SOC 518/618 Criminology

Class information: 2:00 – 4:50, Monday, Cramer Hall 265

Professor: Dr. Aaron Roussell, 217Q Cramer Hall, roussell@pdx.edu

Office hours: By appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This class will examine the development of criminological theory from its earliest precursors to as close to the present as we can manage in a single quarter. It will also attempt to connect criminological thought to a larger body of socio-legal, sociological, and critical theory. We’ll explore and critique, among others, the Classical School, the Big Three (strain/anomie, control, and social learning), early Marxist criminology, neoliberal approaches, anti-colonial and anti-racist approaches, and theories focusing on the societal reaction to crime. The choice of readings is aimed at grounding the student in the foundational strengths of criminology as well as exploring its weaknesses and more contemporary directions of the field. Our approach will be both critical and historical in examining the implications of these theoretical perspectives for collective social action, public policy, the legal system, and for the social and political contexts in which they emerged.

Students who complete this course will emerge with a theoretically nuanced understanding of the broad approaches brought to bear on crime research and theorizing. Students should be able to critically analyze contemporary ideas about crime and the law and discuss the attendant assumptions, explanations, and silences of each. Moreover, students should be able to apply these forward to assess policies and practices of legal and social control.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Recommended Texts:
Cullen, Francis T., Robert Agnew, & Pamela Wilcox. (2013). Criminological theory, past to present: Essential readings (5th ed.) New York: Oxford University Press. (Formerly this course’s textbook.)

Otherwise, readings will be provided electronically.

REQUIREMENTS:
Barring emergency circumstances, both attendance and informed/thoughtful participation are required at each seminar period. READING IS ESSENTIAL TO PASSING THIS COURSE. This means each student will be expected to have read all assignments at each meeting of the seminar and be prepared to speak thoughtfully about them. Students will volunteer to present for ~10 minutes and guide discussion in class on individual readings at several points in the semester (exact number depends on course enrollment). Students not presenting will be required to come with and subsequently submit 2-3 informed comments and/or questions regarding the
week’s reading specifically and/or its relationship to the course’s readings generally. Evaluation of the participation component will be based on clarity, depth of understanding and engagement, and integration with other readings and sections of the course.

A 12-15 page term paper will be due at the conclusion of the course. The topic must be approved by me by (preferably before) week 8. This paper is to be neither a recitation/reproduction of a set of readings nor a lit review of the same/related material. Rather, the student must evaluate a body (or bodies) of theory with respect to its strengths, contradictions, relationship with other theories, and/or generative and explanatory power. This is not an empirical paper, but rather an evaluation and analysis of ideas in heavy dialogue with history, context, and contemporary and historical power relations and violences. Please feel free to be creative in the arguments posed and expand outside of class readings (see list of addendum topics below or choose your own!) but make sure to connect the themes of the paper to our larger course concepts. Papers are strongly encouraged to be relevant with respect to the student’s other academic work.

Missing more than 1 seminar will result in an automatic reduction of the student’s grade. Please come see me if this is relevant to you.

I encourage active and enthusiastic class participation, but students MUST remain respectful of diverse viewpoints when engaging in classroom discussion. Critical analysis and reflection on the readings is required, but rants and conversational trolling will not be tolerated, particularly those of a racist, sexist, homophobic, or transphobic nature. Please present comments in a manner respectful of other students and me.

READ CRITICALLY AND REPARATIVELY: When reading articles and books, particularly those where the information, methodology, standpoint, or epistemology is unfamiliar, pay attention to exactly those things with which you are unfamiliar, uncomfortable, or unclear. Assess the argument’s structure and assumptions, as well as the foundations upon which it is built and the author’s (and the field’s) position of power in society. The work is more than just a text—it is a repository of earlier influences, life experiences, and contextual understandings and agendas. This does not necessarily mean automatically looking to poke holes in the argument—sometimes this means reading empathetically or sympathetically to grasp the text in all its complexity.

As a note, sometimes students taking this class do not have a particular grounding in more general sociological theory. Some of the recommended readings are grounding texts in the disciplinary perspective and I have indicated these with an asterisk.

Academic Honesty: Academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) plagiarism and cheating. It is inappropriate and unacceptable behavior and will not be tolerated. For more information, please discuss with me or consult the Standards for Student Conduct WAC 504-26-010 (3). See below sites for more details.

http://conduct.wsu.edu/
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/1/
www.wsulibs.wsu.edu/plagiarism/main.html

Disability Accommodations: If you feel you may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, contact me privately and/or visit or call the Access Center (Washington Building 217; 509-335-3417). For more information, contact a Disability Specialist: Pullman or WSU Online: 509-335-3417, http://drc.wsu.edu/, Access.Center@wsu.edu

READINGS AND SCHEDULE:
If I make changes to this schedule, I will notify you in class and/or by email:

Week 1: Precursors, Origins, and Classical Criminological Theory
Beccaria, Cesare. (1775). An essay on crimes and punishments. (Excerpt.)
Bentham, Jeremy. (1764). An introduction to the principles of morals and legislation. (Excerpt.)
Beirne, Piers. (2005). Free will and determinism? Reading Beccaria’s Of Crimes and Punishment (1764) as a text of enlightenment, pp. 3-17 in Henry & Lanier.
Lombroso, Cesare. (1867). The criminal man. (Excerpt.)

