

George Mason University
Department of Criminology, Law and Society
Spring 2024
CRIM-210-DL01: Criminology

Online Asynchronous

Instructor: Dr. Auzeen Shariati, email: asharia@gmu.edu
Office Hours: Online by appointment

Course Description

This course provides an overview and critical assessment of the major theories of crime causation. The various definitions of crime, methods of crime measurement, and crime patterns and trends will be explored and evaluated. The course serves as an introduction to the systematic study of crime, criminals, criminal behavior, and the criminal justice system.

Expected Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, it is expected that each student will be able to:

- Explain the history of major schools of criminology – their strengths and limitations – in explaining crime and criminal behavior
- Define and explain the basic characteristics and techniques for measuring different kinds of crime and criminal victimization in the United States
- Critique and explain the main controversies surrounding the major criminological theories of criminality and crime
- Identify and explain the main challenges related to crime control and prevention policies emanating from these theories

Class Format

This is an **asynchronous (fully online) course** using Black board as the learning management system. This means that course materials will be made available online. You can find your syllabus and class assignments on BB as well. Your grades will also be posted on BB.

Required Textbook

Schram, Pamela J. & Tibbetts, Stephen G. Introduction to Criminology. Third Edition. Sage Publications. ISBN: 9781544375731

Course Requirements and Evaluations:

I. Participation Quizzes:

10%

There will be **14 Participation Quizzes** given every week throughout the semester except two weeks; Thanksgiving week and Final Exam week. These quizzes assume knowledge of all concepts discussed up to that point in the semester (though each will focus on knowledge covered in the most recent chapters). Each quiz will likely consist of 10-20 multiple choice questions, but may also include true/false, short answer, or fill in the blank questions.

II. Whole-Class Discussions:

20%

There will be **7 Whole-Class Discussions** throughout the semester. Per the schedule below, I will lecture on each of the chapters in the textbook and make the pre-recorded lectures available within the weekly lessons on Blackboard. During these lectures, I will explain the Whole-Class Discussion assigned for the week. The purpose of these discussions is to connect what you learned in each lecture to a case or scenario and allow you to engage in an interactive discussion with your peers. Additional instructions for each discussion and a grading rubric will be available on Blackboard.

III. Small Group Discussions:

30%

There will be **Five Small Group Discussions** throughout the semester. The purpose of these discussions is to give you an opportunity to practice working through various case study scenarios that will be similar to your Midterm and Final Exam. Unlike your Midterm and Final Exam, which you will submit to me directly for feedback, with the Small Group Discussions, your peers will be providing feedback. It is your responsibility to challenge each other and use this communicative space as a place to ask questions and take risks since this is a much lower stakes assignment than the Midterm and the Final.

IV. Midterm and Final Exams:

40%

There will be a **Midterm Exam** given in Week 8 and a **Final Exam** given during the Final Exams Week. Midterm and Final Exam assume your knowledge of all concepts and theories discussed up to that point in the semester. Your responses to Midterm/Final Exam questions should incorporate the course learning materials and any additional outside material necessary to answer the questions.

Grading Scale

A	93.0 - 100	C	73.0 - 76.9
A-	90.0 - 92.9	C-	70.0 - 72.9
B+	87.0 - 89.9	D	60.0 - 69.9
B	83.0 - 86.9	F	Below 60.0
B-	80.0 - 82.9		
C+	77.0 - 79.9		

Applicable Grading Rubrics

Online Discussion Rubric (Whole Class – 30 points total)

