

EMORY UNIVERSITY

SOCIOLOGY 554 – Spring 2007

Causes of Crime

Tarbutton Hall, 104

W 4:30-7:30

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Overview

This graduate seminar is designed to survey major criminological theories. Criminologists rely on numerous theoretical perspectives, all with distinctive foci. Some focus on explaining offending, others focus on explaining victimization; some focus on the characteristics of criminal incidents, others focus on trends in aggregate crime rates. In this course, we will explore the underlying assumptions of key criminological theories, implications of their distinctive theoretical contributions for the study of crime, and empirical evidence for each perspective. The seminars will be organized around four main objectives: to recognize the unique contributions of each theory, to explore relationships between theoretical concepts, to understand how to operationalize those concepts in empirical work, and to examine the ability of each theory to explain the causes of crime in contemporary society.

This course is intended to provide a broad overview, or survey of contemporary criminological theory as it relates to explaining the causes of crime. As such, we will not address criminal justice responses to crime or punishment ideologies. These topics are more fully covered in the course “Controlling Crime” (Soc 555).

This course will require a substantial commitment to reading as well as regular attendance and participation in seminar discussions. You are expected to read and reflect on all required readings prior to class – completing the assigned reading is a necessary prerequisite for satisfactory completion of the course. The required texts, course assignments, and topic schedule are outlined in detail below.

Note: I reserve the right to modify the syllabus as the course progresses

Required Texts

Becker, Howard S. (1997). *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*. Free Press. ISBN: 0684836351

Cullen, Francis T. and Robert Agnew (Eds.) (2006). *Criminological Theory: Past to Present, Essential Readings* Third Edition. Roxbury Publications. ISBN: 1931719632

Katz, Jack (1990). *Seductions of Crime: Moral and Sensual Attractions in Doing Evil*. New York: Basic Books. ISBN: 0465076165

These three books (TEXT) are available in the Druid Hills Bookstore. Other readings are available on BlackBoard (BB). Readings in Cullen and Agnew's text are identified as (C&A) in the outline below.

Course Requirements

THEORY PORTFOLIO: Due **weekly**, revised portfolio due **May 2nd 2007**
(60% of final grade)

Each week you will be required to hand in answers to the following questions at the beginning of the seminar: (1) What are the contributions of the theory/perspective to the criminological literature? (2) How is this perspective related to other viewpoints we have discussed? (3) What are the problems/limitations of the theory/perspective? and (4) How could the theory/perspective be modified to better capitalize on its strengths and address some of its limitations? These questions will guide our seminar discussions and will help you to locate each theoretical perspective within the criminological literature.

In lieu of examinations on these questions, you will create a portfolio that contains your typewritten responses to each of the four questions above for each of the topics (weeks) covered in the course. This should help you to develop the "big picture" in criminological theory. There is no page limit for these weekly assignments, but your answers should be as complete as possible. On average, I suspect that you can address these questions in 3 to 4 double-spaced pages.

I will return your weekly responses the following week, with comments. ***You should address these comments and include your revised responses in a 'theory portfolio' that you will hand in on May 2nd 2007.*** This portfolio will be invaluable for studying for preliminary exams and will be useful as a teaching aid should you ever teach a criminology course at the undergraduate or graduate level.

CONTRIBUTION TO DISCUSSION: (20% of final grade)

Attendance and active participation are necessary for successful completion of this course. You will be expected to come to class having read and considered all required readings. *In addition, one student will “lead” discussion for each class.* Depending on the number of students enrolled, each student might lead the discussion for three or more meetings. Seminar leaders are expected to read both the required and **at least two** of the recommended readings for the week, be able to summarize the main arguments of the readings, and have composed seminar questions designed to stimulate the discussion. We will assign seminar leaders for the semester on the first day of class.

SEMINAR PAPER: Due **May 4th 2007** (20% of final grade)

For the final paper, you will be required to choose one type of crime, and provide a short review of the theoretical literature pertaining to your crime type. You should focus your review on the theories that have been employed to explain the causes of this particular type of crime and their success in doing so. Your paper will need to go beyond what has been discussed in class and in your theory portfolio. That is, your reading on the theories you choose should extend beyond the ‘required’ readings for the dates that they are covered below. Which of the theoretical perspectives, in your estimation, is most promising for explaining the causes of the type of crime you have chosen, and why?

Your paper should be no more than 10 pages in length, typed and double-spaced. You will need to reference original sources, as you would in any research paper.

