

## **SOCIOLOGY 410: CRIME THROUGH FILM AND THE MEDIA (4 Credits)**

Fully Online

Winter Quarter 2020

**Professor: Dr. M. Thompson, Ph.D.**

217N Cramer Hall: 503-725-3614

Office Hours: 11-1 Wednesdays, or by appt.

mthomp@pdx.edu

**TA: Mrs. R. Petean, M.S.**

217C Cramer Hall: 503-725-9690

Office Hours: 12-2 Thursdays

rpetean@pdx.edu

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course analyzes images of crime and the criminal justice system that are presented through the major mass media within the United States. Crime-themed movies, TV, news, newspaper, and social media coverage will be the major sources of data for uncovering how the media portray society's struggle with crime and what the media can add to our understanding of crime and criminal justice. Case studies and fictional realities in the form of media/films/TV shows will operate: (1) to make abstract concepts more "real," and (2) as an empirical referent to be explored through application of criminological concepts. Films, TV, and the media, in other words, operate as a means or vehicle to allow us to explore criminological themes, issues, and the role of analytic concepts in social analysis.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand media framing and popular representations of crime and the criminal justice system.
- Understand news media portrayals and how they contrast with popular culture representations of crime and the criminal justice system.
- Identify and describe the social construction of crime, criminal offenders, crime victims, and various actors in the criminal justice system.
- Identify, describe, and analyze race, gender, and age as nodes of inequality in media/film representations.
- Identify the consequences of the social construction of crime on individuals and communities.
- Conduct social research on a media or popular culture example to analyze how accurately they socially construct crime and the criminal justice system.

### **COURSE WEBSITE**

**THIS IS A COMPLETELY ON-LINE COURSE.** In order to succeed, you must have reliable internet access that will allow you to navigate/search the web, use email, attach and upload documents, and download and save files.

- All course materials and grades will be available on D2L (<https://d2l.pdx.edu>). I will also use D2L to communicate with the class.

- If you are having trouble accessing your D2L account or do not have an ODIN account please contact the Helpdesk (FMH 724 Harrison) at 503-725-HELP (4357) or [help@pdx.edu](mailto:help@pdx.edu).
- It is your responsibility to check D2L and your email regularly for important announcements and any changes to course requirements.

### **COURSE STRUCTURE**

Each week throughout the quarter, I will post weekly modules on Monday, which will include the following:

- **Weekly Instructions:** A brief statement of the week's theme(s); reading outline and questions to guide your reading; reminders about upcoming due dates and course requirements.
- **Weekly Quiz:** The quizzes require that you've completed the required readings for the week. The quizzes are based solely on the week's readings (not on PowerPoint slides or other material). The quizzes are open book/open notes, but you may not consult with your classmates or anyone else while taking the quiz. Once you start your quiz, you will be limited in the amount of time you have to complete it, so even though it is open book/open note, you should complete the week's readings *before* starting the quiz. Your lowest quiz grade for the term will be dropped.
- **Weekly PowerPoints:** Lectures in the form of voiced-over PowerPoint slides. These summarize some of the key information from your readings, but also provide additional information that is important for you to know as you prepare to discuss the week's readings and other material in a discussion with your classmates.
- **Weekly discussion question(s):** Discussions with your classmates. You will be expected to answer questions I pose. Answering these questions will require you to understand, and be able to apply, information from readings and PowerPoint slides to specific examples from the media and/or films. For most weeks, to be able to answer these discussion questions, students will first need to view an assigned film/TV show.

### **TIME MANAGEMENT AND COURSE ORGANIZATION**

- Because this is an online course, the onus will be on you to stay on top of course material, and to find enough time to complete course requirements. You should be aware that because we do not have a scheduled "face-to-face" meeting, you will instead need to do an equivalent amount of work on your own time. If this were a class with regular face-to-face meetings, you would be expected to spend **approximately 3-4 hours** in a traditional classroom; these 3-4 hours are **in addition** to the time spent on required readings and out-of-class assignments such as paper writing. Thus, rather than those 3-4 hours in lecture, you will instead be expected to spend an equivalent amount of time reviewing PowerPoint slides that will be posted weekly, viewing/reading films/media stories, and participating in discussions on D2L about these readings and media/film examples. In addition, like any class, you are also expected to complete required readings. Therefore, you do need to plan to find time each week to complete all course requirements.
- To help you establish a weekly routine for this course, I have set up the course so that you will have deadlines the same day/same time each week:
  - **FRIDAYS AT 11pm:** deadline for quizzes, based on required readings.

