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Introduction

Welcome to SOC 3710, Sociology of Criminal Careers! Criminology is an exciting and challenging discipline, and it is extremely pertinent in today's society. You will find that this course is a bit different from some of the other criminology courses that you may have taken; wherever possible we try to understand offenders' participation in illegal behaviours from their perspectives and situations.

This is an important element in our understanding that is often neglected. You will probably find some of the material that you read challenges your assumptions and ideas. You may or may not agree with some of these ways of thinking and that is fine! One of the purposes of this course is to allow you to assess a number of perspectives and think critically.

Contacting your instructor

For information on contacting your instructor as well as other important information from your instructor see the Instructor Letter link in your course website.

Course description

The Undergraduate Calendar of The University of Manitoba describes SOC 3710, Sociology of Criminal Careers, as follows:

An examination of patterns of criminal behaviour focusing on the sociological aspects of selected offences, the criminal career of the offender, and on societal reaction and legal processing. Prerequisite: a grade of "C" or better in SOC 2510 (077.251) or SOC 2511 (077.251) or written consent of department head.

This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of careers in three specific types of crime: conventional or street crime, "white collar" crime, and organized crime. An objective of this course is to critically analyze the underlying conditions that lead to careers in these types of crimes, with the objective of controlling these types of careers. Wherever possible, the perspective of the offenders is taken into account through accounts provided by the offenders themselves who discuss their motives and life experiences.

The first section of the course examines the decision-making process of offenders in several traditional or street crimes. The second section on white collar crime, examines fraud, computer crime, finance crime, crimes in the professions, and corporate crime. The third section on organized crime, examines both traditional forms of organized crime and current issues in transnational organized crime.

Course Objectives

This course is designed to provide a more complete understanding of three specific types of crime: traditional or street crime, white collar crime, and organized crime. A primary objective is to explore the underlying conditions that lead to a career in these types of crimes with a view towards preventing them from occurring in our society.

Upon completion of this course you should be able to:

1. Identify, explain, and illustrate factors that precipitate a particular criminal career;
2. Analyze motives for participating in a particular criminal career;
3. Identify the issues involved in controlling certain kinds of crime; and
4. Formulate ways to prevent these types of crime in our society.

Course Materials

Required

Bookstore

The following required materials are available for purchase from the [University of Manitoba Bookstore](#). Please order your materials immediately, if you have not already done so. See your [Distance and Online Education Student Handbook](#) for instructions on how to order your materials.

> Textbooks

Cromwell, Paul and Birzer, Michael (2014). *In their own words: Criminals on crime* (6th ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

In Their Own Words is unique in that it is based on interviews with offenders. As such, it gives the offenders' point of view and reasons for committing the crimes. You will note that not all of the chapters in this text are assigned as required readings. However, if you are considering a career in some aspect of the criminal justice system, you will find that the unassigned chapters provide valuable insights into other types of criminal careers.

> Friedrichs, David. (2014). *Trusted criminals* (Custom edition). Belmont, CA: Nelson Education.

Trusted Criminals discusses the problems involved in studying white collar crime as well as the costs of these crimes. It describes the various types of white collar crime, the theories explaining them, and efforts to control them. It covers topics, such as occupational/professional crime, corporate crime, hybrid forms of crime (computer crime and fraud), and problems in prosecuting white collar criminals.

> Scott, Kody/Sakur, Sanyika. (1993). *Monster: The autobiography of an L.A. gang member*. New York: Grove Press.

This is an autobiography of the notorious gang member Kody Scott who was inducted into the L.A. Crips at the age of 11. The story follows Scott's journey deep into the violence and despair that led him to earn the name Monster by his fellow gang members. After 26 years of on-and-off jail terms in maximum security prisons, Scott experienced a personal transformation, reinvented himself and became Sanyika Shakur, a black nationalist and crusader against gang activity.

Assigned readings

Links to assigned readings are located throughout the course.

'Stick Up, Street Culture and Offender Motivation'(Authors: Bruce A. Jacobs and Richard Wright. In *Criminology*: Feb. 1999, , 31, 1) pp. 149-173.

Here is the url: <http://cooley.libarts.wsu.edu/schwartzj/criminology/JacobsWright%5B1%5D.pdf>

Videos

The following required videos are accessible from your online course site on the lessons tab. Scammed is also available for loan through the University of Manitoba Libraries. Check that you can view the video online before requesting it (the number of copies available in the library is limited), and place your loan request as soon as possible to avoid delays. Refer to the Distance and Online Education Student Handbook for information on how to use the library to borrow the video.

Alex Cheesequay: Live Biography, (Linked in module one unit 2). Not available in the library This video is a recording of Alex Cheesequay who is serving a life sentence for homicide. The recording was done in class.

Scammed, CBC, (linked in Module 2, unit 2), available in the library

Earl Jones: in Trust (linked in Module 2, unit 2), not available in the library

(Module 2, unit 3) <http://www.cbc.ca/strombo/books/misha-glenny-on-the-chilling-new-reality-of-cyber-crime.html>

(Module 3) http://www.ted.com/talks/misha_glenny_investigates_global_crime_networks.html

Optional

Videos

Crimes against employees. Online at: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/workplace/view/>

California Energy Crisis. Online at: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/> Then in the search box type: *Blackout*

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Course Overview

In this course, the offender's perspective will be discussed wherever possible. As you will discover, this perspective contrasts with the public perception of why people commit crimes.

