

Criminology Syllabus 2022 (V1)

Hello and welcome to criminology! For those that are returning, it is nice to see you again! For those that are new, I am excited to introduce you to the wonderful world of understanding why people do crime. This is the third iteration of this class, though the material will be slightly different from that presented in past years (2020 and 2021).

General Guidelines for the Class

Each class will go over some of the theories/applications behind criminology. We will also go over a series of practice questions to apply what we learned. Of note, we will be exploring various scenarios from thought experiments to real-life crime in the news. On that note, the nature of criminology does require exploring some unsettling scenes. **While all scenarios will be toned down to an appropriate level and strictly used for educational purposes, if you find yourself uncomfortable, this class may not be right for you.** With recent events (I make the comment that a historical event happens at least every week), it can and will be difficult to explore crime, especially at a young age.

Additionally, criminology is a little different from other psychology classes in which we focus primarily on criminal behaviors rather than, say, human development or mental health.

Ultimately, the main goal of this class is to expand your critical thinking skills in the world of crime. The general motivation for criminology is that if we are able to figure out why people do crime, we can take measures to make the causes less likely to come up.

Etiquette

By nature, criminology can also cover controversial and/or political topics. Dealing with criminal activity is a highly contested topic in the political sphere. In the two times I have taught this class, I have let the chat speak relatively freely. While I do enjoy reading through your discussion, **I ask that all discussions remain civil and class-related.** It is challenging to teach and moderate the chat for over 100 students at the same time, and I would rather spend more time teaching you over dealing with issues in the chat.

Crime in the News

A new addition to this class is “Crime in the News.” We will be briefly exploring topics from the past week’s Twitter trends, stories covered by various news stations, and more. The goal is to see how we can apply our criminology knowledge into current events.

Homework

There is no “homework” for this class! However, I may provide additional readings/links to help you further explore other criminology. In addition, in the cases where we may not cover all of the material in class, I will send the slides for you to reference and read through.

Calendar:

July 9 (Introduction and Theories)

- Introduction to the class and overview of syllabus

- Crime in the News: Shinzo Abe assassination
- What is criminology?
- Micro-Level Individual Theories
 - Rational Choice Theory
 - Routine Activities Theory
 - Psychological Theories
 - Biological Theory (if time)

July 16 (Application: Historical/Famous Crimes)

- (catch up on any material not covered on the first day)
- Crime in the News
- Historical/Famous crimes
 - Presidential Assassinations (Lincoln and Kennedy)
 - Prohibition Era
 - OJ Simpson
 - Trayvon Martin

July 23 (Micro/Macro Level Theories)

- Crime in the News
- Micro-Level Theories
 - Social Learning Theory
 - Differential Association Theory
 - Labeling Theory
- Macro-Level Theories (if time)
 - Strain Theory
 - Peacemaking Criminology and Restorative Justice

July 30 (Application: Crimes in Entertainment)

- (catch up on any material not covered on the third day)
- Crime in the News
- Crimes in Entertainment
 - The Joker and the IRS
 - The Joker and the two boats
 - Knives Out
 - Minority Report

August 6 (Forensics and Reports)

- Crime in the News
- Forensic Science
- Reading criminal statistics
 - Why statistics is not always correct

August 13 (Application: Crimes in Social Media)

- Crime in the News
- The effects of social media on criminal activity

Emails:

For safety reasons, all email correspondence will be recorded and cc'd to the organizers of HSSP. As such, please do not send any inappropriate emails between classmates, instructors, or anyone associated with HSSP.

While you are allowed to send me emails with questions (and I encourage you to do so), please follow the guidelines outlined in your Student Agreement. Since there are over 100 of you and because I want to answer as many of your questions as possible, what I will be doing is compiling all of your questions into a single email that will be sent out to the entire class. This is to have all the information in one place. All questions will be anonymous.

If you do not want your question to be shared with other students, please write in your email, "I do not wish to share this question with other students." I will email you a response and CC the admins of HSSP so that they have a record of the conversation. Please try to use this option only when necessary as there are a lot of students and some other students may benefit from your question.

Absences:

Unfortunately, classes will not be recorded. However, I will send slides the day after as a pdf. If you have any questions on what you have missed, please refer to the email section above.