Criminology
CJUS 3600.900/950
Summer 2014

Instructor Information

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Office hours: Monday and Wednesday from 4:00 – 5:30 or by appointment

For questions, please first email the Graduate Student Assistant, Ms. Rebecca Dickerson at Rebecca.Dickerson@my.unt.edu

Course Description

Crime is a complex problem. There are so many seemingly distinct types of crime, and crimes occur for different reasons and under different circumstances. In fact, the complexity of crime is increasing. For example, the globalization of communications (e.g., the internet) and conflict (e.g., terrorism) had substantial impacts on the nature of crime. Despite this complexity, it is imperative that we gain as great an understanding of crime as possible through criminology. Criminology can be defined as the study of the nature of crime, its causes, and the systemic practices that (re)produce patterns of harm. At its core, criminology attempts to understand what crime is and why it occurs. We will study the major theoretical traditions that have emerged over the past several centuries to offer insight into the crime problem. We will also evaluate each theory using extant research and identify policy implications.

Course Goals

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

1) Articulate the shortcomings of various definitions of crime and explain the social construction of crime and criminals.
2) Identify and explain all the major schools of criminology.
3) Evaluate criminological theories using empirical evidence.
4) Apply theory and research and formulate criminal justice policy.

Reading Materials

**COURSE NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Please make sure to have your official UNT email forwarded to your preferred email address (if different) to receive important updates, changes, announcements, class cancellations (if applicable), and generally, so I can reach you if necessary.

**Before you email Ms. Dickerson or Dr. Trahan with a question, make sure to review this syllabus and the FAQ document posted on Blackboard. Most questions are answered in these documents.**

The announcement board in Blackboard, and email, will be used for primary communication to the class as a whole. I advise you check the announcements section frequently.

**Important:** It is your responsibility to utilize a computer system that works and is compatible with the UNT online system/Blackboard Learn. This is especially critical during examination times. I would recommend that you take your exams on the UNT campus if possible. If that is not possible, I would recommend you avoid waiting until the last minute to take your exam in case problems arise. **Do not take your exams on mobile devices such as smartphones or tablets.**

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

Your final grade will be determined based on your performance on four exams, 15 unit quizzes, and four blackboard discussions. There are a total of 390 points that can be earned in this class.

Exams: 4 @ 50 points each  
Module Quizzes: 15 @ 10 points each  
Blackboard Discussions: 4 @ 10 points each

Grading Scale:  
- 351 – 390 = A  
- 312 – 350 = B  
- 273 – 311 = C  
- 234 – 272 = D  
- 233 or fewer points = F

**Exams:** There will be four exams administered in this course for a total of 200 points. Each exam will consist of 50 multiple choice questions that will count for 1 point each. No exam will be comprehensive and will include only material assigned up until the time of the test.

Please note that the exams will be administered in blackboard and will have certain restrictions such as time limits, the inability to go back and re-answer questions, and the inability to move forward, among others.
**Unit Quizzes:** There will be 15 unit quizzes administered in this course for a total of 150 points. Each quiz will consist of 10 multiple choice questions that will count for one point each.

Please note that the unit quizzes will also be administered in blackboard and may have the same restrictions as the exams.

**Blackboard Discussions:** Each student will be required to participate in 4 blackboard discussions throughout the course. These discussions will first require you to post an original policy you create based on a theory I will provide that would reduce crime. Be clear about how the policy is based on the theory provided and why, according to that theory, the policy should reduce crime. These posts should be 2-3 paragraphs long (a paragraph is at least four complete sentences) and will be worth 5 points. This portion of the assignment is referred to as “Blackboard Post.”

Each student must then appropriately and professionally respond to at least one other student’s policy. These responses should constructively critique the policies proposed by your classmates. Consider: what changes might you propose to the policy; how might it be better implemented; what other components of the theory might be included and how; etc. These responses should also be 2-3 paragraphs long and will be worth 5 points. This portion of the assignment is referred to as “Blackboard Response.”

