



PSYC/SOC 249: Criminal Behavior

Course Syllabus

Fall Semester 2021

Credits: 3

Contact Hours: 45

Class Hours: Wednesday 1:45 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.
plus one hour of expected classwork online a week
and one mandatory daylong field trip

Office Hours: Wednesday 3:30 p.m. by appointment, Faculty Office, first floor (Umbra Institute)

Course Type: Standard course

Course Description

Crime comes in many different forms, is known since the beginning of humankind and yet it is almost impossible to create a way of lifestyle that eliminates criminal activity completely from a society. The questions raised after a crime are stable over time: when, where, who, but the most important one is why. This course tries to give an answer by analyzing theories of crime, biological and psychological models of criminal behavior, crime and mental disorders, human aggression and violent crimes, cybercrimes and other specific offenses. Students will learn how to profile an offender in base of their actions, risk factors in human development and policies of crime prevention. Students are required to develop critical thinking skills when analyzing case studies by using the theoretical material learned in class.

Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Measures
	Course requirements that will be used to assess students' achievement for each learning outcome
Knowledge in Theories of Crime	Mid Term Exam
Critical Thinking Skills	Class Participation
Presentation skills	Case Ananlysis Presentation
Critical thinking skills	Annotated Bibliography
Linking psychological models of criminal behaviour to an example case	Reflective Paper
Knowledge in a range of different crimes	Final Exam

Course Materials

Readings

All readings will be available online on our Moodle course site in pdf format.

Assessment

Class Participation	15%
Case Analysis	15%
Mid Term Exam	20%
Reflective Paper	25%
Final Exam	25%

Grading

Letter grades for student work are based on the following percentage scale:

Letter Grade Range	Numerical Score Equivalent	Student Performance
A	93% - 100%	Exceptional
A-	90% - 92%	Excellent
B+	87% - 89%	Superior
B	83% - 86%	
B-	80% - 82%	
C+	77% - 79%	Satisfactory
C	73% - 76%	
C-	70% - 72%	
D+	67% - 69%	Low Pass
D	63% - 66%	
D-	60% - 62%	
F	59% or less	Fail (no credit)

Course Requirements

Grades are based on :

Class Participation (15%)

For the purposes of assessment, class participation refers to the following:

- Extent and quality of contributions to class discussions reflecting knowledge and understanding of the issues/topics in question.
- Demonstration of having read assigned material and extent of understanding such material.

- Asking perceptive and original questions.
- Listening and verbal communication skills.
- Recognizing the value of the opinions of others.
- Respecting the work of others.
- Demonstration of teamwork skills in small group work.
- Helping to foster a positive group environment.

Consider that physical presence alone is NOT class participation.

Case Analysis (15%)

Each student will receive a precise assignment and each student needs to expose his/her work to class on established dates by PowerPoint presentation followed by a short discussion of the topic inside class. Each assignment will be linked to the topic of the class and is part of the material for exams.

Mid Term Exam (20%) and Final Exam (25%)

Students will be required to complete written midterm and final exam. Both exams will be comprised of different types of questions (e.g., definitions, short essays, short answers), and at least 50% of these exams will be essay questions that will require students to utilize critical thinking skills and to apply knowledge learned from class and from required readings. Students will be asked to describe and discuss key concepts in the field of criminal behavior and apply these concepts to case examples. Students will need to describe various research methods as well as their strengths and limitations.

Reflective Paper (25%)

For the paper, students will choose one case/crime to work on and write a paper (2500 words, double-spaced, Times, 12 font) after analyzing the topic. The paper will consist of two parts: a short section that describes the actual crime and one that applies theories and researches in the field in order to analyze the criminal behavior of the offender. The findings section can include previous knowledge about the topic, a critique of research methodology, or ideas for further intervention in order to prevent criminal behavior. The paper needs to be written in APA Style, including references. **The reflective paper is due on Monday, November 15; submit proposal for approval latest by Monday, October 18.** A specific hand out is available on the Moodle platform.

