



The University of Western University  
**SOCIOLOGY 4407G-001/ 9130B-001**  
**Advanced Topics in Criminological Theory**  
Winter 2022

**Tuesday 9:30-12:30**  
**SCC 5235**

**Time Zone:** All times on syllabus are in Eastern Daylight Savings Time/Eastern Standard Time

**Instructor: Dr. Ballucci, Assistant Professor**  
**Office Hours:** Via Zoom (link and dates provided through OWL)  
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Email: [dballucc@uwo.ca](mailto:dballucc@uwo.ca)

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**Staying well during the pandemic:** For some useful tips and information on Western's policies during the pandemic, please visit: <https://www.uwo.ca/coronavirus/students.html>

## **COURSE INFORMATION**

### ***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, Western library or via email.

\*I reserve the right to modify the course outline and readings

***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 all Students:**

1. Seminar Leadership 30%
2. Weekly Participation 20%
3. Response to Movie / or Guest Speaker (In class) 10%
4. Ted Talk (on Research Paper Topic) 10%
5. Term Paper 30%

### ***Evaluation Breakdown:***

#### ***1. Seminar Leadership 30%: To be assigned at the beginning of the course***

You will each lead one seminar (on your own or in pairs or groups, depending on class size) on the required readings. 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 ideas and arguments in the article, and how they pertain to the larger questions of criminology. 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. The presenters for this week will have the entire 3 hours of the course. Each presenter will receive an independent grade.

\* Three days prior to your presentation date (by 6pm), submit three questions on OWL, through 'announcements' to the class. The three questions are to be used by non-presenting students to guide their reading and prepare them to participate in the seminar. Failure to do so, will result in a 3% reduction of your final presentation grade. Note: DO NOT have any questions start with, "what do you think, or tell me your opinion on". Each question should be written to encourage students to think about the material, the debates, issues and content NOT personal experience or opinions. The goal is to generate discussion around the material.

#### ***How to build a strong presentation?***

A strong presentation will result from being prepared and understanding the article arguments. Complete a **brief** summary of the main points of the article. That is to **highlight the key elements of the piece**.

Identify the main arguments in one page. This means understand and explain how the author(s) demonstrate the argument. Think about, what methods they used, as well as the expertise they draw on.

1. What areas/discussions does the article contribute to?
2. What does the article claim to offer?
3. What does the article say still needs to be explored?
4. What problems or challenges does the article identify?
5. What unites the texts of that week or module? Are there debates that you can engage in?

The key to preparing and leading a seminar is to engage and guide the class in 'unpacking' and critically analyzing the readings. An effective way to complete the presentation is to identify themes (potentially 2-3, but this will vary based on the topics) that overlap between the readings. These can be in the forms of questions or statements. For example, what is risk? The themes organize and frame your presentation and show you a path to organize and integrate all the articles. To do this, read the articles, and consider the readings in relation to each other (and if applicable to readings discussed in previous seminars weeks).

For the question period, the goal is not to 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.

TIPS: Do not use words in your discussion/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.

## **2. Participation 20% (15% and 5%)**

In class participation 15%: 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, along with your nametag. Please refer to each other by name in class discussions.

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. You will receive a mid-term grade on your participation.

One written assignment 5%: Each student is to submit one annotated bibliography that will be graded out of 5%. This is to provide students who are less comfortable with public speaking the opportunity to participate. Each student can only do this once, because the goal of the participation grade is to encourage students to speak in a public setting and increase their confidence. The best way to increase your confidence, and the ease of speaking in groups is to come prepared with notes and ideas. I ensure that the classroom is a safe space so please make your best effort to talk in the classroom.

## **3. Response to Movie or Guest Speaker: In Class Critical Review Submission 10%**

Students will be required to write a 3-5 pages double-spaced critical review that includes the reading topics and the film. The film is to be used as an additional source to engage in a debate concerning: what is criminology's role in law and policy? Students should take a position and support it using the readings and the film.

## **4. 'Ted Talk': Conference Style Presentation 10%**

In the last two weeks of the course, you will perform a Ted Talk on your own. The purpose is to showcase students' research papers, but in a format that has appeal to the public. A strong Ted Talk, will tell the class why your research matter, why the questions that you investigated is important, why people should do research in your area or field. If you have not seen a Ted Talk before I encourage you to watch one. For this class, each student will present a 8-12 minutes (depending on the size of the class). Remember the key to this exercise is not to review all the components of your paper but rather to make your research interesting to a general audience, to policy makers, to your family at Christmas. This

exercise will demonstrate the value of criminological research in the ‘real world’ and the why it is important to think about correctional practices, language, and societal reactions and ideas of people. If time permits, there will be a short question period.

### ***Graduating, now what?: CV preparation***

If time permits, I will help you build a CV. We will review the activities and tasks you have completed over the course of your degree. I will then discuss how these translate to skills, and how to use them to construct your CV. There is no grades, or written requirements assigned to this component of the course.

### ***5. Final Paper 30% Submit your papers on the OWL website.***

Your final papers must be on one of the topics of the 5 modules. You are encouraged to write your final paper on the module topic you presented on for your seminar. 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 forgot to leave time to proof read your work very carefully. This practice reduced the potential for grammar and spelling errors and increases the clarity of your paper.

***See Appendix***

### ***Expectations for Undergraduates***

Final papers for undergraduate students will be between 10-12 pages in length. This paper should provide a critical literature review, including both theoretical and perspectives and empirical research.

### ***Expectations for Graduate Students***

Final papers for graduate students will be between 12-15 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.

### **How to Contact Me:**

I can be contacted via email at [dballucc@uwo.ca](mailto: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 (<http://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](http://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: [counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/academic\\_consideration.html](http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/academic_consideration.html).

### **Academic Consideration for Missed Work**

Students who are seeking academic consideration for missed work during the semester may submit a *Self-Reported Absence (SRA)* form online provided that the absence is **48 hours or less** and the other conditions



specified in the [Senate policy](#) are met. Two important exceptions to this rule: SRAs will NOT be allowed for final examinations or assessments worth more than 30% of a given course. Students whose absences are expected to last **longer than 48 hours**, or where the other conditions detailed in the policy are not met (e.g., work is worth more than 30% of the final grade, the student has already used 2 self-reported absences, the absence is during the final exam period), may receive academic consideration by submitting a [Student Medical Certificate](#) (for illness) or other appropriate documentation (for compassionate grounds) to your Home Faculty Academic Counselling office.

All students pursuing academic consideration, regardless of type, must contact their instructors no less than 24 hours following the end of the period of absence to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the academic responsibilities missed during their absence. Students are reminded that they should consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying submission of work, and are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances.

[www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_illness.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf)

### **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:

[http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated\\_exams.html](http://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:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://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 ([www.uwo.ca/health/mental\\_wellbeing/](http://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/)) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.