Policy on Missed Classes: Attendance is very important. You should make every effort to attend each class. Please notify me if you are going to be absent. You will need to provide a legitimate explanation.

Seminar Leader Dates

OUTLINE

January 24th 2007:

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE

January 31st 2007:

BIOLOGICAL & PERSONALITY THEORIES

C&A: *The Criminal Man* by Cesare Lombroso (as summarized by Gina Lombroso Ferrero), pp. 26-28

BB: Fishbein (1990). "Biological Perspectives in Criminology." Criminology 28:27-72.

C&A: *Personality and Crime: Are Some People More Crime Prone?* by Avshalom Caspi, Terrie E. Moffitt, Phil A. Silva, Magda Stouthamer-Loeber, Robert F. Krueger, and Pamela S. Schmutte, pp. 76-84

BB: Daly & Wilson (1997). "Crime and Conflict: Homicide in Evolutionary Psychological Perspective." Crime & Justice: A Review of Research 22:51-100.

Recommended

C&A: *Does the Body Tell? Biological Characteristics and Criminal Disposition* by David C. Rowe, pp. 67-75

C&A: *Gene-Based Evolutionary Theories in Criminology* by Lee Ellis and Anthony Walsh, pp. 51-66

BB: Caspi, Lynam, Moffitt, and Silva (1993). "Unraveling Girls' Delinquency: Biological, Dispositional, and Contextual Contributions to Adolescent Misbehavior." Developmental Psychology 29:19-30.

February 7th 2007

CLASSICAL/RATIONAL CHOICE THEORIES & DETERRENCE

BB: Nagin (1998). "Criminal Deterrence Research at the Outset of the Twenty-First Century." Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research 23:1-42.

BB: Nagin & Paternoster (1993). "Enduring Individual Differences and Rational Choice Theories of Crime." Law & Society Review 27:467-496.

C&A: *Reconceptualizing Deterrence Theory* by Mark C. Stafford and Mark Warr, pp. 415-420.

C&A: *Crime as a Rational Choice* by Derek B. Cornish and Ronald V. Clarke, pp. 421-426.

BB: McCarthy (2002). "New Economics of Sociological Criminology." Annual Review of Sociology 28:417-442.

Recommended

BB: McCarthy & Hagan (2005). "Danger and the Decision to Offend." Social Forces 83:1065-1096.

BB: Clarke & Cornish (1985). "Modeling Offender's Decisions: A Framework for Research and Policy." In Tonry & Morris (Eds.), Crime & Justice: An Annual Review of Research. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 147-185.

February 14th 2007:

ROUTINE ACTIVITIES & OPPORTUNITY THEORIES

C&A: *Routine Activity Theory* by Lawrence E. Cohen and Marcus Felson, pp. 433-443

BB: Osgood, Wilson, O'Malley, and Bachman (1996). "Routine Activities and Individual Deviant Behavior." American Sociological Review 61:635-655.

BB: Bennett (1991). "Routine Activities: A Cross-National Assessment of a Criminological Perspective." Social Forces 70:147-163.

BB: Tseloni, Wittebrood, Farrell, and Pease (2004). "Burglary Victimization in England and Wales, the United States and the Netherlands: A Cross-National Comparative Test of Routine Activities and Lifestyle Theories." British Journal of Criminology 44:66-91.

Recommended

Felson (2002). *Crime in Everyday Life*. Third Edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage University Press.

BB: Fox & Sobol (2000). "Drinking Patterns, Social Interaction, and Barroom Behavior: A Routine Activities Approach." Deviant Behavior 21:429-450.

BB: Osgood & Anderson (2004). "Unstructured Socializing and Rates of Delinquency." Criminology 42:519-549.

BB: Rice & Smith (2002). "Socioecological Models of Automotive Theft: Integrating Routine Activity and Social Disorganization Approaches." The Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency 39:304-336.

February 21st 2007:

SOCIAL ECOLOGY THEORIES

C&A: *Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas* by Clifford R. Shaw and Henry D. McKay, pp. 95-101

BB: Sampson & Groves (1989). "Community Structure and Crime: Testing Social Disorganization Theory." *American Journal of Sociology* 94:774-802.

C&A: *A Theory of Race, Crime, and Urban Inequality* by Robert J. Sampson and William Julius Wilson, pp. 102-108

C&A: *Collective Efficacy and Crime* by Robert J. Sampson, Stephen W. Raudenbush, and Felton Earls, pp. 109-114

BB: Kubrin & Weitzer (2003). "New Directions in Social Disorganization Theory." *The Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 40:374-402.

