

Crime Theories & Victimization
CJ 4340, Section 002
Fall, 2024
M-W 2:00 pm - 3:20 pm
Classroom: Hines 203

Instructor: Romy Zingraff, M.S. (she/her/hers)

Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays, 1 pm - 2 pm and by appointments

Office Location: Hill House

Email: prj30@txstate.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the causes of crime, crime victimization, competing explanations for crime, and the impact of crime on crime victims. Students are provided with an in-depth look at classical and contemporary theories of crime causation and victimization. Diverse theories are considered, and their policy implications are explored. The course draws on perspectives advanced by several diverse fields of inquiry, for example, biology, psychology, sociology, and the political and economic sciences. This class is writing intensive.

Prerequisite: CJ 1310 with a grade of "D" or better.

CONTENT WARNING:

Please be advised that some class material may contain images and related content that may be considered graphic or disturbing to some. Topics may be triggering for some; **practice self-care**. If need be, Texas State University offers **counseling services**. More information can be found on their website (<https://www.counseling.txst.edu/>). In addition, TimelyCare is a **FREE** mental health app for students (<https://www.healthcenter.txst.edu/timelycare.html>).

CONTACT POLICIES

Students who wish to contact me for various reasons can do so by **emailing me** (prj30@txstate.edu). Even though I do my best to answer emails as quickly as possible, please give me 24 hours (**weekend NON included**) before sending a follow-up email. You can also make an in-person or Zoom **appointment**.

COURSE CANVAS SITE

<https://canvas.txstate.edu/courses/2334662>

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course explores crime and criminality in modern society, emphasizing the underlying assumptions, propositions, and supporting evidence of current crime theories. In this course, students will:

- **Recognize** the competitive views and models in criminology to address crime in society.
- **Analyze** the historical, social, and political background of criminological theory.
- Develop a critical approach to analyze and critique competing theories of crime.
- **Describe** the key theoretical concepts of major crime theories.
- Acquire and verbalize an interdisciplinary approach to explain crime and its impact on society.
- Assess the theory's use, importance, and connection to criminal justice policy and decision-making.
- Identify the patterns, trends, and risk factors of crime and victimization.
- Review contemporary theory and policy issues connected with crime and victimization.
- Examine the development and growth of victim compensation services for crime victims.

REQUIRED TEXT AND READINGS

Readings will be uploaded on Canvas.

EVALUATIONS

Exams (4): Four regularly scheduled **non-cumulative** exams will be held in the classroom during class time and will be **closed notes** and **closed book**. Each exam is worth **100 points**. About 50% of the exam points will come from multiple-choice questions and about 50% from short-answer questions. Each exam must be taken as scheduled, except for documented medical or family problems. Students caught cheating on an exam may receive a failing grade for the course. (**Total: 400 points**)

Packback (4): Four PackBack discussions will be due throughout the semester. The due dates are set up for using the PackBack assignments as exam reviews. Each Packback is worth **10 points**. These discussions are designed to help you critically engage with the material covered in class and prepare for your upcoming exams.

1. **Engagement**: These assignments allow you to explore the course material more deeply and engage with your classmates. Be sure to provide thoughtful, well-supported answers demonstrating your understanding of the theories and concepts discussed in class.
2. **Curiosity Score**: Your responses should aim for a curiosity score of at least 70 points. This score reflects the depth, originality, and relevance of your contributions. Responses below this threshold will receive half credit, so elaborate on your thoughts and provide supporting evidence where necessary.
3. **Submission**: You must choose two of the three questions provided for each assignment. Late submissions will not be accepted, so please plan accordingly.

4. **Citations:** When referencing theories, studies, or specific content from the readings, cite your sources appropriately. This strengthens your argument and helps your classmates follow along with your reasoning. Only use class resources.

By thoughtfully engaging with the PackBack questions, you will enhance your understanding of criminological theories and be well-prepared for your exams. **(Total: 40 points)**

Portfolio: The final portfolio is a comprehensive project that requires you to compile, analyze, and synthesize the significant crime and victimization theories covered throughout the course. This portfolio will serve as a culmination of your learning, demonstrating your ability to critically engage with the material and apply theoretical concepts to real-world scenarios. The project is due on **December 11th at 5 p.m.** and is worth **100 points**.

It will be time-consuming, so you must start early in the semester. As such, **two drafts** will be due throughout the semester. Each draft is worth **30 points**. **(Total: 160 points)**

More information about the drafts and final portfolio can be found on Canvas under “*Final Portfolio Resources*.”

Students are expected to be familiar with all University policies regarding academic dishonesty. <http://www.dos.txstate.edu/TxState-Handbook/Rules-and-Policies/Honor-Code.html>

It is a violation of the honor code to submit anything generated from ChatGPT and other similar AI software programs for any assignment for this class. It is okay (and actually encouraged) to use Grammarly.com, Turnitin.com, or other grammar/plagiarism check software programs.

