SOAN 314. CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN CRITICAL CRIMINOLOGY

This course examines contemporary criminological issues from a critical, sociological perspective. Our focus is on the United States with topics under examination including definitions of crime, racial disparities in the criminal justice system, mass incarceration and other transformations in punishment, prisoner reentry, and recidivism. In addition to understanding both classic and contemporary sociological research and theory, we will answer questions like: What is crime? Who is considered a criminal? What social changes drove the United States to get “tough” on crime? What effects does mass incarceration have on society? What happens to prisoners who are released? By the end of the course, you will be better equipped to question popular assumptions about crime and more knowledgeable about how sociologists investigate criminal justice policies and practices.

Contemporary Issues in Critical Criminology is a course that satisfies several graduation requirements. As a SOAN course, you will learn how sociologists ask questions about crime, the data sources sociologists use to study crime, and how to interpret and present sociological research findings. By the end of the course you will have accomplished these SOAN “student learning outcomes”:

- Connect information about historical and contemporary socio-cultural phenomena
- Formulate appropriate sociological research questions about socio-cultural phenomena
- Apply sociological theory to analyze socio-cultural phenomena

As a WR course, these students learning outcomes will be emphasized:

- Understand writing as a process
- Learn how to seek and use feedback
- Gain awareness of audience and voice
- Learn how to apply forms of attribution and sociological citation
- Understand accepted guidelines for academic honesty
- Develop confidence in writing

As a QRE course, these student learning outcomes will be emphasized:

- Consider what numerical evidence might add to analysis of problems
- Locate or collect data
- Properly interpret numerical evidence
• Recognize the limitations of methods and sources used
• Effectively communicate quantitative arguments

Finally, as an ACE-theoretical course, these student learning outcomes will be emphasized:

• Understand issues in their real world complexity
• Become aware of your positionality
• Take course content and doing something with it beyond the classroom
• Nurture a commitment to life-long civic engagement

Office Hours:

I love seeing students during my office hours. A one-on-one visit can clarify course material; provide answers to questions you may have; and help you understand, on a deeper level, my expectations for the work you complete in this course.

This term I am holding office hours during the following days and times:

• Mondays (except Mid-term Break) 2:15-3:00 pm
• Tuesdays 3:15-4:15 pm
• Wednesdays 2:30-4:00 pm
• Additional times available by appointment

To schedule an office visit, please visit the Google form I’ve shared with you. I meet students on the main floor of the library, close to the circulation desk, in the southeast corner.

Course Material:

The following books are required reading. Additional material is posted to the course Moodle.


Reading Requirements

To perform well in this course and to create a rewarding class discussion, you must commit to several hours of active, focused reading prior to each class meeting. The readings represent a mix of classic and contemporary works in the field of sociological criminology. Four types of readings are assigned: news articles, reports, review essays, and research studies.

Be aware that course material reveals the ways in which people experience and participate in crime while also introducing students to criminogenic environments. You may find some of the material shocking or personally difficult to read. Consider this admission a trigger warning.

Course Requirements

Reading reflections (35 points): Throughout the term, students will write reflections on course readings. These reflection papers provide opportunities for enhancing your understanding of course material and improving your social science writing skills. There are seven reflection papers with each worth five points.

Reflections should not be considered opportunities for venting or vague musings. Instead, they are opportunities to assist with processing ideas, making connections between readings, integrating ideas and experiences, questioning assumptions, viewing material from new perspectives, and reorganizing knowledge to accommodate new learning.

Each reflection paper should be approximately two pages of clear and efficient prose that demonstrates your understanding of the crime, criminology, and sociology. Papers are due at the beginning of class. Be aware that failure to submit your reflections in a timely manner will result in a grade reduction.

Paper and Presentation Assignment (50 points):

In keeping with the ACE designation of this course, you will write a short term paper (approximately 12 pages) on a specific topic related to mass incarceration. Segments of this paper will be submitted throughout the term. You will present a summary of your findings to your classmates and later you will present a more condensed version to the Carleton community. More details about this assignment will be shared in class.

