



CRIM 12: Introduction to Criminology

Instructor: Anna Newell, M.A.

akn5535@psu.edu

Class Meeting Times: Willard Building 067 Monday-Friday 9:35-10:50 AM

Office hours: Wednesdays 11 AM – 12 PM in Willard 067 or by appointment

Course overview:

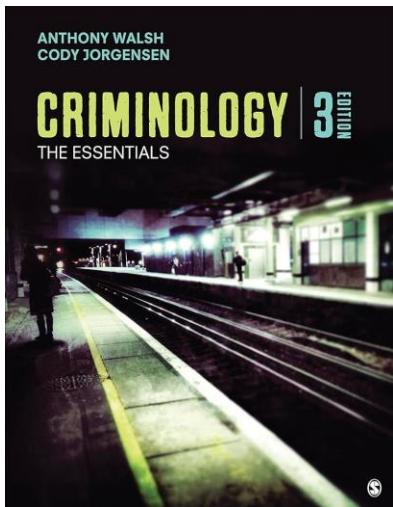
Criminology is the study of crime, criminals, and why people commit crime. In this course, students will be introduced to the major theories of criminality, research methods of studying criminality testing theories, the history of the criminal justice system, and contemporary issues in criminology and criminal justice.

This course will address several of Penn State's general education learning objectives, including effective communication, critical and analytical thinking, and integrative thinking. Students will learn these objectives by thinking critically about criminal justice issues, applying criminological theory to real-world scenarios, and integrating perspectives from multiple disciplines, including sociology, psychology, and political science.

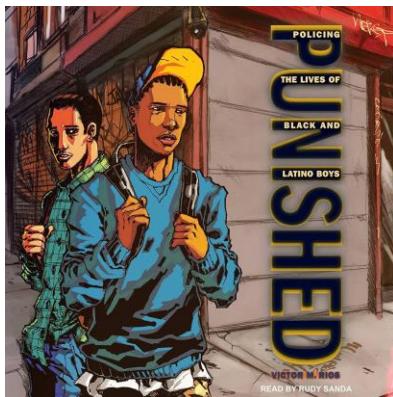
The course will follow a consistent schedule each week. On Mondays and Tuesdays, I will give a lecture on class content that you will need to know for the midterm and final paper. On Wednesdays, we will watch a video on contemporary criminal justice issues. You will write a reaction paper about the video based on a prompt that I will give you in class. The reaction papers will be due at the end of class. On Thursdays, we will have a lecture for the first half of class and a discussion about what we have covered that week during the second half of class. On Fridays, you will work collaboratively on an activity that covers content from the week. There will also be weekly quizzes that will be available on Canvas until Friday at 11:59 PM. You should complete the weekly assigned readings so that you are prepared for these quizzes. Journal articles will be available as PDFs on Canvas.

Required text:

Criminology: The Essentials, 3rd Edition, Walsh and Jorgensen



Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Youth



Assignments:

You will be assessed based on class attendance and participation, weekly reaction papers and quizzes, an open note multiple-choice midterm, group assignments and activities, and a final paper due at the end of the semester.

Attendance. Attendance is a required and important component of this course. You can miss two classes without it affecting your attendance grade so long as you let me know prior to class. I completely understand that extenuating circumstances may arise that prevent you from letting me know in advance. Please let me know if you run into any problems that inhibit you from attending class and we can make arrangements.

Group work. Group work will involve responding to open-ended questions about the readings. You will work collaboratively with your classmates three times this semester. All members will receive the same grade based on the final submitted work. This work will be completed on Fridays during class, so you will not have to meet with your classmates outside of class.

Participation. Participation is a crucial aspect of this class. At the end of the semester, you will receive a grade for participation based on your engagement in class discussions, group work, and answering questions I ask during lecture.

Reaction papers. Reaction papers will be administered on Wednesdays and will ask questions about videos we will watch during class. These are graded based on thorough completion.

Quizzes. Weekly quizzes will be given on Canvas. These are open-note and open-book multiple choice quizzes that will assess your knowledge of the readings.

