Introduction

Crime is a controversial subject. On one hand, crime is immoral and abhorred; the social, public health, and economic costs of crime and victimization are staggering; and politicians often focus campaigns around a “tough on crime” philosophy. On the other hand, there is a societal fascination with crime via media, movies, and television shows; and the most popular youths are often rebellious, delinquent, and even criminal.

This course uses these juxtapositions to facilitate discussion and to provide accessibility to students with a wide variety of backgrounds, interests, and goals. For students interested in crime research, the course will provide a solid foundation of criminological theory and an introduction to the methods used for studying crime issues. For students interested in criminal justice and legal policy issues, the course will provide a framework for understanding, critically evaluating, and applying criminological theory and research to policy. For all students, the course will provide a framework for digesting and assessing research and discussions of crime and crime policy in the media and political spheres.

Course Description

A “criminal justice” course focuses primarily on the actors and institutions involved in the formal response to crime. A “criminology” course, by contrast, focuses mainly on crime itself: its forms, prevalence, and causes. The first part of this course will examine the relationship between crime and delinquency, the definition of “crime,” and the nature and extent of crime. Measurement issues will be discussed, as will different types of crime and delinquency. The second part of the course will detail different theories of crime causation. The third part of the course will focus on how to control and prevent crime and analogous behaviors. We will touch upon “criminal justice” issues in this part of the course and as they arise in other parts of the course, but this is not the explicit focus of this course as a whole.

Course Learning Goals

During the semester, course readings and discussions will provide you with an understanding of:

- The extent of crime in the United States
• How we use theory to explain observable phenomena
• The details, validity, and contemporaneous applicability of major theories of crime and delinquency
• How we evaluate theoretical explanations via research
• How we form our own opinions of crime and delinquency from the accumulated research

Course Readings

A series of additional readings will be made available via Blackboard.

Course (and Student) Expectations/Requirements
This course will be intensive. This course will go quickly. This course will require reading and constant, active participation. This course will utilize a variety of written and oral learning techniques: I will teach you; you will teach me; and you will teach each other.

A number of different graded assignments will be utilized to fulfill the course goals. Graded assignments include in-class quizzes, group exercises, and “students’ choice” discussions. These assignments are based on assigned readings (which must be completed prior to class), material (not included in the readings) presented in class, and class discussions. Note: if I do not feel that a large enough portion of the class is regularly contributing, or if I suspect that a large portion of students have not been completing the readings, I reserve the right to institute “pop” quizzes. If instituted, these additional quizzes would count for up to 15% of the final grade (with the contributions of the in-class quizzes, group exercises, and students’ choice discussions diminishing accordingly). Graded assignments, along with grade distributions, are detailed below.

You will also receive a class and group participation grade, as discussed below. While attendance will not count directly toward your course grade, it will count indirectly through the class and group participation grade. In addition, much of the material included in the in-class quizzes is not directly covered by the readings but instead covered in class; attendance will therefore impact your ability to perform well on the quizzes. Finally, class provides an opportunity to clarify the course readings.

Blackboard
You can access main blackboard site at [http://blackboard.neu.edu](http://blackboard.neu.edu). You are responsible for checking this site regularly as course information will be added to the site. Blackboard training courses are offered for free through the University. See a representation from the “Help Desk” at the Info Commons in Snell Library.
Communication

Students are expected to check Blackboard as well as their email on a regular basis. Important information such as assignments, class cancellations, and changes in course material may be relayed via Blackboard and email.

Class Policies

Extended Absences

In the rare instance where a student expects to miss class for an extended period of time (i.e., serious illness) or multiple classes regarding the same issue, he or she must contact me as soon as possible. Students must provide a documented reason for an extended absence in order to make any arrangements regarding missed work. All circumstances will be evaluated on an individual basis.

Laptops, Cell Phones, and Pagers

You are not permitted to use the internet in the classroom; laptops should only be used for taking notes. Please turn off your cell phones and pagers before coming to class. This includes text messaging! If I suspect you of using technology for purposes unrelated to the course, I reserve the right to disallow the use of technology in the classroom.