Class participation (10 points): Participation will be evaluated according to punctuality, regular class attendance, and close-reading of the material so that comments and questions have solid grounding and advance the discussion. Participation also involves listening when others are speaking. Unless you are pulling up electronic copies of your readings for class discussion, cell phones and other electronic devices – including computers – should be turned off. If you have a personal circumstance that merits exception, please see me so we can discuss an accommodation.

Students who meet the standards of class participation at only the most basic level will receive the “default” participation grade of 5 points; those who miss more than three classes without a suitable explanation risk forfeiting their participation grade.
Learning Strategies and Time Management for Students

Steve Schauz assists students in learning effective ways of managing and focusing their time. Coaching is available for the following learning strategies:

- organizing busy schedules
- dividing term-long projects into manageable tasks
- improving in-class notetaking and participation
- creating a repertoire of approaches to studying
- developing effective test-preparation strategies

Steve holds open office hours and meets students by appointment. For more information, visit: https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/asc/academicskillconsulting/

Public Speaking Coaching for Students

Speech coaching is available for all Carleton students. Because you will be completing two presentations in this class, I highly recommend that you work with Jenny Portis, Carleton’s speech consultant. Appointment can be made via this online form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Requirement</th>
<th>Distribution Date</th>
<th>Due Date*</th>
<th>Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading reflections</td>
<td>1/7</td>
<td>See syllabus for 7 due dates</td>
<td>35 (5 pts per reflection)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topic statement</td>
<td>1/11</td>
<td>1/22</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>First draft with reflection piece</td>
<td>1/11</td>
<td>2/7</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second draft and peer review</td>
<td>1/11</td>
<td>2/28</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poster</td>
<td>1/11</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td>1/11</td>
<td>2/22-3/1 and 3/12</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
<td>1/11</td>
<td>3/13</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>1/7</td>
<td>as per requirements</td>
<td>10</td>
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* No extensions will be provided. Late submissions will have a half point deducted for each day late.

Grade range: “A” = 90-100%; “B” = 80-89%; “C” = 70-79%; “D” = 60-69%; “F” <= 59%
Course Outline

1/7

What this course is (and is not) about


1/9

What are some popular misconceptions of crime?


1/11

How do sociologists think and what do they say about crime?


Reflection paper 1: What lessons about crime, criminology, and/or sociology did you learn this past week? Did the material reinforce anything you already knew? Did you have any big “aha” moments? What connections do you see emerging in the readings? In developing your two page response, your goal is to demonstrate that you have thoroughly engaged this past week’s readings and have arrived at some conclusions. Papers are due at the beginning of class.

1/14  
When did a scholarly study of crime begin?


1/16  
Positivistic explanations of crime


1/18,21  
How has the sociological study of crime evolved?

1/18 Readings:


• Reflection paper 2: What lessons about crime, criminology, and/or sociology did you learn this past week? Did the material reinforce anything you already knew? Did you have any big “aha” moments? What connections do you see emerging in the readings? In developing your two page response, your goal is to demonstrate that
you have thoroughly engaged this past week’s readings and have arrived at some conclusions. Papers are due at the beginning of class.

1/21 Readings:


1/23 How is crime measured?


UCR worksheet (Moodle): please complete this worksheet before class.

- Guest Speaker: John Bermel, Director of Security and Emergency Management, Carleton College

1/25 What does the critical study of crime entail?


- Reflection paper 3: What lessons about crime, criminology, and/or sociology did you learn this past week? Did the material reinforce anything you already knew? Did you have any big “aha” moments? What connections do you see emerging in the readings? In developing your two page response, your goal is to demonstrate that you have thoroughly engaged this past week’s readings and have arrived at some conclusions. Papers are due at the beginning of class.

1/28 Are there limits to thinking critically about crime?


1/30  Who is likely to offend?


