Fall 2025
Criminology
CRIJ 3313 CRN 11279
Online

Instructor: Dr. Caitlyn Muniz
Office Hours: By appointment in LART 343
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Communication

The most efficient means of communication with me is through email using the email address listed above (do not message me on Blackboard). I make every possible effort to respond to emails within 24 hours. Do not reply to announcements or assignment comments. I do not get notifications for them and will not reply.

Course Description and Objectives:

Social context has given rise to various theoretical developments in the explanation of criminal behavior. Throughout this course, you will examine the evolution and empirical status of traditional to contemporary theories of criminal behavior, with a focus on the historical context of each theory. In addition, you understand the impact of theory on prevailing crime control policies in different historical eras.

Learning Outcomes

1. Discuss the components of a theory
2. Describe the qualities of a good theory
3. Explain the major elements in past and current criminological theories
4. Discuss the policy implications of major criminological theories

Edge Advantages

This course is designed to equip students with essential Edge Advantages that contribute to their professional and personal development. Students will develop the following Edge Advantages:

	Problem-Solving	Assignments will challenge students to identify and address complex social issues using innovative and analytical approaches.
	Communication	Written assignments will improve students' skills in articulating ideas clearly and persuasively in written forms.
	Social Responsibility	Through understanding social problems, students will foster a sense of responsibility towards their community and society at large.
	Confidence	By actively participating and successfully completing assignments, students will build self-assurance in their abilities to tackle academic and real-world challenges.

	Critical Thinking	The course's emphasis on analysis and synthesis of information will strengthen students' abilities to think critically and make informed decisions.

Required Text:

All class materials are no-cost Open Education Resources. All required readings, lectures, and supplemental learning materials can be found on Blackboard. Therefore, access to the Internet and Blackboard will be necessary.

Course Requirements and Grading

1. Quizzes – 20%
2. Infographics (2)– 20%
3. Exams—35%
4. Written Paper – 20%
5. SONA Participation (3 hours)—5%

Course Assignments

All assignments are due at 5pm on their due date!

1. Weekly Quizzes

A large portion of your grade is based on comprehension of the material through quizzes. You will have a quiz to complete each module. The quiz questions will be a combination of multiple choice and true/false. Questions will be based on the reading(s), lectures, and videos (if applicable). Quizzes are to be done independently. Each quiz and exam will have a strict time limit based on the number and difficulty of the questions. Your 2 lowest quiz grades will be dropped. Therefore, no makeups will be allowed.

2. Infographic

The infographics will be due on Blackboard and must contain the following information about the theory:

1) School of thought (e.g., classical, positivist, macro-sociological)
2) Main ideas of the theory (what does the theory assert causes crime?)
3) Main theorists (who developed the theory?)
4) Policy implications (how can laws be implemented to reduce crime based on the theory?)

Students must submit two infographics about two different theories throughout the duration of the course. Please Google "infographics" if you aren't sure what one is!

Blog about Infographics

3. Exams

There will be two essay exams (mid-term and final). Exams must be completed independently and by the due date. You are not allowed to use generative AI on the exam.

4. Written Paper

Students will choose two theories, describe, compare, and contrast them.

The paper must discuss the following regarding their theories of choice:
1) The assumption about human behavior/what causes crime
2) The main ideas of each theory (how does the theory explain criminal behavior)
3) The policy implications of each theory (what policies should be implemented to reduce crime according to the crime)
4) Which theory they believe better explains crime and why. Make a compelling argument!

This paper will require students to write thoughtfully using formal academic language, APA style citations, and academic sources beyond class readings.

- Paper must be 5 pages in length.
- Have at least **8** academic articles (not news sites, websites, or textbooks). These must be journal articles.
- Paper must use formal, academic, conventional writing style.
- APA in-text citations and references

Using AI for brainstorming

Some AI technologies or automated tools, particularly generative AI such as ChatGPT or DALL-E, can be beneficial during the early brainstorming stages of an activity, and you are welcome to explore them for that purpose. However, keep in mind that AI-generated ideas are not your own and may hinder your ability to think critically and creatively about a problem. It is also important to remember that these technologies often "hallucinate" or produce materials and information that are inaccurate or incomplete—even providing false citations for use.

