

CRIM 1307: Introduction to Crime and Criminology

Fall 2023

GR 3.420

Tuesday & Thursday 11:30AM – 12:45PM

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, students will learn about the nature, location, and impact of crime in America. They will also learn about how criminal behavior is measured, who is most likely to commit it, and where crime is most likely to occur.

PREREQUISITE(S)

None

COURSE OBJECTIVES

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- describe the foundations of criminological thought;
- describe and assess theories of criminal behavior;
- compare and contrast the types of data that are used to examine crime;
- evaluate criminal justice policies based on their application of crime theories and quality of evidence; and
- recognize some of the indicators of “good” social science research and “bad” social science research.

REQUIRED READINGS

Steffensmeier, D. J. (2017). *Confessions of a dying thief: Understanding criminal careers and illegal enterprise*. Routledge.

All other required readings will be posted on eLearning.

OTHER READINGS

For students wanting additional perspective on and practice with the course material, I recommend this textbook:

Akers, R. L., Sellers, C. S., & Jennings, W. G. (2020). *Criminological Theories: Introduction, Evaluation, and Application (8th ed.)*. Oxford University Press.

Note that quizzes and exams will only include content that was covered in the class lecture, PowerPoints, or assigned readings. Quizzes and exams will *not* include material that is covered in the textbook, but not elsewhere.

COURSE ATTENDANCE

Students are not required to attend the lecture. They are strongly encouraged to attend, however. Note that:

- the readings and PowerPoints are not exhaustive of the course material. The lectures will include novel information;
- students who attend the lecture tend to understand the material better and do better in the course; and
- there may be extra credit opportunities offered to students who participate in class discussions and complete in-class activities.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Weekly Online Quizzes. Throughout the semester, students will be assigned weekly online quizzes. These quizzes will include the material covered in the *previous week's* lecture, PowerPoints, and readings. There will be a total of 11 online quizzes, but only the student's 10 highest scores count towards their final grade. Three points will be deducted from any online quizzes that are submitted after the due date.

Students are permitted to use their course notes, textbook, and the internet during the quizzes. Students will have 24 hours once they begin the quiz to complete it. Note that it will automatically be submitted at its due date/time.

Reading an Academic Article. Twice during the semester, a portion of the class period will be dedicated to teaching students how to read empirical articles. Students will then read the assigned article outside of class time. Students will be separated into groups and complete an activity about the article during the subsequent class period.

If a student needs to miss subsequent class period, the student should send an email to me *before* the start of the class period. The student will be assigned an alternative assignment. Students who do not attend the class period will receive a zero for the assignment.

Unit Exams. There will be 3 exams throughout the semester. The exams will cover material from the lectures, PowerPoints, and the readings and will consist of multiple-choice, true-or-false, matching, and fill-in-the-blank questions.

The exams will be completed online via eLearning during the designated class period. Students will be allowed to use their course notes, textbook, and the Internet during the exam, but the exam will be created in such a manner that students *must* understand the material. We will review the exam material in the class period before the exam.

Students who experience technical difficulties while completing the exam should email the University of Texas at Dallas 24/7 eLearning Help Desk (eLearning@utdallas.edu) and CC Dr. Krajewski on the email.

Extraordinary circumstances: If a student needs to miss an exam, they will have the opportunity to make it up provided they have proper documentation of illness, injury, or a family emergency. In such circumstances, the student should send an email to Dr. Krajewski (andrew.krajewski@utdallas.edu) within 3 business days of the examination.

Final Exam. There will be a comprehensive final exam at the time designated by the Office of the Registrar. The exam will cover material from throughout the course and will consist of multiple-choice, true-or-false, and fill-in-the-blank questions.

The student's final exam grade will replace their lowest unit exam grade (i.e., scoring an 80 percent on the final exam would replace an exam grade in which a student scored below 80 percent). Students who are satisfied with their semester grade may choose to forgo the comprehensive final exam.

GRADE DETERMINATION

Overall, your final grade will be calculated as follows:

Weekly Online Quizzes	250 points	25 %
Reading an Empirical Article Activity (x2)	100 points	10 %
Unit Exams (x3)	600 points	60 %
* Comprehensive Exam (x1)		
Minor Assignments		
Syllabus Quiz	25 points	2.5 %
Self-Report Survey	25 points	2.5 %
Total	1000 points	100 %

The following scale will be used for grading:

Letter Grade	Required Percentage
A	94 - 100%
A-	90 - 93%
B+	87 - 89%
B	84 - 86%
B-	80 - 83%
C+	77 - 79%
C	74 - 76%
C-	70 - 73%
D+	67 - 69%
D	64 - 66%
D-	60 - 63%
F	Below 60%

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

The use of laptops or other technological devices is permitted if they are being used for the purposes of note taking. The use of these devices should *not* be a distraction to yourself or your fellow classmates. Students may be asked to put away their electronic devices if the devices become a distraction.

