applicable); 3) What are its limitations? 4) How can this theory and supporting evidence be useful to policy makers?

Keep in mind that active seminar participation is a necessary (but not sufficient) condition to earning an “A” grade.

Abstracts and Facilitation of In-Class Discussion (10% of final grade)
Each week a few participants will be asked to lead discussions and to turn in short abstracts of assigned readings. All other participants should be prepared to discuss these readings each week. Please submit your abstracts to me by midnight on the night preceding your presentation.

Midterm and Final Examinations (40% of final grade)
Final exam will be optional for those who have received no less than a B+ on the midterm exam. The midterm exam will be take-home. Questions will be provided a week in advance. No group work while working on the exams is allowed.

Course Paper (40% of final grade): Due April 22
An original seminar project is required of all students. You can write a research proposal; work on a synthesis and critical evaluation of a particular line of research in criminology; trace the development of a particular theory (or a group of theories, for that matter), or even produce an empirical paper addressing a substantive problem in criminology. Please note that this paper must go beyond what you have already done (or are doing currently) for another course.
Course Policy
1. At no time should you feel uncomfortable or degraded because of words or acts that you find offensive. If anyone, including myself or any of your peers, says or does anything that you consider harassment of any kind, you may contact me in person or write me anonymously.
2. Reasonable accommodations will be made for seminar participants with disabilities. Please see me as soon as possible if any of such accommodations should be provided.
3. Don’t cheat, don’t plagiarize. Violations of academic integrity will be handled in accordance with the university policy (see http://www.northeastern.edu/osccr/pdfs/Code%20of%20Conduct/2014-15%20UG%20Handbook_Code%20of%20Conduct%20only.pdf for more information).

Schedule and Readings
(Note: Readings may be added or deleted throughout the semester)


Week 2 (Jan 20)—Internal Control Theories

C,A, & W.-Ch. 18 &19.


Week 3 (Jan 27)—Internal Control Theories (Cont.)


Week 4 (Feb 3)—Learning Theories (DAT and SLT)

C, A &W Ch. 10, 11, 17


Week 5 (Feb 10)—Strain Theories

C,A&W—Ch. 13, 15.


Week 6 (Feb 17)—Strain Theories (Cont.)

C, A&W-Ch.16


Week 7 (Feb 24) --Deterrence and Rational Choice; Situational Crime Prevention Paper Proposals (2-3 pages) Due.

C,A&W—Ch. 33, 34, 35


**Week 8 (March 2)—Midterm Examination**

**Week 9 (March 9)—Spring Break**

**Week 10 (March 16)—Social Disorganization Theory**

C,A & W- Ch. 7, 8, 9.


**Week 11 (March 16)—Labeling Theory**

C,A&W-Ch. 20, 21, 22

Becker, Howard S. “Outsiders”. 1, 2, 8, 10.


**Week 12 (March 23)—Crime and the Life Course. Criminal Trajectories**

C,A&W - 40, 42.


**Week 13 (March 30)—Crime and the Life Course (Cont.)**

*Workshop on Term Papers.*


**Week 14 (April 6)—Gender Gap in Crime; Feminist Theories**

C, A, & W.—Ch. 28, 29


**Week 15 (April 13)—New Developments in Criminology: Heritability vs. Social Influence; Integrated Theories**


**Week 16 (April 20)—New Developments in Criminology (Cont.); Wrap Up.**

C, A, & W.—48, 49, 50.

Hagan “Who Are the Criminals?” Ch. 1, 3, 4, 5.