

SOC 431
Analysis in Criminology/Juvenile Delinquency

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Crime is a central issue in our society. Our newspapers are saturated with it; our police fight it; our communities grieve it; our politicians campaign against it; our scholars and “bar-room” philosophers debate its origins; our imaginations fear it. Crime seems to be everywhere. But is it? How much crime is there? How likely is it that you will be a victim of some criminal act? This course attempts to understand crime scientifically. To this end, we will analyze the empirical patterns of crime (how much crime is there? Who commits it? Who are the victims?), as well as theoretical attempts to explain these patterns. Criminal behavior is diverse, as are the explanations of it. Moreover, we will address efforts to control crime within a “free society.”

The course consists of four broad sections. The first begins with basic definitions of law, crime, criminal types, the differentia of criminal behavior, and measurements of crime. The second section analyzes the empirical patterns of violent, economic, normative, “white collar,” and “organized” crime in modern America. A range of sociological theories of crime is presented in the third section, and the final section covers issues of crime control.

TEXT REQUIREMENTS

1. Crime and the American Dream (Wadsworth Series in Criminological Theory) by Rosenfeld
ISBN: 0534619584
2. Rich Get Richer and The Poor Get Prison: Ideology, Class, and Criminal Justice 8th or 9th edition by Reiman
ISBN: 0205461727

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES (SLOs)

8 short-writing assignments

The objective of these short-writing assignments is to demonstrate your understanding and grasp of the weekly literature, with the opportunity for creative and critical analysis. These short-writing assignments are to be posted on the discussion board, and thus will serve to engage you in discussion with your classmates on the discussion board

Academic book review

The purpose of this book review is to challenge you to identify a topic that interests you within our field of study, and find an approved book that delves further into that topic and write an academic book review on that book. This assignment serves to improve your academic writing and researching ability.

Discussion/ Analysis of the assigned readings

The purpose of this assignment is to (1) determine your understanding of the assigned readings; (2) build on your writing skills; and (3) build on your critical analysis skills and your ability to apply rigorous academic critique to your discussion and analysis.

Final Research Paper

The final research paper seeks to culminate all of these aforementioned learning objectives and apply your research skills, critical writing and analysis skills, along with demonstrating your understanding of the theoretical concepts and frameworks we learned throughout the term.

STUDENT EVALUATION

Your grade will consist of:

8 short-writing response assignments which are required to be posted to the discussion board which is intended to engage you in discussion with your classmates – each worth 2.5% of your final grade

Academic book review on an academic book on the topic of crime (min 5 pgs) – 15% of your final grade

Two writing assignments providing a summary and Discussion/Analysis of assigned readings (min 5 pgs each) – each 15% of your final grade

Final research paper which must be a minimum of 10 pages - 30% of your final grade

There is a total of 100 points in the class. Final grades will be determined using a +/- 94%, 90%, 87%, 83% 80% etc. scale.

If you are a student with special needs or circumstances, have emergency medical information to share with me, or need special arrangements, please talk with me as soon as possible.

SOME IMPORTANT ITEMS:

ü **NO EXTRA CREDIT IS AVAILABLE FOR THIS COURSE UPON REQUEST**

ü **NO GRADE NEGOTIATING**

Doing well in this class: In order to do well in this class, it is important that you a) view all the lectures, stay up with the discussion board, and (b) do all required readings

It is critical that you do the readings. Doing the readings will help you to better understand the posted Powerpoint lectures and focus your discussion postings topics to the relevant areas that we have been covering.