Attendance in every class is strongly encouraged because there is a strong positive association between class attendance and course grades (the more the attendance, the better the course grade). Attendance will be taken sporadically during the semester, and attendees will be given bonus exam points. Do not assume you can get everything you need to know from the PowerPoints.

Final grades will be out of **600 points**:

A	540 – 600	90%-100%
B	480 – 539	80%-89%
C	420 – 479	70%-79%
D	360 – 419	60%-69%
F	359 or below	≤ 59.9%

Any grade disputes for assignments, exams, and/or the final grade must be submitted in writing within one week after the grade is given, with clear and substantial reasons for the desired grade change. I will not discuss grades without first receiving this written statement. However, if you believe an error has been made with your grade, please bring that to my attention as soon as possible.

LATE POLICY

The deadlines are non-negotiable. However, if there are extenuating circumstances (e.g., hospitalization, religious observance, death in the immediate family, required participation in a university-sponsored activity, required participation in active military service) that prevent you from completing the work on the scheduled date, notice and documentation must be given to the instructor. The student and instructor must schedule make-up/different-day quizzes, which may consist of essay questions and alternate formats of the original at the instructor's discretion.

COURSE POLICIES

Appointments and E-mail: Students are encouraged to meet with me at their convenience to address questions, concerns, and any other issues that may arise regarding the course. I am available by appointment on campus and via Zoom.

Absences: **Students without university-recognized absences will not be allowed to make up missed assignments or exams and will receive a grade of 0.** An excused absence will be granted for a documented, physician-ordered illness, death in the immediate family, or other documented crisis, a call to active military duty or jury duty, a religious holy day, or an official university activity. If you miss an assignment or exam due to an emergency, please 1) notify me as soon as possible or 2) contact the Dean of Students Office to make an absence notification request at <https://www.dos.txst.edu/services/care-center/absence.html>.

Technology: You will need a computer and Internet to access Canvas for course materials and quizzes.

Netiquette: Respect the diversity of opinions among the professor and your classmates by engaging with them courteously, respectfully, and professionally. All posts and classroom communication must be conducted following the Student Code of Conduct. Think before you push the Send button. Did you say just what you meant? How will the person on the other end read the words? Maintain an environment free of harassment, stalking, threats, abuse, insults, or humiliation toward the instructor and classmates. This includes but is not limited to, demeaning written or oral comments of an ethnic, religious, age, disability, sexist (or sexual orientation), or racist nature, and unwanted sexual advances or intimidations by e-mail or on discussion boards and other postings within or connected to the online classroom. Please let the professor know if you have concerns about something that has been said.

Grade Reductions: I reserve the right to lower the final grade by one letter grade due to repeated instances of disruptive behavior. If you engage in disruptive behavior to the learning environment, you will be given a written warning. If a student has received an official warning about his or her behavior and chooses to repeat it, they will be notified of the impending grade change at the end of the semester.

Notice of Copyright/Intellectual Property: I will post my slides on Canvas, but students will not post lecture notes or other course materials on commercial or public websites. Notes are to be used for personal use only (which may include sharing notes with a classmate or in a study group, which is highly encouraged). Posting notes without my permission violates the academic honor code and university policies regarding intellectual property. Any infringement will reduce the final grade by one full letter grade. In addition, university sanctions allowed by the relevant university policies and procedures will be pursued.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Students Needing Accommodations: A student with a disability may require accommodation(s) to participate in this course. They must contact me within the first two weeks of the semester. They will be asked to provide documentation from the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at that time. Failure to contact me promptly will delay any accommodations the student may seek. Ongoing care by a physician does not automatically qualify you as an ODS special needs student. Students are required to file paperwork for accommodations with ODS each semester. Accommodations granted one semester do not automatically carry forward to the next.

Academic Honesty Policy: The submission of any work for a grade for which unauthorized help has been received is termed academic dishonesty and may be grounds for a failing grade in the course. "Unauthorized" is used here to designate stealing, copying (with or without permission), or collaboration with others. Students are strongly encouraged to review the academic honor code and refer to the Texas State University student handbook for policies related to academic dishonesty. These policies may be found at <http://www.dos.txstate.edu/handbook/rules.html>.

Addressing Acts of Academic Dishonesty: Students accused of dishonest conduct may hear their cases from the faculty member. The student may also appeal the faculty member's decision to the Honor Code Council. Students and faculty will have the option of having an advocate present to ensure their rights. Possible actions that may be taken range from exoneration to expulsion. Students accused of violating the academic honor code are encouraged to consult UPPS No. 07.10.01 at <http://www.txstate.edu/effective/upps/upps-07-10-01.html>.

STUDENT RESOURCES

Health and Wellbeing: If you or another Texas State student are struggling, the Dean of Students Office manages [Here to Help](#) to assist students experiencing crises or emergencies or displaying concerning behaviors. Submissions are received directly by the Dean of Students Office's [CARE Center](#). This process takes an individualized and holistic approach to assessing

submissions and determining an appropriate course of action or referral based on the information provided in the submission. [LinkedIn Learning](#) is available to all faculty, staff, and students and includes resources on wellbeing, career development, time management, and other skills and knowledge.

