

SOCIOLOGY 6810: SOCIOLOGY OF CRIME
Professor Ron Simons
Spring, 2009

This course is designed to acquaint students with the predominant issues and theoretical perspectives within criminology. The course will employ a critical focus, analyzing the assumptions and empirical adequacy of the various perspectives and theories extant in the field.

Class Format. Students should come to seminar having read the material assigned for the class session. In addition, each student should write down three questions or comments that occurred to him/her while doing the required readings, and bring these statements to class. In addition, students should read one of the week's recommended readings and write a paragraph describing their reaction to the article and its relationship to the required readings. These paragraphs will be turned in at the beginning of class. Class sessions will be divided into two parts, each lasting about 80 minutes and separated by a 10 minute break. The instructor will begin class with a short lecture over the topic of the day. Following these orienting comments, discussion will take place regarding questions and issues generated by the readings and lecture. During the second portion of the class, student volunteers will present and lead discussion of recommended readings that build upon the theoretical and empirical issues discussed prior to the break.

Evaluation

- 1) Students are expected to come to seminar with three discussion questions concerning the assigned readings and a paragraph regarding one of the recommended readings. Quality of these questions and quality of class participation will count for 25 percent of the student's grade.
- 2) The last three meetings of the seminar will be devoted to student presentations of papers. Each paper will be discussed by another student, so that each student will make a presentation and serve as a discussant. There will be peer evaluations of each presentation, with these evaluations counting for 25 percent of the student's grade.
- 3) Final papers should be turned in to the instructor by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, April 27. The final paper will count for the remaining 50% of the student's grade. Incompletes will be strongly discouraged.

Assigned Readings

There are two textbooks for the course: Ronald L. Akers and Christine S. Sellers, *Criminological Theories* (5th ed.; Oxford University Press, 2009) and Ronald L. Simons, Leslie G. Simons, and Lora E. Wallace, *Families, Delinquency, and Crime: Links Between Society's Most Fundamental Institution and Antisocial Behavior* (Oxford University Press, 2004). They can be purchased at the University Bookstore. Journal articles listed as required or recommended reading come from mainstream sociology and criminology journals readily available in the library or on-line.

Topics and Readings

1. January 14

Orientation to the Course

Required readings:

Simons et al., Chapter 1

Akers & Sellers, Chapter 1

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES--

2. January 21

Control Theories

Required Readings

Akers & Sellers, Chapter 6

Simons et al., Chapters 2 and 5

Michael Gottfredson & Travis Hirschi (1990). The nature of criminality: low self-control, *A General Theory of Crime*, Stanford University Press, 1990. (reserve)

Travis Pratt and Francis T. Cullen (2000). "The empirical status of Gottfredson and Hirschi's General Theory of Crime." *Criminology*, 38: 931-964.

Recommended Readings

Carter Hay and Walter Forrest (2008). Self-control theory and the concept of opportunity: The case for a more systematic union. *Criminology*, 46, 1039-1072,

Michael Welch, Charles Tittle, Jennifer Yonkoski, Nichole Meidinger, and Harold Grasmick (2008). Social integration, self-control, and conformity. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 24, 73-92.

Greg Pgarsky (2007). Deterrence and individual differences among convicted offenders. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 23, 59-74.

Callie Burt, Ronald Simons, and Leslie Simons (2006). A longitudinal test of the effects of parenting and the stability of self-control: negative evidence for the general theory of crime. *Criminology*, 44, 353-396.

Charles Tittle and Ekaterina Botchkovar (2005). Self-control, criminal motivation and deterrence: An investigation using Russian Respondents. *Criminology*, 43, 307-354.

Richard B. Felson and Jeremy Staff (2006). Explaining the academic performance-delinquency relationship. *Criminology*, 44, 299-320.

3. January 28

Social Learning: Parent, Peer, and Media Effects

Required readings:

Akers & Sellers, Chapter 5

Simons et al., Chapters 3, 4 and 10

Recommended readings:

Robert Apel and Catherine Kaukinen (2008) On the relationship between family structure and antisocial behavior: Parental cohabitation and blended households. *Criminology*, 46, 35-70.

Frank M. Weerman and Wilma Smeenk (2005). Peer similarity in delinquency for different types of friends: A comparison using two measurement methods. *Criminology*, 43, 499-523.

Mark Warr (2005). Making delinquent friends: Adult supervision and children's Affiliations. *Crminology*, 43, 77-106.