- **SUNDAYS AT 11pm:** deadline for discussion questions, plus other course requirements such as the paper assignment and exams.
- Of course, you can do the work whenever it works best in your schedule for the week, but these days/times are the *latest* you can submit your work to receive credit each week.
- The course is not designed for “working at your own pace,” so working ahead on quizzes/discussions will not be allowed (i.e., I won’t activate quizzes and discussions early). This course is intentionally designed so that all students are at more or less the same place in the course at the same time. If you do need to “work ahead” due to an upcoming time conflict, you should “work ahead” on required readings and the paper assignment.

### **ONLINE DISCUSSIONS**

Weekly online discussions will be used to apply readings and core concepts to films and other media representations. The purpose of these discussions is to learn how the film/media example can be represented and understood by applying other class material. Key terms and concepts will be identified via quizzes and on PowerPoint slides, and you should think about how these might be used by you to offer an interpretation of the “social reality” depicted in the film &/or the media. Together with your classmates via D2L discussions, you will work toward a shared understanding of these key concepts and how they apply to the examples in the course.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

1. Surette, Ray. 2015. *Media, Crime, and Criminal Justice*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition. Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning. (Also available on reserve at Millar Library.)
2. PDFs of other required readings will be available on D2L.
3. Films: As part of the class, you are required to watch several films. These films, and various ways of accessing the films, are available in a document on D2L titled “Film Access”. The films are required viewing; weekly discussions and exams will assume that each assigned film has been watched. In general, the purpose of watching the films is (a) to apply concepts from readings/PowerPoints slides to these examples, and (b) to provide a frame of reference for discussions regarding the apparent “accuracy” of crime/criminal justice representations in film and the media. Students are expected to be aware of film viewing requirements for each week, and to be prepared to track down the relevant film with sufficient time to allow for viewing the film prior to corresponding discussion deadline.

### **COURSE POLICIES**

- Late Assignments. Assignments should be completed by the due date/time. Late assignments *may* be accepted with a legitimate excuse but will be penalized 10% per day late. Please document any family or medical emergency and notify the professor as soon as possible (email preferred).
- Course Announcements. Please check D2L frequently (a minimum of 2 times per week) for any announcements related to the course.
- Contact for Technical Support: Helpdesk. Computing and D2L questions should be directed to the Helpdesk ([www.pdx.edu/oit/contact](http://www.pdx.edu/oit/contact)). They may be contacted in the following ways.

- Phone: 725-4357 (5-HELP)
- Online through the Help Center:  
<https://portlandstate.atlassian.net/servicedesk/customer/portals>
- Visit the Helpdesk in the lobby of FMH 724 Harrison (formerly Neuberger Hall). Users experiencing wireless connectivity issues are especially encouraged to visit in person for hands-on troubleshooting.
- Class Questions and Contacting the Professor. The best way to contact your TA or professor is via email. Please allow approximately 24 hours for a response during the week and up to 48 hours over the weekend. If you have a question about the class or the syllabus, you can post your question on D2L in the discussion titled “Class questions” (in the “Course Material” folder). If you see a question posted in “Class questions” and you know the answer, you are encouraged to answer the question yourself.
- Offensive Material. You will likely find some of the depictions and language presented in this class to be shocking, disgusting, or offensive. The subject matter of this course includes things that many people find objectionable on moral or other grounds. This course will require you to have a certain amount of tolerance for offensive language, actions, descriptions, and images. This does not mean that you must approve of them, but you will have to keep your personal feelings in check in order to study these topics. Professor Thompson is available to discuss any concerns you have with course materials.
- Access and Inclusion for Students with Disabilities. PSU values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to fostering mutual respect and full participation for all students. My goal is to create a learning environment that is equitable, useable, inclusive, and welcoming. If any aspects of instruction or course design result in barriers to your inclusion or learning, please notify me. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides reasonable accommodations for students who encounter barriers in the learning environment.

If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations. The DRC is located in 116 Smith Memorial Student Union, 503-725-4150, [drc@pdx.edu](mailto:drc@pdx.edu), <https://www.pdx.edu/drc>.

