**Criminology**
SOC/JAC 0720-4010
Tuesday and Thursday 11:00-12:20

**Instructor:** Ross Kleinstuber, Ph.D.
**Office:** 104-B Krebs
**Office Hours:** Tues. & Thurs. 9:30-11:00; Wed. 2:00-6:00 and by appt.; Fri. by appt. only
**Office Phone:** 269-2989
**Email:** rkleins@pitt.edu

**NOTE** This course will utilize CourseWeb (https://courseweb.pitt.edu/) for announcements, assignments, additional readings, and other materials pertinent to the course. You are expected to be familiar with CourseWeb and to check it regularly. If you have any questions about using CourseWeb, please see me.


*Other readings will be assigned throughout the course and posted on CourseWeb.

**Course Description**
This course provides a broad overview of the scientific study of crime, its causes, and social responses to it. The central focus will be on the development and application of the major theories of crime causation, but it will also examine the legal definitions and elements of crime, survey the major categories of crime, review the major measures of crime, differentiate types of offenders, and explore various dimensions of their offending.

**Course Expectations**
Questions related to criminal behavior and crime control raise many issues that are inherently controversial. To get a fuller understanding and appreciation for these issues, class attendance and participation is essential. Classes will be conducted using a combination of lecture and, when appropriate, class discussions. You are expected to have read and thought about the assigned readings prior to the class for which they are assigned. This will facilitate discussion and make learning easier; much of what you learn in this class will come from your interactions with fellow students. The purpose of this course is to teach you how to think about the methods of defining crime, the causes of crime, and social responses to crime in a critical manner. In this sense, you will be challenged to support your opinions or beliefs with material from the text, the lectures, or any other appropriate source. You will be expected to participate and to interact with your classmates. As such, you will be expected to have read and thought about the assigned readings prior to the class for which they are assigned. This will facilitate discussion and make learning easier and more enjoyable. Because of the discussion-based nature
of many classes, you are expected to attend class; many exam questions will come directly from class discussions.

Please remember that you are expected to respect your classmates at all times. There are no wrong opinions (as long as they can be defended), so when someone else is speaking, you are expected to listen, to wait until he or she is done before responding, and to respond courteously, politely, and thoughtfully. Derogatory, racist, sexist, and other offensive or insulting remarks or comments will not be tolerated.

**Course Grading**
Your grade in this course will be based out of 500 points, broken down as follows:

- 3 Exams (100 points each): 300 points
- Quiz & Assignment Average: 100 points
- Term Paper: 100 points

Grades will be based on total points accumulated as follows; there will be NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS GRADING SYSTEM:

\[
\begin{align*}
462.5-500 &= A \\
447.5-462 &= A- \\
432.5-447 &= B+ \\
412.5-432 &= B \\
397.5-412 &= B- \\
382.5-397 &= C+ \\
362.5-382 &= C \\
347.5-362 &= C- \\
332.5-347 &= D+ \\
312.5-332 &= D \\
297.5-312 &= D- \\
\leq 297 &= F
\end{align*}
\]

**Note on Disabilities**
Students with disabilities who require special testing accommodations or other classroom modifications must notify the instructor and the Coordinator of Disability Services in writing no later than the *second week* in the term. Documentation of a disability may be needed to determine the appropriate accommodations or classroom modifications. For information or to schedule an evaluation-of-need appointment, call the Office of Health & Counseling Services in G10 Student Union, at (814) 269-7119.

**Academic Dishonesty**
Students are expected to be familiar with the University of Pittsburgh’s Guidelines on Academic Integrity ([http://www.as.pitt.edu/fac/policies/academic-integrity](http://www.as.pitt.edu/fac/policies/academic-integrity)) and abide by them. Academic dishonesty will *not* be tolerated. Anyone caught plagiarizing, cheating, or helping anyone do so will be referred to the appropriate university authorities and, at the very least, receive a 0 on the assignment. Additional penalties may apply depending on the nature of the incident.

