

Loyola University New Orleans
Theories of Criminal Behavior CRJU-C700-081
Spring I 2006

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Department of Sociology

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Office Hours: M 3:00 - 6:00 p. m. and before class in Mercy Hall 306E
and by appointment

Course Meeting Information:

January 20 and 21; February 17 and 18; and March 24 and 25, 2006

(Fridays 6:00 - 10:00 p.m. and Saturdays 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.)

Class meets in Monroe Library, Multi-Media Room #2 (ML133)

Course Description:

This course provides an in-depth overview of the origin and development of the major etiological theories of crime with special emphasis on criminal justice applications. We will consider both the historical roots and the cultural context of various branches of theories. After a brief review of the classical criminologists, we will focus our study on the contemporary schools of thought and the body of scientific research associated with each perspective. Our examination of the theories of criminality and associated research will be multidisciplinary in nature bringing in contributions from biology, psychology, sociology, law, and criminal justice as well as insights from history, economics and philosophy. Special attention will be given to the development of critical skills of theory analysis. We will consider not only the relationship between theory and research, but also theory and ideology, as well as theory and practice.

Course Goals and Objectives:

- To identify and understand the structure and substance of the fundamental paradigms of criminological thought and the works of key theorists (both classical and contemporary) that are associated with each paradigm.
- To critically analyze theories with respect to their relative strengths and weaknesses and to apply the criteria of critical evaluation.
- To understand the major theoretical debates in the field of criminology.
- To be well versed in the connection between theory and scientific research.
- To understand the politics and ethics of theory and research.
- To appreciate the linkage between theory and programmatic applications and policy formation.

- To conduct comprehensive theoretical literature reviews and prepare reports synthesizing major lines of theories and research.

Above everything else, the aim of this course is to convey the exciting quality of theories. Even though a portion of this course is concerned with abstract conceptual and technical matters, behind the discussion is the conviction that theories have important consequences - they influence our beliefs and experiences in everyday life. Theories are not mere neutral forces let out in a market place of ideas; they are at the core of the self-image of individuals and they are interwoven in the cultural fabric of contemporary society. They are at the root of conformity and deviance, and of peace and war; and they mirror the complex web of values held in society. Theories can be deeply absorbing and vitally interesting!

Required Readings:

Cullen, F. T. *Criminological Theory: Past to Present: Essential Readings* (2nd Ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Roxbury Publishing Company, 2003.

Lilly, J. R., Cullen, F. T., and Ball, R. A. *Criminological Theory: Context and Consequences* (3rd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002.

Class Handouts and Library Reserve Materials.

Class Format:

Although formal lectures have been planned for this course, it is primarily a graduate seminar. This means everyone in the class participates in raising questions over the assigned readings and takes an active role in analyzing and discussing the issues.

Class Decorum:

- Students are expected to come to class prepared and to actively participate in class.
- Questions and discussions are encouraged in class. Superior contributions to discussions and outstanding impromptu class presentations (based on readings and class materials) may result in extra credit points added to the final grade.
- **Assignments:** All assignments must be submitted in typed form in hardcopy (do not email assignments). Proofread and polish all work prior to submission. Assignments must be handed-in on their designated due dates. Late submissions will result in grade penalties or failure.
- Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services at 504-865-2990 as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.
- The *University Honor Code* will be strictly enforced. All work must represent each student's own efforts.

- **Attendance:** Individuals are expected to be punctual and regular in their class attendance. Excessive absences (no more than 4 hours per term) will result in failure or necessitate withdrawal from the course. If a student misses the first weekend of our Intensive Weekend class, the student must withdraw from the class. In such case contact the Department of Criminal Justice or City College Office immediately.
- If for reasons of serious illness or other emergency you are unable to complete the course requirements as scheduled, you must speak with the professor regarding approval of a grade of “I” (Incomplete). Please note that grades of “I” change to “F” automatically if the course is not completed and the grade changed by the sixth week of the subsequent term, excluding summer terms. The resulting “F” grade remains the permanent grade for the course.
- All students are encouraged to come to office hours, Mondays 3:00- 6:00 p. m. or just prior to class or by appointment. My office is in Mercy 306E (you may enter through Mercy 306).