Course Content Disclaimer

The course will use short movies or case examples that are NOT containing explicit violent images or material.

Attendance Policy

Absence for Covid-related circumstances: in order to keep the entire Umbra community healthy and to comply with local laws, you may not enter the Umbra premises if you have a temperature of 37.5°C (99.5°F) or higher. We also ask students that display strong cold or flu-like symptoms to take proper precautions and not risk spreading any type of illness. Students may attend classes remotely and without academic penalty via Zoom in case of self-isolation or illness during the Fall 2021 semester.

Class attendance (in person or through live connection) is mandatory. Students are allowed two "free" absences, which do not need to be justified. However, it is considered common courtesy to inform the instructor of your absence when possible. It is the students' responsibility to keep them in case of real necessity (sickness or any other unforeseen inconvenience that may prevent students from being in class). Each additional absence, unless for a very serious reason, will lower the students' grade by one grade level (i.e., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B). If students miss class, they are responsible for obtaining class notes from other students and/or for meeting the professor during office hours. It is also the policy of the Institute that any student who has eight or more absences automatically fails the class.

Except in the case of medical emergencies, absences are not accepted when tests are scheduled; tests cannot be made up. Furthermore, scheduled times and dates indicated for exams, quizzes, oral presentations, and any other graded assignments cannot be changed for any reason. Even if more sections of the same class are activated, students may only take exams during the scheduled times and dates for the section they are enrolled in.

Note: This course may have one or more meetings in the didactic garden located in Via delle Prome
17.

Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

WEEK 1

- Mon. Sept. 20 Introduction to Crime and Criminal Behavior (Online lesson)
Readings:
Walsh/Jorgensen, Criminology, Chapter 1+2
- Wed. Sept. 22 Exercise: what is a crime and its statistics

WEEK 2

- Mon. Sept. 27 Watch the documentary as indicated online
- Wed. Sept. 29 Victims and Victimization: in class discussion
Readings:
Walsh/Jorgensen, Criminology, Chapter 3

WEEK 3

- Mon. Oct. 4 Social Structure Theories: online
Readings:
Walsh/Jorgensen, Criminology, Chapter 6
- Wed. Oct. 6 Social Process Theories: in class lecture and discussion
Readings:
Walsh/Jorgensen, Criminology, Chapter 7
- Fri, Oct. 8 Day Trip to Florence

WEEK 4

- Mon. Oct. 11 Developmental Theories (online)
Readings:
Walsh/Jorgensen, Criminology, Chapter 11
- Wed. Oct 13 Psychosocial Theories: Traits and Crime (in class)
Readings:
Walsh/Jorgensen, Criminology, Chapter 9

WEEK 5

Mon. Oct. 18

Review (online)

Submit your proposal for the reflective paper.

Wed. Oct. 20

Midterm Exam: in class

SEMESTER BREAK

OCTOBER 25-29

WEEK 6

Mon. Nov. 1

Crimes of Violence: online

Readings:

Walsh/Jorgensen, Criminology, Chapter 12

Wed. Nov. 3

Crime Scene Investigation: exercise in class

Readings:

Crime Classification Manual (pdf online)

WEEK 7

Mon. Nov. 8

Cyber Crime: online

Wed. Nov. 10

New Frontiers in Crime: in class discussion

WEEK 8

Mon. Nov. 15

Sexual Assault: Offender typologies (online)

Readings:

Bartol/Bartol, Introduction to Forensic Psychology, Chapter 9

Submit your reflective paper online.

Wed. Nov. 17

Public Order Crimes: in class discussion

Readings:

Walsh/Jorgensen, Criminology, Chapter 15

WEEK 9

Mon. Nov. 22

Property Crime: online

Readings:

Walsh/Jorgensen, Criminology, Chapter 14

Wed. Nov. 24 Case studies: in class presentation

WEEK 10

Mon. Nov. 29 Latest challenges in crime and society (online)

Wed. Dec. 1 Review and taking stock of the experience

Dec. 6-10: Final Exams: date and time TBD

Bibliography

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