

Sam Houston State University
College of Criminal Justice
CJ 737: Criminological Theory – Fall 2007

Room/Time: CJC A181 Thursday 12:30 p.m. – 2:50 p.m.
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Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. and by appointment

Course Description:

This course will provide an overview of the major theoretical paradigms focusing on the causes of crime and deviant behavior with special attention given to the social, political and intellectual milieu within which each perspective arose. The course will include a discussion of criminological theories from a philosophy of science perspective focusing upon such issues as theory construction, theoretical integration and the formal evaluation of theory.

Course Objectives:

The primary goal of this course is to introduce students to the criminological theories and paradigms that are the focus of research appearing in top level peer reviewed journals. This introduction will address the historical development of these traditions and will focus on contemporary issues being addressed by criminologists today. A secondary goal of this course is to continue to develop in students the skills necessary to author manuscripts that can be competitive at top publication outlets. These skills include understanding the major issues facing criminologists today, identifying and organizing the relevant literature, and developing research topics which are a clear and substantial extension of the existing literature.

Required Books

Cullen, F. T. and R. Agnew. 1999. *Criminological Theory Past to Present: Essential Readings*.

Cullen F. T., Wright, J. P. and K. R. Blevins. 2006. *Taking Stock: The Status of Criminological Theory*. *Advances in Criminological Theory: Volume 15*.

Grading Policy:

Class grades will be based on four elements: class participation, a class presentation, a paper, and two tests.

Class Participation (25 points)

Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the assigned reading.

Paper (100 points)

The paper will be a literature review on a topic of importance to contemporary research on criminological theory. In effect, the paper should be the functional equivalent of literature reviews which serve as the beginning of articles appearing in peer reviewed journals. To gain an understanding of the structure of such a paper, you may consult many of the articles on the reading list. Articles that are the most applicable consist of a literature review, a statistical test and a discussion/conclusions section.

In your paper, the literature review should lead to the identification of a research question(s). The hypothetical resolution of the research question identified in the paper should result in a substantial contribution to the criminological literature. While it is not necessary to achieve full credit on the assignment, students may wish to identify research questions which may be addressed with publicly available data sets.

General topics for your papers will be identified in consultation with the instructor during office hours on 8/28 or 9/4. Make sure that you identify an area of interest prior to meeting with the instructor. General topics will be very broad, for example 'strain theory', and may be borrowed from the areas described in the syllabus. If you are unable to meet with the instructor during office hours alternative arrangements will be made.

After you have your general topic area you will develop a research question(s) within the topic area. Research questions and paper bibliographies will be submitted to the instructor in paper during class on 9/27. To develop your bibliography consult reference lists from the course readings in your topic area and also search peer reviewed journals using tools provided through the library website.

In all likelihood, it will take a little while to identify research questions within your general topic area. Good research questions clearly advance the prior literature. Some of the ways in which the literature may be advanced include testing a particular issue with a sample different from those used in earlier work., using an alternative (but still appropriate) statistical technique, and including theoretically relevant variables which have not been included in prior work.. One way to think about developing a strong research question is to identify a limitation of prior work in your topic area. Your research question would then address this limitation.

The paper should begin with an introduction of the general topic. This general introduction should include an overview of the major areas covered in the body of the paper and an identification of the potential contribution of the paper to the literature. The paper should then summarize the literature that leads to the research question. In most cases, literature summaries should not be a paper by paper discussion of prior work. Instead, when you are summarizing the literature think carefully about the contribution of each article. Look for consistencies across the articles you are reviewing. When a number of articles make similar point, discuss this work as a group. Summarize peripheral (but still pertinent) literature with broad strokes. In contrast, discuss in detail studies making strong contributions that are directly in line with your research question. Make sure the conclusion of your paper includes your research questions and clearly identifies the limitation of the existing literature that the research question addresses.

The body of the paper will be between 8 and 12 full pages of text (double spaced in times new roman 12 point font). Include a separate title page. For each incomplete page or missing page, a deduction of 10% per page will be taken from the final grade. The final paper will be due on * No late submissions of the paper will be accepted.

Important paper deadlines are summarized below.

8/30 and 9/6: Develop topic in consultation with the instructor.

9/27: Bibliography and research question

Submit a bibliography of the articles that you will be using in your paper and a statement of your research question and the contribution that addressing the research question will make to the prior literature. The bibliography should be based on articles from peer reviewed journals. The bibliography should be in APA format.

11/8: Draft deadline.

Submitting a draft is optional, but if you do want to submit one it needs to be done by this date.

Submission of the final paper

Grading of the final paper will be based on two main elements. The first is the extent to which your paper clearly identifies a research question and situates that research question in the existing literature. Within this element it is necessary to identify and include appropriate literature and to clearly identify the contribution to the literature that will be made by addressing the prior literature. The second element is the clarity of writing and organization and the overall presentation of paper including grammar, spelling, sentence structure etc.