Recommended

BB: Browning, Feinberg, and Dietz (2004). "The Paradox of Social Organization: Networks, Collective Efficacy, and Violent Crime in Urban Neighborhoods." *Social Forces* 83:503-534.

BB: Bursik (1988). "Social Disorganization and Theories of Crime and Delinquency: Problems and Prospects." *Criminology* 26:519-551.

BB: Patillo (1998). "Sweet Mothers and Gangbangers: Managing Crime in a Black Middle-Class Neighborhood." *Social Forces* 76:747-774.

BB: Sampson (1987). "Urban Black Violence: The Effect of Male Joblessness and Family Disruption." *American Journal of Sociology* 93:348-382.

BB: Sampson, Morenoff, and Gannon-Rowley (2002). "Assessing "Neighborhood Effects": Social Processes and New Directions in Research." *Annual Review of Sociology* 28:443-478.

February 28th 2007:

SOCIAL LEARNING THEORIES

C&A: *A Theory of Differential Association* by Edwin H. Sutherland and Donald R. Cressey, pp. 122-125

C&A: *Techniques of Neutralization* by Gresham M. Sykes and David Matza, pp. 126-133

C&A: *A Social Learning Theory of Crime* by Ronald L. Akers, pp. 134-146

BB: Matsueda (1988). "The Current State of Differential Association Theory." *Crime & Delinquency* 34:277-306.

BB: McCarthy (1996). "The Attitudes and Actions of Others: Tutelage and Sutherland's Theory of Differential Association." British Journal of Criminology 36:135-147.

Recommended

BB: Akers (1990). "Rational Choice, Deterrence, and Social Learning Theory in Criminology: The Path Not Taken." Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology 81:653-676.

BB: Skinner & Fream (1997). "A Social Learning Theory Analysis of Computer Crime among College Students." The Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency 34:495-518.

March 7th 2007:

STRAIN THEORIES

C&A: *Social Structure and Anomie* by Robert K. Merton, pp. 171-178

C&A: *Pressured Into Crime: General Strain Theory* by Robert Agnew, pp. 201-209

BB: Agnew, Brezina, Wright, and Cullen (2002). "Strain, Personality Traits, and Delinquency: Extending General Strain Theory." Criminology 40:43-71.

BB: LaFree & Drass (1996). "The Effect of Changes in Intra-racial Income Inequality and Educational Attainment on Changes in Arrest Rates for African Americans and Whites, 1957-1990." American Sociological Review 61:614-634.

BB: Aseltine, Gore, and Gordon (2000). "Life Stress, Anger and Anxiety, and Delinquency: An Empirical Test of General Strain Theory." Journal of Health and Social Behavior 41:256-275.

Recommended

C&A: *Crime and the American Dream* by Richard Rosenfeld and Steven F. Messner, pp. 191-200

BB: Agnew (1999). "A General Strain Theory of Community Differences in Crime Rates." The Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency 36:123-155.

BB: Slocum, Simpson, and Smith (2005). "Strained Lives and Crime: Examining Intra-Individual Variation in Strain and Offending in a Sample of Incarcerated Women." Criminology 43:1067-1110.

March 21st 2007:
SUBCULTURAL THEORIES

BB: Akers (1996). "Is Differential Association/Social Learning Theory Cultural Deviance Theory?" Criminology 34:229-247.

BB: Hirschi (1996). "A Theory without Ideas: Reply to Akers." Criminology 34:249-256.

C&A: *The Thesis of a Subculture of Violence* by Marvin E. Wolfgang and Franco Ferracuti, pp. 147-150

C&A: *The Code of the Street* by Elijah Anderson, pp. 151-161

BB: Venkatesh (1997). "The Social Organization of Street Gang Activity in an Urban Ghetto." American Journal of Sociology 103:82-111.

BB: Hagan (1991). "Destiny & Drift: Subcultural Preferences, Status Attainments, and the Risks and Rewards of Youth." American Sociological Review 56:567-582.

BB: Almgren (2005). "The Ecological Context of Interpersonal Violence: From Culture to Collective Efficacy." Journal of Interpersonal Violence 20:218-224.

Recommended

C&A: *Delinquent Boys: The Culture of the Gang* by Albert K. Cohen, pp. 179-183

C&A: *Delinquency and Opportunity* by Richard A. Cloward and Lloyd E. Ohlin, pp. 184-190

BB: Cullen (1988). "Were Cloward and Ohlin Strain Theorists? Delinquency and Opportunity Revisited." The Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency 25:214-241.

BB: Matsueda, Gartner, Piliavin, and Polakowski (1992). "The Prestige of Criminal and Conventional Occupations: A Subcultural Model of Criminal Activity." American Sociological Review 57:752-770.

March 28th 2007:
SOCIAL CONTROL THEORIES I: SOCIAL BOND & SELF-CONTROL

C&A: *Social Bond Theory* by Travis Hirschi, pp. 219-227

BB: Greenberg (1999). "The Weak Strength of Social Control Theory." Crime & Delinquency 45:66-81.

C&A: *A General Theory of Crime* by Michael R. Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi, pp. 228-240

BB: Reed & Yeager (1996). "Organizational Offending & Neoclassical Criminology: Challenging the Reach of a General Theory of Crime." Criminology 34:357-382.

BB: Herbert, Green, and Larragoite (1998). "Clarifying the Reach of a General Theory of Crime for Organizational Offending: A Comment on Reed and Yeager." Criminology 36:867-883.

BB: Yeager & Reed (1998). "Of Corporate Persons and Straw Men: A Reply to Herbert, Green, and Larragoite." Criminology 36:885-897.

Recommended

BB: Akers (1991). "Self-Control as a General Theory of Crime." Journal of Quantitative Criminology 7:201-211.

BB: Grasmick, Tittle, Bursik, and Arneklev (1993). "Testing the Core Empirical Implications of Gottfredson and Hirschi's General Theory of Crime." The Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency 30:5-29.

BB: Hirschi & Gottfredson (1993). "Commentary: Testing the General Theory of Crime." The Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency 30:47-54.

BB: Pratt & Cullen (2000). "The Empirical Status of Gottfredson and Hirschi's General Theory of Crime: A Meta-Analysis." Criminology 38:931-964.

BB: Sellers (1999). "Self-Control and Intimate Violence: An Examination of the Scope and Specification of the General Theory of Crime." Criminology 37:375-404.

April 4th 2007:

SOCIAL CONTROL THEORIES II: SYNTHETIC PERSPECTIVES & THE LIFECOURSE

C&A: *An Age-Graded Theory of Informal Social Control* by Robert J. Sampson and John H. Laub, pp. 241-253

BB: Sampson & Laub (2005). "A Life Course View of the Development of Crime." The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 602:12-45.

BB: Macmillan (2001). "Violence and the Life Course: The Consequences of Victimization for Personal and Social Development." Annual Review of Sociology 27:1-22.

C&A: *A Power-Control Theory of Gender and Delinquency* by John Hagan, pp. 254-262

BB: Grasmick, Hagan, Blackwell and Arneklev (1996). "Risk Preferences and Patriarchy: Extending Power-Control Theory." Social Forces 75:177-199.

Recommended

BB: Blackwell & Piquero (2005). "On the Relationships between Gender, Power Control, Self-Control, and Crime." Journal of Criminal Justice 33:1-17.

BB: Laub & Sampson (1993). "Turning Points in the Life Course: Why Change Matters to the Study of Crime." Criminology 31:301-325.

BB: McCarthy, Hagan, and Woodward (1999). "In the Company of Women: Structure and Agency in a Revised Power-Control Theory of Gender and Delinquency." Criminology 37:761-788.

BB: Sampson & Laub (1990). "Crime and Deviance over the Life Course: The Salience of Adult Social Bonds." American Sociological Review 55:609-627.

April 11th 2007:

SOCIAL REACTION (LABELING) THEORIES

BB: Erikson (1962). "Notes on the Sociology of Deviance." Social Problems 9:307-314.

C&A: *Primary and Secondary Deviance* by Edwin M. Lemert, pp. 273-276

BB: Hagan & Palloni (1990). "The Social Reproduction of a Criminal Class in Working Class London, Circa 1950-1980." American Journal of Sociology 96:265-299.

BB: Matsueda (1992). "Reflected Appraisals, Parental Labeling, and Delinquency: Specifying a Symbolic Interactionist Theory." American Journal of Sociology 97:1577-1611.

TEXT: Becker (1997). *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*. Free Press. Chapters 1, 2, 7, 8 and 10

Recommended

TEXT: Becker (1997). *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance*. Free Press. Chapters 3 and 4 or 5 and 6

BB: Bernberg, Krohn, and Rivera (2006). "Official Labeling, Criminal Embeddedness, and Subsequent Delinquency: A Longitudinal Test of Labeling Theory." The Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency 43:67-88.