Course Requirements:

- I. **Position Papers:** Prepare written position papers/reactions to your selected discussion questions, which have been designed to amplify the lecture materials. You may choose one from each group of questions associated with each weekend meeting of the class (see Tentative Order of Lectures for questions corresponding to lecture materials for each week-end meeting of the class). Your position papers/reactions should be informed by class materials (lectures and readings) as well as additional library research. Each written reaction should be approximately 3-5 pages double-spaced in length including citations and bibliographic references. Your written papers/responses will form the basis of brief oral presentations to the class, which should serve to stimulate further class discussion of the questions. The written papers/responses must be submitted to be graded at the end of each weekend class when the specific question is scheduled for discussion. Together the *three* position papers/responses (i.e., one position paper corresponding to each weekend session - 3 total) will comprise 25% of the final grade.

- II. **Critical Review:** Summarize and critically analyze the key theoretical elements of five (5) articles (representing different perspectives on theory) selected from 5 different sections of Cullen and Agnew’s *Criminological Theory: Past to Present: Essential Readings*. Use the “Criteria for Evaluating Theories” (handout discussed in class) for your analysis of each theoretical perspective. Compare and contrast the perspectives of the five articles. Include a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of each theory and consider which theorist you think does the best job of explaining crime (please explain fully). Your critical review should be approximately 10-12 pages double-spaced in length. It is due on February 18, 2006. The critical review will comprise 25% of the final grade.

III. Term Paper/Project: Select a crime-prevention or control program on the metropolitan, state, federal, or private level. Describe how the program works and provide any evidence of its impact or indicators of success. Theoretically analyze the program. Begin by identifying the underlying school(s) of thought or theories and the fundamental assumptions that underpin the program. Then provide a review of the theoretical research literature that supports the program idea or thesis as well as a critical assessment (i.e., the strengths and weaknesses) of the theoretical base that informs the program. Be sure to include citations and a bibliography. Finally, do you think the program represents an adequate test of the theory? Below is a sample list of sources of information on various crime prevention and control programs to help you get started in your search:

- Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). For example, "Blueprints for Violence Prevention" (NCJ204274) is available online at:
<http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/publications/PubAbstract.asp?pubi=11721>. Also check "Successful Program Implementation: Lessons From Blueprints" (NCJ204273), which is available online at <http://www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/publications/PubAbstract.asp?pubi=11719>.
- National Institute of Corrections (<http://www.nicic.org/>). For example, see "Workplace Development for Community Corrections in the 21st Century."
- Faith-bases Resources for Reducing Crime and Violence (<http://www.stopviolence.com/restorative/faith-based.html>). For example, see the "Sycamore Tree Project."
- Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Criminal Justice (<http://www.cole.state.la.us/>). Go to the bottom of the web page to the section titled "Programs". For example, see "Drug Abuse Resistance Education Program" (D.A.R.E.), Crime Victim Assistance, Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, etc.
- Building Blocks for Youth: For a Fair and Effective Youth Justice System <http://buildingblocksforyouth.org/issues/> For example, see Louisiana's state plan to address disproportionate minority confinement.

Your Term Paper/Project should be approximately 15-20 typed double-spaced pages in length. It is due in the City College Office (Stallings Hall, second floor) on April 24, 2006. Ask to have your paper/project put into Dr. Voigt's folder. The Term Paper/Project will comprise 30% of the final grade.

IV. Final Examination: Your Take-Home Final Examination (approximately 10 pages in length, which comprises 20% of your final grade) will be due in class on the last day of class (Saturday, March 25, 2006). After reviewing all of the theories and their respective policy implications that we have considered in class and in light of what you have learned this semester, please respond to the

following question: What recommendations would you offer a criminal justice review panel for creatively reforming the post Katrina criminal justice system in New Orleans? Be sure to support your recommendations with appropriate theories and associated criminological research evidence on what works and what does not work in preventing or controlling crime.