Presentation and Summary (25 points)

To facilitate discussion and critical thought on the course material, each student will be required to develop a presentation. Topics will be assigned on the first day of class. In order to make sure that the student is on the right track he or she will meet with the professor after class the week before his or her presentation.

Presentations are expected to last approximately 15 minutes. They should focus on the assigned material and its relation to other material being discussed in class at the time. You will be graded on the coverage of important points, the timeliness of the presentation, the clarity of the presentation and presentation style.

Presentations will be accompanied by a written summary of the work the student is presenting. Summaries should identify the main points of the material including the why, who, what, and how of the test described in the article. They will be type written and can be in outline form. It is suggested that a summary for a particular piece should be at least two pages and no more than five pages (pages should be doubled spaced). When students present the material they will provide a copy of the summary for each person in the class. Together the summary and presentation will be worth 25 points.

Exams (50 points each)

Two exams will be given. Exams will require students to answer three essay questions and will be conducted in a computer lab. Potential exam topic areas will be provided in class a week before each exam. Exams will assess the student's ability to understand, articulate and critically discuss material presented in class. Grades will be based on each of these elements. Exams are worth 50 points each.

Final Grade

Your final semester grade will be based on the percentage of points out of 250 that you receive.

Percent of Points	Grade
90% - 100%	A
80% - 89%	B
70% - 79%	C
60% - 69%	D
59% and below	E

Schedule and Readings

8/23 - Introduction

8/30 - Subcultural theory/social learning theory/peer effects

Past to Present: Chapters 8, 10, and 12
Taking Stock: Chapter 1
Matsueda and Anderson 1998
Haynie 2002
Haynie and Osgood 2005

9/6, 9/13 – Control theory

Past to Present: Chapters 18 and 19
Taking Stock: Chapter 2
Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990
Hirschi and Gottfredson 1983
Horney et al. 1995
Piquero and Bouffard 2007
Pratt and Cullen 2000

9/27– Lifecourse/Developmental theory

Taking Stock: Chapters 10, 11 and 12
Past to Present: 5 and 20
Sampson and Laub 1993
Moffitt 1993
Sampson and Laub 2003
Farrington 2003

10/4 – Biology and Crime

Past to Present: Part I introduction and Chapter 1
Rowe: Chapters 4, 5 and 6
Raine et al., 1997, 2002, 2005

10/4 **Exam #1**

10/11 – Criminal Careers

Piquero et al 2003
Armstrong 2007
Francis 2007

10/18 - Micro and macro strain theory

Past to Present: Chapters 13, 14, 15, 16, 17
Taking Stock: Chapters 3 and 4
Agnew 1992, 2001, 2002
Leeper and Sealock 2004

10/25, 11/1 – Ecological explanations of crime

Taking Stock: Chapter 5
Past to Present: Part II
Sampson et al. 1997
Armstrong et al 2007
Sampson and Groves 1989
Taylor 2002
Warner and Wilcox Rountree 1997

11/8 – Race and Crime

Taking Stock: Chapter 6
Bursik and Grasmik 1993
Iceland 2004
Peterson and Krivo 1999, 2005
Krivo and Peterson 1996

11/15 – Labeling Theory

Past to Present: Part VIII
Matsueda 1992
Hiemer and Matsueda 1994
Zhang and Zhang 2004

11/22 – Thanksgiving

11/29 – Deterrence theory/ Rational Choice Theory

Taking Stock: Chapter 13
Past to Present Chapters 4, 25, 26
Nagin 1998
Paternoster and Piquero 1995
Pogarsky 2002
Pogarsky and Piquero 2003

12/6 – Feminist and Radical Theories

Taking Stock: Chapter 7 and Chapter 8
Lynch 2004

Miller 2002
Miller and White 2003
Russel 2002

12/13 – Exam #2

Attendance Policy: Class attendance requirements will be followed in accordance with Academic Policy Statement 800401.

Academic Honesty: Students are encouraged to review the statements presented in the Sam Houston State University's Guidelines available at www.shsu.edu/administrative/faculty/sectionb.html#dishonesty

Disable Student Policy: Students are encouraged to review the statements presented in the Sam Houston State University's Guidelines available at: www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/811006.html

Services for Disabled Students: Students are encouraged to review the statements presented in the Sam Houston State University's Guidelines available at: www.shsu.edu/~counsel/sswd.html

Student Absences on Religious Holy Day Policy: Students are encouraged to review the statements presented in the Sam Houston State University's Guidelines available at: www.shsu.edu/catalog/scholasticrequirements.html#holyday