The Guidelines on Academic Integrity forbid students from presenting “as one’s own, for academic evaluation, the ideas, representations, or words of another person or persons without customary and proper acknowledgment of sources.” Plagiarism is dishonest and illegal. Writers
are indebted to authors from whom they borrow exact words, ideas, theories, opinions, statistics, illustrative material, or facts (beyond common knowledge). **Writers are also indebted if they summarize or paraphrase in their own words material from sources.** All quoted material requires the acknowledgement of the source by the use of quotation marks or indentation (if exact wording is incorporated). In addition, both directly quoted and summarized material must be acknowledged by use of a note or parenthetical citation that indicates the author and/or date of publication and page number or numbers. If the writer indents a quotation, it must be clearly set off from the body of the text and must be documented in the aforesaid manner. Students are permitted to use any professionally recognized citation style, but to verify the various documentation procedures, writers should consult the style sheet for the particular citation format they are using (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.). (Note: Language of this paragraph was adapted from both the University of Pittsburgh’s Guidelines on Academic Integrity and the Indiana University of Pennsylvania’s Academic Integrity Policy.)

**Cell Phones**
You are expected to turn off your cell phones before coming to class. I reserve the right to answer any cell phone that rings during class or to complete any text message I catch you typing during class. **Remember, you are expected to be respectful at all times. Interruptions during class, whether they are from cell phones or unnecessary conversations, are disrespectful. Failure to respect your classmates and the instructor may result in being asked to leave.**

**Exams and Make-up Exams**
Exams are expected to be completed in class and may only be made up with documentation of an approved excused absence; please consult the university policy for more information. If you miss an exam due to either an emergency or an excused absence, you are expected to contact the instructor within 48 hours or as soon as reasonably possible. Failure to provide an approved excuse or to contact the instructor within 48 hours to schedule a make-up will result in a grade of 0 for the exam. Make-up exams will be given in a format to be determined by the instructor.

**Quizzes and Assignments**
Throughout the semester, there will be approximately 12 short quizzes and 3 or 4 short written assignments. The quizzes will be posted on CourseWeb and must be submitted via CourseWeb prior to the first class period in which we begin a new chapter; NO LATE quizzes will be accepted. These quizzes will focus on major points in the chapter, the main thesis of each additional reading, and the causal links that each theory predicts will lead to crime. The chapter’s major points are typically identifiable as section headings, bold font, or other identifiers. The main thesis of each additional reading will be clear to anyone who reads the reading, and the question about the causal links will ask what factors each theory predicts is the cause of crime. The goal of these quizzes is to encourage all students to read in advance and to
enhance comprehension of the theories being discussed; these quizzes will also be returned and can be used as a study tool. There will also be 3 or 4 short writing assignments throughout the semester. These assignments will be posted on CourseWeb and will be due on the dates listed.

Your “Quiz & Assignment” grade will be calculated as your overall average on the quizzes plus the assignments and will be out of 100 points. All quizzes and assignments will have equal weight. As a courtesy, your THREE (3) lowest scores in this section will be dropped.

**Research Paper**

In this course, we will be discussing how theories are tested with empirical research. For the research paper, you are expected to choose one of these theories and review its merits and weaknesses. The purpose of the paper is to argue FOR or AGAINST the theory’s validity. You are expected to answer the question: Is this theory an accurate explanation of crime or criminality? In order to do this, you will be required to find at least five scholarly journal articles that conduct original empirical research that tests your theory. This assignment will be due in two parts: a bibliography, due February 25, and a final paper, due April 7.

The bibliography will count as one of your quiz/assignment grades, but no final paper will be accepted without first having its bibliography approved. The bibliography should list, in a professionally recognized citation style of your choosing (e.g., MLA, APA, ASA, Chicago, etc.), all of the articles you have selected. The articles selected for this paper MUST meet the following criteria:

1. Must be from a peer-reviewed academic journal (e.g., *Criminology, Justice Quarterly, Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, etc.).
2. It must conduct original empirical research. It may not be a simple review of other research or an essay that proposes a new or describes an existing theory. The article MUST produce NEW KNOWLEDGE by analyzing data.
3. It must TEST a theory of crime covered either in this course or in your textbook.
4. All articles must test the same major theory (e.g., rational choice, strain, social disorganization, etc.).