Tentative Order of Lectures

January 20 and 21, 2006

Crime, Criminals and Criminal Justice: Public Opinion vs. Expert Knowledge

Crime and Ideology

History of Criminal Law and Criminological Thought

Origins of Scientific Criminology

Linking Theory, Research, and Practice:

- **Theory Components and Structure**
- **Theory Testing: The Scientific Method**
- **Theory Applications: The Evaluation Process**
- **Critical Analysis: Elements of Critical Evaluation**
- **The Ethics and Politics of Theory and Research**

Reading Assignment: Cullen and Agnew, *Criminal Theory: Past to Present: Essential Readings*, **Introduction** and Parts I-IV; and Lilly, et al., *Criminological Theory: Context and Consequences*, Chapters 1-2. Class Handout: "Criteria for Evaluating Theories."

Class Discussion Questions: Please choose one of the following questions for your first position paper (written response due in class). Be sure to cite references for your observations/conclusions. Please be prepared to discuss all questions in class.

1. What is Criminology? (Please offer a detailed discussion of its meaning, its substantive areas, the significance of its contributions to our understanding of human behavior and society, and its place in the world of ideas.)
2. Is Criminology a science? (Please discuss the debated issues - explain fully.)

3. Why is Criminology considered a multiparadigm discipline? (Please discuss what is meant by multiparadigm and what significance this has.)
4. What is the meaning and significance of the terms *macro* and *micro* theories? (Please discuss fully and give some examples.)
5. How did the media's portrayal of crime and violence during and after Hurricane Katrina compare to the actual incidents of crime and violence for this time period?

February 17 and 18, 2006

(In addition to your second position paper, your **Critical Review** is due!)

Criminological Paradigms:

- **Biological Criminology**

- **Psychological Criminology**

- **Sociological Criminology**

Reading Assignment: Cullen and Agnew, Parts V-VIII; and Lilly, et al., Chapters 3-5.

Class Discussion Questions: Please choose one of the following questions for your position paper. Be sure to cite references for your observations/conclusions. Please be prepared to discuss all of the questions in class.

1. Are human beings naturally violent?
2. Can dangerousness be predicted in individuals?
3. Does mental illness cause crime?
4. Are crimes in certain geographical zones or social areas foreseeable?
5. According to research results, what are the major correlates of crime?
6. Is crime like beauty in the eyes of the beholder?
7. What is the most popular brand of theories of crime today?

March 24 and 25, 2006

Criminological Paradigms (continued):

- **Conflict Theories: Critical/Radical Criminology**

New Directions in Theories:

- **Feminist Theories**
- **Integrated Theories**
- **Life-Course Theories**

The Impending Crisis in Criminology

Reading Assignment: Cullen and Agnew, Part IX-XII; and Lilly, et al., Chapters 6-9.

Class Discussion Questions: Please choose one of the following questions for your position paper. Be sure to cite references for your observations/conclusions. Please be prepared to discuss all of the questions in class.

1. To what extent does social class or power determine who or what is criminal?
2. Compare and contrast a radical conflict view of criminology with a consensual view (include in your discussion the key underlying assumptions of both perspectives). What is the significance of this difference?
3. What is the future of crime trends? (Be sure to provide evidence.)
4. What is the future direction of criminology? (Please include ideas of major authorities on the subject.)
5. How can it be that over a century of theorizing and research has made little or no apparent impact on the trends of crime in our society or upon our ability to modify criminal tendencies in individuals?

(In addition to your final position paper, your response to the Take-Home Final Examination Question is due in class on March 25, 2006.)

Final Examination Question: What recommendations would you offer a criminal justice review panel for creatively reforming the post Katrina criminal justice system in New Orleans?

A special invitation: On Wednesday, March 8, 2006, the Loyola University New Orleans Department of Criminal Justice is sponsoring a field trip to the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola, Louisiana. Transportation will be provided by Louisiana Coaches Trailways. The bus will be departing from Loyola at 6:30 a. m. promptly in order to arrive at the penitentiary at 10: a. m. This will be an all day event including lunch at the penitentiary cafeteria. A nominal fee of \$13.00 is due during time of sign-up for the trip (\$10.00 covers the cost of transportation, which is subsidized by Loyola's Department of Criminal Justice, and \$3.00 covers the lunch). Students participating in the field trip will receive 5 extra credit points added to their final grade. In the event that students are unable to take part in the field trip, but desire to have an opportunity to get extra credit, they may submit a paper on or before the last day of class on a selected topic (5-7 pages in length).