Personal Responsibility and Extra Credit

I do not “give out” grades – you earn them. When a grade is earned by you, I will not change it. If you need help, ask for it; do not wait until it is too late to seek help. Absolutely no extra credit will be given or accepted. Arrange to class on time, come prepared, respect others’ views, and turn in assignments on time.

Missing Assignments

I must be notified in advance if you will be missing a class session when a quiz will be taken or when an assignment is due. Acceptable “excuses” relate to serious emergencies such as a death in the family and serious illness. Documentation may be requested and I reserve the right to approve or deny any such requests. In-class quizzes, group exercises, and “students’ choice” discussions (as well as any “pop” quizzes) cannot be made up because of an unexcused class absence. Other instances will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Contacting Me

If you need to contact me, use the email provided above. Please put “CRIMINOLOGY” in the subject line of the email.

Academic Integrity

All students enrolled in this course must adhere to Northeastern University’s policy on “Academic Honesty and Integrity.” Those of you who are unfamiliar with this policy are expected to read it online at: http://www.neu.edu/osccr/academichonesty.html. Violations
of the academic honesty and integrity policy will not be tolerated, and will be reported to university officials. I take this policy very seriously and will make every effort to ensure it is strictly followed. If you are caught cheating, you will receive a failing grade for the course – no exceptions. If you are in any way unclear about this policy, please come speak to me.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism of any kind is unacceptable. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, be sure to ask me. In general, to avoid plagiarism: if you directly quote OR paraphrase OR use specific information (e.g., statistics) from ANY source (one of your previous papers, another student, an internet site, an academic article, a book, etc.), you must give credit to that source via a properly formatted citation/reference. I expect every student to understand plagiarism and to complete their own work.

For more information on this, Northeastern has an Academic Integrity Policy outlined on pages 36 and 37 of the Student Handbook: [www.northeastern.edu/admissions/pdfs/UndergradHandbook.pdf](http://www.northeastern.edu/admissions/pdfs/UndergradHandbook.pdf). I encourage all students to review this policy and to contact me with any questions.

**Students with Disabilities**

Any student who may require special accommodations for this course should notify me as soon as possible. You may need to register with the university’s Disability Resource Center (DRC). The DRC can provide students with services such as note-takers and extended time for taking exams. The DRC is located in 20 Dodge Hall and can be reached at 617-373-2675.

**Course Grading**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Point Allocation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-Class Quizzes (x6)</td>
<td>540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Exercises (x4)</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ Choice Discussions (x2)</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class and Group Participation</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1000</strong></td>
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**In-Class Quizzes**

There will be 6 in-class quizzes throughout the semester. Quizzes will range from 25 to 35 multiple choice questions (typically 5 answer choices), and each question will be worth 3 points. Each quiz is therefore worth between 75 (7.5%) and 105 (10.5%) of 1000 possible class points. Students will have roughly 45–60 minutes to complete each quiz. This variation is accounted for by difficulty of material and number of questions on the quiz. The quizzes are based on assigned readings (which must be completed prior to class), material (not included in the readings) presented in class, and class discussions.
Group Exercises

There will be 4 group exercises throughout the semester. The same students will be in your group for the majority of the class exercises (this includes the students’ choice discussions discussed below). Each group exercise is worth 60 points or 6% of your final course grade. These exercises will be assigned in class and will require research and PPT presentations on various topics. I will provide clear guidelines for working on and presenting these projects in class. Grading rubrics will be made clear when the exercises are assigned.

Students’ Choice Discussions

There will be 2 students’ choice discussions throughout the semester. These are group exercises, and the same students will be in your group for the majority of the class exercises (this includes the group exercises above). Each students’ choice discussions is worth 35 points or 3.5% of your final course grade. These discussions will be assigned in class and will require research and presentations on various topics. I will provide clear guidelines for working on and leading these discussions in class. Grading rubrics will be made clear when the discussions are assigned.

Class and Group Participation

The class and group participation grade (150 points or 15% of your final course grade) is based equally on two components.