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING ANY OF THESE CRITERIA, PLEASE CONSULT THE INSTRUCTOR.**

The final paper is worth 100 points (20% of your grade) and should be a minimum of 5 pages in length (double-spaced with standard font and margins). At the very minimum, the paper should meet the following criteria (excellent papers will exceed these criteria):

1. Clearly identify the theory you are discussing in the introduction
2. Clearly indicate your position. Do you support or oppose the theory?
3. Provide “signposts”—that is, reasons you either support or oppose the theory. This argument should incorporate the findings of the articles you used to reach your position. In doing this, you are NOT permitted to use any direct quotations that you do not fully
explain. I cannot tell if you understand the findings of the articles if you quote, so unless absolutely necessary and unless you are also able to summarize the meaning of the quotation, please refrain from using any direct quotations. Please note that your rationale CANNOT simply be that you happened to review more articles from one side than the other. You MUST describe why you found the evidence presented on the one side more convincing or reliable than the evidence on the other.

4. Consider competing arguments and explain why you have refuted them. You should use evidence from your articles here too. That is, why did you reject alternative positions?

5. Summarize your paper, your position, and your rationale in a concluding section.

6. **Properly** cite ALL sources you use in both the body of the paper and in the works cited section.

All papers are to be submitted Online through CourseWeb. Both the bibliography and the research paper will be due **before** the start of class on the due dates listed above. Ten points will be deducted from the paper for every day **OR PART OF A DAY** that the paper is late. No papers will be accepted more than five days late barring extreme extenuating circumstances.

**Course Schedule**

***Please Note: This schedule (including exam dates) is tentative and subject to change at the instructor’s discretion. Please be sure to check CourseWeb for scheduling updates. ***

January 7: Introduction to the course; Distribution of syllabus

January 12-14: Crime and Criminology
- Siegel, chapter 1

January 19-21: Nature and Extent of Crime
- Siegel, Chapter 2

January 26: Victims and Victimization
- Siegel, Chapter 3

January 28-February 2: Choice Theory
- Siegel, Chapter 4
- Donohue, “The Impact of the Death Penalty on Murder”

**February 4: EXAM 1 (date is subject to change)**

February 9: Trait Theories
- Siegel, Chapter 5
• Caspi, et al., “The Role of Genotype in the Cycle …”
• Drum, “America’s Real Criminal Element”

February 11: Learning How to Find Empirical, Academic Journal Articles
• ROOM TBD

February 16-23: Social Structure Theories
• Siegel, Chapter 6
• Sampson, et al., “Neighborhoods and Violent Crime …”
• Readings on Income and Wealth Inequality

February 25-March 1: Social Process Theories
• BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE FEBRUARY 25
• Siegel, Chapter 7
• Sykes & Matza, “Techniques of Neutralization”

March 3: Critical Criminology
• Siegel, Chapter 8
• Darrow, “Address to Prisoners …”

March 8-10: NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK 😎

March 15: Critical Criminology (cont’d) if necessary

March 17: Review Game

March 22: EXAM 2 (date is subject to change)

March 24-29: Developmental Theories
• Siegel, Chapter 9
• Laub & Sampson, “Turning Points in the Life Course”

March 31-April 5: Violent Crime
• Siegel, Chapter 10

April 7-12: Public Order Crimes
• FINAL PAPERS DUE APRIL 7
• Siegel, Chapter 13
April 14-19: Cybercrime & White-Collar Crime
   • Siegel, pp. 388-407
   • Siegel, pp. 330-340 (time permitting)

April 21: BONUS DATE
   • Will be used to make up a missed class (due to weather or illness), to catch up if we are behind, or as a review date

*FINAL EXAM: Date and time TBD by Registrar*