1/31  Tour: Minnesota Correctional Facility – Faribault

We will leave campus at 8:15 a.m. and return by noon. To prepare for the tour, please review the following material:

MCF-Faribault’s website and prison roster (Moodle).

Bureau of Labor Statistics. No date. “Correctional Officers and Bailiffs.” Occupational Outlook Handbook (Read the information provided under these tabs: Summary, What They Do, Work Environment, How to Become One, Pay, Job Outlook, State and Area Data, and Similar Occupations)

2/1  a. Processing your observations of MCF-Faribault (first 30 mins of class)


b. Library resources for you term papers (last 30 mins of class)

- Reflection paper 4: What lessons about crime, criminology, and/or sociology did you learn this past week? Did the material reinforce anything you already knew? Did you have any big “aha” moments? What connections do you see emerging in the readings? In developing your two page response, your goal is to demonstrate that you have thoroughly engaged this past week’s readings and have arrived at some conclusions. Papers are due at the beginning of class.
2/4  Revisiting the age-crime relationship


2/6,8  Policing schools

2/6 Readings:


Nicodemo, Allie and Lia Petronio. 2018. “Schools are safer than they were in the 90s, and school shootings are not more common than they used to be, researchers say.” News @ Northeastern, February 26, 2018, online.

2/8 Readings:


2/11  MIDTERM BREAK

2/13  Policing schools (con’t)


•  Reflection paper 5: What lessons about crime, criminology, and/or sociology did you learn this past week? Did the material reinforce anything you already knew? Did you have any big “aha” moments? What connections do you see emerging in the readings? In developing your two page response, your goal is to demonstrate that
you have thoroughly engaged this past week’s readings and have arrived at some conclusions. Papers are due at the beginning of class.

2/15-20 Policing Skid Row

2/15 Readings:

2/18 Readings:

2/20 Readings:
Stuart, Forrest. 2016. *Down, Out & Under Arrest*. Just read Chapters 4 and 5, and Conclusion

- Reflection paper 6: What lessons about crime, criminology, and/or sociology did you learn this past week? Did the material reinforce anything you already knew? Did you have any big “aha” moments? What connections do you see emerging in the readings? In developing your two page response, your goal is to demonstrate that you have thoroughly engaged this past week’s readings and have arrived at some conclusions. Papers are due at the beginning of class.

2/22,25 Mass incarceration

2/22 Presentations:
- The growth of mass incarceration
- How did we get here?
- Mass incarceration and communities of color

2/25 Presentations
- Mass incarceration and poverty
- Women and mass incarceration
- Conditions within correctional institutions
2/27 Poster session with Doug Foxgrover

3/1,4 Mass incarceration
3/1 Presentations
- Collateral consequences of incarceration: individuals
- Collateral consequences of incarceration: families
- Collateral consequences of incarceration: communities

3/4 Presentations
- Collateral consequences of incarceration: society
- Who benefits from mass incarceration?
- What can we do differently?

3/6-3/11 Understanding the re-entry process
3/6:
Western, Bruce. 2018. Homeward: Life in the Year After Prison. Just read chapters 2, 3, and 4

3/8:
Western, Bruce. 2018. Homeward: Life in the Year After Prison. Just read chapters 5, 6, and 7

- Reflection paper 7: What lessons about crime, criminology, and/or sociology did you learn from chapters 2-7 of Western’s book? Did the material reinforce anything you already knew? Did you have any big “aha” moments? What connections do you see emerging in the readings? In developing your two page response, your goal is to demonstrate that you have thoroughly engaged the chapters and have arrived at some conclusions. Papers are due at the beginning of class.
3/11:
Western, Bruce. 2018. Homeward: Life in the Year After Prison. Just read chapters 8, 9, and 10

3/12  Mass incarceration presentation to the Carleton community

Our presentation is at noon in Weitz 236. Please invite your Carleton community to this event.

3/13  Wrapping up Contemporary Issues in Critical Criminology

Please join me for end-of-term evaluations, conversation, and yummy food.