



Western University
SOCIOLOGY 4407
Advanced topics in Criminological Theory

Winter 2017
Friday, 930-12:30, 5406 SSC

Instructor: Professor Dale Ballucci

Office Hours: Friday 12:30-2:00 pm or by appointment
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Course Description:

The purpose of this course is two-fold: 1) To explore the debates concerning the role of criminological research, and 2) to advance your knowledge of selected criminological topics. In this course we discuss the purpose and goals of criminology and criminological research. Using a variety of theoretical and empirical readings in select topics (represented in several modules), we explore these various positions, and engage in critical discussions concerning how and why issues are shaped and dealt with. Through an in-depth examination of each topic, we explore the power of definitions of crime, the effects of these definitions, and the political and social context for crime control initiatives. We assess policies and practices, and discuss how they serve as institutions that control and shape lives. This seminar-style course will require you to think critically and engage in thoughtful debate with your classmates. Each student is required to complete all readings each week.

Required Text(s):

All readings will be made available to students on OWL or via email.

Prerequisites:

Sociology 2253A/B, Sociology 2266A/B, and enrollment in fourth year of one of the Honors Specializations or Honors Double Majors in Sociology and Criminology.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students should:

- * Learn to recognize the connection between public policy on crime, political ideology, and criminological theory.
- * Develop a critical understanding of the major crime control policy issues, debates over these issues, and their ideological and theoretical underpinnings.
- * Learn to work cooperatively in a group to accomplish common goals.

Method of Evaluation for Undergraduate Students:

1. Seminar Leadership 20%
2. Participation 10%
3. Response to Movie (in-class) 15%
4. Annotated Commentaries 15% (3 x 5%)
5. Conference Style Presentation on Research Paper 10%
6. Final Paper Outline 5%
7. Final Research Paper 25%

Method of Evaluation for Graduate Students:

1. Seminar Leadership 20%
2. Participation 10%
3. Response to Movie (In class) 10%
4. Annotated Commentaries 15% (3 x 5%)
5. Conference Style Presentation on Research Paper 10%
6. Final Paper Outline Voluntary
7. Final Paper 35%

This course has been exempted by the dean's office from University Senate rules requiring assessment of work accounting for 15% of your final grade, prior to the deadline for withdrawal from a course without academic penalty. You will not receive 15% of your grade prior to the deadline to drop the course.

Evaluation Breakdown:

1. Seminar Leadership: To be assigned at the beginning of the course

Total 45 minutes MAX

This is a very important part of your grade. This is NOT simply a summary of the article. Students who complete a summary will receive a low grade. This exercise requires you to teach the class about the article. This means that you must understand the arguments presented in the piece. This may require you to do some additional reading and or to look up the meaning of words. Do not use words in your presentation if you do not know what they mean. Do not simply summarize or read out parts of the article. You are certainly allowed to integrate quotes from the article, but the presentation must be in your own words. Using your own words is the best way to understand and explain what you have learned to other people.

A strong presentation will explain the article arguments. This includes a **brief** summary of the article that **highlights the key elements to the piece**. Identify the main arguments in one page. The large portion of the presentation should provide substantial arguments – this means how they demonstrate the argument- methods they use, expertise they draw on. What unites the texts of that week or module? Are there debates? Approx. 25-30 mins

For the question and discussion period consider discussing the challenges the pieces raises, how the piece relates to, or diverts from other readings, and/or the strengths and limitations of the argument. These are some suggestions. The purpose of this exercise is to illustrate that you are thinking about the piece and how it relates to other course material, and to get others to do the same. Approx. 10-15 mins

Your presentation grade will reflect how closely you follow the requirements discussed in this section.

2. Participation

As a seminar, the success of this course depends on informed and engaged student participation. All students are expected to attend to class having done the readings and prepared for discussion. You *are* required to bring the reading material with you to class each week.

This proportion of your grade will reflect your efforts to contribute in *meaningful ways* to class discussions. This means providing comments related to the readings and that address course content. You will not be given grades for giving your opinions or telling me what you think if it is not related to the course material. To attain grades for participation you must engage in meaningful conversations in the class. I will evaluate not only how often you speak, but also the quality of your contributions. Your contributions should be informed by, and grounded in, the readings. Your attendance is also reflected in this grade.