The [Counseling Center](#) provides counseling, telehealth appointments, and educational workshops and videos for students who may be struggling with mental health issues. [Therapy Assistance Online \(TAO\)](#) is a free online program available to faculty, staff, and students that helps build skills for dealing with anxiety, depression, and other shared concerns. The [Student Health Center](#) also provides various student resources, including healthcare services and sexual violence resources, including [Students Against Violence Peer Education \(SAV\)](#).

First-Gen Students, Financial Concerns, & Food Insecurity: The Texas State website provides links to multiple national and campus resources for [first-gen students](#). For students facing food insecurity, Texas State has the [Bobcat Bounty](#). Students must submit a [participant survey](#) before attending. Bobcat Bounty is hosted every Thursday from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. in room 187 of the Family and Consumer Sciences building. [Bobcat Balance](#) serves the legal, financial, and mental health needs of faculty and staff.

Scholarships, Grants, Research, and Funding: Texas State also has the [Bobcat Online Scholarship System \(BOSS\)](#) for various scholarship opportunities and information on [TXST grants](#) for both undergraduate and graduate students. For students interested in pursuing research, there are opportunities for [undergraduate research funding](#). If you are interested in pursuing research at an undergraduate level, feel free to reach out to your [instructor](#) or any of our TXST Criminal Justice & Criminology [faculty](#).

Emergency Management: In an emergency, faculty, students, and staff should monitor the [Safety and Emergency Communications webpage](#). This page will be updated with the latest information available to the University and provide links to information concerning safety resources and emergency procedures. Faculty, students, and staff are encouraged to sign up for the [Texas State Alert system](#).

RIGHT TO CHANGE THE SYLLABUS

Although I put considerable effort into the syllabus to balance your workload and ensure that the course flows, adjustments to the content, timeline, and due dates for assignments may be required during the semester. If this is necessary, some components of the syllabus may change. However, any such changes will be posted on Canvas. The students are responsible for any such announced changes.

Week	Day	Date	Topic	Readings/Important Info	Due
1	M	08/26	Syllabus Day		Read Syllabus
	W	08/28	Introduction to criminological theories	Gennaro & Maahs, 2021	
2	M	09/02	LABOR DAY - NO CLASS		
	W	09/04	Criminological Schools	Darvesh, 2020	
3	M	09/09	Deterrence theory	Ihekwoaba et al., ND; NIJ, 2016; Tomlinson, 2016	
	W	09/11	Rational choice theory	Perrera, 2024	
4	M	09/16	Routine activities theory	Cohen & Felson, 1979; Exam #1 review available	
	W	09/18	Mental Health Day¹ - NO CLASS		PackBack #1 due @2 pm
5	M	09/23	Exam #1		Exam #1
	W	09/25	Biological & biosocial theories	Gerould et al., 2019	
6	M	09/30	Psychological theories	Akers et al., 2019 (Chapter 4)	
	W	10/02	Social learning theory	Akers & Jennings, 2016	Draft #1 due @2 pm
7	M	10/07	Control theories	Britt & Rocque, 2016; Gerould et al., 2019	
	W	10/09	Self-control theory	Akers, 1991; Gottfredson, 2017; Exam #2 review available	
8	M	10/14	Mental Health Day - NO CLASS		PackBack #2 due @2 pm

¹ Please note that all mental health day can be replaced by in-person exam reviews if needed.

	W	10/16	Exam #2		Exam #2
9	M	10/21	Labeling & reintegrative shaming theories	Cullen & Wilcox, 2010; Triplett & Upton, 2016	
	W	10/23	Social disorganization theory	Akers et al., 2019 (Chapter 8)	
10	M	10/28	Anomie/strain theories	Bernburg, 2014; Bernburg, 2021	
	W	10/30	General strain theory	Agnew, 2016; Exam #3 review available	
11	M	11/04	Mental Health Day - NO CLASS		PackBack #3 due @2 pm
	W	11/06	Exam #3		Exam #3
12	M	11/11	Conflict theories	Black, 2013	
	W	11/13	Marxist theories	Chambliss et al., 2000; Sims, 2007	
13	M	11/18	Critical theories	Schwartz & Brownstein, 2016	Draft #2 due @2 pm
	W	11/20	Feminist Criminology	Tibbetts, 2019; Tripathi, 2016; Van Gundy, 2016	
14	M	11/25	Victimization Theories Part #1	Mkhize & Majola, 2021; Pratt & Turanovic, 2021	
	W	11/27	Thanksgiving Break - NO CLASS		
15	M	12/02	Victimization Theories Part #2	Pratt & Turanovic, 2015; Exam #4 review available	
	W	12/04	Mental Health Day - NO CLASS		PackBack #4 due @2 pm
16	M	12/09	Exam #4		Exam #4
	W	12/11			Portfolio due @5pm