SOCL 4461 CRIMINOLOGY

"Society prepares the crime and the criminal commits it." -- Henry Thomas Buckle, English Historian

Fall 2018

Section 1: Tuesdays and Thursdays 7:30 a.m. to 8:50 a.m. in Stubbs 220

Professor: **Michael S. Barton, Ph.D.**
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Office Hours: **Mondays and Thursdays 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and by appointment.**

This course explores topics related to the definition and measurement of crime and the dominant theories used to explain why crime occurs. Prerequisite: SOCL 2001 or equivalent.

What should you expect to get from this course?
   1. Understand how crime is defined and measured.
   2. Learn about, and be able to discuss and apply, the major theories of crime.
   3. Understand how social, economic, and other factors affect crime (and perceptions of crime) in the United States.
   4. Be able to critically examine claims related to crime made by academic and non-academic sources.

Readings:
REQUIRED:
   Mosher, Clayton, Terance D. Miethe, and Timothy C. Hart. 2012. *The Mismeasure of Crime*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

   Sharkey, Patrick F. *Uneasy Peace: The Great Crime Decline, the Renewal of City Life, and the Next War on Violence*. New York City: W. W. Norton and Company.

   Singer, Simon I. 2014. America's Safest City: Delinquency and Modernity in Suburbia. New York: New York University Press.

OPTIONAL:
   Conklin, John E. 2012. *Criminology*. Prentice Hall. (Older editions may work, just make sure chapter headings match with the topics listed on the syllabus).

General Course Guidelines:

(1) *Classroom Participation and Etiquette:* All students are expected to participate in class discussions. Your participation helps you and your classmates to learn, practice, and actively engage with class materials. We will sometimes be discussing controversial and sensitive topics, during which time debates are not only acceptable, but expected. I expect that all classroom communications will be respectful. I work hard to create a learning environment where all viewpoints are respected and, thus, **will not tolerate racist, sexist, homophobic, or other insulting comments**.

(2) *Attendance:* **Punctual** class attendance is vital for learning and is required by university policy. **You are personally responsible for obtaining notes from classes that you miss.** I strongly encourage you to make friends with at least two other people in this class in case you (or they) need notes. I request that students be willing to allow other students to photocopy their notes. I will not release lecture notes, but PowerPoints will be posted after each class. Much of the material covered in lecture IS NOT in your readings. Likewise, the readings introduce crucial material that helps illuminate the lectures and discussions.

 (3) *Academic Integrity:* **Any student who engages in academic dishonesty (e.g., cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, and facilitating academic dishonesty), will receive a failing grade on the quiz or assignment for the <u>first</u> offense. <u>Second offenses</u> will result in referral to the University Judicial System, which includes more serious punishments (suspension, expulsion etc.) Please familiarize yourself with the Undergraduate Academic Regulations:** http://saa.lsu.edu/code-student-conduct

(4) *Computers and other Technological Devices:* All non-course related technological devices <u>must be turned off and put away prior to class</u>. If you choose to use a laptop, make sure it does not distract you or your fellow students during class time. With the exception of international translator devices, no technology will be allowed during course exams.

(5) *Disabled Students:* If you qualify for extra accommodations because of a diagnosed disability, please submit a letter to Dr. Barton from Disability Services by the third week of class so that arrangements can be made as needed. Disability Services is located in 115 Johnston Hall (225) 578-5919: http://disability.lsu.edu/

Course Grade:

(1) **Three Non-Cumulative Exams**. Exams will consist of multiple-choice and short answer questions that draw upon the material covered in the readings, lectures, videos, and discussions. If you know from experience that you have trouble with quizzes or exams, I strongly encourage you to contact academic support services. You will not receive a letter grade until the final grade in the course.

All exams must be taken on the assigned date. **No make-ups will be granted except with an official letter from the undergraduate dean.** University approved make-up quizzes will be different from the quiz given to the regular class. **The last exam is NOT cumulative, but will be held on the university scheduled date for the final exam.**

(2) **In-class Assignments.** Periodically, we will do brief (2-10 minutes) individual or group exercises in class. These will be **unannounced** and involve answering a question, applying concepts or theories, or reflecting on an issue related to criminology. Each student will turn in a write-up, unless otherwise instructed. **Students are allowed to miss up to two (2) of these assignments without losing points**.

(3) *America's Safest City* **Book Assignment.** We will be reading *America's Safest City* during the second section of this course and discussing answers to a series of questions about the book in class. The list of the questions will be distributed after Exam 1. You will be required to submit written answers to the questions prior to the start of the class discussion of this book.

(4) **Crime Data Analysis Exercises:**

Assignment 1: Using micro criminological theories to explain the Alton Sterling shooting. This assignment will require you to write a 5-7 page paper applying micro criminological theories discussed during the second section of the course to the Alton Sterling incident. There are a variety of perspectives you could take while writing this assignment including those of Alton Sterling, the perspective of local community members or the perspective of Baton Rouge police officers. Additional instructions for this assignment will be discussed in class and posted to Moodle after Exam 1.

