



PA/SOC 343

The Crime Problem

TR 9:30-10:45pm McClelland 134
Admn. Asst. Ms. Cara Wallace: McClelland Hall 405

Professor: Dr. Salmon A. Shomade
Office hours – By Appointment
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Introduction: This is a course that asks the question: “What is the crime problem”? We will try to answer this question by examining the way that politics, the media, and social fears combine to define the crime problem aside from any actual crime that is occurring. We will also explore some of the more controversial, yet common, policy strategies used to solve the crime problem. A basic introduction to criminological theory will help you with the class, but a refresher on these concepts will be provided to those with little background in crime and delinquency. More than anything, this class requires an open mind and a willingness to think critically about a topic (crime) that comes to us prepackaged full of beliefs that may often be more myth than reality.

Required Readings

- **Text: Random Violence: How We Talk About New Crimes and New Victims**, Joel Best (University of California Press, 1999) - U of A Bookstore at the Student Memorial Center
- **Text: Making Hate A Crime: From Social Movement to Law Enforcement**, Valerie Jenness and Ryken Grattet (Russell Sage, 2001) – U of A Bookstore at the Student Memorial Center
- Classroom Handouts and Materials posted on the [D2L University System](#)

Strongly Recommended

- **Text: Living Off Crime**, Kenneth D. Tunnell (Rowman & Littlefield, 2006)

Assignments and Grading

1. **Exams:** (2) There will be a written Midterm and Final Examination, each worth 30% for a combined 60% of your grade in the class.
2. **Debates/Book Chapters:** (1) Each person will do one of these two activities. For those doing debates, each person will be randomly assigned to a two-person debate team. We will have 8 total debates with debate topics focusing on current

and past events that reflect class lessons. The Instructor will accept topic suggestions. Debate topics will be assigned during the fourth/fifth week of class. Debate participants are expected to be fully prepared to engage their opponents. For those doing book chapters, the professor will provide additional information as needed. Each activity is worth 30% of your grade in the class.

3. **Participation: Do not come to class late!!! Class attendance is required.** If you plan to be absent, I must be notified in advance. If there is an emergency that necessitates your absence and circumstances prevent you from notifying me in advance, please notify me shortly thereafter. I will be noting your participation in the class. It is up to you to make sure that I know you are involved by making comments, asking questions, or engaging your colleagues. Class participation accounts for 10% of your final grade in the class. Any class absence will be considered in awarding this grade. **A student may receive 0% out of this 10%.** *Whereas I will not regularly take class attendance lists, I will do so on 2-3 occasions during the semester. Any absence during any of these occasions will be considered in awarding class participation grades.*

Information Resources

This is a discussion-based class. Class discussions will be based mostly on the day's readings, assignments, and current or past events taken from the media. If you do not keep up with the readings and assignments, you will be unable to participate meaningfully in class discussions. There will be very little time when I am solely lecturing in the traditional sense.

Suggested Texts

A Primer on Crime and Delinquency, Robert M. Bohm (Wadsworth, 1997)
 A General Theory of Crime, Gottfredson and Hirschi (Stanford, 1990)
 Crime and Everyday Life, Marcus Felson (Sage, 2002)
 The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison: Ideology, Class, and Criminal Justice, Jeffrey Reiman (Pearson, 2003)
 The Mythology of Crime and Criminal Justice, Kappeler, Blumberg, and Potter (Waveland, 2000)
 Crime and the American Dream, Messner and Rosenfeld (Wadsworth, 2000)
 Crime is not the Problem: Lethal Violence in America, Zimring and Hawkins (Oxford, 1997)
 The Politics of Street Crime, Stuart Scheingold (Temple, 1993)
 The Justice Juggernaut, Diana Gordon (Rutgers, 1992)
 Power, Politics and Crime, William Chambliss (Westview, 2000)

Suggested Journals

American Journal of Sociology
 Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology

American Sociological Review
 Crime and Delinquency
 Criminology
 American Criminal Law Review
 Public Interest
 Journal of Quantitative Criminology
 Judicature
 Law & Policy

Suggested Internet Sites

www.law.cornell.edu
www.whitehouse.gov
www.fbi.gov
www.aclu.org
www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/
www.iir.com
www.ilg.org

Give yourself the respect you deserve: DO NOT PLAGIARIZE OR CHEAT ON assignments. Any conduct that violates the University code of academic integrity will be cause for immediate dismissal from class and referral to the Dean of your College.