Midterm. The midterm exam will be an open-note and open-book multiple choice test that will be available on Canvas during Week 3. It must be completed by 11:59 PM on Sunday, June

Final Paper. The final paper will be an 8-10 page paper applying a criminological theory to a real crime. The rubric will be available on Canvas. You will describe the theory you wish to apply and prior research on this theory, the facts of the crime you are applying the theory to, and how well-suited you think the theory is at explaining the crime. We will discuss the requirements for this paper throughout the class and you are encouraged to meet with me individually to discuss your plans for the paper. It must be completed by 11:59 PM on Monday, June 24th.

Grading	
Attendance	5%
Group Work	5%
Participation	10%
Reaction Papers	10%
Quizzes	20%
Midterm	20%
Final Paper	30%

Final Class Grade	Letter Grade
97-100%	A+
93-96%	A
90-92%	A-
87-89%	B+
83-86%	B
80-82%	B-
77-79%	C+

73-76%	C
70-72%	C-
67-69%	D+
63-66%	D
60-62%	D-
0-59%	F

*Final grades will be rounded up to the next percentage point and grades will not be negotiated.

Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest, and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at The Pennsylvania State University, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle.

According to Penn State policy [G-9: Academic Integrity](#), an academic integrity violation is “an intentional, unintentional, or attempted violation of course or assessment policies to gain an academic advantage or to advantage or disadvantage another student academically.” Students with questions about academic integrity should ask these questions **before submitting work**. Please do not use AI resources such as ChatGPT to complete class work. This constitutes an academic integrity violation. Quizzes and exams will be open note, but I ask that you complete these assignments on your own and without the help of other students.

Disability Accommodations:

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University’s educational programs. Every Penn State campus has an office for students with disabilities. Student Disability Resources (SDR) website provides [contact information for every Penn State campus](#) (<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/disability-coordinator>). For further information, please visit [Student Disability Resources website](#) (<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/>).

In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: [See documentation guidelines](#) (<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/guidelines>). If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus disability services office will provide you with an accommodation letter. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early as possible. You must follow this process for every semester that you request accommodations.

Counseling and Psychological Services:

Many students at Penn State face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. The university offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients' cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation.

Counseling and Psychological Services at University Park (CAPS)

(<http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/>): 814-863-0395

Counseling and Psychological Services at Commonwealth Campuses

(<http://senate.psu.edu/faculty/counseling-services-at-commonwealth-campuses/>)

Penn State Crisis Line (24 hours/7 days/week): 877-229-6400

Crisis Text Line (24 hours/7 days/week): Text LIONS to 741741

Educational Equity:

Penn State takes great pride to foster a diverse and inclusive environment for students, faculty, and staff. Acts of intolerance, discrimination, or harassment due to age, ancestry, color, disability, gender, gender identity, national origin, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, or veteran status are not tolerated and can be reported through Educational Equity via the Report Bias webpage (<http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias/>).

Course schedule:

Week 1: Introduction to Criminology

Defining crime and criminality, studying criminology, and overview of major theories

Readings:

Criminology: The Essentials chapters 1-2

Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Youth chapter 1

Schedule:

Monday, May 13th: syllabus overview and introduction to Criminology

Tuesday, May 14th: criminal justice system actors and systems

Wednesday, May 15th: video and reaction paper due at the end of class

John Oliver – Wrongful Convictions

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kpYYdCzTpps&list=PLyJbJ-guR_hfFKj84ZpXzLf5AYPNQmQRP&index=4

Reaction paper due at the end of class

Thursday, May 16th: discussion

Friday, May 17th: overview of major criminological theories

Quiz #1 due at midnight on Thursday, May 16th

Week 2: Deterrence Theory and Choice Theories

Overview of the four major goals of punishment and choice and learning theories

Readings:

Criminology: The Essentials chapters 4-5

Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Youth chapter 2

Schedule:

Monday, May 20th: goals of punishment and deterrence theory

Tuesday, May 21st: rational choice theory and routine activities theory

Wednesday, May 22nd: John Oliver – The Death Penalty

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kye2oX-b39E&list=PLcsifFtU7OzVvbUaG2KZmcBq7oK0hg_xg

Discuss and debate

Reaction paper due at the end of class

Thursday, May 23rd: discussion

Friday, May 24th: group activity

Quiz #2 due at midnight on Friday, May 24th

Week 3: Social Disorganization Theories, Anomie and Strain Theories, and Social Control Theory

Conceptualizing how social structures prevent and create crime

Readings:

Criminology: The Essentials chapters 6-7

Sampson and Groves (1989). Community structure and crime: Testing social-disorganization theory.

Agnew (1985). Social control theory and delinquency: A longitudinal test.

Schedule:

Monday, May 27th: **NO CLASS** (Memorial Day)

Tuesday, May 28th: social disorganization theory guest lecture – Sheri Gudez

Wednesday, May 29th: Brandon M. Matthews Ted Talk – The Surprising Reason Our Correctional System Doesn't Work

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LmvBGmu9k4>

Reaction paper due at the end of class

Thursday, May 30th: discussion

Friday, May 31st: social control theory and anomie/strain

Midterm due at midnight on Sunday, June 2nd

Week 4: Biopsychosocial Theories, Learning Theories, and Labeling Theory

Relating individual traits and social reactions to individual behavior to crime

Readings:

Criminology: The Essentials chapters 9-10

Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Youth chapter 3

Schedule:

Monday, June 3rd: biopsychosocial and learning theories

Tuesday, June 4th: Labeling Theory

Wednesday, June 5th: Deanna Van Buren Ted Talk – What a World Without Prisons Could Look Like

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m6X1i8khmt8>

Discuss and debate

Reaction paper due at the end of class

Thursday, June 6th: guest lecture – Ryan Bowman

Friday, June 7th: group activity

Quiz #3 due at midnight on Friday, June 7th

Week 5: Application of Criminological Theories

Examining research that tests criminological theories and relating the theories we have learned to real world crime examples

Readings:

Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Youth chapter 4-5

Bernburg, Krohn, and Rivera (2006). Official labeling, criminal embeddedness, and subsequent delinquency: A longitudinal test of labeling theory.

Chamlin and Cochran (1995). Assessing Messner and Rosenfeld's institutional anomie theory: A partial test.

Schedule:

Monday, June 10th: feminist criminology guest lecture – Gwyneth Evans

Tuesday, June 11th: theory testing

Wednesday, June 12th: John Oliver – Mandatory Minimums

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pDVmldTurqk&list=PLcsifFtU7OzVvbUaG2KZmcBq7oK0hg_xg&index=6

Reaction paper due at the end of class

Thursday, June 13th: delta-8 research and social learning theory

Friday, June 14th: NO CLASS

Extra credit early submission of final paper due at midnight on Friday, June 14th

Quiz #4 due at midnight on Friday, June 14th

Week 6: Current Research in Criminology and Future Directions for the Field

Contemporary criminal justice issues, how the field of criminology studies these issues, and future directions for criminal justice policy and research

Readings:

Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Youth chapters 6-7

Calaway and Kinsley (2017). Rethinking Bail Reform.

Tonry (2014). Remodeling American Sentencing: A Ten-Step Blueprint for Moving Past Mass Incarceration.

Nguyen, Thomas and Tostlebe (2023). Revisiting the relationship between age, employment, and recidivism.

Schedule:

Monday, June 17th: policing guest lecture – Bianca Wirth

Tuesday, June 18th: overview of several important journal articles

Wednesday, June 19th: John Oliver – Bail

Discuss and debate

Reaction paper due at the end of class

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IS5mwymTIJU&list=PLcsifFtU7OzVvbUaG2KZmcBq7oK0hg_xg&index=5

Thursday, June 20th: discussion

Friday, June 21st: group activity and class wrap up

Final paper due Monday, June 24th at midnight