Course Overview & Objectives

This course is designed to dispel myths & popular misconceptions about the extent of crime & violence & about who commits crime in the United States. After developing an understanding of the basic contours of criminal offending, we use criminological theories to help us understand why some people engage in criminal behavior & others do not, why some communities have higher crime rates than others, & why crime rates are high during some periods of history & low in others. Students will also come away with a better understanding of what has influenced their own decisions regarding involvement in crime. Additional topics include: defining what is criminal, measuring criminal offending, media portrayals of crime, & characteristics of offenses such as homicide, burglary, drunk driving, & prostitution. These issues & topics are presented using a sociological perspective, meaning that students will become more aware of the social forces shaping offending patterns & official reactions to it.

Required Textbook


Class Format

This course is based on weekly modules that open each Monday morning at 8:00AM and close the following Friday at midnight (Mountain Standard Time). If students fail to submit any required work (i.e. an exam or assignment) before the module closes they will receive a grade of zero (0) for that assignment—no exceptions!

As outlined in the syllabus, each weekly module will focus on one chapter from our textbook. For each of these chapters, I will prepare a brief outline and introduction that is intended to provide guidance and structure to students as they read the chapter. Students should read this outline before reading the chapter. Students may wish to print the outline.

Every fourth week, students will take an exam. Exams are only available to access and complete during the module they are schedule. A failure to submit it before the
time the module closes will result in a grade of zero (0) for that exam. Additionally, the exams are timed, meaning that once students begin the exam, they will have ninety minutes (1 hour and 30 minutes) to complete and submit their exam. All exams are “open book,” meaning that students can use any class materials they wish when completing this assignment. However, they cannot “collaborate” in any way with any person (whether they are a fellow student or not) when completing the exams. Doing so constitutes cheating and will be dealt with per the policy on academic dishonesty specified later in the syllabus.

Students will be able to communicate with me and each other to ask questions, share concerns, raise ideas, etc. through “Dr. Z’s Corner.” This is an open forum discussion board where students can post general questions, comments, and ideas for each other and me. I will access “Dr. Z’s Corner” at least once each business day and post any needed responses. The postings on “Dr. Z’s Corner” will be continuously available to students throughout the semester. Finally, never post exam questions on “Dr. Z’s corner.” Posting exam questions before everyone has taken the exam will be considered an act of cheating.

**Requirements**

Students will complete 4 exams consisting of 50 multiple choice questions. All class materials and assignments can be the basis of test questions. Each exam is worth 100 points for a total of 400 points. In addition, each week students will be given a written assignment. These assignments consist of answering a specific question regarding the chapter for that week and is limited to no more than 500 words. There will be 12 assignments and each is worth 10 points (120 points total). Again, a grade of zero (0) will be assigned to each exam and assignment not submitted by the time the respective weekly module closes. Exams and assignments will be available on Monday at 8:00 AM each week and close midnight on Friday (Mountain Standard Time).

**Final Grade Calculation**

Your final grade in this class will be determined based on the 4 exams and 12 written assignments.

- **Exam 1** 100 Points
- **Exam 2** 100 Points
- **Exam 3** 100 Points
- **Exam 4** 100 Points
- **Assignments** 120 Points

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**Total Points: 520 Points**
Final Grade Distribution:
- 520-468 Points = A
- 467-416 Points = B
- 415-364 Points = C
- 363-312 Points = D
- 311-0 Points = F

Please Note: There will be no curve used in grading, no grades will be dropped, and there will be no extra credit. Do not contact me at the end of the semester regarding extra points for a particular letter grade. Your grade is an accomplishment, not a gift! There will be no incompletes (grade of I) offered in this course. I have the right to make any changes to the course or syllabus and any changes will be announced in class and/or email.

Important Reminders
The exams are timed, meaning that once you begin the exam you will have a limited amount of time (90 minutes) to complete and submit your work. The exams will automatically close and submit at the end of the time limit if you haven’t already submitted it yourself. Do not wait until the last minute to begin exams. This way, if you do experience any difficulties with submissions, they can be corrected before the module closes.

