This is the second in a two-course sequence of theory training. Students are expected to have successfully completed CJ 511 prior to enrolling in this course. This graduate seminar begins with an examination of some of the major theories developed to explain crime and criminal behavior, followed by a discussion of theories of punishment and societal control, and concludes with a debate about the present state and future prospects of criminological theory.

Criminologists rely on numerous theoretical perspectives, all with distinctive foci. Some focus on explaining offending, others focus on explaining victimization; some focus on the characteristics of criminal incidents, others focus on trends in aggregate crime rates. In this course, we will explore the underlying logic, propositions, and assumptions of criminological theories, implications of their distinctive contributions for the study of crime, and empirical evidence for each perspective. The seminars will be organized around four main objectives: to recognize the unique contributions of each theory, to explore relationships between theoretical concepts, to understand how to operationalize those concepts in empirical work, and to examine the ability of each theory to explain the causes of crime in contemporary society.

This course will require a substantial commitment to reading as well as regular attendance and active participation in seminar discussions. You are expected to read and reflect on all required readings prior to class – completing the assigned reading is a necessary prerequisite for satisfactory completion of the course. The required texts, course assignments, and topic schedule are outlined in detail below.

**Please note that I reserve the right to modify the syllabus as the course progresses**
REQUIRED TEXTS


Other readings are available on the Blackboard course site.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students will be graded on the basis of the following criteria:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Theory Portfolio (5 entries and revised portfolio)</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contribution to Discussion and Presentations</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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The grading scale that will be used for the final semester grades is as follows:

- **A** 90.0% or higher
- **B+** 87.0% to 89.9%
- **B** 80.0% to 86.9%
- **C+** 77.0% to 79.9%
- **C** 70.0% or 76.9%
- **F** 69.9% or lower
**THEORY PORTFOLIO:** Due weekly for 5 weeks (of your choosing); revised portfolio due Tuesday, May 1, 2018, at 5:00 pm (60% of final grade)

Each week (for 5 weeks) you will be required to submit a portfolio entry (via email) addressing the following questions by 9 AM on Monday *before* the seminar:

1. What are the central tenets, assumptions, and propositions of the theory/theories?
2. What are the contributions of the theory/perspective to the criminological literature?
3. How is this perspective related to other viewpoints we have discussed? In what ways is it similar and in what ways is it distinctive?
4. What critical reactions do you have of the theory? What are the problems/limitations of the theory/perspective? And...
5. How could the theory/perspective be modified to better capitalize on its strengths and address some of its limitations?

At the end of your portfolio entry, you are also expected to include:

1. One or more diagrams illustrating the causal mechanisms/processes of the theory, and...
2. At least one well-developed discussion question (effectively put in context, comprehensive but not vague, aimed at triggering an in-class discussion).

Your entries should include citations and references, and **no more than 5 to 6 double-spaced pages** in 12-pt Times New Roman font with one-inch margins. These portfolio entries will help to guide our seminar discussions and locate each theoretical perspective within the criminological literature.

Over the semester, your entries will combine to create a portfolio that contains your typewritten responses to the questions above for six of the topics (weeks) covered in the course. This should help you to develop the “big picture” in criminological theory. It is in your best interests to select 6 unique weeks (in which we cover substantively different theoretical perspectives).

I will return your responses the following week, with comments. You should **address these comments and revise your entry according to the course discussion**; these revised responses will comprise your **final theory portfolio**. **Please email me your revised theory portfolio by 5:00 pm on May 1, 2016.** This portfolio will be invaluable for studying for qualifying exams and will be useful as a teaching aid should you ever teach a criminology course at the undergraduate or graduate level.