BB: Sherman & Berk (1984). "The Specific Deterrent Effects of Arrest for Domestic Assault." American Sociological Review 49:261-272.

BB: Thomas & Bishop (1984). "The Effect of Formal and Informal Sanctions on Delinquency: A Longitudinal Comparison of Labeling and Deterrence Theories." The Journal of Criminal Law & Criminology 75:1222-1245.

April 18th 2007:

PHENOMENOLOGICAL (FOREGROUND) THEORIES

TEXT: Katz (1990). *Seductions of Crime: Moral and Sensual Attractions in Doing Evil*. New York: Basic Books. Chapters 1, 2, 4 and 9

Recommended

TEXT: Katz (1990). *Seductions of Crime: Moral and Sensual Attractions in Doing Evil*. New York: Basic Books. (Chapter of choice)

BB: Athens (2005). "Violent Encounters: Violent Engagements, Skirmishes, and Tiffs." Journal of Contemporary Ethnography 34:631-678.

BB: McCarthy (1995). "Not Just "For the Thrill of It": An Instrumentalist Elaboration of Sneaky Thrill Property Crimes." Criminology 33:519-538.

April 25th 2007:

CONFLICT/FEMINIST THEORIES

C&A: *Criminality and Economic Conditions* by Willem Bongers, pp. 304-311

C&A: *Class, State, and Crime* by Richard Quinney, pp. 312-217

C&A: *Crime in a Market Society* by Elliott Currie, pp. 318-329

C&A: *Crime and Coercion* by Mark Colvin, pp. 330-337

C&A: *A Feminist Theory of Female Delinquency* by Meda Chesney-Lind, pp. 367-373

C&A: *Toward a Gendered Theory of Female Offending* by Darrell Steffensmeier and Emilie Allan, pp. 394-401

BB: Colvin & Pauly (1983). "A Critique of Criminology: A Structural-Marxist Theory of Delinquency Production." American Journal of Sociology 89:513-551.

BB: Britton (2000). "Feminism in Criminology: Engendering the Outlaw." Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science 571:57-76.

Recommended

C&A: *Sisters in Crime* by Freda Adler, pp. 359-366

C&A: *The Gendering of Violent Delinquency* by Karen Heimer and Stacy De Coster, pp. 374-382

C&A: *Masculinities and Crime* by James W. Messerschmidt, pp. 383-393

BB: Alexander & Bernard (2002). "A Critique of Mark Colvin's, Crime and Coercion: An Integrated Theory of Chronic Criminality." Crime, Law and Social Change 38:389-398.

BB: Unnever, Colvin, and Cullen (2004). "Crime and Coercion: A Test of Core Theoretical Propositions." The Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency 41:244-268.

BB: Young (1988). "Radical Criminology in Britain: The Emergence of a Competing Paradigm." British Journal of Criminology 28:159-183.

BB: Yodanis (2004). "Gender Inequality, Violence Against Women, and Fear: A Cross-National Test of the Feminist Theory of Violence Against Women." Journal of Interpersonal Violence 19:655-675.

Additional (Not Required)
INTEGRATED THEORIES

C&A: *An Integrated Theoretical Perspective on Delinquent Behavior* by Delbert S. Elliott, Suzanne S. Ageton, and Rachelle J. Canter, pp. 537-550

C&A: *Toward an Interactional Theory of Delinquency* by Terence P. Thornberry, pp. 551-562

BB: Bernard & Snipes (1996). "Theoretical Integration in Criminology." Crime and Justice: A Review of Research 20:301-348.

BB: Agnew (2003). "An Integrated Theory of the Adolescent Peak in Offending." Youth & Society 34:263-299.

BB: Bernburg & Thorlindsson (2001). "Routine Activities in Social Context: A Closer Look at the Role of Opportunity in Deviant Behavior." Justice Quarterly 18:543-567.

BB: Brannigan (1997). "Self-Control, Social Control, and Evolutionary Psychology: Towards an Integrated Perspective on Crime." Canadian Journal of Criminology 39:403-431.

BB: Hoffmann (2002). "A Contextual Analysis of Differential Association, Social Control and Strain Theories of Delinquency." Social Forces 81:753-785.

BB: Ward, Stafford, and Gray (2006). "Rational Choice, Deterrence and Theoretical Integration." Journal of Applied Social Psychology 36:571-585.

THEORY PORTFOLIO DUE: May 2nd 2007

SEMINAR PAPER DUE: May 4th 2007