Bill McCarthy, Diane Felmlee, and John Hagan (2004). Girl friends are better: Gender, friends, and crime among school and street youth. *Criminology*, 42, 805-836.

Rachel A. Gordon et al. (2004). Antisocial behavior and youth gang membership: Selection and socialization. *Criminology*, 42, 55-88.

4. February 4

Cognitive Perspectives: Street Code, Biased Attributions and Relational Schemas

Required Readings:

Elijah Anderson (1997). Violence and the inner-city street code. In J. McCord (ed.), *Violence and Childhood in the Inner City*. Cambridge University.

Kenneth Dodge (1993). Social-cognitive mechanisms in the development of conduct disorder and depression. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 44, 559-84.

Kaaren Lyons-Ruth (1996). Attachment relationships among children with aggressive

behavior problems: The role of disorganized early attachment patterns. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 64, 4-73.

Ronald L. Simons, Leslie Gordon Simons, Yi-Fu Chen, Gene Brody, and Kuei-Hsiu Lin (2007), Identifying the psychological factors that mediate the association between parenting practices and delinquency. *Criminology*, 45, 481-519.

Recommended Readings:

Ellen Moss et al. (2004). Attachment at early school age and developmental risk: Examining family contexts and behavior problems of controlling-caregiving, controlling-punitive, and behaviorally disorganized children. *Developmental Psychology*, 40, 519-532.

Kenneth A. Dodge et al. (2003). Peer rejection and social information-processing factors in the development of aggressive behavior problems in children. *Child Development*, 74, 374-393.

Joseph P. Allen et al. (2002). Attachment and autonomy as predictors of the development of social skills and delinquency during mid-adolescence. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 70, 56-66.

5. February 11

Life Course Perspectives

Required Readings

Akers and Sellers, Chapter 12 (pp. 314-320)

Simons et al., Chapter 7

Terrie E. Moffitt (1997). Adolescent-Limited and life-course-persistent offending: A complementary pair of developmental theories. In T.P. Thornberry (ed.), *Developmental Theories of Crime and Delinquency* (pp. 11-54).

Robert J. Sampson and John H. Laub (2003). Life-course desisters? Trajectories of crime among delinquent boys followed to age 70. *Criminology*, 41, 555-592.

Recommended Readings

Deborah Capaldi, Hyoun Kim, and Lee Owen (2008). Romantic partners' influence on men's likelihood of arrest in early adulthood. *Criminology*, 46, 267-299.

Peggy Giordano, Monica Longmore, Ryan Schroeder, and Patrick Seffrin (2008). A life course perspective on spirituality and desistance from crime. *Criminology*, 46, 99-132.

- Scott Jacques and Richard Wright (2008). The victimization-termination link. *Criminology*, 46, 1009-1038.
- Ryan King, Michael Massoglia, and Ross Macmillan (2007). The context of marriage and crime: Gender, the propensity to marry, and offending in early adulthood. *Criminology*, 45, 33-66.
- Michael Masoglia (2006). Desistance or displacement? The changing patterns of offending from adolescence to young adulthood. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 22, 215-239.
- Robert Sampson, John H. Laub, and Christopher Wimer (2006). Does marriage reduce Crime? Approach to within-individual causal effects. *Criminology*, 44, 465-508.
- Elaine Eggleston Doherty (2006). Self-control, social bonds, and desistance: A test of life-course interdependence. *Criminology*, 44, 807-834.
- Arjan A.J. Blokland and Paul Nieuwebeerta (2005). The effects of life circumstances on Longitudinal trajectories of offending. *Criminology*, 43, 1203-1240.
- Becky Pettit and Bruce Western (2004). Mass imprisonment and the life course. Race and class inequality in incarceration the United States. *American Sociological Review*, 69, 151-169.

6. February 18

Causes and Consequences of Labeling

Required readings:

Akers and Sellers, Chapter 7

Simons et al., Chapter 6 (pp. 110-114)

Robert J. Sampson and John H. Laub (1997). A life-course theory of cumulative disadvantage and stability of delinquency. In T. Thornberry (ed.), *Developmental Theories of Crime and Delinquency*. New Brunswick: Transaction.

Recommended readings:

Ted Chiricos, Kelle, Barrick, William Bales, and Stephanie Bontrager (2007). The labeling of convicted felons and its consequences for recidivism. *Criminology*, 45, 547-582.

