Course Description:

This course is a seminar on the major theoretical paradigms within the field of criminology. This course will include an overview of the paradigms, as well as a review of the specific theories that they are comprised of. Within each theory we will consider the original statement of the theory as well as any contemporary theoretical developments. Particular attention will be paid to strong empirical tests of theory.

Course Objectives:

The primary objective of this course is to introduce students to the criminological theories and paradigms that are the focus of research appearing in top level peer reviewed journals. This introduction will address the historical development of these traditions and will focus on contemporary issues being addressed by criminologists today.

Required Books:


Recommended Books (but not required)


Grading Policy:

Grades will be based on three elements: 1) summaries 2) article critiques, and 3) a small paper.

Reading Summary (40%)

For the first five week’s reading material, provide a 2 page long summary at most. It should be single spaced and Times New Roman 12 point font. Citation and reference pages are not necessary, but make sure they are mostly your own words. In the summary, you should talk about what the theory talks about, how was the theory developed, what is the causal link between each component in the theory with crime/victimization. The summary is due on each Friday midnight. Submit it on the BlackBoard under the folder of Reading Summary.

Article critiques (30%)

For each week, besides book chapter(s), you may be required to read several journal articles that are related to the theories for that week. After reading, you are asked to critique two articles theoretically or/and methodologically. Each critique should not be more than 2 pages single space.

The first one is from week 4 reading list: Cohen, L., and Felson, M. F. (1979). Social change and crime rate trends: A routine activity approach. American Sociological Review, 44, 588-604. This assignment is due on Nov. 18 midnight. Feedbacks will be provided by Nov. 21.

The second is from week 7 reading list: Sampson, R. J., and J. H. Laub. (2003). Life-course desisters? Trajectories of crime among delinquent boys followed to age 70. Criminology, 41, 555-592. This assignment is due on Dec. 9 midnight. Feedbacks will be provided by Dec. 12.

Paper (30%)

You are asked to write a paper on your favorite criminological theory. In your paper, you should include (1) what your favorite theory talks about and why do you like this theory.
Make sure to cover all propositions within the theory and clearly discuss the theory at length; (2) find a real-life event (newspaper, news, online, etc.) that lends itself to the application of your chosen theory and discuss this connection; and (3) discuss 2 articles that support this theory and 1-2 articles that do not support this theory. The paper should be typed in APA format (12 points Times New Roman, 1-inch margins, double spaced, etc.). You need to include a reference page for the articles you cite in your paper. Do NOT copy and paste from other sources. The paper should be no longer than 5 pages.

Rubric:

- Formatting – 5%
- Academic voice – 5%
- Define criminological theory – 30%
- Related theory to real life event properly – 30%
- Discussion of the articles you find related to the theory – 30%

The final paper is due on the **Dec. 2 midnight**.

Final Grade

Your final semester grade will be based on overall percentage across the assignments and paper.

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**Schedule and Readings:**

This reading list is an introduction to the important works of criminological theory. Keep in mind this is only an introduction. Serious study and subsequent research productivity in any of these areas will require much more in-depth reading.

**Week 1 (Oct. 22 – Oct. 26)**

Criminology through the 1950’s - The classical school, early biological theory (positivism), the Chicago school (Shaw and McKay’s theory of juvenile delinquency and Sutherland’s theory of differential association), Akers theory of differential association.

Lilly, Cullen and Ball - chapters 1, 2, 3, 4

**Week 2 (Oct. 29 – Nov. 2)**
Criminology in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s – early strain theory (Merton, Cohen, Cloward and Ohlin), early control (Reiss, Nye, Reckless, Sykes and Matza, Hirschi), early labeling (Tannenbaum, Lemert, Becker).

Lilly, Cullen and Ball – 5, 6, 7 (only the theories I have listed above)


Week 3 (Nov. 5 – Nov. 9)

Critical and Feminist Theory, Past and Present

Lilly, Cullen and Ball - chapter 8, 9, 10


Week 4 (Nov. 12 – Nov. 16)

Neo classical theories: Deterrence, routine activities theory, and rational choice theory

Lilly, Cullen and Ball - chapter 13


Week 5 (Nov. 19 – Nov. 23)

Contemporary strain theory and contemporary control theory

Lilly, Cullen and Ball - chapter 5, 6 (only the material on contemporary versions of the respective theories)


Week 6 (Nov. 26 – Nov. 30)

Contemporary ecological theories: 1) informal social control/collective efficacy and crime; 2) broken windows (disorder and crime)

Lilly, Cullen and Ball - chapters 3 and 13 (only the material on contemporary versions of the respective theories)

Informal social control/collective efficacy and crime:


Broken windows (disorder and crime):


Week 7 (Dec. 3 – Dec. 7)

Life course, developmental, and criminal careers

Lilly, Cullen and Ball, chapter 15


Week 8 (Dec. 10 – Dec. 14)

Contemporary Biological Explanations of Crime (explaining time stable between individual differences in criminal behavior).

Lilly, Cullen and Ball, chapter 14


University Policies:

Academic Integrity

Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding and complying with the university Academic Honor Code and the ASU Student Handbook.

Accommodations for Disability

The Student Life Office is the designated campus department charged with the responsibility of reviewing and authorizing requests for reasonable accommodations based on a disability, and it is the student’s responsibility to initiate such a request by contacting the Student Life Office at (325) 942-2191 or (325) 942-2126 (TDD/FAX) or by e-mail at Student.Life@angelo.edu to begin the process. The Student Life Office will establish the particular documentation requirements necessary for the various types of disabilities.

Student absence for religious holidays
A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. A student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence.