



The University of Western University

**SOCIOLOGY 4407G-001**

**Criminological Theory and Research**

Winter 2023

**Tuesday 9:30-12:30, SCC 5406**

**In Person**

**Instructor: Dr. Ballucci, Assistant Professor**

**Office Hours:** Via Zoom (link and dates provided through OWL)

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**Course Description:**

This seminar will review and discuss major criminological theories and related empirical research. The course will examine empirical patterns associated with crime, violence and deviance; as well as the sociology of the criminal justice system. 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.

***Prerequisites:*** Sociology 2266A/B, and registration in third year or above in a Department of Sociology module or fourth year in any module.

Unless you have either the prerequisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

***Anti-requisite(s):*** Sociology 4409F/G, Sociology 4486G taught in 2010.

**Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:**

***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.

### **Course Material:**

#### ***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.

### **Communication:**

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 (with the exception of weekends).

Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<http://owl.uwo.ca>) on a regular basis for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class.

### **Method of Evaluation:**

The evaluation methods described in the course outline are essential requirements for the course.

1. Critical Response Module 10%, Due Feb 1 (by 4pm)
2. Seminar 25%, Assigned Dates in the first week
3. Weekly Participation 20%
4. Ted Talk 10%, April 4, 2023
5. Final Research Paper 25%, April 10, 2023

*For your research paper, you may write on the topic that presented, or a variation of. Instructions for this paper are described above in the course syllabus.*

#### ***1. Critical Response Module 10%***

Describe the challenges with conducting Criminological research. Max 3-4 pages double spaced, fully references with reference page in any reference style you are knowledgeable.

## ***2. Seminar Leadership 25%: 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.

### **3. *Weekly Participation 20%***

In class participation 20%: 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.

### **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 25% 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. 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. 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 (*See Appendix*). *Save your paper using your last name NOT the name of the course.*

### **Contingency plan for an in-person class pivoting to 100% online learning:**

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, affected course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will **not** change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

### **Student Absences:**

If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstances, please follow the procedures below.

#### ***Assessments worth less than 10% of the overall course grade:***

For work worth less than 10% of the total course grade, please contact me directly; you do not have to consult your academic counsellors. Depending on the circumstances, I will provide an extension, or make-up opportunity. These decisions will be made on a case by case basis.

#### ***Assessments worth 10% or more of the overall course grade:***

For work totaling 10% or more of the final course grade, students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to their Home Faculty Academic Counselling Office as soon as possible. The absence will be handled through either an extension, or make-up opportunity.

**Note:** missed work can *only* be excused through one of the mechanisms above. Being asked not to attend an in-person course requirement due to potential COVID-19 symptoms is **not** sufficient on its own. Students should check the Western website to see what directives for Covid are to be followed. Western has been and will continue to follow directives established by the Middlesex-London Health Unit. That directive will state whether students should or should not come to campus/class and any other requirements (e.g., masks are mandatory). Please check on your own and do not email the instructor, the Department Undergraduate Advisor/Coordinator or the Faculty of Social Science Academic Counselling Office.

## **Important Policies**

**Academic Consideration for Missed Work:** Students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation in order to receive accommodation for missed work worth 10% or more of the final grade in the course. All required documentation for absences must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty. Individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds or for other reasons.

Western's policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness can be found at [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf). The student medical certificate is available at [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf).

**Religious Accommodation:** When a course requirement conflicts with a religious holiday that requires an absence from the University or prohibits certain activities, students should request accommodation for their absence in writing at least two weeks prior to the holiday to the course instructor and the Academic Counselling office of their Faculty of Registration. Please consult University's list of recognized religious holidays (updated annually) at <https://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo>.

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.

**Accessibility Options:** Students with disabilities or accessibility challenges should work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD [http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible\\_education/index.html](http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html)), which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar's website: [www.registrar.uwo.ca/academics/examinations/accommodated\\_exams.html](http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/academics/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: [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

**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.

**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 (<https://www.turnitin.com/>).

**Mental Health:** Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western ([www.uwo.ca/health/mental\\_wellbeing/index.html](http://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html)) for a complete list of options how to obtain help. Please visit the Social Science Academic Counselling webpage for information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters: [Academic Counselling - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](http://www.uwo.ca/academic_counselling/).

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at [https://www.uwo.ca/health/student\\_support/survivor\\_support/get-help.html](https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html) .To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact [support@uwo.ca](mailto:support@uwo.ca).

## 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.