- The first component assesses each student’s willingness to answer questions, ability to raise thoughtful questions related to course material, and capacity to respond thoughtfully to course topics and class readings. Although attendance is not a direct part of the final grade, missing class limits your ability to participate in class discussions. Therefore, repeated absences will indirectly influence your final course grade through the class participation grade.
- The second component assesses each student’s contribution to the group and students’ choice exercises. At the end of the semester, each student will provide a written assessment indicating the percentage of group work that was completed by each student in the group, along with a written explanation of the work allocation. The points given for the group participation grade in the course will be commensurate with the aggregated work allocation provided by students.

Note that absolutely no extra credit will be given or accepted in this course. Grades will be based strictly on the assignments above.

Grading Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>930–1000</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>900–929</td>
<td>930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>899–870</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>869–830</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>829–800</td>
<td>869</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>799–770</td>
<td>829</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>629–600</td>
<td>669</td>
</tr>
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Class Schedule

**Week 1**

*Introduction to Criminology*

**M 5/11** Course Introduction  
Readings:  
- Syllabus (Blackboard)  
- How to Read and Interpret Research (Blackboard)

**T 5/12** Establishing a Foundation  
Readings:  
- Minneapolis Domestic Violence Experiment (Blackboard)

**W 5/13** The Case of Nushawn Williams  
Readings:  
- Nushawn Williams – The AIDS Predator (Blackboard)

**TH 5/14** The Nature and Extent of Crime  
Readings:  
- “The Nation’s Two Crime Measures” (Blackboard)  
Week 2

“I Chose to Engage in Crime Because the Benefits Outweighed the Potential Costs”
Classical Criminology: Historical Underpinnings to Contemporary Theory

M 5/18 Quiz 1
What is a Theory?

T 5/19 Classical Criminology and Contemporary “Choice” Theories of Crime
Readings:
• “The Origins of Modern Criminology” (Cullen pp. 21-26)
• “An Essay on Crimes and Punishments” by Cesare Beccaria (Cullen pp. 27-30)
• “Reconceptualizing Deterrence Theory” by Mark C. Stafford and Mark Warr (Cullen pp. 431-436)
• “Crime as a Rational Choice” by Derek B. Cornish and Ronald V. Clarke (Cullen pp. 437-442)
• “Armed Robbers in Action” by Richard T. Wright and Scott H. Decker (Cullen pp. 443-453)

W 5/20 Group Exercise I (assigned)
Environmental Criminology: “Opportunity” Theories of Crime
Readings:
• “Environmental Criminology” (Cullen pp. 454-458)
• “Routine Activity Theory” by Lawrence E. Cohen and Marcus Felson (Cullen pp. 469-479)
• “Situational Crime Prevention” by Ronald V. Clarke (Cullen pp. 480-488)
• Peruse the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing Webpage: http://www.popcenter.org/

TH 5/21 Group Exercise I (presented)
Group Exercise II (assigned)
Readings:
Week 3

“It Wasn’t My Fault: I Was Born Like (or Born Into) This”
*Positivist Criminology: From Biological to Sociological Theorizing*

**M 5/25**  No Class – Memorial Day

**T 5/26**  *Group Exercise II (presented)*

**W 5/27**  *Quiz 2*
Biosocial Criminology: From the “Criminal Man” to Epigenetic Research
Readings:
- “Biosocial and Trait Theories” (Cullen pp. 34-46)
- “Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency” by Sheldon Gluck and Eleanor Glueck (Cullen pp. 47-58)
- “Personality and Crime: Are Some People More Crime Prone?” by Avshalom Caspi et al. (Cullen pp. 86-96)

**TH 5/28**  *Group Exercise III (assigned)*
Biosocial Criminology (continued)
Social Disorganization Theory: Conceptualization and Extensions
Readings:
- “The Chicago School: The City, Social Disorganization, and Crime” (Cullen pp. 97-106)
- “Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas” by Clifford R. Shaw and Henry D. McKay (Cullen pp. 107-113)
- “Collective Efficacy and Crime” by Robert J. Sampson, Stephen W. Raudenbush, and Felton Earls (Cullen pp. 121-126)
Week 4

“It Wasn’t My Fault: Where I Live Made Me Do It”
Macro-Criminological Theorizing: Culture and Structure