Lackadaisical discussions will result in a loss of points.

**CLASS POLICIES**

**Make-Up Policy**

There will be no opportunities to make up any missed coursework with the exception of authorized absences according to University policies prescribing authorized absences in certain situations. I reserve the right to consider extreme circumstances and modify this rule. Students should notify me prior to missing an assignment, if possible. Those in athletics, those who are absent for religious holidays, and/or those involved in other school supported activities that require being absent from class will be allowed to make up assignments if proper procedures are followed in requesting an excused absence. I must have written documentation in advance that you will be away from class for the absence to be excused.

**Authorized Absences:** Absences are authorized only in cases of participation in school sponsored activities and/or religious holidays. For an excused absence due to a school sponsored activity, students must be approved in advance by the department chair and academic dean. Within three days after the absence, students must obtain authorized absence cards from the Dean of Students for presentation to instructor. Students who wish to request an excused absence for religious holidays can do so and will be excused from class as long as they make a request within the required time frame set by the University (see the most recent undergraduate catalog). Notification must be in writing so that I may
have it for my records. You must arrange to make up any work missed during the excused religious absence or school sponsored activity.

**Academic Dishonesty/Integrity**

All students are required to conduct themselves with utmost honesty and integrity in all aspects related to this course. Any act of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and may result in failing the course. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, and collusion – the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing work offered for course credit.

**Grade Appeals**

Please keep all your graded work. You cannot, under any circumstance, dispute a grade on an exam or assignment if you cannot provide the original copy. Should you have any discrepancy with a grade you receive, you must submit a written complaint and meet with me within one week of receiving the grade. Bring the original copy of the exam or assignment to this meeting. Written complaints must address specific comments and/or grading criteria. Filing an appeal does not guarantee that your grade will be changed. **Grades are not verbally negotiable.**

**Disabled Student Policy**

Any student in this class may request learning assistance by submitting a written statement that describes the nature of your impairment and any specific accommodations you may need. Should you need assistance please contact the Dean of Students’ Office at [http://www.dos.unt.edu/index.html](http://www.dos.unt.edu/index.html) or by calling (940) 565-2648.

**SETE Participation (Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness)**

The Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available to you at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. I am very interested in the feedback I get from students, as I work to continually improve my teaching. I consider the SETE to be an important part of your participation in this class.

**Student Behavior and University Policy:**

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [www.unt.edu/csrr](http://www.unt.edu/csrr)
Participation and Online Behavior

To be successful at learning and understanding the material in this class, it is essential that you read and complete the assigned material and engage in thoughtful online discussions. Your active participation, along with your willingness to engage in thoughtful discussions regarding criminological theory will be taken into account at all times during the semester.

An online classroom, at least during times of online discussion, is a place to express ideas, opinions, and engage in thoughtful discussions. Students will respect the views and opinions of others at all times or their status in the course will be examined. In sum, simply be appropriate during online interactions. Each student brings unique insight and perspectives, and that can make for a very interesting and lively discussion forum, but just please be appropriate and respectful of others. Please review the undergraduate catalog concerning conduct which adversely affects the university community.

Syllabus Changes

I reserve the right and have the discretion to change this syllabus. While every effort will be made to follow this syllabus as closely as possible, it is sometimes the case that the syllabus must be modified. In the case that the syllabus needs to be adjusted, I will announce such adjustments to the class. I will make every effort to ensure that any changes to the syllabus benefit the class as a whole. It is the student’s responsibility to check announcements/email so that any and all syllabus changes are documented. Failure to obtain syllabus changes because of failure to check and read announcements does not constitute a defense against missed assignments, test dates, and other applicable changes.

Miscellaneous:

The material posted online is my personal intellectual property or that of the University of North Texas. You may not utilize the material for other than class purposes.

* A course schedule can be found in a separate file in Blackboard