WEEKS ONE-FOUR		
DATE	DAY	READING(S) & ASSIGNMENT(S)
AUG. 26	TUESDAY	<u>Introduction to Course</u> "Crime & Punishment" Part I (ABC News Nightline Special Investigation)
AUG. 28	THURSDAY	"Crime & Punishment" Part II (ABC News Nightline Special Investigation)
SEP. 2	TUESDAY	<u>Language of Crime</u> Random Violence: Preface & Chapter 1
SEP. 4	THURSDAY	<u>Audio Broadcast – Talk of the Nation – Why is Violent Crime on the Rise in Major Cities?</u> – 07/26/06 Open Discussion
SEP. 9	TUESDAY	<u>Role of Media in Crime Coverage</u> Random Violence: Chapter 2 <u>Audio Broadcasts – Tell Me More – Crime Reporters Speak Out</u> – 07/23/08; <u>Talk of the Nation – Confronting Crime: The Complicated Relationship Between the Media and the FBI</u> – 06/25/08
SEP. 11	THURSDAY	<u>Hate Crimes & Crime Institutionalization</u> Random Violence: Chapter 3

SEP. 16	TUESDAY	Gangs & Deviants Random Violence: Chapter 4 <u>Audio Broadcasts – Morning Edition & All Things Considered – Cops Target LA Gangs ... & Other Stories – 06/2-3/08</u>
SEP. 18	THURSDAY	<u>Audio Broadcasts – Morning Edition & All Things Considered – Cops Target LA Gangs ... & Other Stories – 06/2-3/08</u> Open Discussion
WEEKS FIVE-EIGHT		
DATE	DAY	READING(S) & ASSIGNMENT(S)
SEP. 23	TUESDAY	TO BE ASSIGNED
SEP. 25	THURSDAY	<u>Victims and Victimization</u> Random Violence: Chapter 5
SEP. 30	TUESDAY	<u>Victims and Victimization</u> Random Violence: Chapter 6
OCT. 2	THURSDAY	<i>DEBATES 1 & 2</i>
OCT. 7	TUESDAY	<i>DEBATES 3 & 4</i>
OCT. 9	THURSDAY	Open Discussion Pre-Midterm Exam Review
OCT. 14	TUESDAY	MIDTERM EXAMINATION
OCT. 16	THURSDAY	Video or Audio Presentation
WEEKS NINE-TWELVE		
DATE	DAY	READING(S) & ASSIGNMENT(S)
OCT. 21	TUESDAY	Random Violence: Chapter 7
OCT. 23	THURSDAY	TO BE ASSIGNED
OCT. 28	TUESDAY	Random Violence: Chapter 8
OCT. 30	THURSDAY	Making Hate . . . Chapters 1 & 2
NOV. 4	TUESDAY	Making Hate . . . Chapter 3
NOV. 6	THURSDAY	Making Hate . . . Chapter 4
NOV. 11	TUESDAY	NO CLASS – VETERANS DAY
NOV. 13	THURSDAY	Making Hate . . . Chapter 5
WEEKS THIRTEEN-SIXTEEN		
DATE	DAY	READING(S) & ASSIGNMENT(S)
NOV. 18	TUESDAY	Making Hate . . . Chapters 6 & 7
NOV. 20	THURSDAY	<i>DEBATES 5 & 6</i>
NOV. 25	TUESDAY	<i>DEBATES 7 & 8</i>
NOV. 27	THURSDAY	NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING DAY
DEC. 2	TUESDAY	TO BE ASSIGNED
DEC. 4	THURSDAY	Pre-Final Exam Review
DEC. 9	TUESDAY	FINAL EXAM – 11:00 -1:00 P.M.