- If you already have accommodations, please contact me to make sure that I have received a faculty notification letter and discuss your accommodations.
- For information about emergency preparedness, please go to the [Fire and Life Safety webpage](https://www.pdx.edu/environmental-health-safety/fire-and-life-safety) (<https://www.pdx.edu/environmental-health-safety/fire-and-life-safety>) for information.
- Net Etiquette. In all course communications, whether formal or informal, you are required to observe the rules of netiquette. These include the following net etiquette rules:

- Avoid using all CAPS as it can give the impression that you are shouting. If you want to emphasize a point, use \*asterisks\* around a word.
  - Avoid personal attacks. If you read a message that you suspect might be a personal attack, resist the temptation to fire off a response. Instead, let your response sit before sending or request that your instructor resolve the situation.
  - If you disagree with a fellow student, describe your perspective clearly and politely rather than primarily criticizing her/his comments. Avoid any personal criticism or potentially offensive language.
  - Be respectful when making a comment or responding to others' comments. This rule is the same as for face-to-face classroom behavior. However, as we are not going to have body language and tone of voice in our online communications, please use formal English appropriately.
  - Be extra polite, careful, and kind about how you express yourself while posting to a discussion board or emailing the instructor.
  - Avoid that thousand-word lengthy post and avoid posting dozens of messages a week. In the interest of time only, which I know none of you have enough of, please work on being succinct.
  - Avoid text message abbreviations. Not everyone knows them.
  - Finally, if you run into any net etiquette-related problems, please e-mail the instructor directly. I would like to be aware of any concerns.
- Academic Misconduct. According to the PSU Student Code of Conduct, a student is subject to disciplinary action for academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is the act of knowingly or intentionally seeking to claim credit for the work or effort of another person or participation in such acts. This includes, but is not limited to: (a) cheating, (b) fraud, (c) plagiarism, such as word for word copying, using borrowed words or phrases from original text into new patterns without attribution, or paraphrasing another writer's ideas; (d) The buying or selling of all or any portion of course assignments and research papers; (e) Performing academic assignments (including tests and examinations) for other persons; (f) Unauthorized disclosure or receipt of academic information. Students engaging in academic misconduct will receive a failing grade on that assignment.
  - Title IX Reporting Obligations. Portland State is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and sexual harassment (sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and gender or sex-based harassment and stalking). If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or sexual harassment, know that help and support are available.

Information about PSU's support services on campus, including confidential services and reporting options, can be found on PSU's Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response website at: [www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault/get-help](http://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault/get-help) or you may call a confidential interpersonal violence advocate at 503-725-5672 or schedule online at <https://psuwrc.youcanbook.me>.

You may report any incident of discrimination or discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment, to:

- PSU’s Title IX Coordinator: Julie Caron by calling 503-725-4410, via email at [titleixcoordinator@pdx.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@pdx.edu) or in person at Richard and Maureen Neuberger Center (RMNC), 1600 SW 4th Ave, Suite 830
- Deputy Title IX Coordinator: Yesenia Gutierrez by calling 503-725-4413, via email at [yesenia.gutierrez.gdi@pdx.edu](mailto:yesenia.gutierrez.gdi@pdx.edu) or in person at RMNC, 1600 SW 4th Ave, Suite 830
- Deputy Title IX Coordinator: Dana Walton-Macaulay by calling 503-725-5651, via email at [dana26@pdx.edu](mailto:dana26@pdx.edu) or in person at Smith Memorial Union, Suite, 1825 SW Broadway, Suite 433.

Please be aware that all PSU faculty members and instructors **are required to report** information of an incident that may constitute prohibited discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence. This means that if you tell me about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence that may have violated university policy or student code of conduct, I have to share the information with my supervisor, the University’s Title IX Coordinator or the Office of the Dean of Student Life. However, the Title IX Coordinators will keep the information confidential and refer you to a confidential advocate.

For more information about Title IX please complete the required student module Creating a Safe Campus in your D2L.

