This course is part of the core requirements for the Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice and is primarily designed to explore (1) the nature of criminal behavior and (2) the range of criminological theories that attempt to explain criminal behavior. All justice system practitioners make assumptions about human nature and society (for example “free will” versus “determinism”) when attempting to understand the causes of criminal behavior and when developing strategies for dealing with crime. In many cases, whether practitioners realize it or not, their assumptions are based on criminological theory. In this course, emphasis is placed on understanding how various criminological theories attempt to explain crime, particularly those theories considered to be more conventional or mainstream in the field of criminology (i.e., strain theory, learning theory and control theory). Emphasis is also placed on understanding how criminological theories and their related assumptions shape the development and implementation of crime control strategies by criminal justice policy-makers.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Define and describe the focus of criminology as a field of study;
2. Explain the differences between the study of criminology and criminal justice;
3. Describe and discuss differences between crime and deviance;
4. Discuss the reasons that it is so difficult to define crime from culture to culture and over time, and describe the efforts of criminologists to define crime;
5. Describe and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the statistical systems used to measure crime in the United States;
6. Identify the basic characteristics of various criminological theories (including biological, psychological, ecological, strain, learning, control, labeling, conflict, radical, realism, peacemaking, feminist, and postmodern theories) and describe their underlying assumptions about human nature, society and the causes of crime;
7. Describe and discuss the various strategies for controlling crime that are suggested by these different criminological theories; and
8. Recognize the changing nature of crimes in the modern world such as terrorism and white collar crime, and their political and social contexts.

Readings


Instructional Methods

1. Lectures and class discussions on aspects of criminal justice and criminological research;
2. Readings in required materials;
3. Films / Class Activities;
4. Four (4) examinations. Examinations will consist of thought problems, multiple choice items, or essay questions drawn from the readings, lectures, films, and guest speakers. Examinations will be completed in the computer laboratory. The examination with the lowest score will be dropped so that only three examinations will count toward your final grade;
5. An individual paper that uses theory(ies) of criminal behavior to (a) explain incidents of a so-called game known as "knockout" where teens randomly sucker-punch strangers with the goal of knocking them unconscious with a single blow (some such incidents have resulted in the death of the victim) and (b) to recommend crime control strategies for reducing the likelihood of such incidents. The paper is to be typed in 12 point font, double-spaced, and be from 4 to 5 pages in length (excluding the title page and references). The focus and structure of the paper will be discussed in greater detail in the class. The paper is due on April 16;
6. A creative group project that focuses on criminological theory. Groups will consist of no more than five students. Each group will research a specific criminological theory that is assigned by the professor. The objective of the project is to describe the history and characteristics of the theory, explain the assumptions underlying the theory (especially assumptions about the causes of criminal behavior), and to provide real-world examples of crime control strategies that are suggested by the theory. A central objective of the project is to provide a clear understanding of the theory that other students can grasp and remember readily. The requirements and grading criteria for the project will be discussed in greater detail during class. A hardcopy and electronic version of the project (e.g., PowerPoint, paper, or video) will be provided to the professor by April 30. The professor will make the electronic version available to the class through Blackboard;
7. Class presentation of the group project; and
8. I recommend keeping a glossary of key terms, concepts and methods during the course. While the glossary will not be graded, it will be helpful in directing your studies and preparing for examinations.

Grades

Grades will be assigned on the basis of the following weights:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four Examinations (best 3)</td>
<td>60 pts</td>
<td>(60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Paper</td>
<td>20 pts</td>
<td>(20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Project and Presentation</td>
<td>20 pts</td>
<td>(20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100 pts</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

100-93=A; 92-90=A-; 89-88=B+; 87-83=B; 82-80=B-; 79-78=C+; 77-73=C; 72-70=C-; 69-68=D+; 67-63=D; 62-60=D-; less than 60=F

Make-Up Examination Policy

There will be no make-up examinations except in cases of extreme hardship. If you are not present to take one of the four examinations, that examination will be the one dropped from consideration in calculating your final grade. You will have to take all remaining examinations.

