Criminology Syllabus (Summer 2016)

Book

Taking Sides: Clashing Views in Crime and Criminology (*11th ed.)* by Thomas Hickey.  Published by McGraw-Hill.

Course Description

This class takes a "major issues" approach to the field of Criminology.  We will cover a wide range of topics including the sociology of law; constitutional, psychological, sociological theories of criminal behavior; process of criminal justice; treatment of corrections; control of crime; and current trends in the definition of crime.

Methods of Evaluation

Participation

Every week you will be required to participate in 2 debates with your “team” (group) on topics selected from the themes in the textbook.  In each debate, you will be assigned either the “yes” or “no” side, and be required to argue it. The point of the forums is to take the material you've read for the week and turn it in to a cohesive argument on the issue.

First, pick one or several points from the reading to support your reasoning.  Make reference points one or both of the articles that week argues.  You need not summarize them, but rather establish your own reasoning for being "yes" or "no" and use them for support.  Second, you will also need be required to do some independent research and bring in at least one outside source to make your point in each forum.  This can take many forms: a peer-reviewed journal article, a magazine or newspaper article that cites experts in the field, a Youtube (or other) video that similarly uses expert knowledge, a government or non-profit's report; or anything similar I didn't include.

In each debate, you will be expected to post 3 times: 1 initial post that responds “yes” or “no” on the issue, depending on what you’ve been assigned (6 points), and 2 follow up posts to classmates (2 points each).  In follow up posts you can change sides or be neutral, as long as you add some meaningful thought to the discussion.

 Your initial posts and responses should be:

* Well-thought-out (carefully planned)
* Clear as to whom your response is directed (a particular student or the entire class)
* Concise but complete (approximately two paragraphs for Initial Comments and approximately one paragraph for replies at a minimum)
* Insightful (perceptive)
* Considerate (don’t say anything you wouldn’t say to someone in person)
* Professional (composed with good grammar, spelling, and punctuation in mind)
* Respectful (contain no profanity or disrespectful references)
* Timely (submitted on time)
* Pertinent (address the subject at hand)

Comments pertaining to topics other than the one addressed in a particular forum won’t necessarily be given credit, but they are allowed.  Tasteful humor in your comments and responses when appropriate is always appreciated and enjoyed along with your more considered responses.

 Sometimes you will have to take a side that you vehemently disagree with or see as obviously wrong.  The challenge in those instances is not necessarily to prove the argument correct, but to understand its origins and why some people would view it correct.  Playing “devil’s advocate” or arguing for a key underlying assumption are good methods for taking the “pro” side of bad arguments. You don’t have to agree with the side you are assigned, but you should come to understand why others do, and you must take the side assigned in your initial post for full credit.

Quizzes

Each week there will be a quiz over the lesson at hand.  The quizzes will cover material from the textbook readings for the week.  Therefore, the only way to do well on them is to do the readings, which will end up helping you in the discussion forums.  You have unlimited time, up until 11:59 PM of the due date, to finish and submit each quiz.  Your assessments will not be comprehensive.

Essay Assignment:

At the end of the semester, you will produce a 2000-2500-word research paper.  It is worth quite a bit of points, but will be turned in by stages.  The point of writing in this way is so that you receive feedback along the path to creating a comprehensive research paper that you can use as an example of high-caliber academic writing in future portfolios or writing examples when applying to a job or graduate schools.  You will be expected to come up with an original idea and review the ideas of some of your classmates as part of this process.  More details will be given in week 2.

Points Distributions

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Category | Points |
| Quizzes | 160 |
| Paper | 130 |
| Participation | 160 |
| *Total* | *450* |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Points | Min % | Grade | Points | Min % | Grade |
| 418.5 | 93 | A | 328.5 | 73 | C |
| 405 | 90 | A- | 315 | 70 | C- |
| 391.5 | 87 | B+ | 301.5 | 67 | D+ |
| 373.5 | 83 | B | 283.5 | 63 | D |
| 360 | 80 | B- | 270 | 60 | D- |
| 346.5 | 77 | C+ |  |  | F |

Late Policy

Project planning, time management, and contingency planning are essential to success in this and all college courses.  Thus, it is expected that all assignments will be submitted by their respective due dates.

To encourage your personal commitment to learning and to maintain focus on your achievement of learning outcomes, I will accept late work on the essay portions and quizzes, with consequences.

 The following will be in effect for assignments submitted late:

* One day late results in 20% off the points possible.
* Two days late results in 40% off the points possible.
* Three days late results in 60% off the points possible.
* Four days late results in 80% off the points possible.
* Five or more days late results in zero points earned.
* Assignments are not accepted after the last day of the course.