- Resources to Help You Succeed at PSU.
  - Writing Center (<https://www.pdx.edu/writing-center/>)
    - One-on-one help with writing, on a walk-in or appointment basis
    - 188 Cramer Hall, 503-725-3570
  - Center for Student Health and Counseling (SHAC) (<http://www.pdx.edu/shac/>)
    - Mental health, physical health, dental, and testing services. 1880 SW 6<sup>th</sup> Ave., 503-725-2800
  - Online grammar and writing resource:
    - The OWL at Purdue University [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue\\_owl.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html)

<b>COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADES:</b>	<b>Associated Points</b>
1. <b>Weekly Discussion Participation:</b> There will be ten online discussions (one per week), each worth up to 10 points. Everyone is expected to review the posted materials <i>and</i> participate in the discussions; participation includes reading classmates’ posts and responding to them. More instructions about discussions will be provided in the weekly instructions. Review the grading rubric to see how grades for these discussions will be assigned.	100
2. <b>Quizzes:</b> There will be eight quizzes throughout the term that you will complete via D2L. Quizzes will be based on the required readings for that week. Each quiz will be worth 10 points. You will be able to drop your lowest quiz score (I will only count the 7 highest of the	70

8 scores). You will have 30 minutes to complete each quiz once you begin. You will have an available window of 5 days to complete the quizzes (Monday through Friday).

3.	<b>Midterm exam:</b> An open-book/open-note midterm exam, which includes material from readings, PowerPoint slides, films, and discussions. This multiple choice, short answer, and essay exam will not be timed. You will be able to work on it throughout the week, but it will need to be submitted by the submission deadline. The midterm exam will cover material from week 1 through week 5.	50
4.	<b>Paper assignment:</b> An analysis on a topic of your choice regarding the media/films and crime. Wherever possible, the paper must draw on/tie to class material, especially PowerPoint material and the required readings.	80
5.	<b>Final exam:</b> An open-book/open-note final exam, which includes material from readings, PowerPoint slides, films, and discussions. This multiple choice, short answer, and essay exam will not be timed. You will be able to work on it throughout the week, but it will need to be submitted by the submission deadline. The final exam will be comprehensive: it will cover material from week 1 through week 10.	75
<b>TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS</b>		<b>375</b>

<b>Grading Scale</b>	<b>Letter Grade</b>	<b>Point Ranges for Associated Grade</b>
92% and above	A	345-375
90-91%	A-	338-344
88-89%	B+	330-337
82-87%	B	308-329
80-81%	B-	300-307
78-79%	C+	293-299
72-77%	C	270-292
70-71%	C-	263-269
60-69%	D	225-262
Below 60%	F	224 and under

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Course schedule subject to change with reasonable notice

