Course Outline:

1. The Sociological Study of Crime

In this first section of the course you will gain insight into the sociological study of crime. As you will learn, the sociological approach is worlds apart from psychological, economic, and biological explanations of crime. The sociological perspective also provides an important point of departure from popular media depictions of crime. We conclude this section by examining major sources of crime data and the research methods sociologists use to develop their explanations of crime.

3/28: Introduction
- Class exercise: How Much Do You Know About Crime?

3/30: Classical and Biological Perspectives on Crime
- Gottfredson and Hirschi, Chapter 1: “Classical theory and the idea of crime”
- Gottfredson and Hirschi, Chapter 3: “Biological positivism”

4/1: Psychological and Classic Sociological Perspectives on Crime
- Gottfredson and Hirschi, Chapter 4: “Psychological, economic, and sociological positivism”
4/4.6: 

Crime and Popular Consciousness: Examining Myths of Crime


- Gottfredson and Hirschi, Chapter 2: “The nature of crime”


4/8: 

Sociological Investigations of Crime: Methods & Data

- Hagan and McCarthy, Appendix: “The methodology of studying street youth”

- Gottfredson and Hirschi, Chapter 11: “Research design and measurement”

→ Assignment 1 distributed and discussed. This assignment is due 4/20.

4/11: 

Library Session: Accessing Crime Statistics

2. Classic Theories of Crime

In this second section of the course, we examine and assess classic sociological theories of crime. To facilitate this endeavor, we also examine empirical research and policy initiatives developed in response to these perspectives. As this section will demonstrate, one way to control crime is by developing theories and policy responses that “fit the facts” of crime.

4/13: 

Theorizing and Reacting to Crime

- Braithwaite, Chapter 3, “Facts a theory of crime ought to fit”

- Gottfredson and Hirschi, Chapter 6: “Criminal events and individual propensities: age, gender and race”

4/15,18: Learning Perspectives
4/15: Group Presentation


- REACTION PAPER TOPIC: CRITICS ARGUE THAT LEARNING PERSPECTIVES DO NOT EXPLAIN WHY CRIME OCCURS IN THE FIRST PLACE. HOW WOULD YOU REACT TO THIS STATEMENT? REACTION PAPERS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS (4/15).

4/18 Readings:

4/20,22 Strain Perspectives
4/20: Group Presentation


4/22 Readings:

→ Assignment 2 distributed and discussed. This assignment is due 5/9.

4/25,27: 
**Social Control**
4/25: Group Presentation


- **REACTION PAPER TOPIC: ARE DELINQUENTS UNIQUE OR DO ALL PEOPLE HAVE EQUAL SKILL AND ABILITY TO COMMIT CRIME AND DELINQUENCY?**

REACTION PAPERS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS (4/25).

4/27 Readings:

4/29: 
**Labeling**
Group Presentation
• REACTION PAPER TOPIC: IS LABELING THEORY AN ADEQUATE EXPLANATION OF CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR OR IS IT MERELY TAKING THE SIDE OF THE “UNDERDOG”? REACTION PAPERS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS (4/29).

5/2: MID-TERM BREAK

5/4: Social Disorganization


5/6: Routine Activities

5/9: Policy Responses to Social Disorganization and Routine Activities


→ Assignment 3 distributed and discussed. This assignment is due 6/1.
3. Contemporary Theories of Crime

In this final section of the course, we examine contemporary sociological theories of crime that claim to account for all types of criminal behaviors, including crime on the streets and crime in the suites. Our discussion will grapple with the explanatory power of these "general theories" of crime.

5/11-16: Crime on the Street: Street Kids

5/11 Readings:
- Hagan and McCarthy, Chapter 1: "Street and school criminologies"
- Hagan and McCarthy, Chapter 2: "Street youth and street settings"
- FILM: Street Wise

5/13 Group Presentation
- Hagan and McCarthy, Chapter 3: "Taking to the streets"
- Hagan and McCarthy, Chapter 4: "Adversity and crime on the street"
- Hagan and McCarthy, Chapter 6: "Criminal embeddedness and criminal capital"
- Hagan and McCarthy, Chapter 7: "Street youth in street groups"

5/16 Readings:
- Hagan and McCarthy, Chapter 8: "Street crime amplification"
- Hagan and McCarthy, Chapter 9: "Leaving the street"
- Hagan and McCarthy, Chapter 10: "Street criminology redux"
- REACTION PAPER TOPIC: DOES HAGAN AND McCARTHY’S "SOCIAL CAPITAL" PERSPECTIVE REPRESENT A SIGNIFICANT ADVANCE IN CRIMINOLOGICAL THEORY? REACTION PAPERS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS (5/16).
5/18:

Crime in the Suites: White Collar Crime


5/20-25

Reintegrative Shaming and White Collar Crime

5/20 Readings:

• Braithwaite, Chapter 1: "Whither criminological theory?"

• Braithwaite, Chapter 2, "The dominant theoretical traditions: labeling, subcultural, control, opportunity, and learning theories"

5/23 Readings:

• Braithwaite, Chapter 4: "The family model of the criminal process: reintegrative shaming"

• Braithwaite, Chapter 5: "Why and how does shaming work?"

• Braithwaite, Chapter 6: "Social conditions conducive to reintegrative shaming"

• Braithwaite, Chapter 7: "Summary of the theory"

5/25 Readings:

• Braithwaite, Chapter 8: "Testing the theory"

• Braithwaite, Chapter 9: "Reintegrative shaming and white collar crime."

• Reaction paper topic: Is Braithwaite’s image of an offender consistent with the research and theory we’ve reviewed up to

5/27-6/1:  Low Self-Control and White Collar Crime

5/27 Readings:
• Gottfredson and Hirschi, Chapter 5: “The nature of criminality: low self-control”

5/30 Group Presentation
• Gottfredson and Hirschi, Chapter 7: “The social consequences of low self-control”
• Gottfredson and Hirschi, Chapter 8: “Culture and crime”
• Gottfredson and Hirschi, Chapter 9: “White collar crime”

6/1 Readings:
• Gottfredson and Hirschi, Chapter 12: “Implications for public policy”

• REACTION PAPER TOPIC: DOES SELF-CONTROL THEORY PROVIDE GUIDELINES FOR DESIGNING AN EFFECTIVE GENERAL CRIME PREVENTION POLICY? REACTION PAPERS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS (6/1).