### White-Collar Crime CRIM7252
Tuesday 5:45-8:15 in Churchill 301
Professor Nikos Passas

Please contact Prof. Passas at:
617-373 4309
n.passas@neu.edu

Office Hours: Tue. 4-5.30 pm
401C Churchill Hall

### Texts

**Books:**
- Passas N and Goodwin N, eds. 2004. *It's Legal, but It Ain't Right: Harmful Social Consequences of Legal Industries*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press [*available as ebook at NU Library*]
- Passas N. and R. Agnew (1997). *The Future of Anomie Theory*. Boston: Northeastern University Press. [*this is out of print – chapters will be made available electronically*]
- Susan W Brenner: *Cyberthreats: The Emerging Fault Lines of the Nation State*

**Optional**

See also e-readings below under “schedule” for each week. There will be additional required and recommended readings.

### Description

This course provides an in-depth review of the extent, nature, causes and control of the problem of white-collar crime, which includes serious misconduct by respected and powerful people in the course of their occupations as well as by organizations.

Following a brief history of the concept of white-collar crime, we will study: 1) the nature and extent of offenses committed by corporations, government agencies, and highly regarded or powerful professionals in the course of their occupations; 2) the social, economic and physical costs of such misconduct; and 3) the social organization of various types of white collar crime (modus operandi, division of labor, victims, beneficiaries, etc.); 4) the difficulties in detecting, regulating, and sanctioning these offenses; and 5) legal and policy issues.
We will examine the above issues through case studies of misconduct by physicians, lawyers, accountants, politicians, government agents and agencies, as well as domestic and multinational corporations.

The main objective is to appreciate the significance of this social problem, understand the connections between law, culture, politics, and economics, become fully aware of policy options and dilemmas, and to be able to critically assess current and proposed regulatory and control strategies. Participants will thus understand why many scholars regard white-collar crime as a more significant social problem than crime in the streets.

At the same time, the course is designed to strengthen the participants’ research, analytical, writing, oral, and collaborative skills.

The course will be based on the presentation and discussion of the assigned readings and each one’s independent research.

**Grading and Tasks**

For the days when students do not present a paper in class, they have the following task:

**Summary and Questions for Discussion (individual)**

- Outline of main arguments made and issues discussed in the readings; and,
- Questions that we need to discuss in class
  - what is hardest to understand and
  - what is most exciting to debate.

This set of questions must be emailed to me by Monday evening by 10PM (one day before we meet for each topic). (30% of the final grade; class participation will strongly influence the grade too.)

Students whose turn is to PRESENT for discussion will have the following tasks:

**PowerPoint Presentation (collective)**

The presentation must be based both on the required readings and on independent research conducted by the presenters. This provides an opportunity to discuss findings and issues with the rest of the class, in order to improve the final paper, which is due at the end of the semester. The PowerPoint presentation must address the following topics:

- The extent of a given type of white-collar crime;
- Estimates on the effects and cost of this type of white-collar crime;
- The causes of white-collar crime (draw on the theories we examined; examine questions unanswered or incompletely addressed by them; look for alternative modes of explanation; list draw on other disciplines, like history, political science, etc.; compare and contrast with explanations of other crimes (what are the specificities of white-collar crime?));
- The social organization of this kind of crime (demand and supply issues; modus operandi; division of labor; relations with other criminal or legitimate and government actors; organizational structures; characteristics of offenders and victims; characteristics of main beneficiaries of illegal activity); and,
Discussion of law enforcement and policies that are needed to deal with white-collar crimes (what should be done about each form of crime; what social and political limitations are there; what can be achieved realistically in the short term; can should we strive for in the long term).

(30% of the final grade).

Class Participation
Students are expected to come to class prepared to have a thoughtful, critical discussion of the assigned materials. Your ACTIVE participation in debates during the whole semester will be 5% of the final grade.

Final Research Paper (individual)
The final paper will be on an individual basis. The paper must reflect and elaborate upon the students’ research and analysis developed in the (collective) PowerPoint presentation, but go very extensively beyond it. It is fine to rely on each other’s work but you must show ways and areas where the work is exclusively your own. The paper must integrate wherever appropriate literature, points, arguments and issues examined during the whole course. Students should draw on the feedback offered in class to work on the research paper. Try to integrate as best as possible the various readings around the three main themes. IMPORTANTLY, the paper must reflect research beyond the readings for the class. Library and online research is expected for this paper. Papers are due by email on December 11 at midnight (35% of the grade).

Schedule

Week 1 The Concept of White-Collar Crime and Criminology
Sept. 15

The concept and costs of white-collar crime. Sutherland’s contribution to criminology; introduction to wcc:
http://www.lexisnexis.com/lawschool/study/understanding/pdf/WhiteCollarCh1.pdf
and Reiman – see http://www.paulsjusticepage.com/RichGetRicher/4students.htm;

Does it matter how the law treats white-collar offenses?