	Exceeds standards	Meets standards	Does not meet standards	Grade
	7/7	6/7	2/7	
Relevance of Post to Prompt	Posting answers all components of the prompt and demonstrates understanding of material with well-developed ideas. Posting integrates assigned content and makes strong connections to practice.	Posting addresses most of the prompt(s) and demonstrates mild understanding of material with well-developed ideas. Posting references assigned content and may not make connections to practice.	Posting fails to address all components of the prompt. Makes short or irrelevant remarks. Posting lacks connection to practice	7 points
	8/8	7/8	2/8	
Academic Applicability (Source Materials)	Posting includes academic sources all of which are current, relevant, recognized, accurate, and purposeful (see CRAAP test)	Posting includes academic sources which are to some extent current, relevant, recognized, accurate, and purposeful (to some extent means three of five of these indicators are met).	Posting includes academic sources which are questionably current, relevant, recognized, accurate, and purposeful (two out of five of these indicators are met).	8 points
	5/5	4/5	1/5	
Contribution to the Learning Community (Critical thinking)	Post meaningful questions to the community; attempts to motivate the group discussion; presents creative approaches to topic.	Attempts to direct the discussion and to present relevant viewpoints for consideration by group; interacts freely.	Minimum effort is made to participate in learning community as it develops.	5 points
	10/10	8/10	3/10	
Peer Contributions	Relevant comments that elevate the conversation and generate new ideas: thoughtful, reflective, and respectful of other's postings, responds to at least two peers	Relevant but standard comments and responds respectfully to other's postings, responds to one peer or responses are superficial.	Responds, but with minimum effort to peers. (e.g., "I agree with X")	10 points

Online Discussion Rubric (Small Group – 50 points total)

	Exceeds standards	Meets standards	Does not meet standards	Grade
	10/10	8/10	3/10	
Relevance of Research	Posting fully identifies the policies that were informed by the theoretical framework addressed in the case study and connects theory to the policy objectives, assesses the effectiveness of the policy in detail.	Posting partially identifies the policies that were informed by the theoretical framework addressed in the case study and somewhat connects theory to the policy objectives, assesses the effectiveness of the policy to some degree.	Posting fails to identify the policies in the case study or confuses the objectives of the policy or its applicability.	10 points
	10/10	8/10	3/10	
Academic Applicability (Source Materials)	Posting includes academic sources all of which are current, relevant, recognized, accurate, and purposeful (see CRAAP test)	Posting includes academic sources which are to some extent current, relevant, recognized, accurate, and purposeful (to some extent means three of five of these indicators are met).	Posting includes academic sources which are questionably current, relevant, recognized, accurate, and purposeful (two out of five of these indicators are met).	10 points
	10/10	8/10	3/10	
Contribution to the Learning Community (Critical thinking)	Post meaningful questions to the community; attempts to motivate the group discussion; presents creative approaches to topic.	Attempts to direct the discussion and to present relevant viewpoints for consideration by group; interacts freely.	Minimum effort is made to participate in learning community as it develops.	10 points
	20/20	17/20	7/20	
Peer Contributions	Thoughtful, relevant comments that challenge peers and generate new ideas, to include making suggestions and providing critical feedback: respectful of other's postings, responds to at least two peers	Relevant but standard comments and responds respectfully to other's postings, responds to one peer or responses are superficial and without depth.	Responds, but with minimum effort to peers. (e.g., "I agree with X")	20 points

Instructor Policies

Blackboard

As this course is delivered entirely online, please make sure you visit our class Blackboard shell (including the course syllabus, course calendar, weekly lessons), and check your email frequently to see announcements and grades, among other important information.

Internet Access

Please note that lack of internet connection or problems with services are not acceptable excuses for not completing quizzes and/or turning-in online assignments. If you have any internet issues or computer-related problems, please contact the IT help desk for assistance.

Late Work

Papers and assignments are to be turned in on Blackboard by midnight on the day they are due. If you have problems submitting your assignment, please contact the IT help desk for assistance. Assignments submitted late will not be accepted except in the case of documented illness or emergency.

Online Classroom Behavior

It is expected that everyone treats one another respectfully at all times. Respectful behavior includes being prepared for class, listening attentively (and with an open mind toward different viewpoints), and addressing each other respectfully in online discussions.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

George Mason University has an Honor Code, which requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing are all prohibited. All work will be scanned for plagiarism. Any AI-generated material and any reasonable perception of violation of the Honor Code will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity (oai.gmu.edu). See oai.gmu.edu for more detailed information.