You will be engaged in this course through readings (online links and one scanned in your course website), videos, assignments, and online discussions. You are required to participate in 3 online discussions. This is an opportunity to interact with other students, to discuss the reading material, and to share thoughts and interpretations.

The study notes include critical thinking questions and other learning activities to facilitate your learning. Use the critical thinking questions to help you focus on the relevant issues in the course manual, assigned readings, or videos. At the end of each unit, you should summarize each reading in your own words.

Topics

Module 1

– Street Crime

The first section of this course is concerned with what we typically think of as crime: traditional or street crime. Here we discuss both violent and property crimes. As the theme of this course is criminal careers, we discuss a number of aspects of each crime. A primary focus, however, is what motivates offenders to commit this type of crime. As such, the first part of this section is devoted to criminal decision-making.

Unit 1 Criminal Lifestyles and Decision-Making

Unit 2 Violent Crime

Unit 3 Property Crime

Unit 4 Quitting Crime

Module 2

– White Collar Crime

This section discusses issues in researching and defining white collar crime, as well as problems in policing and controlling it.

Unit 1 What is White Collar Crime?

Unit 2 Fraud

Unit 3 Computer Crime

Unit 4 Occupational Crime

Unit 5 Corporate Crime

Unit 6 Explaining and Controlling White Collar Crime

Module 3

– Organized Crime

It is important to understand the underlying societal conditions that create organized crime. The focus of this section is to demonstrate how organized crime has progressed along with societal changes, as well as issues in controlling organized crime.

Unit 1 Defining Organized Crime

Unit 2 Paradigms and Theories of Organized Crime

Unit 3 Organized Crime Groups and their Development

Unit 4 Political and Corporate Alliances

Unit 5 Transnational Organized Crime: Trends and Issues

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Evaluation and Grading

Your grade for this course will be based on two essay assignments, three online discussions, a book review, and a take home essay exam. You should understand the University's policy on plagiarism, cheating, and examination impersonation as detailed in the General Academic Regulations and Policy section of the University of Manitoba Undergraduate Calendar. Note: These policies are also located in your Distance and Online Education Student Handbook or you may refer to Student Affairs at <http://www.umanitoba.ca/student>

Distribution of marks

Evaluation	Percentage/Weighting
Assignment 1 Essay	20%
Assignment 2 Essay	25%
Assignment 3 Essay	25%
Book review	15%
Online Discussions (3)	15%
Total	100%

Grading scale

Letter grade	Percentage range	Description
A+	91 – 100	Exceptional
A	85 – 90	Excellent
B+	80 – 84	Very good
B	75 – 79	Good

C+	70 – 74	Satisfactory
C	60 – 69	Adequate
D	50 – 59	Marginal
F	less than 50	Failure

Note: All final grades are subject to departmental review.

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Assignments

Book review

You will write a short book review on the text *Monster: The Autobiography of an L.A. Gang Member*.

Assignment 1 essay

You will write two essays on a choice of topics that address issues that were covered in the first module.

Assignment 2 essay

You will write two essays on a choice of topics that address issues that were covered in the second module.

Assignment 3 essay

You will write two essays on a choice of topics that address issues that were covered in the third module. The format is the same as assignments 1 and 2.

Online discussions

You will be required to participate in 3 online discussions worth 5 marks each for each unit. The online discussion area will be open for one week. You will respond to the instructor's questions and one other student's posting. See the discussion rubric.

Note: If you cannot access the course website to participate in the online discussions, please contact your instructor immediately to request the alternative written essay assignment.

Assignment due dates

Assignment due dates will be posted in the course announcements.

General guidelines for assignment preparation

Assignment preparation

For your essay assignments, you should read the notes in the course manual and then read the assigned chapters that correspond to that topic. As you are reading through the chapters, you should underline the relevant points or make notes if you prefer. You must make reference to the readings and videos in your assignments.

Plagiarism, cheating, and examination impersonation

You should acquaint yourself with the University's policy on plagiarism, cheating, and examination impersonation as detailed in the General Academic Regulations and Policy section of the University of Manitoba *Undergraduate Calendar*. Note: These policies are also located in your *Distance and Online Education Student Handbook* or you may refer to Student Affairs at <http://www.umanitoba.ca/student>.

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Distance and Online Education (DE) Student Resources

In your course website there are links for the following:

- Contacting Distance and Online Education Staff
- Distance and Online Student Handbook
- Distance and Online Education Website

Acknowledgements

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Biography

Dr. Peikoff was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Manitoba in 2000, where she has been teaching since 1997. She now teaches Introduction to Sociology, Criminology and Sociology of Criminal Careers.

Dr. Peikoff's primary interests are in the areas of historical research on the early interaction between Anglican missionaries and First Nations people at Red River, (for which her doctoral thesis won the Social Justice Award given by St. Paul's College) as well as current issues in white collar and organized crime.

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