See some basic discussion questions at
http://learn.uci.edu/oo/getDemoPage.php?course=OC0899020&lesson=001&topic=5&page=1

Week 2 Theoretical Issues
Sept. 22


Global inequality materials to be reviewed at: [http://www.pbs.org/now/politics/globalinequality.html](http://www.pbs.org/now/politics/globalinequality.html)


*Articles in Justice Quarterly and Law and Society Review are available electronically through the library’s ([www.lib.neu.edu](http://www.lib.neu.edu)) E-Journal finder option. Search by journal title.*

Optional readings:


**Week 3**

**Legal but not Right**

**Sept. 29**

Passas and Goodwin, Introductory chapter and chapters by Howe, Kindt, Ritchie, Riggs and Maples, Gerstenblith in *It's Legal, but It Ain't Right*

Optional


Discussion questions: what are the responsibilities of government, policy makers, academics and the private sector when they are aware of coming energy, flood, water, security crises? How should inaction and neglect to plan for the scenarios outlined in the readings be categorized? Lawful but awful, legal but wrong or unethical? White-collar crime?

**Week 4**

**The Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) Affair**

**Oct. 6**


At: http://www.motherjones.com/news_wire/bushboys.html


**Week 5**

**Corporate Crimes against the 3rd World**

**Oct. 13**


http://ic.galegroup.com.ezproxy.neu.edu/ic/bic1/AcademicJournalsDetailsPage/AcademicJournalsDetailsWindow?failOverType=display-query=&prodId=BIC1&windowstate=normal&contentModule=&display-query=&mode=view&displayGroupName=Journals&limiter=&u=mlin_b_northeast&currPage=&disableHighlighting=false&displayGroups=&sortBy=&source=&search_within_results=&p=BIC1&action=e&catId=&activityType=&scanId=&documentId=GALE|A53461729

Optional readings:


*Shell and Nigeria*

*Bhopal and Union Carbide*

Christian aid report on poverty and multinational corporation tax dodging:

*Articles in* Race and Class and *Boston University International Law Journal* are available electronically through the library’s (*www.lib.neu.edu*) E-Journal finder option. Search by journal title.

**Week 6**  
**The Car Industry**  
**Oct. 20**

http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.neu.edu/stable/4105939?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents


http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/rollover/

http://www.sierraclub.org/globalwarming/factsheets/BiggestStep_05.pdf

- areas to look at: Pollution
- Airbags
- The Highway Lobby
- Ford-Firestone Tragedy
- Safety last
  M.B. Clinard and P. Yeager Corporate Crime

Optional  

**Week 7**  
**The Tobacco Industry: Corporate Crime bordering Organized Crime**  
**Oct. 27**
Richard Daynard chapter in It's Legal, but It Ain't Right: Harmful Social Consequences of Legal Industries.


Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids. Illegal Pathways to Illegal Profits.


http://news.findlaw.com/legalnews/lit/tobacco/ 

Week 8  
Arms Trade, Proliferation, Department of Defense Frauds

guest lecture Prof. Glenn Pierce

Nov. 3

Bondi and Diaz papers in It's Legal, but It Ain't Right (arms chapters).

http://go.galegroup.com.ezproxy.neu.edu/ps/retrieve.do?sort=RELEVANCE&docType=Article&tabID=T002&prodId=AONE&searchId=R2&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm&contentSegment=&currentPosition=1&searchResultsType=SingleTab&inPS=true&userGroupName=mlin_b_northest&docId=GALE|A285533148&contentSet=GALE|A285533148


http://whatreallyhappened.com/WRHARTICLES/allwarsarebankerwars.php
http://archive.org/stream/WarIsARacket#page/n0/mode/2up


To be emailed

Optional Readings

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At: http://www.citizen.org/documents/bechteliniraq.pdf


Week 9  
**The Pharmaceutical Industry and Doctors**

Nov. 10

Goldacre, B. (2013) Bad Pharma
Silverstein chapter in *It's Legal, but It Ain't Right: Harmful Social Consequences of Legal Industries.*
Perry & Dawson “Nightmare: Women and the Dalkon Shield” (paper will be made available)
Can't find


Week 10  
**Banks and financial crisis**

Nov. 17

Greek Parliament report on the origins and austerity measures impact to be made available

Nguyen and Pontell Mortgage origination fraud and the global economic crisis.

Criminology & Public Policy (9: Issue 3): 591-612


Paper by William Black to be made available

Optional


Week 11  
**Cybercrime**

Nov. 24

Susan W Brenner: *Cyberthreats: The Emerging Fault Lines of the Nation State*


Optional


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**Week 12: Corruption**

**Dec. 1**


Passas – Strategy paper to be made available

Optional


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**Week 13: Control of White-collar crime: Policy Issues**

**Dec. 8**

http://go.galegroup.com.ezproxy.neu.edu/ps/retrieve.do?sort=RELEVANCE&docType= Article&tabID=T002&prodId=AONE&searchId=R5&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchType=AdvancedSearchForm&contentSegment=&currentPosition=1&searchResultsType=SingleTab&inPS=true&userGroupName=mlin_b_northeast&docId=GALE|A125713291&contentSet=GALE|A125713291

UNCAC/UNTOC –
Piece by Zimmerman on the World Bank and debarment process
[additional readings may be provided] – check lit and book on white-collar crime in my sub-directory

*Articles in American Criminal Law Review are available electronically through the library’s (www.lib.neu.edu) E-Journal finder option. Simply search by journal title.

The final paper is due by email on December 11 at midnight.