Assignment 2: Macro Theory. This assignment will require you to write 5-7 page paper that draws upon material presented by Sharkey in *Uneasy Peace* **and** concepts we will discuss during Module 3 to explain why crime levels have changed in the city of your choice since 1990. Your paper should use crime data from **www.crimedatatool.com** in addition to data sources such as the United States Census (https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml), information from your selected city's website OR news stories about crime in the city of your choice. Your paper should address two key points: (1) Has crime increased, decreased, or stayed relatively stable since 1990? (2) Drawing upon the additional data sources you find, how can the crime pattern in your city be explained with ideas and concepts from Sharkey and course material? Additional instructions for this assignment will be discussed in class and posted to Moodle after Exam 2.

(5) **Grading:** The final letter grade will be based on the numeric score as follows:

Three Exams	= 600 points
In-class activities	= 100 points
America's Safest City Book Assignment	= 50 points

Crime Data Analysis Assignments
    Assignment 1 (125 points)
    Assignment 2 (125 points)
	= 250 points

Total Possible Points	= 1000 points

YOUR FINAL GRADE CAN BE CALCULATED BY DIVIDING THE NUMBER OF POINTS YOU HAVE RECEIVED BY 1000 AND THEN MULTIPLYING BY 100. POINT TOTALS WILL ONLY BE ROUNDED UP TO THE NEAREST WHOLE NUMBER.

A+ (97-100), A (93-96.9), A- (90-92.9), B+ (87-89.9), B (83-86.9), B- (80-82.9), C+ (77-79.9), C (73-76.9), C- (70-72.9), D+ (67-69.9), D (63-66.9), D- (60-62.9), F (0-59.9)

 Final Note: A syllabus is a form of a contract designed to protect both the student and the professor so all parties are informed of the rules. If you have any concerns with the requirements of this class, please meet with Professor Barton early in the session.

Tentative Course Schedule: All readings should be done PRIOR to the class to which they are attached. All of the listed readings noted(*) can be downloaded from Moodle.

Date	Topic	Reading Assignment
MODULE 1		
8 / 21	What is this class about? What do criminologists do?	No Reading Assigned
8 / 23	How do criminologists define crime?	Hoffman*
8 / 28	How is crime studied qualitatively?	Becker 2013* Luckenbill 1977*
8 / 20	How is crime studied quantitatively (Official Stats)?	Mosher chapters 1, 2 and 3
9 / 4	How is crime studied quantitively (Self-report surveys)	Mosher chapters 3, 4 and 5
9 / 6	What do we know about street crime?	Violent Crime in Cities* Sharkey chapter 1
9 / 11	Other forms of crime: White-collar and Cyber	Ngo and Jaishankar*
9 / 13	Connecting Crime Data with Crime Control Policy: Guest Speaker – Assistant District Attorney Will Morris of the East Baton Rouge Parish Crime Strategies Unit	No reading assigned. Prepare for in-class discussion.
9 / 18	Catch-up and Review (if time is available)	
9 / 20	**Exam 1**	

Date	Topic	Reading Assignment
MODULE 2		
9 / 25	Are criminals biologically or psychologically different?	Rocque et al*
9 / 27	Zimbardo Ted Talk on the Psychology of Evil	No readings Assigned
10 / 2	Is crime a rational activity?	Nederec et al.*
10 / 4	**Fall Holiday – No Class Meeting**	
10 / 9	Introduction to Microlevel Sociological Theories of Crime and **In-class Discussion of America's Safest City**	**America's Safest City assignment due**
10 / 11	How do people learn to be criminal?	Sharkey chapter 5
10 / 16	Why are labels so important?	Pager*
10 / 18	What prevents people from engaging in crime?	Hirschi*

Date	Topic	Reading Assignment
10 / 23	Why do patterns of offending vary over the life course?	Sullivan*
10 / 25	Catch-up and Review (if time is available)	
10 / 30	Class Discussion of Micro Analysis of Crime in Baton Rouge	Micro Analysis papers must be submitted to Turn-It-In before the start of class.
11 / 1	**Exam 2**	

Date	Topic	Reading Assignment
MODULE 3		
11 / 6	Is crime the result of strain?	Agnew* Messner and Rosenfeld*
11 / 8	How does culture influence propensity to engage in crime?	Mears et al.*
11 / 13	How does social conflict influence variation in crime? / Start watching CitizenFour in class	Sharkey Chapter 6
11 / 15	Finish watching CitizenFour/ class discussion	
11 / 20	Why do crime rates vary by neighborhood?	Sharkey Chapters 2 and 3
11 / 22	**Thanksgiving Break – No Class Meeting**	
11/ 27	Class Discussion of Macro Analysis Assignment	Macro Analysis papers must be submitted to Turn-It-In before the start of class.
11 / 29	Catch-up and Review (if time is available)	
12 / 4	**Final Exam 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.**	Non-cumulative exam to be held in regular classroom