Accessibility Resources

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Resources at osd@gmu.edu or call 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Tentative Course Schedule

The schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. You will be advised in class and via Canvas, and it is your responsibility to comply with these requirements.

Week	Lesson	Content	Assignment Due Dates
Week 1: Jan 16 – Jan 21	Introduction to Course/What is Criminology?	Ch 1, Prezi 1, Recorded Lecture	Participation Quiz 1 (Due Jan 20) Whole-Class Discussion 1 (Due Jan 21)
Week 2: Jan 22 – Jan 28	Defining & Measuring Crime	Ch 2, Prezi 2, Recorded Lecture	Participation Quiz 2 (Due Jan 27) Whole-Class Discussion 2 (Due Jan 28)
Week 3: Jan 29 – Feb 4	Classical School of Criminology	Ch 3, Prezi 3, Recorded Lecture	Participation Quiz 3 (Due Feb 3) Small Group Discussion 1 (Due Feb 4)
Week 4: Feb 5 – Feb 11	Contemporary Classical Theory	Ch 4, Prezi 4, Recorded Lecture	Participation Quiz 4 (Due Feb 10) Whole-Class Discussion 3 (Due Feb 11)
Week 5: Feb 12 – Feb 18	Early Positivism/Biological Theories	Ch 5, Prezi 5, Recorded Lecture	Participation Quiz 5 (Due Feb 17) Small Group Discussion 2 (Due Feb 18)
Week 6: Feb 19 – Feb 25	Modern Biosocial Perspective	Ch 6, Prezi 6, Recorded Lecture	Participation Quiz 6 (Due Feb 24) Whole-Class Discussion 4 (Due Feb 25)
Week 7: Feb 26 – Mar 3	Psychological/Trait Theories	Ch 7, Prezi 7, Recorded Lecture	Participation Quiz 7 (Due Mar 2) MIDTERM EXAM (Due Mar 3)
Week 8: Mar 4 – Mar 10	Spring Recess (Enjoy your break!)		

Week 9: Mar 11 – Mar 17	Social Structure Theories I	Ch 8, Prezi 8, Recorded Lecture	Participation Quiz 8 (Due Mar 16) Small Group Discussion 3 (Due Mar 17)
Week 10: Mar 18 – Mar 24	Social Structure Theories II	Ch 9, Prezi 9, Recorded Lecture	Participation Quiz 9 (Due Mar 23) Whole-Class Discussion 5 (Due Mar 24)
Week 11: Mar 25 – Mar 31	Social Process and Control Theories	Ch 10, Prezi 10, Recorded Lecture	Participation Quiz 10 (Due Mar 30) Whole-Class Discussion 6 (Due Mar 31)
Week 12: Apr 1 – Apr 7	Labeling, Conflict Marxist & Radical Theories	Ch 11, Prezi 11, Recorded Lecture	Participation Quiz 11 (Due Apr 6) Small Group Discussion 4 (Due Apr 7)
Week 13: Apr 8 – Apr 14	Feminist Theories of Criminology	Ch 12, Prezi 12, Recorded Lecture	Participation Quiz 12 (Due Apr 13) Whole-Class Discussion 7 (Due Apr 14)
Week 14: Apr 15 – Apr 21	Developmental Theories/ Life Course Theories	Ch 13, Prezi 13, Recorded Lecture	Participation Quiz 13 (Due Apr 20) Small Group Discussion 5 (Due Apr 21)
Week 15: Apr 22 – Apr 28	Review	Review Study Guide Prepare an individual study plan for your Final Exam	Participation Quiz 14 (Due Apr 27) Study plan (Due Apr 28)
Final Week: May 1 – May 8	FINAL EXAM Due May 6		