

Louisiana State University
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
SOC 4461
Criminology
Three (3) Credit Hours
Fall 2018

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A Criminal Short Story

The following is a *fictional* short story meant to trigger your mind into thinking about crime:

A lot can happen in ten minutes, or not, depending on how much you are paying attention. Just today I realized there was so much crime on my block, in my city, and across the nation. I woke up at eight this morning to my mother, who just got home from prostitutin, screaming for me to get my ‘tail up outta bed’ and get her some milk for breakfast. As I walked out of my building the city streets were already jumpin. I made my way to the corner market just up the street. A newspaper flew into my hands. I glanced down at the headline which read ‘Scott Walker: Unarmed, Shot, Dead!’ I threw the paper on the ground, right at the feet of a homeless man drinkin a forty while his girlfriend began to shoot up her morning dose of heroin. In the alley I could see a teen getting jumped by two guys “Dumb gays, don’t let me see you around my block no more.” I paused just as they made me “What are you lookin at you want some too!” One of em lifted up his shirt to show a handgun. Scared, I kept walkin and made my way into the store. On the magazine and newspaper shelves was another newspaper, this time reading “FIFA Officials Busted: Racketeering, Bribery, Fraud!” I grabbed the milk and headed to the register just before a man ran in with a shotgun pointed it at the teller ‘Gimme everything you terrorist or I’ll blast you!!!!’ I ran out the back, into the alley and back onto the street before I slowed down to catch my breath. Where does all this crime come from? Why does it happen? Can it stop?

Exercise: How many examples of crime can you find? Were there any examples hate crimes? Drug crimes? Low level crimes? Organizational crimes? Etc.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

SOCL 4461 Criminology (3)

Prereq.: SOCL 2001 or equivalent. Crime, the criminal justice system and penology.

Required Materials

Lilly, Cullen, and Ball. *Criminological Theory: Context And Consequences* 4th Edition

Access to Top Hat (Laptop, or Android and iOS).

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Based on course material students should be able to:

- (1) *Define crime and theoretical perspectives explaining crime.*
- (2) *Explore the demographic and geographic trends and correlates of crime.*
- (3) *Investigate the validity of theoretical perspectives using research.*
- (4) *Investigate how crime is socially constructed.*
- (5) *Explain how various criminological research can be used to inform policy and practice.*
- (6) *Dispute if crime is necessary and explore how knowledge of crime can be applied to your own life.*

COURSE OUTCOMES

You should be able to explain the many layers at play when discussing why people commit crime. After this course, any stories you read about crime or witness crime you should play detective and discuss with yourself or others *all* the things that likely contributed to someone committing a crime. Likewise, for those seeking careers in criminal justice understanding crime and the ways we can explain crime enhances your cultural sensitivity and prevents you from using your own personal biases towards those you are to provide a service to, or in your everyday encounters. As an example, as a police officer the knowledge I received about crime, its explanations, and its construction, allowed me to recognize that going “zero-tolerance” on relatively minor offenses breeds distrust of police in low income communities and can have costly social consequences for impoverished individuals such as job loss and even loss of homes. Finally, this course should provide you with a basic understanding of the ways we can address crime beyond a law enforcement response.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

With a heavy background in sociology and criminology, I take an interdisciplinary approach to teaching criminology. Emphasis is not given to a particular epistemological standpoint, as students will be encouraged to explore the issues beyond solely traditional standpoints. Therefore, I allow for non-traditional tools such as music, movies, TV shows, and story sharing within the classroom environment. Through these outlets, students are encouraged to find ways social and criminological theories could explain crime in a global world.

EVALUATION

***Course Requirements**

Attendance 5%

Participation 5%

Short Story Pitch...10%

HW assignments 10%

Exam 1.....25%

Exam 2.....25%

Short Story Final Paper.....20%

*Tentative (see Assignment Guidelines Below and Policies)

TENTATIVE/POSSIBLE Grading Scale

Grade	Points	Performance
A	100-94	Excellent

A-	93-90	
B+	89-87	Above Average
B	86-84	
B-	83-80	
C+	79-77	Satisfactory
C	76-74	
C-	73-70	
D+	69-67	Below Average
D	66-64	
D-	63-60	
F	60-<	Failing

ATTENDANCE and PARTICIPATION

- I will be taking attendance each class. It is imperative to attend class as much as possible to get the necessary notes for the exams, so try not to miss that many days.
- *Excused* absences will not affect your attendance grade.
 - o Yes that means I will need *documentation* if you want your absence to be excused
- Participation credit will be based on completion of in class assignments and your contributions to class discussions.