Discussions of criminal behavior and its underlying causes often involve topics that may be uncomfortable for some individuals. I expect that students treat their fellow classmates with respect. I will not tolerate offensive or belligerent attacks against one another.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

The faculty expects from its students a high-level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrates a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work. See <https://conduct.utdallas.edu/integrity>.

Academic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty can occur in relation to any type of work submitted for academic credit or as a requirement for a class. It can include individual work or a group project. Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, and collaboration/collusion. In order to avoid academic dishonesty, it is important for students to fully understand the expectations of their professors. This is best accomplished through asking clarifying questions if an individual does not completely understand the requirements of an assignment.

Additional information related to academic dishonesty and tips on how to avoid dishonesty may be found here: <https://conduct.utdallas.edu/dishonesty>.

NOTE: Please do not use artificial intelligence engines or software to produce work for this class EXCEPT for assignments in which I have given you explicit permission.

ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMODATIONS

The University of Texas at Dallas is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. The syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. If you are seeking classroom accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (2008), you are required to register with the [AccessAbility Resource Center \(ARC\)](#), located in the Administration Building, Suite 2.224. Their phone number is 972-883-2098, email: studentaccess@utdallas.edu and the website is <https://accessability.utdallas.edu/>. To receive academic accommodations for this class, please [register and request services](#) by completing the Request for Services form with the proper documentation and meet with the Director of ARC at the beginning of the semester.

RECORDING OF CLASS LECTURES

Students are expected to follow appropriate University policies and maintain the security of passwords used to access recorded lectures. Unless the Office of Student AccessAbility has approved the student to record the instruction, students are expressly prohibited from recording any part of this course. Recordings may not be published, reproduced, or shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

ACADEMIC SUPPORT RESOURCES

The information contained in the following link lists the University's academic support resources for all students. Please see <http://go.utdallas.edu/academic-support-resources>.

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGY SERVICES

The [Student Counseling Center](#) offers confidential services to students either for individual appointments or as part of groups. Initial appointments must be made in person in the Student Counseling Center, which is located in SSB 4.600, on the fourth floor of the Student Services Building. Their main number is 972-883-2575 and the 24/7 Crisis Hotline is 972-883-8255 (972-UTD-TALK).

COURSE CALENDAR - ASSIGNMENTS

An online exam will be given between 11:30 AM and 1:00 PM on the following dates:

Tuesday, September 19
Thursday, October 19
Tuesday, December 5
(tentatively) Tuesday, December 12

An online quiz is due at 11:30 AM (the start of class) on the following dates:

Tuesday, August 29
Tuesday, September 5
Tuesday, September 12
Tuesday, September 26
Tuesday, October 3
Tuesday, October 10
Tuesday, October 17
Tuesday, October 31
Tuesday, November 7
Tuesday, November 14
Tuesday, December 5

The online quiz will cover the material from the previous week.

The other assignments are due on the following dates:

The syllabus quiz is due Tuesday, September 12 at 11:30 AM
The self-reported offending survey is due Thursday, September 21 at 11:30 AM

COURSE CALENDAR - READINGS

Tuesday, August 22 - Overview of syllabus

Thursday, August 24 - What is crime? What is Criminology?

Chapter 1, "Scientific Understanding of Behavior," in *Methods in Behavioral Research* by Paul C. Bates and Scott C. Cozby

Chapter 1 in *Confessions of a Dying Thief*

Tuesday, August 29 - How is crime measured?

Chapter 2, "Measuring Crime," in *Introduction to Criminology: Why Do They Do It?* By Pamela J. Schram and Stephen G. Tibbetts

Thursday, August 31 – Crime trends

How to Compute a Crime Rate

Fear of Rampant Crime is Derailing New York City's Recovery by Fola Akinnibi and Raedah Wahid, Bloomberg News

Chapter 4 and 5 in *Confessions of a Dying Thief*

Tuesday, September 5 - How do we study crime?

Chapter 4, "Fundamental Research Issues," in *Methods in Behavioral Research* by Paul C. Bates and Scott C. Cozby

Thursday, September 7 - How do we study crime? (continued)?