For example, if an assignment is 2 days late and you scored 8 out of 10, you would be assigned a score of 4 instead – 40% off the maximum possible points

*That being said, stuff happens.  If there are one or more personal emergencies that happen you find yourself in a crunch, email me* ***before*** *something is due and we might be able to work out a plan, depending on the circumstances.*

Classroom Safe Space Policy

 There is likely to be a good deal of discussion and participation in this class.  Even though we are all faceless to each other on the internet, take care to treat your classmates with respect.  Any words or actions inside or outside the forums that create a hostile learning environment for someone on the basis of race, gender, sexuality, class, geographic origin, immigrant status, or any other characteristic with the potential for discrimination could be grounds for discipline up to removal from the course.  No space can be made entirely safe to all views and vulnerabilities, and the best outcome in an offending situation is a response that engages and changes minds rather that retreats and accuses.

Normally, I would give a trigger warning whenever a lesson comes up with content that could be potentially troubling to people with related past trauma. This class, however, deals frequently with controversial and sensitive topics.  Should a topic have the potential for triggering effects for you, you are encouraged to exercise independent decision making about how you want to engage it, and email me if you have concerns.  You will still be held accountable to the material covered.

Technical Requirements:

Since this in an online course, you need to be able to easily search and navigate the internet.  Basic computer skills are a must, though if you are not an advanced user I can do my best to help.  In the end, you and you alone are responsible for working the required software so be sure you are comfortable with it.

For this course, you need to be sure you have the following pieces of software or an acceptable surrogate:

* Microsoft Office (Word) - If you don't have and don't want to purchase, a substitute that is usually pretty reliable is OpenOffice ([www.openoffice.org](http://www.openoffice.org/) or [www.libreoffice.org](http://www.libreoffice.org/) for the Mac).  It is an open-source product from a long-established software non-profit with a stellar reputation.  Oh, and did you know the University of Missouri provides Office for free?  Click here to learn more: <https://help.missouri.edu/portal/app/portlets/results/viewsolution.jsp?solutionid=041409409562777>
* Java - Free from Sun Microsystems, www.java.com
* Adobe Reader - Free from Adobe at http://get.adobe.com/reader/
* Adobe Flash Player – Free from Adobe at http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/
* A stable Internet browser – If you don't like your system's default browser like Microsoft Edge or Apple Safari, Mozilla Firefox ([www.mozilla.org](http://www.mozilla.org/)) and Google Chrome ([chrome.google.com](http://chrome.google.com/)) also work well with Canvas.

If you already have these pieces of software check to make sure they are all as up to date as possible.  I tend to use new and exciting educational tools that I find on the Internet and those sometimes require the newest version of software.  If you ever have any technical problems be sure to let me know right away so we can work to fix them or find an alternative.

***The best way to solve technical problems immediately is to call the help desk.  They are open 24/7 and their number is 866-295-3070.***

Tips for Success

* I reserve the right to change or update this syllabus as I see fit, with forewarning to you all.
* Let me know if you will be unable to turn in an assignment on time due to technical difficulties or illness and we will arrange a way to make up for content and points.  I will be far less indulgent about this if you email me the night before something is due than if you email me several days before, so get started on projects in advance and avoid the last-minute freak-out.
* Likewise, if I have to be absent from my email or the course for more than 48 hours, I will let you all know as far in advance as possible.
* There will be no extra credit in this course.
* Be *connected*.  To some, the idea of being tied to a computer is a terrible fate, but the only way to ensure you succeed in this and other online classes is to make sure you frequently check your email and the forum posts.  I try to find a balance, too, by taking a walk in the woods, but the nature of online classes requires you to vigilantly sit in front of a screen sometimes.

Academic Honesty

Academic integrity is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards breaches of the academic integrity rules as extremely serious matters. Sanctions for such a breach may include academic sanctions from the instructor, including failing the course for any violation, to disciplinary sanctions ranging from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, collaboration, or any other form of cheating, consult the course instructor.

The University community welcomes intellectual diversity and respects student rights. Students who have questions or concerns regarding the atmosphere in this class (including respect for diverse opinions) may contact the departmental chair or divisional director; the director of the [Office of Students Rights and Responsibilities](http://osrr.missouri.edu/); the [MU Equity Office](http://equity.missouri.edu/), or [equity@missouri.edu](mailto:equity@missouri.edu).