Plagiarism Warning

Plagiarism is to take and present as one's own the writing's or ideas of others. You should understand the concept of plagiarism and keep it in mind when taking examinations and writing papers in this course. Possible disciplinary actions for cheating and plagiarism at SDSU include expulsion, suspension, and probation. Instructors have certain options with respect to sanctioning students for
plagiarism including assigning an F grade for the course. A report will be prepared by the instructor and forwarded to the Office of Judiciary Procedures for all instances of plagiarism. It will also be reported to the Chair of the appropriate academic division and to the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs on the Imperial Valley campus. The specifics of SDSU’s Academic Senate Policy with respect to handling cases of suspected plagiarism can be found at the following link: http://its.sdsu.edu/docs/TURN_Plagiarism_AcadSen.pdf

**Students with Disabilities**

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (760) 768 5509 or (760) 7 5637. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that I cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until I have received an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

**Tentative Schedule of Activities**

1/22  Review the syllabus and discuss the course. For the next session read the material assigned for 1/29. **The syllabus is required reading and should be read thoroughly by the next session.** Questions/ concerns.

**CRIMINOLOGY AND CRIME**

1/29  Schmalleger: Chap 1: What is Criminology? (crime and deviance; criminology and social policy; the social context of crime); **Film: Origins of Human Aggression: The Other Story** which discusses biological, environmental, and psychological reasons behind human violence; **Class Activity:** Why do people commit crime?

**CRIME THEORIES AND CRIME CAUSATION**

2/5  Schmalleger: Chap. 2: Where Do Theories Come from? (science of criminology; theory building); **Film:** Psychology, Criminality and Incarceration in America; **Form Groups for Creative Group Project**

2/12  Schmalleger: Chap. 3: Classical and Neoclassical Thought (the classical school; situational crime control; punishment and neoclassical thought)

2/19  Schmalleger: Chap. 4: Biological Roots of Criminal Behavior (biological theories; body types; genetics; policy implications of biological theories); **Class Activity:** Who is to blame….the individual or society?  **First Examination**

2/26  Schmalleger: Chap. 4: Biological Roots of Criminal Behavior (biological theories; body types; genetics; policy implications of biological theories); **Class Activity:** Who is to blame….the individual or society? **Film:** In the Blood: Is Criminal Behavior Genetic? (DVD 65)

3/5  Schmalleger: Chap. 5: Psychological and Psychiatric Foundations of Criminal Behavior (forensic psychology; psychological theories; personality disorders; insanity; psychological profiling)
3/12 Schmalleger: Chap. 6: Social Structure Theories (social disorganization theory; strain theory; culture conflict theory; policy implications of social structure theory); Film: Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory: An Introduction (DVD 348)

3/19 Schmalleger: Chap. 7: Theories of Social Processes and Social Development (learning theory; social control theory; labeling theory; shaming; ecological criminology; policy implications of social development theories)

Second Examination

3/26 Schmalleger: Chap. 7: Theories of Social Processes and Social Development (learning theory; social control theory; labeling theory; shaming; ecological criminology; policy implications of social development theories); Film: In the Shadow of Feeling (2007) which discusses factors that can turn children to psychopathy

4/2 No Class – Spring Recess

4/9 Schmalleger: Chap. 8 Social Conflict Theories (radical criminology; left realist criminology; feminist criminology; postmodern criminology; peacemaking criminology; policy implications of social conflict theories)

CRIMES IN THE MODERN WORLD

4/16 Schmalleger Chap. 9: Crimes Against Persons; Schmalleger Chap. 10: Crimes Against Property; Individual Paper Due; Third Examination

4/23 Schmalleger Chap. 13: Technology and Crime; Schmalleger Chap. 14: Globalization and Terrorism; Film: (one of several related to information technology/terrorism); Creative Group Project Due (hardcopy and electronic version)

4/30 Creative Group Project Presentations

5/7 Creative Group Project Presentations

FINAL EXAMINATION WEEK

5/14 Fourth Examination (optional if you are satisfied with your scores on the first three examinations); Review Grades