Date	Topic	Required Readings	Requirements & Deadlines
<i>Week 1</i> <b>January 6-12</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Course Introduction</li> <li>The Mediated World of Crime and Justice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surette, chapter 1 (Pp. 1-29)</li> <li>Renauer, B. 2011. "Do Oregonians Know About the Crime Drop?" CJPRI. (Pp. 1-4).</li> <li>The crime report: "Crime and Justice: Does the Press Get it Right?" (Pp. 1-8).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Quiz #1 Opens 1/6; Closes 1/10 at 11pm</b></p> <p><b>Discussion #1 Opens 1/6; Closes 1/12 at 11pm</b></p>
<i>Week 2</i> <b>January 13-19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social construction of reality</li> <li>Drugs and crime</li> </ul> <p><u>FILM</u>: "American Drug War"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surette, chapter 2 (Pp. 30-56)</li> <li>Dixon and Linz. 2000. "Overrepresentation and underrepresentation of African Americans and Latinos as lawbreakers on TV news." (Pp. 131-154).</li> <li>Reinarman. 1994. "The Social Construction of Drug Scares." (Pp. 155-165).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Quiz #2 Opens 1/13; Closes 1/17 at 11pm</b></p> <p><b>Discussion #2 Opens 1/13; Closes 1/19 at 11pm</b></p>
<i>Week 3</i> <b>January 20-26</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Media &amp; theories of crime</li> <li>Race, gender, and media construction of "typical criminals" and "typical victims"</li> </ul> <p><u>FILM</u>: "13th"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surette, chapter 3 (Pp. 57-73)</li> <li>Slakoff, Danielle. 2019. "The representation of women and girls of color in United States crime news." (p. 1-13).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Quiz #3 Opens 1/20; Closes 1/24 at 11pm</b></p> <p><b>Discussion #3 Opens 1/20; Closes 1/26 at 11pm</b></p>
<i>Week 4</i> <b>January 27-February 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gangs, violence and crime</li> <li>Criminogenic media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surette, chapter 4 (Pp. 74-99)</li> <li>Esbensen &amp; Tusinski. 2006. "Youth gangs in the print media." (Pp. 21-38).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Quiz #4 Opens 1/27; Closes 1/31 at 11pm</b></p> <p><b>Discussion #4 Opens 1/26; Closes 2/2 at 11pm</b></p>
<i>Week 5</i> <b>February 3-9</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Media &amp; crime control: anticrime ads &amp; surveillance</li> </ul> <p><u>FILM</u>: "Reefer Madness"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surette, chapter 8 (Pp. 177-202)</li> </ul>	<p><b>(No week 5 quiz; material covered on midterm exam instead)</b></p> <p><b>Discussion #5 Opens 2/3; Closes 2/9 at 11pm</b></p> <p><b>Midterm exam available 2/3; Due 2/9 at 11pm</b></p>
<i>Week 6</i> <b>February 10-16</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth, media, and moral panics</li> </ul> <p><u>FILM</u>: "Bowling for Columbine"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welch et al. 2002. "Moral Panic over Youth Violence." (Pp. 3-30).</li> <li>Robbers, M. 2005. "The Media and Public Perceptions of Criminal Justice Policy Issues." (Pp. 77-95).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Quiz #6 Opens 2/10; Closes 2/14 at 11pm</b></p> <p><b>Discussion #6 Opens 2/10; Closes 2/16 at 11pm</b></p>
<i>Week 7</i> <b>February 17-23</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender and Crime</li> <li>New Media, Crime, and Justice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surette, chapter 10 (Pp. 225-246).</li> <li>Chesney-Lind &amp; Eliason. 2006. "From invisible to incorrigible: The demonization of marginalized women and girls." (Pp. 29-47).</li> </ul>	<p>Quiz #7 Opens 2/17; Closes 2/21 at 11pm</p> <p>Discussion #7 Opens 2/17; Closes 2/23 at 11pm</p>



Date	Topic	Required Readings	Requirements & Deadlines
<i>Week 8</i> <b>February</b> <b>24-March 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regulation and Social Control: Police &amp; Courts</li> </ul> <p><u>FILMS</u>: "Law &amp; Disorder" <i>or</i> "Making a Murderer" (Season 1, Ep. 1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surette, chapter 5 (Pp. 100-122).</li> <li>Donovan, Kathleen and Charles Klahm. 2015. "The Role of Entertainment Media in Perceptions of Police Use of Force." (Pp. 1261-1281).</li> <li>Surette, chapter 6 (Pp. 123-152).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Quiz #8 Opens 2/24;</b> <b>Closes 2/28 at 11pm</b></p> <p><b>Discussion #8 Opens 2/24;</b> <b>Closes 3/1 at 11pm</b></p>
<i>Week 9</i> <b>March 2-8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regulation and Social Control: Corrections</li> </ul> <p><u>FILMS</u>: "Prison State" <i>or</i> "Orange Is the New Black" (Season 1, Ep. 1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surette, chapter 7 (Pp. 153-176).</li> <li>Schwan, Anne. 2016. "Postfeminism meets the women in prison genre: Privilege and spectatorship in <i>Orange is the New Black</i>." (Pp. 473-490).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Quiz #9 Opens 3/2;</b> <b>Closes 3/6 at 11pm</b></p> <p><b>Discussion #9 Opens 3/2;</b> <b>Closes 3/8 at 11pm</b></p> <p><b>Film/media analysis papers due 3/8 at 11pm</b></p>
<i>Week 10</i> <b>March 9-15</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mental Illness, Crime, and Criminal Justice Policy</li> </ul> <p><u>FILM</u>: "Taxi Driver"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surette, chapter 9 (Pp. 203-224).</li> <li>Angermeyer and Schulze. 2001. "Reinforcing Stereotypes." (Pp. 469-486).</li> <li>Surette, chapter 11 (Pp. 247-267)</li> </ul>	<p><b>(No week 10 quiz; material covered on final exam instead)</b></p> <p><b>Discussion #10 Opens 3/9;</b> <b>Closes 3/15 at 11pm</b></p>
<i>Finals</i> <i>Week</i> <b>March 16-22</b>			<p><b>Final exam available 3/9;</b> <b>Due 3/20 at 11pm</b></p>