M 6/1 Quiz 3
Group Exercise III (presented)

T 6/2 Subcultural Theories of Crime: The Code of the Street
Readings:
• “The Code of the Street” by Elijah Anderson (Cullen pp. 154-165)

W 6/3 The Anomie and Strain Tradition of Criminological Theorizing
Readings:
• “Anomie/Strain Theories of Crime” (Cullen pp. 166-176)
• “Social Structure and Anomie” by Robert K. Merton (Cullen pp. 177-185)
• “Crime and the American Dream” by Richard Rosenfeld and Steven F. Messner (Cullen pp. 191-201)
• “Pressured Into Crime: General Strain Theory” by Robert Agnew (Cullen pp. 202-211)

TH 6/4 Students’ Choice I (assigned)
Critical Criminology: The Upper Class vs. the Lower Class
Readings:
• “Critical Criminology: Power, Peace, and Crime” (Cullen pp. 284-294)
• “Criminality and Economic Conditions” by Willem Bonger (Cullen pp. 295-302)
**Week 5**

“My Friends Made Me Do It” vs. “My Parents Should’ve Stopped Me”

Social Learning vs. Social Control

**M 6/8**  
**Quiz 4**  
*Students’ Choice I (presented)*

**T 6/9**  
Learning to be a Criminal: Social Learning Theories  
Readings:
- “Learning to be a Criminal: Differential Association, Subcultural, and Social Learning Theories” (Cullen pp. 127-135)
- “A Theory of Differential Association” by Edwin H. Sutherland and Donald R. Cressey (Cullen pp. 136-139)

**W 6/10**  
Control Theories of Crime  
Readings:
- “Varieties of Control Theory” (Cullen pp. 212-220)
- “Techniques of Neutralization” by Gresham M. Sykes and David Matza (Cullen pp. 221-228)
- “Social Bond Theory” by Travis Hirschi (Cullen pp. 229-237)

**TH 6/11**  
*Students’ Choice II (assigned)*  
Criminal Offending Across the Life Course: Age-Graded Social Bond Theory  
Readings:
- “Developmental Theories: Crime and the Life Course” (Cullen pp. 511-524)
- “A Theory of Persistent Offending and Desistance from Crime” by John H. Laub and Robert J. Sampson (Cullen pp. 545-551)
Week 6

Neglected Populations
Examining the Role of Race and Sex (or Gender) in Criminological Theorizing

M 6/15 No Class

T 6/16 Quiz 5
Students’ Choice II (presented)

W 6/17 Race and the Criminal Justice System: Theory and Implicit Bias
Readings:
  • “Paying Attention to Race: Theoretical Developments” (Cullen pp. 558-569)
  • “Getting Played” by Jody Miller (Cullen pp. 570-577)
  • Take the Race IAT (Implicit Association Test) at https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html

TH 6/18 Group Exercise IV (assigned)
Sex and Crime: Explaining Crime from a Gendered Perspective
Readings:
  • “Feminist Theories: Gender, Power, and Crime” (Cullen pp. 325-338)
  • “A Feminist Theory of Female Delinquency” by Meda Chesney-Lind (Cullen pp. 347-353)
  • “Toward a Gendered Theory of Female Offending” by Darrell J. Steffensmeier and Emilie Allan (Cullen pp. 366-374)
Week 7

Controlling Crime: What Works and What Doesn’t
Incarceration, Rehabilitation, Prevention, and Broken Windows Policing

M 6/22  Quiz 6
Labelling Theory: “Blame it on the Criminal Justice System”
Readings
• “Labeling, Interaction, and Crime: Societal Reaction and the Creation of Criminals” (Cullen pp. 253-262)
• “Primary and Secondary Deviance” by Edwin M. Lemert (Cullen pp. 263-266)

Readings
• “Imprisoning Communities” by Todd R. Clear (Cullen pp. 649-658)

Readings
• “Broken Windows” by James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling (Cullen pp. 497-510)
• “Saving Children from a Life of Crime” by David P. Farrington and Brandon C. Welsh (Cullen pp. 667-676)

TH 6/25  Group Exercise IV (presented)