That said, you are not allowed to submit any AI-generated work in this course as your own. If you use any information or materials created by AI technology, you are required to cite it like you would any other source. Consider how this will affect your credibility as a writer and scholar before doing so. Any direct use of AI-generated materials submitted as your own work will be treated as plagiarism and reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR).

5. SONA Participation

Students need to participate in three 3 credit hours of SONA. If a student does not wish to do so, an alternative assignment will be provided. Student must email me to indicate they wish to complete the alternative assignment.

Extra Credit

Extra credit opportunities will be provided so that students can improve their grades. No individual extra credit opportunities will be provided nor will there be any end-of-semester grade adjustments.

Student Expectations

Participate. Students are expected to contribute to all class discussions and are responsible for all material presented in each module, including course-related announcements.

Check Email & Blackboard Regularly for Course Correspondence. Valuable information regarding the course schedule, assignments, and grades will be posted to Blackboard.

Be Respectful. This includes directing full attention to discussions. When participating in discussion and in email exchanges with the instructor and other classmates, students are expected to use respectful language. Do not communicate with others via the Internet in a way you would not interact with them in person. Disrespectful language, and/or disrespectful classroom behavior will not be tolerated. In instances of serious or repeated infractions, students will be subject to University disciplinary action.

Complete Quizzes and Assignments When Scheduled. Students are informed in writing (this syllabus) of the due dates of exams and assignments for the entire semester on the first day of class. You will have ample time to compete all work. For this reason**:**

LATE WORK IS NOT ACCEPTED & MAKE UP EXAMS ARE NOT AN OPTION*

Exception: Emergencies, Religious Observances, & University Excused Absences. Students are expected to notify their instructors at the beginning of each academic term if they intend to be absent for an announced examination. Students absent for religious reasons, as noticed to the instructor at the beginning of each academic term, will be given reasonable opportunities to make up any work missed.

Email Etiquette

All students are expected to communicate with me in a professional and respectful manner. Emails that are not written respectfully and professionally will be met with no response. As adults preparing to enter the professional or academic world, you are expected to conduct yourself as an academic or professional. This skill is necessary for success in all realms of your life.

Blackboard

Access to the internet is required to obtain the course material. Therefore, students need reliable access to the internet to complete this class successfully.

Grading Scale

Grade	Percentage
A	90%-100%
B	80%-89.9%

C	70%-79.9%
D	60%-69.9%
F	below 60%

Course Organization

The course is organized by weekly modules. You will access each week's assignments and materials by accessing the current week module. Each week has a brief description of the topic and assignments within the module.

Instructor Communication

Please allow 48 hours for response from me. I try to respond within 24 hours, but if you email me on a weekend or if you send a message an hour before an exam or before an assignment is due, do not expect to receive a response in time. Please give yourself plenty of time for this response time. Announcements and assignments will be through Blackboard. Failure to frequently check Blackboard is done so at risk of missing current communication, materials, and assignments.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is required. Classes are run on the basis of class interaction. Students must be prepared, participate in individual/group discussions, and complete the course modules.

Technology Requirements

Course content is delivered via the Internet through the Blackboard learning management system. Ensure your UTEP e-mail account is working and that you have access to the Web and a stable web browser. Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox are the best browsers for Blackboard; other browsers may cause complications. When having technical difficulties, update your browser, clear your cache, or try switching to another browser.

You will need to have access to a computer/laptop and the internet. You will need to download or update the following software: Microsoft Office, Adobe Acrobat Reader, Windows Media Player, QuickTime, and Java. Check that your computer hardware and software are up-to-date and able to access all parts of the course.