**CONTRIBUTION TO DISCUSSION AND PRESENTATIONS:** (10% of final grade)

Attendance and active participation are necessary for successful completion of this course. You will be expected to come to class having read and considered all required readings. **In addition, all students who have written a portfolio entry in any given week will participate in “leading” the discussion.** Seminar leaders are expected to have submitted a portfolio entry for the week, be able to summarize the main arguments of the readings, and have composed seminar questions designed to stimulate the discussion.
**FINAL EXAM** Date to be announced. (30% of final grade)

For the final exam, you will be required to choose between two essay-type questions. These questions will require you to review the central arguments of two or more theories, compare and contrast those theories, and consider how each explains an empirical pattern in criminological research. Your essay should be approximately 10 pages double-spaced (in 12 point Times New Roman font with one-inch margins). The exam will be modeled after the qualifying exam. The exam will be open-book and 12 hours in length. More details will be provided in class.

**COURSE POLICIES**

**ATTENDANCE:** Attendance is very important. You should make every effort to attend each class. Please notify me in advance by email if you are going to be absent. You will need to provide a legitimate explanation. You will also be required to submit a theory portfolio for any week that you miss. This additional entry will not count in the 6 required theory portfolio submissions.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** As a member of the Rutgers University community you are not to engage in any academic dishonesty. You are responsible for adhering to basic academic standards of honesty and integrity as outlined in the Rutgers University Policy on Academic Integrity for Undergraduate and Graduate Students [http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity](http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity) Your academic work should be the result of your own individual effort, you should not allow other students to use your work, and you are required to recognize and reference any material that is not your own. Violations of the university’s policy will result in appropriate action.

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** Rutgers University “is committed to providing equal educational opportunity for persons with disabilities in accordance with the Nondiscrimination Policy of the University and in compliance with § 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.” For additional information please visit the website [https://ods.rutgers.edu/](https://ods.rutgers.edu/) or contact the representative for the Newark Campus.

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Website: [https://ods.rutgers.edu/](https://ods.rutgers.edu/)

**PSYCHOLOGICAL AND COUNSELING SERVICES:** If you experience psychological or other difficulties as a result of this course, or because of other issues that may interfere with your performance in the course, please contact the university’s psychological and counseling service center ([http://www.counseling.newark.rutgers.edu; 973-353-5805](http://www.counseling.newark.rutgers.edu; 973-353-5805)), which is located in Blumenthal Hall, room 101. The center offers a variety of free, confidential services to part-time and full-time students who are enrolled at Rutgers.
Weekly Topics and Assignments

Week 1: January 17
Introduction

Mills, C. Wright, 1959. “Grand Theory” and “Abstracted Empiricism”, Chapters 2 and 3 of *The Sociological Imagination*.


Week 2: January 24
Classical Theories, Rational Choice, Deterrence


Week 3: January 31
Biosocial and Psychological Theories


**Week 4: February 7**

**Social Disorganization and Contemporary Social Ecological Theories**


**Week 5: February 14**

**Anomie and Strain Theories**


LaFree, Gary & Kriss A. Drass. 1996. The Effect of Changes in Intraracial Income Inequality and

**Week 6: February 21**

**Social Learning Theories**


**Week 7: February 28**

**Cultural and Subcultural Theories**


Matza, David. 1964. *Delinquency and Drift*. Excerpt TBA.


**Week 8: March 7**

**Control Theories (Self and Social)**


**Spring Recess: March 10 through March 18**

No class
Week 9: March 21
Developmental and Life-course Theories; Theories of Desistance


Week 10: March 28
Societal Reaction Theories: Labeling and Restorative Justice


Week 11: April 4  
Opportunity Theories: Routine Activities, Situational and Environmental Theories


Week 12: April 11  
Symbolic Interactionist and Phenomenological Theories


Week 13: April 18
Critical and Feminist Theories


Week 14: April 25
Institutional and Relational Theories


Recommended:


THEORY PORTFOLIO DUE: Tuesday May 1, 2018, via email by 5:00 pm

FINAL EXAM DATE: Date to be announced, from 9:00 am - 9:00 pm (electronic exam)