Technology Issues
I will not provide you with technical assistance. Rather, you should familiarize yourself with the assistance available to you whenever you have problems. You should also ensure that you have the appropriate hardware and software.

- **Technical Assistance:** Please see the “Tech Support” link in the left side menu of Blackboard.
- **Hardware Requirements:** Please see the “Getting Started” link in the left side menu of Blackboard.
- **Software Requirements:** Please see the “Getting Started” link in the left side menu of Blackboard.

Class and University Policies

**Academic Dishonesty Statement:** Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. 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 laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another person's as ones' own. And, 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. Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions.

1. Notice of Safe Assign: This course will utilize third party software that has the ability to automatically detect plagiarism on documents submitted for grading.

2. Copyright Notice: Many of the materials that are posted within this course are protected by copyright law. These materials are only for the use of students enrolled in this course and only for the purpose of this course. They may not be further retained or disseminated.

3. Note for students with disabilities:
If you are registered at the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) with a learning disability, please let me know so I can accommodate your needs. Students with disabilities are responsible for making their needs known to the instructor, and seeking available assistance in a timely manner.

A Final Note
1. I will provide you clear instructions on class expectations.
2. I will check my email and will answer back to you as soon as possible.
3. I will check “Dr. Z’s Corner” each business day and make any needed responses at that time.
4. I will provide graded feedback on your performance in a timely manner.
5. I will keep you informed about your graded progress in the class at all times and will make time to discuss your concerns when needed.
6. I am open to suggestions about improvement of the class and class related activities.
7. I will do all I can to ensure your learning and success in this class
8. If any changes in the course are to be implemented, I will ensure that the class is notified in a timely manner.
9. Read all postings on the bulletin board and all emails from me.
10. Email messages are sent to your UTEP email address, so you will want to check your UTEP email several times a week, preferably each business day.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Class Lecture</th>
<th>Readings and Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>August 25-29</td>
<td>Criminology and the Sociological Perspective</td>
<td>Chapter 1 Assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>September 1-5</td>
<td>The Measurement and Patterning of Criminal Behavior</td>
<td>Chapter 3 Assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>September 8-12</td>
<td>Victims and Victimization</td>
<td>Chapter 4 Assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>September 15-19</td>
<td><strong>Exam 1</strong></td>
<td>Chapters 1, 3, &amp; 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 2: Explaining Crime</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>September 22-26</td>
<td>Classical and Neoclassical Perspectives</td>
<td>Chapter 5 Assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>September 29-October 3</td>
<td>Biological and Psychological Explanations</td>
<td>Chapter 6 Assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>October 6-10</td>
<td>Sociological Theories: Emphasis on Social Structure</td>
<td>Chapter 7 Assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>October 13-17</td>
<td><strong>Exam 2</strong></td>
<td>Chapters 5, 6, &amp; 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>October 20-24</td>
<td>Sociological Theories: Emphasis on Social Process</td>
<td>Chapter 8 Assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>October 27-31</td>
<td>Sociological Theories: Critical Perspectives</td>
<td>Chapter 9 Assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 3: Criminal Behaviors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>November 3-7</td>
<td>White-Collar and Organized Crime</td>
<td>Chapter 13 Assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>November 10-14</td>
<td><strong>Exam 3</strong></td>
<td>Chapters 8, 9, &amp; 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>November 17-21</td>
<td>Political Crime</td>
<td>Chapter 14 Assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 4: Controlling and Preventing Crime</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>November 24-28</td>
<td>Prosecution and Punishment</td>
<td>Chapter 17 Assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>December 1-5</td>
<td>Conclusion: How Can We Reduce Crime?</td>
<td>Chapter 18 Assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>December 8-12</td>
<td><strong>Exam 4</strong></td>
<td>Chapters 14, 17, &amp; 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>