Nadine Lanctot, Stephen Cernkovich, and Peggy Giordano (2007). Delinquent behavior, official delinquency, and gender: Consequences for adulthood functioning well-

being. *Criminology*, 45, 131-158.

Katherine Beckett, Kris Nyrop, and Lori Pflingst (2006). Race, drugs, and policing: Understanding disparities in drug delivery arrests. *Criminology*, 44, 105-138.

Jon Gunnar Bernburg and Marvin D. Krohn (2003). Labeling, life chances, and adult crime: The direct and indirect effects of official intervention in adolescent crime in early adulthood. *Criminology*, 41, 1287-1318.

MACRO PERSPECTIVES--

7. February 25

Opportunity, Strain, and Anomie Theories

Required readings:

Akers and Sellers, Chapter 8 (pp. 182-208)

Simons et al., Chapter 6 (pp. 94-98)

Steven F. Messner and Richard Rosenfeld (2001). Chapter 4 in *Crime and the American Dream* (3rd edition). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. (reserve)

Recommended:

Eric P. Baumer and Regan Gustafson (2007). Social organization and instrumental crime: Assessing the empirical validity of classic and contemporary anomie theories. *Criminology*, 45, 617-664.

Ronald L. Simons et al. (2006). Supportive parenting moderates the effect of discrimination upon anger, hostile view of relationships, and violence among African American youth. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 47, 373-379.

Thomas M. Arvanites and Robert H. Defina (2006). Business cycles and street crime. *Criminology*, 44, 139-164.

Mark Konty (2005). Microanomie: The cognitive foundations of the relationship between anomie and deviance. *Criminology*, 43, 107-132.

Michael O. Maume and Matthew R. Lee (2003). Social institutions and violence: A sub-national test of institutional anomie theory. *Criminology*, 41, 1137-1172.

8. March 4

Social Disorganization/Ecological Theories

Required:

Akers and Sellers, Chapter 8 (pp. 177-182)

Simons et al., Chapter 6 (pp. 103-110)

Robert J. Sampson, Jeffrey D. Morenoff, and Thomas Gannon-Rowley (2002). Assessing “neighborhood effects”: Social processes and new directions in research. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28, 443-478.

Ronald L. Simons et al. (2005). Collective efficacy, authoritative parenting, and delinquency: A longitudinal test of a model integrating community- and family-level processes. *Criminology*, 43, 989-1030.

Recommended:

Karen Parker and Amy Reckdenwald (2008). Concentrated disadvantage, traditional male role models, and African-American juvenile violence. *Criminology*, 46, 711-736.

Barbara Warner (2007). Directly intervene or call the authorities? A study of forms of neighborhood social control within a social disorganization framework. *Criminology*, 45, 99-130.

Daniel P. Mears and Avinash S. Bhati (2006). No community is an island: The effects of resource deprivation on urban violence in spatially and socially proximate communities. *Criminology*, 44, 509-548.

Eric A. Stewart and Ronald L. Simons. (2006). Structure and culture in African-American adolescent violence: A partial test of the code of the street thesis. *Justice Quarterly* 23:1-33.

Charis E. Kubrin and Eric A. Stewart (2006). Predicting who reoffends: The neglected role of neighborhood context in recidivism studies. *Criminology*, 44, 165-198.

David Wesiburd et al. (2006). Does crime just move around the corner? A controlled Study of spatial displacement and diffusion of crime control benefits. *Criminology*, 44, 549-592.

Paul E. Bellair and Tomas L. McNulty (2005). Beyond the bell curve: Community Disadvantage and the explanation of black-white differences in adolescent violence. *Criminology*, 43, 1135-1168.

SPECIAL TOPICS--

9. March 18

Women and Crime

Required:

Akers & Sellers, Chapter 11

Simons et al., Chapter 6 (pp. 98-103)

Darrell Steffensmeier et al. (2005). An assessment of recent trends in girls' violence using diverse longitudinal sources: Is the gender gap closing? *Criminology*, 43, 355-406.

Recommended:

Janet Lauretson and Karen Heimer (2008). The gender gap in violent victimization, 1973-2004. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 24, 125-147.

Jennifer Schwartz and Bryan D. Rookey (2008). The narrowing gap in arrests:
Assessing

competing explanations using self-report, traffic fatality, and official data on drunk driving, 1980-2004. *Criminology*, 46, 637-672.