All students will have the opportunity to submit an anonymous evaluation of the instructor(s) at the end of the course.

University of Missouri System Executive Order No. 38 lays out principles regarding the sanctity of classroom discussions at the university. The policy is described fully in [section 200.015](http://www.umsystem.edu/ums/rules/collected_rules/programs/ch200/200.015_academic_inquiry_course_discussion_and_privacy) of the Collected Rules and Regulations. In this class, students may not make audio or video recordings of course activity, except students permitted to record as an accommodation under [section 240.040](http://www.umsystem.edu/ums/rules/collected_rules/programs/ch240/240.040_policy_related_to_students_with_disabilities) of the Collected Rules. All other students who record and/or distribute audio or video recordings of class activity are subject to discipline in accordance with provisions of [section 200.020](http://www.umsystem.edu/ums/rules/collected_rules/programs/ch200/200.020_rules_of_procedures_in_student_conduct_matters) of the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri pertaining to student conduct matters.

Those students who are permitted to record are not permitted to redistribute audio or video recordings of statements or comments from the course to individuals who are not students in the course without the express permission of the faculty member and of any students who are recorded. Students found to have violated this policy are subject to discipline in accordance with provisions of [section 200.020](http://www.umsystem.edu/ums/rules/collected_rules/programs/ch200/200.020_rules_of_procedures_in_student_conduct_matters) of the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri pertaining to student conduct matters.

Students with Disabilities:

If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need to make arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let me know as soon as possible.  If disability related accommodations are necessary (for example, a note taker, extended time on exams, captioning), please register with the Disability Center ([http://disabilitycenter.missouri.edu](http://disabilitycenter.missouri.edu/)), S5 Memorial Union, 573- 882-4696, and then notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. For other MU resources for persons with disabilities, click on "Disability Resources" on the MU homepage.

Course Schedule:

Quizzes and paper parts are due on Sunday at midnight, except the final week when the course ends on Friday.

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| **Lesson #** | **Subject**  1.     Assignments | **Topics** |
| **1** | **Introduction**  1.     Participation  2.     Quiz 1 | Introduce Yourself!  Debate 1: Is Crime Beneficial to Society? |
| **2** | **Biology**  1.     Participation  2.     Quiz 2 | Debate 1:  Is Criminal Behavior Determined Biologically?  Debate 2: Does a “Warrior Gene” Make People More Prone to Violence? |
| **3** | **Society**  1.     Participation  2.     Quiz 3  3.     Paper stage 1 due (proposal) | Debate 1: Does the United States have a Right to Torture Suspected Terrorists?  Debate 2:  Is Racial Profiling an Acceptable Law Enforcement Strategy? |
| **4** | **Technology**  1.     Participation  2.     Quiz 4  3.     Paper stage 2 due (annotated bibliography) | Debate 1: Should It be a Crime to Download Copyrighted Music From the Internet?  Debate 2:  Should an Imprisoned Convict Who Claims Innocence Have a Constitutional Right to Access the State’s Evidence for DNA Testing? |
| **5** | **Getting Tough**  1.     Participation  2.     Quiz 5 | Debate 1: Should the Police Enforce Zero Tolerance Laws?  Debate 2:  Do Three Strikes Sentencing Laws and Other “Get Tough” Approaches Really Work? |
| **6** | **Prisons**  1.     Participation  2.     Quiz 6  3.     Paper stage 3 due (Rough draft, I will return these with feedback  during week 7) | Debate 1: Is Capital Punishment a Bad Public Policy?  Debate 2: Should Private “For-Profit” Corporations be Allowed to Run U.S. Prisons? |
| **7** | **Guns**  1.     Participation  2.     Quiz 7  3.     Paper stage 4 due (Peer Reviews) | Debate 1: Does the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution Protect the Right to Possess a Firearm?  Debate 2: Do Strict Gun Control Laws Reduce the Number of Homicides in the United States? |
| **8** | **Vice**  1.     Participation  2.     Quiz 8  3.     Paper stage 5 due (Final) | Debate 1: Is Exposure to Pornography Related to Increased Rates of Rape?  Debate 2:  Should Marijuana be Legalized? |

Misc:

* [Academic Policies](http://provost.missouri.edu/faculty/syllabus-information.php)
* [Statement of Nondiscrimination](http://missouri.edu/statements/eeo-aa.php)
* [Copyright](http://www.umsystem.edu/ums/copyright)
* [Acceptable Use](http://www.umsystem.edu/ums/rules/collected_rules/facilities/ch110/110.005_acceptable_use_policy)