3. Response to Movie: In Class Critical Review Submission: Feb 10, 2016

Students will watch a feature length film/documentary about human trafficking and write a 3-5 pages double spaced critical review. This response will be done in groups of 3. The review should be similar to an academic book review. Students should briefly summarize the film/documentary and provide a critical review of the depiction of human trafficking. The review should identify how human trafficking has been framed in the film or documentary and critically examine how the portrayal of trafficking may influence public perceptions of the problem and expectations about the responses of the state and civil society.

4. Annotated Commentaries

Graduate students are required to write 3 commentaries. These are short insightful reviews that not only summarize the article but that focus on illustrating knowledge of the arguments and how they may fit into larger debates. To do this, discuss a strength of the argument or what it may contribute to in terms of a larger debate and a limitation to the article. Comments such as the ‘the same size is small’, the author explained this well’ and ‘I liked the article’ will NOT give you any points. Your comments must be grounded in the readings, the context of the course and or your overall knowledge in the areas of criminology and sociology.

5. Conference Style Presentation

On April 2nd, we will hold a mini-conference that showcases students’ research papers. The class/conference will be organized into 4 sessions, with each session having a panel of speakers (roughly 3 or 4 students on each panel). Each student will present a 5-7 minute presentation on his or her research paper, followed by a brief question and answer period.

6. Final Paper– Due Date- April 14, 2016. Submit your papers via email.

Your final papers must be on one of the topics of the 5 modules. Your paper needs to explore one of these topics. The papers must be original, in that they will be written specifically for this course. They will be clearly organized and articulate a coherent argument. They must use the appropriate literature and sources that would normally be expected for a scholarly paper being prepared for publication. All papers should be correctly referenced, using any one of the standard academic reference styles (use whatever you are familiar with as long as you are consistent in the paper). You are required to use 10-15 sources for undergraduates and 15-20 for graduate students. Of these sources, a minimum of 3 must be

from module (place an * beside each of the references from that are from the course). The remaining sources must be from beyond the course material. The final paper takes the place of a comprehensive final examination. All papers must be typewritten and double-spaced. Do not forget to leave time to proof read your work very carefully. This practices reduced the potential for grammar and spelling errors and increases the clarity of your paper.

See Appendix

Expectations for Undergraduates (25%)

Final papers for undergraduate students will be between 12-15 pages in length. This paper should provide a critical literature review, including both theoretical and perspectives and empirical research.

Expectations for Graduate Students (35%)

Final papers for graduate students will be between 15-20 pages in length. These papers should not only comprehensively engage in a topic from the course but also demonstrate independent and critical thinking. As graduate students the expectations for the paper are greater and the grading scheme will reflect this. Graduate students are expected to incorporate a critical and engaging analysis by using an empirical component such as criminal code, police policy, governmental policy, court cases, and any other form of institutionalized regulation relevant to your topic.

7. Final Paper Outline: Due Date: no later than Feb 17, 2017

Paper proposals should be roughly 500 words, double-spaced, 1.5” margins, and typed. Paper proposals should identify your topic, the main research problematic, relevant theories and concepts, and the direction you hope to take your analysis in the final draft. Your proposal must also include:

1. The beginning of your bibliography. **Provide a minimum of 5** sources (none from the course) that you plan to use in your final paper.
2. A statement that explains the focus of the paper. What issues/topic, argument or idea are you planning to explore.
3. Why is the focus of your paper important?
4. A short explanation of the three points you plan to make.

How to Contact Me:

I can be contacted via email at dballucc@uwo.ca. Only emails that use proper etiquette will be answered. For example, a salutation is required. “Hello Professor Ballucci, Dr. Ballucci, or Dale” is acceptable. “Hey”, “Miss”, or the absence of a salutation is not acceptable. Also, no texting terminology is acceptable. Lastly, provide me with your name and the course and section you are emailing about. Also, please do not email me questions about course content or course procedures. I will take time in every class to answer these types of questions. There are, however, two main exceptions to this policy:

1. You are experiencing a personal emergency that I need to know about before the next class.
2. You want to make an appointment to see me.

I will give my best effort to respond to these emails within 24 hours.