POLICIES AND STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

- It is crucial that each of you check your emails daily for any course updates. Regularly checking emails should be the norm for you as students, as this will be expected of you in your future careers.
- The syllabus is tentative and may change if necessary. You will be notified in advance of any changes that may affect you.

***One letter grade will be taken off from any late assignment each day that it is late. ***

HONOR CODE

All students should be aware and become familiar with the [LSU Code of Student Conduct and Commitment to Community](#). The Code of Student conduct will be strictly enforced and I will not hesitate to report any suspect violations of the honor system. Since the majority of your assignments require the use of the textbook, lectures, or supplementary material please protect yourself by citing anything you use that is not your own work or ideas for writing assignments. The required method of citation is [APA](#).

- I will not hesitate to copy and paste your work if I feel it is literally “ctrl +v’ed”.
- That also means don’t be cute and change a couple words so it’s not verbatim when I do copy and paste it, that is still wrong.
- If you plan on going to grad school citing is a skill you *must* master.

Students who are suspected of violating the Code of Conduct will be referred to the office of Student Advocacy & Accountability. For undergraduate students, a first academic violation could result in a zero grade on the assignment or failing the class and disciplinary probation until graduation. For a second academic violation, the result could be suspension from LSU. For graduate students, suspension is the appropriate outcome for the first offense.

Final thoughts on this:

- 1) If it feels wrong then it probably is.
- 2) Treat your work like a job where employers take misconduct seriously.

AMERICAN WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

I am devoted to working with anyone in the class who comes to me stating that they have a disability.

This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request.

If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see a [staff member in Disability Services](#) so that such accommodations can be considered. Students that receive accommodation letters, please meet with me to discuss the provisions of those accommodations as soon as possible.

COURSE OUTLINE/CALENDAR

Aug 21, 23 *Defining Crime and Explaining Crime: Theoretical Foundations*

Questions to Start: What is crime? How is crime different from criminality? Where did criminology originate? How does crime influence policy? What has crime looked like in the U.S. over time?
Studying Crime: causation versus correlation, within individuals
Vs. external to individuals, the “Crime Timeline”

Aug 28, 30 *The Internal Explanations and External?: Choice, Biological, and Psychological*

Key Questions: How does our biological and psychological makeup influence our ability to commit crime?

Blended Theories: Differential Association Theory, Social Bond Theory, General Theory of Crime (self-control theory), General Strain Theory, Mertons Strain Theory, Rational Choice Theory, Routine Activities Theory

Can we learn to commit crime? Why *don't* we commit crime? Can low self-control in people be the main cause of crime? How can choice theories be considered blended?

Sep 4, 6 *External Theories: Ecological Theories, Labeling, Conflict Theory, Feminist Criminology*

How can the environments we live in explain crime? Who defines what crimes are and why is that important? What are the effects of being labeled deviant? How is the understanding of crime gendered?

Sep 11 No Class: Conference

Sep 13 Workshop

Sept 18 Short Story Draft Due

Sep 18, 20 *External Theories: Critical Race Theory, Right Realism, Left Realism*

How do political ideologies influence crime response, how does race inform our understanding of crime?

EXPLORING CRIME: WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH TELL US ABOUT THE WHO, WHERE, WHEN, AND HOW OF VARIOUS TYPES OF CRIME?

Sept 25, 27 Property Crime

Oct 2, 4 Violent Crime/Midterm Review

Oct 9 Midterm

Oct 11, 16, 18 Drug Crimes: Possession and Distribution

Oct 23, 25 Drugs: A Constructionist Perspective

Oct 30, Nov 1 Heroin Documentary

OUR MOST DANGEROUS CRIMES?

Nov 6, 8 Environmental and White Collar Crime

Nov 13, 15 No Class: Conference

Nov 20 Final Workshop

CONTROLLING CRIME POST *TERRY V. OHIO*: POLICY AND PRACTICE

Fundamental Questions: Can crime be stopped through various policing strategies? Does incarceration reduce crime? What have been the theories driving modern day attempts to reduce crime? What does the research tell us?

Nov 27, 29 Historical Context: Terry v. Ohio, The Get Tough On Crime Era and the War on Drugs
Investigating Broken Windows Policing and Community Policing

Nov 27 Final Short Stories Due

Nov 29
Dec 3

Final Exam Review
Final