If you do not have a word-processing software, you can download Word and other Microsoft Office programs (including Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and more) for free via UTEP's Microsoft Office Portal. Click the following link for more information about Microsoft Office 365 and follow the instructions.

IMPORTANT: If you encounter technical difficulties beyond your scope of troubleshooting, please contact the UTEP Help Desk as they are trained specifically in assisting with technological needs of students. Please do not contact me for this type of assistance. The Help Desk is much better equipped than I am to assist you!

Netiquette

When communicating electronically, many of the feelings or impressions that are transmitted via body language in face-to-face communications are lost. Consequently, interpreting emotions and innuendos is much more difficult. Only what is written, or drawn, carries the message. Often, excitement can be misinterpreted as anger or insult. It is important to keep this in mind as we communicate online. Words in print may seem harmless, but they could emotionally injure when working at a distance. Hence, it is vitally important that we are conscious of how we communicate while working at a distance.

For example, avoid the use of caps in your electronic messages, as wording in caps comes across as shouting. The standard practice ("Netiquette") for participation in networked discussion requires that all participation be focused on the topic at hand, not become personalized, and be substantive in nature. A person may certainly disagree with someone else's view, but you must do so respectfully; you may express strong beliefs but you must allow for differing opinions.

Please observe the following:

- You are required to check the Blackboard course shell daily for messages, updates and assignments.
- Always consider audience. Remember that members of the class and the instructor will be reading any postings.
- Respect and courtesy must be provided to fellow classmates and the instructor at all times, in all contexts. No harassment or inappropriate postings will be tolerated.
- Be professional and careful in what you say about others.
- When reacting to someone else's message, address and focus on the ideas, not the person who posted them.
- Be careful when using sarcasm and humor. Without face-to-face communications your joke may be viewed as criticism.
- Blackboard is not a public internet venue; all postings to it should be considered private and confidential. Whatever is posted on in these online spaces is intended for classmates and professor only. Please do not copy documents and paste them to a publicly accessible website, blog, or other space. If students wish to do so, they have the ethical obligation to first request the permission of the writer(s).
- The obstruction or disruption of any group activity, discussion board or any other course activity is prohibited and will subject the student or group of students to disciplinary action.
- An instructor may deny a student access to participate in class activity for up to two individual classes (or course related activity periods) for behavior that is disruptive to the learning or teaching environment. Individuals so denied may be immediately referred to the Office of the Dean of Students for additional disciplinary intervention including withdrawal from the course.

Policy for withdrawing or dropping the Course

Students are responsible for seeing they are withdrawn from the course by the drop deadline. Please contact the Registrar's Office to initiate the drop process. Students that are withdrawn by the drop

deadline will automatically receive a grade of "W". After the student drop deadline, students will receive a grade of "F" except under extraordinary circumstances and only with the approval of the instructor and academic dean.

Scholastic Integrity

UTEP prides itself on its standards of academic excellence. In all matters of intellectual pursuit, UTEP faculty and students must strive to achieve based on the quality of the work produced by the individual. Students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Any form of scholastic dishonesty is an affront to the pursuit of knowledge and jeopardizes the quality of the degree awarded to all graduates of UTEP. Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOOP). It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another as ones' own. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All suspected violations of academic integrity at The University of Texas at El Paso must be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR) for possible disciplinary action. To learn more HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline.

Copyright Infringement and Plagiarism

Copying a textbook, or any other copyrighted material is a violation of U. S. copyright law. Violation of U. S. copyright law can result in civil damages up to $100,000 for each work copied. Copying of textbooks or any other copyrighted material is not "fair use" under the Copyright Act. The "fair use doctrine" only permits non-commercial copying of part (in general, not more than 10%) of a copyrighted work.
Do not take credit for work that is not your own by copying and pasting from the internet, failing to cite sources of information, failing to attribute direct quotes to their original author, or submitting your work from another course without prior permission. Do not use AI to write your papers for you (that's not your work…). Do not use AI at all on exams.