Jennifer E. Cobbina, Jody Miller, and Rod K. Brunson (2008). Gender, neighborhood danger, and risk avoidance strategies among Urban African American youths. *Criminology*, 46, 673-710.

Sheldon Zhang, Ko-Lin Chin, and Jody Miller (2007). Women's participation in Chinese transnational human smuggling: A gendered market perspective. *Criminology*, 45, 699-733.

Andrea M. Leverentz (2006). The love of a good man? Romantic relationships as a source of support or hindrance for female ex-offenders. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 43, 459-488.

Candace Kruttschnitt and Kristin Carbone-Lopez (2006). Moving beyond the stereotypes: Women's subjective accounts of their violent crime. *Criminology*, 44, 321-352.

Patrick Lussier, Jean Proulx, and Marc LeBlanc (2005). Criminal propensity, deviant sexual interests and criminal activity of sexual aggressors against women: A comparison of explanatory models. *Criminology*, 249-281.

10. March 25

Domestic Violence

Required readings:

Simons et al., Chapters 8 and 9

Richard Felson et al. (2005). Police intervention and the repeat of domestic assault. *Criminology*, 43, 563-588.

Recommended readings:

Erika Lawrence & Thomas Bradbury (2007). Trajectories of change in physical aggression and marital satisfaction. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 21, 236-247.

Jennifer Schwartz (2006). Effects of diverse forms of family structure on female and male homicide. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 68, 1291-1312.

Casey T. Taft et al. (2006). Examining the correlates of psychological aggression among a community sample of couples. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 20, 581-588.

Janet L. Laritsen and Robin J. Schaum (2004). The social ecology of violence against women. *Criminology*, 42, 323-358.

Jody Miller and Norman A. White (2003). Gender and adolescent relationship violence: A contextual examination. *Criminology*, 41, 1207-1248.

Timothy O. Ireland, Carolyn A. Smith, and Terence P. Thornberry (2002). Developmental issues in the impact of child maltreatment on later delinquency and drug use. *Criminology*, 40, 359-400.

11. April 1 Evolutionary, Biological, and Genetic Perspectives

Required Readings

Akers & Sellers, Chapter 3

Simons & Burt, "Human Nature, Morality, and Crime." (reserve)

Recommended Readings:

Guang Guo, Michael E. Roettger, and Tianji Cai (2008). The integration of genetic propensities into social control models of delinquency and violence among male youths. *American Sociological Review*, 73, 543-568.

Kevin M. Beaver (2008). Nonshared environmental influences on adolescent delinquent involvement and adult criminal behavior. *Criminology*, 46, 341-369.

12. April 8 Criminal Justice Issues: Deterrence, Eye Witness Testimony, Repressed

Memories, Gun Control, Etc.

Required Readings:

Akers & Sellers, Chapter 2, 9, and 10

Ronald Huff (2002). Wrongful conviction and public policy: The American Society of Criminology 2001 Presidential Address. *Criminology*, 40, 1-18.

Recommended Readings:

James D. Unnever (2008). Two worlds apart: Black-White differences in beliefs about why African American men are disproportionately imprisoned. *Criminology*, 46, 511-538.

Patrick J. Carr, Laura Napolitano, and Jessica Keating (2007). We never call the cops and here is why: A qualitative examination of legal cynicism in three Philadelphia neighborhoods. *Criminology*, 45, 445-479.

James D. Unnever, Francis T. Cullen, and John P. Bartkowski (2006). Images of God and public support for capital punishment: Does a close relationship with a loving God matter? *Criminology*, 44, 835-866.

Gary Kleck et al. (2005). The missing link in general deterrence research. *Criminology*, 43, 623-660.

Daniel S. Nagin and Greg Pogarsky (2003). An experimental investigation of deterrence: cheating, self-serving bias, and impulsivity. *Criminology*, 41, 167-194.

Philip Cook and Jens Ludwig (2004). Does gun prevalence affect teen gun carrying after all? *Criminology*, 42, 1-26.

William Wells and Julie Horney (2002). Weapon effects and individual intent to do harm: Influences on the escalation of violence. *Criminology*, 40, 265-295.

Lisa Stolzenberg and Stewart J. D'Alessio (2000). "Gun availability and violent Crime: New evidence from the National Incident-Based Reporting System." *Social Forces*, 78: 1461-1482.

13. April 15 **Student presentations**

14. April 22 **Student presentations**

15. April 29 **Student presentations**