How to get important information:

All relevant course material will be available in the course outline and in class. Course announcements and information may also be sent to your western email account.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Reading and Note Taking

Mechanics of reading and note taking:

Read the text and make notes (on a separate piece of paper) indicating what seem like the most important parts of the text. When you have gone through the text once, go back and take notes in outline form, by paraphrasing sentences or paragraphs until you have reduced the many pages of text to a few pages in your own words. (Make sure to keep an accurate citation to the work so that any future use of these notes and paraphrases can be appropriately cited.) Do not rely on underlining. Do not rely on highlighting. To “know” a text, you need to convert it into your own words and phrases and claims. The text needs to be processed several different ways. Underlining does not help you learn the material.

Analytical Reading:

- a. Classify the book or article according to kind and subject matter. Into what paradigm or research program (genre) does that work fit? What is the piece about as a whole?
- b. Define the specific problem or problems the author has tried to address. What question does the author claim to address? You might also want to think about how this reading fits into the course. Why did the instructor place the reading at this point in the course? What is the topic on the syllabus? How does this reading provide an answer or information for this topic?
- c. A theoretical statement proposes a relationship between elements of a process. What theoretical statements does the author make?
- d. What are the concepts and variables used? Become familiar with the author by defining key words. Know the details of the argument.
- e. How does the author’s argument / position compare with that of others who address the same question or related questions? Where are the points of similarity and difference?
- f. What normative statements (value judgments) does the author make? What values does the author assume readers will share? What assumptions does the author make that may be contestable?
- g. What is the author’s methodology? What constitutes data in this reading? Know the author’s arguments by finding them in, or constructing them out of, sequences of sentences.
- h. Determine which of the problems the author has solved and which she has not; and of those not solved, decide which the author knows he has failed to solve. If you disagree with the author, on what basis do you disagree? Is the author uninformed, misinformed, illogical, imprecise, or incomplete? Criticize fairly; do not pass judgment based on personal opinion, taste, or preference. Is the argument internally consistent? Does the data (both that presented by the author and other data in the field) support the argument?

General Guidance on Structuring Academic Term Papers

A good general rule when writing a social science term paper is to discuss each point of the argument you make in your paper in the following way:

(Stage 1) **Description:** show you understand the basic idea, premise and/or argument(s) made by the position or theory you are considering

(Stage 2) **Connections:** show how the different ideas, premises and/or arguments you are considering might relate to one another: how might they have similar thinking/understanding on the topic in question? Or, alternatively, how they might not be similar to one another?

(Stage 3) **Critical assessment:** show your sociological thinking by looking at what the issues, counter-arguments, alternative perspectives, etc. might be and then, looking at the issue under consideration for its formation) and ask yourself: what is it about them that might be problematic? (e.g. what might they assume?; what might be contentious in their 'understanding' of a particular issue?; what alternative explanations might there be?)

Many students spend too much time on the descriptive (i.e. Stage 1) part, a little on Stage 2 and then hardly anything (sometimes nothing at all) on Stage 3. To perform well on this 400 level paper, you need to demonstrate that you have also done the difficult analytical work involved in Stages 2 and 3 and can present it in a thoughtful and balanced exposition.

You should also strive to write your paper concisely, organize your exposition clearly, and use concepts accurately.

Important Policies

Policies for Assignment Deadlines:

All assignments are due on the dates noted. Late course work will only be accepted without penalty with appropriate documentation that has been approved by the Academic Counseling office. Coursework received after the due date will have their grade reduced by a rate of 5% per a day (including weekends). If an assignment is due at the end of a morning class (12:30) it will be considered one day late any time after 12:30 p.m. until 4:30 p.m. the following day).

A Note on Plagiarism:

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence (the Scholastic Offence Policy can be viewed in the Western Academic Calendar).

Plagiarism Checking:

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for detection of plagiarism. All papers

submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (www.turnitin.com).

Examinations:

There will be no electronic devices allowed during tests and examinations.

Policy on Laptops and other Electronics/Phones in Class:

Laptops are permitted in class but if it is observed that students are on social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter, they will be told to close the lid and they will not be permitted to use it for the remainder of the class. Be sure that all cell phones are turned off at the beginning of class.

Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness:

Western's policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness can be found at www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf. Students must see the Academic Counsellor and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain accommodation: http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical_accommodation.html

Accessibility Options:

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar's website: www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated_exams.html

Scholastic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site: www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Mental Health

Students who are in **emotional/mental distress** should refer to Mental Health@Western (http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.