

**University of Massachusetts Dartmouth
CJS 358 Criminological Theory
Summer 2008**

Instructor: Susan T. Krumholz, J.D., Ph.D.
Office: Group 1, Rm 392H, ext. 8370
Email: skrumholz@umassd.edu

Course Description:

The focus of this course is on developing an understanding of the casual factors of crime and criminal behavior as they emerge from the theories of a variety of disciplines including biology, psychology, law, economics, sociology and anthropology. The course will also present a broad picture of the criminal justice system, providing us with a framework for translating the theories into practice through policy development.

Required Texts:

Curran and Renzetti, Theories of Crime, 2nd edition
Renzetti, Curran, and Carr, eds., Theories of Crime: A Reader
Additional readings, available through the website, may be required.

Note that the text will be an integral part of your learning environment, and you cannot complete the course without it!

Expected Outcomes:

- 1) Working knowledge of all major theories of criminal causation.
- 2) Understanding of the sources of data, and ability to evaluate the data's support a theory.
- 3) Ability to critically evaluate theories.
- 4) Ability to translate a theory into a viable policy.
- 5) Improved ability to communicate—using both formal writing and conversation to clearly present ideas.

Course Requirements:

Discussions will constitute an important element of the learning environment. You will be expected to write at least four substantive posts per week in a discussion forum. Substantive means that your comments create new space for more discussion by introducing new questions and ideas. It does not include "I agree!" or "Good post!" although these comments are welcome if you

are moved to make them. Your timely and reflective post will be included in your participation grade.

The weekly assignments will involve answering questions based on the theories we are studying. They may include researching journal articles, web sites, or newspapers. You will be given the assignments on Wednesdays and they will be due by Monday morning.

The final exam will be a conceptual project that will allow you to show your understanding of the theories, and your ability to apply them to a real life circumstance.

Grading:

- 30% discussions
- 40% weekly assignments
- 30% final exam

Outcome Criteria:

An "A" represents:

- *Having completed all assignments in a timely manner.
- *Having demonstrated: 1) a clear understanding of the theories; 2) the ability to distinguish between theories by recognizing their philosophical underpinnings; 3) the ability to suggest viable social policy based on a theory.
- *Presenting original written work that is clear and grammatically correct; with proper spelling and work usage and proper citations.
- *Participating in class on a consistent basis; making valuable contributions to classroom discussion.

A "B" represents:

- *Having completed all assignments.
- *Having demonstrated a working knowledge of the theories presented; the ability to make policy suggestions based on a theory.
- *Presenting original written work that is easy to follow; showing improvement in the attention paid to matters of grammar, word usage, and format.
- *Making contributions to ongoing discussions.

A "C" represents:

- *Having completed all written assignments, and substantially fulfilling all peripheral assignments.
- *Having demonstrated a basic understanding of the categories of theories discussed; knowing what distinguishes a biological theory from a sociological theory, for instance; recognizing the difference between primary and secondary sources in reporting.
- *Presenting original work that is comprehensible. Showing a willingness to work to improve writing skills.

*Some participation in discussions.

Course Outline (tentative):

Week One

Introduction and Overview: Definitions, Data, and Methods review

Week Two

Classical & Neo-Classical Theories

Week Three

Biological and Psychological Theories

Week Four

Social Structure Theories

Week Five

Social Process Theories

Week Six

Critical Theories

Week Seven

Integrated Theories and Wrap-up