Calendar and Modules Subject to Modification

The calendar provided for the course is a "best estimate" schedule for the class. Unexpected scheduling problems and developing course materials may result in a modification of the schedule. Current events may also cause the elimination or substitution of other material that may become more relevant. You may rely on this course schedule as a BASIC outline for the course. The schedule is not a contractual agreement and is subject to change. Students will receive guidance concerning alterations to the schedule through announcements. Regardless of the ordering of material covered, stay up with the scheduled reading assignments. Because of the nature of the material and texts, course requirements are designed to aid in developing an integrated understanding of the material with the full semester in mind. Quizzes and assignments are designed with the assumption that you have read relative materials prior to participation.

Accommodations Policy

Students requesting an accommodation based on a disability must register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services. If you have or believe you have a disability that may impact your ability to succeed in a class, whether it be online or face-to-face, you may wish to contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) to show documentation of a disability or to register for testing and services. Students who have been designated as disabled must reactivate their standing with the CASS yearly. If you feel that you may have a disability requiring accommodations and/or modifications, contact CASS at (915) 747-5148.

You also can visit the CASS website at http://sa.utep.edu/cass/ or the CASS office in Room 108 East Union Building.

Student Resources

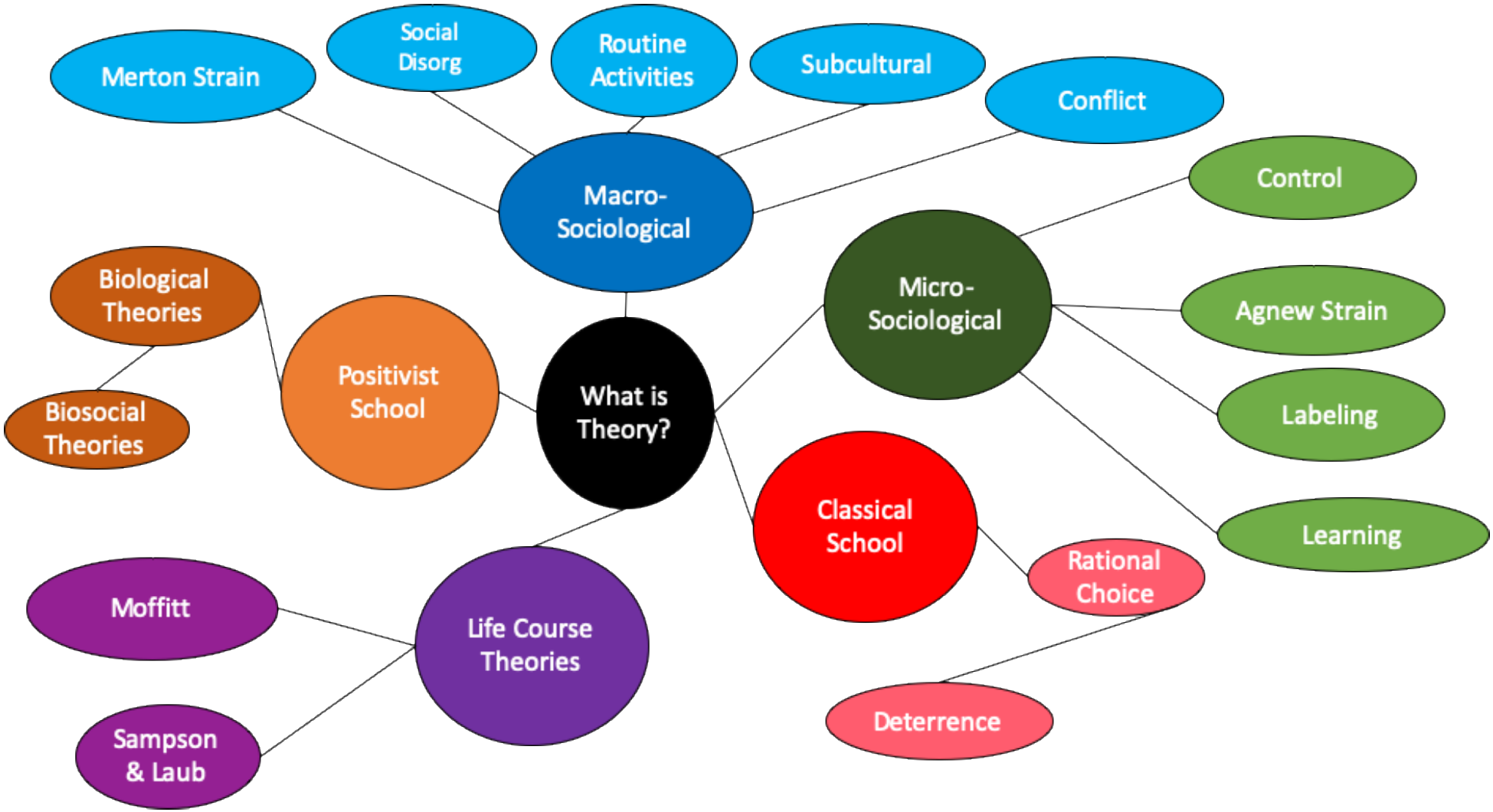
UTEP provides a variety of student services and support:

- UTEP Library: Access a wide range of resources including online, full-text access to thousands of journals and eBooks plus reference service and librarian assistance for enrolled students.
- Help Desk: Students experiencing technological challenges (email, Blackboard, software, etc.) can submit a ticket to the UTEP Helpdesk for assistance. Contact the Helpdesk via phone, email, chat, website, or in person if on campus.
- University Writing Center (UWC): Submit papers here for assistance with writing style and formatting, ask a tutor for help and explore other writing resources.
- Military Student Success Center: UTEP welcomes military-affiliated students to its degree programs, and the Military Student Success Center and its dedicated staff (many of whom are veterans and students themselves) are here to help personnel in any branch of service to reach their educational goals.

Mandatory Reporting

As mandatory reporters, faculty can no longer have confidential conversations with students or other reporting persons about their experiences with sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, or sexual assault. If a topic in class leads to a discussion of experiences of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, or sexual assault I must share the information with the University so that the student can receive care, support and resources and learn about the options for having the situation addressed and resolved within the University. Even though I am obligated to share the information with University officials specially trained to respond, students' privacy will be respected; identities and details will be shared only with those who need to know to support the reporting person and to address the situation through the University's processes.

	Required Material	Assignment	Date
Important Info	Read syllabus and how-to-succeed documents	Syllabus Quiz	8/29
How to Research	Research Materials	Quiz 1	9/5
Module 1	What is a Theory	Quiz 2	9/12
Module 2	Classical Criminology	Quiz 3	9/19
Module 3	Positivist Criminology	Quiz 4	9/26
Module 4	Psychological Theories	Quiz 5 **Infographic 1 Due**	10/3
Mid-Term Exam (covers first half of class)			10/10
Module 5	Life Course Theories	Quiz 6	10/17
Module 6	Macro-Sociological Theories Pt.1	Quiz 7	10/24
Module 7	Macro-Sociological Theories Pt.2	Quiz 8	10/31
Module 8	Micro-Sociological Theories Pt. 1	Quiz 9	11/7
Paper Topic Due			11/10
Module 9	Micro-Sociological Theories Pt. 2	Quiz 10 **Infographic 2 Due**	11/14
Paper Due			11/21
Thanksgiving week			11/24-11/28
Written Final Exam (covers second half of class)			12/3


Merton Strain
Social Disorg
Routine Activities
Subcultural
Conflict
Macro-Sociological
Control
Micro-Sociological
Agnew Strain
Labeling
Learning
Biological Theories
Biosocial Theories
Positivist School
What is Theory?
Classical School
Rational Choice
Deterrence
Moffitt
Sampson & Laub
Life Course Theories