Recommended:

Week 2: Control Theories

Recommended:

Week 3: Functionalism, Anomie(s), and Strain
Merton, Robert K. (1938). Social structure and anomie. (Excerpt.)
-On the sociology of deviance, pp. 3-29
-Stabilities and instabilities in Puritan crime rates, pp. 163-181
-Puritanism and deviancy, pp. 185-205

Recommended:

Week 4: Social Learning and Subcultural Theories
  -Introduction, pp. 1-21
  -Underlying assumptions of basic models of delinquency theories, pp. 22-50.

Week 5: Theories of Societal Reaction
Lemert, Edwin. (1951). Primary and secondary deviance. (Excerpt.)
  -The labeling hype: Coming of age in the era of mass incarceration, pp. 43-73
  -Introduction, pp. xv-xxii
  -The criminal process and adjudicative ideal, pp. 278-297

  Recommended:

Week 6: The Marxian Tradition
  -Introduction: Criminal justice through the looking glass, or winning by losing, pp. 1-8.

  Recommended:

Week 7: Social Disorganization Theory
Shaw, Clifford R., & Henry D. McKay. (1942). Juvenile delinquency and urban areas. (Excerpt.)


**Recommended:**


- Race: The epistemology of ignorance, pp. 41-110.

**Week 8: Code of the Street**


- Chapter 1: Decent and street families
- Chapter 2: Campaigning for respect


- The riddle of the zoot: Malcolm Little and Black cultural politics during World War II, pp. 161-182


- Introduction: Managed violence
- Chapter 4: Faith is the opposite of fear

**Recommended:**


- Kickin’ reality, kickin’ ballistics: “Gangsta rap” and postindustrial Los Angeles, pp. 183-228


**Week 9: Race, Crime, and Colonialism**


- From determinism to meaning: The emergence of the labelling perspective, pp. 40-49
- From societal reaction to questions of power: From labelling to radical criminology, pp. 50-62


**Recommended:**


- Of fish and water: Perspectives on racism and privilege, pp. 34-65
- Been in the pen so long: Race, crime, and justice, pp. 132-160


**Week 10: Post-Structuralism and Neoliberalism**

Foucault, Michel. *Abnormal.*

Chapters 1 – 3 (For those who are familiar with D&P.)

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and punish.*


- Introduction: Crime and American governance, pp. 3-12
- Power, authority, and criminal law, pp. 13-32

**Recommended:**


**(Hypothetical) Week 11: Backlash: Biology, Eugenics, and Reactionary Criminology**


Walsh, Anthony, & Ilhong Yun (2017). Examining the race, poverty, and crime nexus adding Asian Americans and biosocial processes. *Journal of Criminal Justice* online first:
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2017.05.017


- The New Right and the old determinism, pp. 3-16.
- The politics of biological determinism, pp. 17-36.


**Final paper due June 12 by noon (email is fine).**

**Non-exhaustive list of potential student paper topics in addition to the class readings:**

Criminal justice theories (e.g., David Garland, Ian Loader)

Criminological conflict theory (e.g., Austin Turk, Richard Quinney, Stanley Cohen)

Juvenile delinquency/juvenile justice (e.g., Miroslava Chávez-García, Barry Feld, Tony Platt, Geoff Ward)

Law and society (e.g., Kitty Calavita, Donald Black, Patricia Ewick, Susan Silbey)

Left realism (e.g., Jock Young, Elliott Currie)

Legal anthropology (e.g., Susan Coutin, Sally Merry, Justin Richland)

Life course (e.g., Terrie Moffitt, John Laub & Robert Sampson)

Marxian theory (e.g., Richard Quinney, Nikolas Pashukanis, Bill Chambliss, Marjorie Zatz)

Neighborhood theory (e.g., Gerald Suttles, Robert Sampson, Bernard Harcourt)

Postmodern theories/peacemaking (e.g., Bruce Arrigo, Dragan Milovanovic, Hal Pepinsky)

Psychology, personality and biology (e.g., Avshalom Caspi, Terrie Moffitt, Adrian Raine)

Reintegrative shaming/peacemaking (e.g., John Braithwaite)

Black radical theory (e.g., Saidiya V. Hartman, George Jackson, Robin D.G. Kelley, Cedric Robinson)

Radical feminism and gender studies (e.g., Judith Butler, Angela Y. Davis, Andrea Dworkin, Catherine McKinnon, Beth Richie)

Surveillance, technology, and science (e.g., Sarah Brayne, Simon Cole, Mathieu Deflem, Trudy DeHue)

White-collar crime (e.g., Kitty Calavita, Henry Pontell, Gil Geis, Edwin Sutherland, Diane Vaughn)