Everything We Know About Facebook's Secret Mood-Manipulation Experiment by Robinson Meyer, The Atlantic

"A mental health tech company ran an AI experiment on real users..." by David Ingram, NBC News

Chapter 6 and 7 in *Confessions of a Dying Thief*

Tuesday, September 12 - What is a theory and what makes a good one?

Chapter 1, "Introduction to Criminological Theory," in *Criminological Theories...*, by Ronald Akers, Christine Sellers, and Wesley Jennings

Thursday, September 14 - Exam review

Tuesday, September 19 – Exam 1

Thursday, September 21 - Rational choice theory and deterrence theory

Two Cities Took Different Approaches to Pandemic Court Closures. They Got Different Results by Alec MacGillis, ProPublica

Chapter 8 and 9 in *Confessions of a Dying Thief*

Tuesday, September 26 - Rational choice theory and deterrence theory (continued)

Chapter 3, “Choosing the Target,” and Chapter 4, “Committing the Robbery,” by Wright and Decker

Thursday, September 28 - Routine activities / Situational crime prevention

Philly teenagers would like safe, accessible, and interesting places to hang out. They can't find any, by Nate File *The Inquirer*

How teens hang out and stay in touch with their closest friends, by Amanda Lenhart, Pew Research Center

Chapter 10 in *Confessions of a Dying Thief*

Tuesday, October 3 - Reading an article

van Sintemaartensdijk, I., van Gelder, J.L., van Prooijen, J.W. *et al.* Mere presence of informal guardians deters burglars: a virtual reality study. *J Exp Criminol* **17**, 657–676 (2021). <https://doi-org.libproxy.utdallas.edu/10.1007/s11292-020-09430-1>

Thursday, October 5 – Social learning & neutralizations

Episode 1 of *Rabbit Hole*, New York <https://www.nytimes.com/column/rabbit-hole>

Chapter 11 in *Confessions of a Dying Thief*

Tuesday, October 10 - Evidence on social learning / Social network analysis

Episode 2 and 3 of *Rabbit Hole*, New York Times (<https://www.nytimes.com/column/rabbit-hole>)

Thursday, October 12 – Violent crime

Shooting in the Dark by Benedict Carey, New York Times

Drinking Games by Malcolm Gladwell, New Yorker

6 major takeaways from the ATF's first report in 20 years on U.S. gun crime by Jaclyn Diaz, NPR

Tuesday, October 17 - Exam review

Thursday, October 19 – Exam 2

Tuesday, October 24 - Control theory

Thursday, October 26 - Control theory

The Struggles of a Psychologist Studying Self-Control by Maria Konnikova

Why Rich Kids Are So Good at the Marshmallow Test Jessica McCrory Calarco, *The Atlantic*

Chapter 12 in *Confessions of a Dying Thief*

Tuesday, October 31 - Age crime curve and life course criminology

Friends can be dangerous, by Laurence Steinberg, New York Times
The Terrible Teens, by Elizabeth Kolbert, The New Yorker

Thursday, November 2 - Social disorganization theory / Collective efficacy

A half-century after 'Mister Rogers' debut, 5 facts about neighbors in U.S., by Leslie Davis and Kim Parker, Pew Research Center
The Other Side of "Broken Windows" by Eric Klinenberg, The New Yorker

Chapter 13 and 14

Tuesday, November 7 - Anomie theory / General strain theory

American Dream Can Lead to Crime by Rita Simon, Los Angeles Times

Thursday, November 9 – Labeling Theory

For the 78,000 people released from prisons in Texas every year, finding a job isn't easy by Arcelia Martin, Dallas Morning News
Ban the Box: Policy Snapshot by Michael Hartman, National Conference of State Legislatures

Chapter 17 and 18 in Confessions of a Dying Thief

Tuesday, November 14 – NO CLASS, ASC Conference

Thursday, November 16 – NO CLASS, ASC Conference

Tuesday, November 21 – THANKSGIVING BREAK, NO CLASS

Thursday, November 23 – THANKSGIVING BREAK, NO CLASS

Tuesday, November 28 - Reading an article

Pager, D., Bonikowski, B., & Western, B. (2009). Discrimination in a low-wage labor market: A field experiment. *American sociological review*, 74(5), 777-799.

Thursday, November 30 - Exam review

Chapter 2 and 19 in Confessions of a Dying Thief

Tuesday, December 5 - Exam 3

Thursday, December 7 - Exam review

(tentatively) Tuesday, December 12 - Final exam

The professor reserves the right to change the material on this syllabus. Students will be informed in a timely manner in class and over email about any changes made to the syllabus