This graduate seminar is designed to survey the construction of theory, the history of criminological thought, and some of the major theories developed to explain crime and criminal behavior. It is the first course of a two-semester sequence in criminological theory. This first course is intended to provide a broad overview or survey of the development of criminological theory, as it relates to explaining the causes of crime. Only some of the major veins of thought are covered in this first seminar; the remainder are covered in the course “Contemporary Criminological Theory” (CJ 27.202.518).

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.

**Prerequisite:** there is no prerequisite for first-year CJ Ph.D. students. All other students must contact the instructor to request special permission to enroll.

**Please note that I reserve the right to modify the syllabus as the course progresses**
**Course Learning Goals and Outcomes**

- Exposure to foundational criminological theory writings and theory construction to facilitate nuanced considerations of course content and critical thinking
- Identify the distinct causal mechanisms of major criminological theories
- Reflect on the ability of criminological theories to explain the causes of crime
- Develop the skills to compare and contrast the unique contributions, problems, and policy implications of various criminological theories
- Contemplate the relationship between theoretical concepts and empirical measurement for theory testing
- Evaluate logical and empirical support for criminological theories covered in this course
- Prepare students to be conversant in criminological theory in anticipation of the comprehensive exam, teaching, and research

**Required Texts**


These books are available in the Rutgers Newark Barnes & Noble Bookstore. Other readings are available on the Canvas course site.

**Course Grading Scale & Requirements**

The grading scale that will be used for the final semester grades is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90.0-100%</td>
<td>Work is <em>excellent</em> in quality; it is correct, comprehensive, and markedly superior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87.0-89.9%</td>
<td>Work is <em>very good</em> in quality; it is correct and provides a detailed explanation in responses; exceeds expectations in some areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80.0-86.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77.0-79.9%</td>
<td>Work is <em>acceptable</em> quality; may be missing or incorrect in a minor area; meets but does not exceed expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70.0-76.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-69.9%</td>
<td>Work <em>fails</em> to meet minimum expectations for the course</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theory Portfolio (8 entries and revised portfolio)</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution to Discussion</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

100%
THEORY PORTFOLIO: Due weekly for 8 weeks (from Sept 21 onward); complete revised portfolio due December 14, 2022 (80% of final grade)

Each week (for 8 weeks) you will be required to submit a portfolio entry (via email) addressing the following questions by 5:00 pm on the Tuesday *before* the seminar:

1. What are the central tenets, assumptions, and propositions of the theory?
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; please write no more than 5-6 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 theory portfolio that contains your typewritten responses to the questions above for eight of the topics (weeks) covered in the course. This should help you to develop the “big picture” in criminological theory.

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’ due by 5 pm on December 14, 2022, via email. This portfolio will be invaluable for studying for qualifying exams, for writing research papers, and for teaching criminology courses at the undergraduate or graduate level.

CONTRIBUTION TO DISCUSSION: (20% 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, whether you decide to write a portfolio entry for that week or not. In weeks during which you write a portfolio entry, you will be expected to be even more active in the discussion, pushing the conversation forward and posing/responding to questions; you should be able to summarize the main arguments of the readings, grapple with the theoretical issues raised in the readings, and have composed seminar questions designed to stimulate the discussion during class.
OUTLINE

September 7:
INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE(S)


September 14:
THEORY CONSTRUCTION


September 21:
CLASSICAL, NEOCLASSICAL & RATIONAL CHOICE THEORIES


September 28:
CONTEMPORARY DETERRENCE


October 5:
BIOLOGICAL & BIOSOCIAL THEORIES


October 12:
CONTEMPORARY CONTROVERSIES


Wright, John Paul, J. C. Barnes, Brian B. Boutwell, Joseph A. Schwartz, Eric J. Connolly, Joseph L. Nedelec and Kevin M. Beaver. 2015. Mathematic Proof is not Minutiae and Irreducible Complexity is


**October 19:**

**SOCIAL DISORGANIZATION THEORY**


**October 26:**

**SOCIAL ECOLOGY**


November 2:
STRAIN THEORIES


November 9:
SOCIAL LEARNING THEORIES


November 16:
CLASS CANCELLED

Attend American Society of Criminology session in which one of the criminological theories that we’ve covered to date is examined and prepare a brief summary report of the session (one page, single spaced) - Due date: Nov 21, 2022

November 23:
NO CLASS – HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

RU-N change in designation of class (Friday class schedule)

November 30:
SUBCULTURAL THEORIES


December 7:
CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES


THEORY PORTFOLIO DUE: December 14, 2022 @ 5:00 pm. Send to eg345@scj.rutgers.edu

COURSE POLICIES

COVID 19 and the Mask Mandate: In order to protect the health and wellbeing of all members of the Rutgers-Newark community, masks must be worn by all persons in the classroom. Masks should securely cover the nose and mouth. Masks must be worn during class meetings. For the health and safety of your colleagues, please do not come to class if you believe that you may have contracted COVID-19.

Attendance: Attendance is very important, but so is your health and the health of your colleagues. In this new normal, I will try to be as flexible as possible, recognizing that there is really no substitute for in-class participation and discussion. Nonetheless, I will record our sessions in the event that you cannot make a given session, and I will upload those to our Canvas site after the class. Please note that I cannot guarantee that there will be no snafus or recording problems, nor can I guarantee that you will be able to hear all of the conversations on these recordings. If you are unable to attend multiple class sessions, there may be implications for your participation grade, as you would not be a contributing member of the class in days that you miss. However, I will do the best I can to be as flexible as possible this semester. That said, you should make every effort to attend each class (unless you are not feeling well). Please notify me in advance by email if you are going to be absent.

Course Canvas Site: The use of the Canvas site for this course is integral to be kept informed of upcoming class announcements and to access required readings not in the required texts. Please consult Canvas regularly for relevant information. For tech help with Canvas, please visit https://it.rutgers.edu/help-support.

Grading: If you require further clarification regarding your performance, you are responsible for setting up an individual appointment with me. Requests to review or reconsider any grade received must be made directly to me within 7 days of the return of the graded coursework. Requests for grade reassessment must be accompanied by a written explanation detailing why you believe your grade should be higher. Please note that a request to re-grade means that the assignment will be reassessed in its entirety and, in the event of an error in grading, the final grade may increase or decrease accordingly.

Missed Classes/Assignments: If you are not able to complete an assignment due to a documented emergency situation or unavoidable conflict (i.e., illness, personal or family emergency, participation in intercollegiate athletics, religious observance, etc.), you should reach out to me immediately to make arrangements for missed work or to schedule a make-up exam. Students who must, for any reason, miss an assignment or exam should consult with me.

Students for whom a religious holiday or observance conflicts with a course requirement should notify me by no later than the end of the Add-Drop period of potential scheduled conflicts to discuss whether mutually acceptable alternative methods exist for completing the missed assignment/exam.
Lecture Material: Course materials including email communications and lecture content are the property of the instructor. Publishing this content publicly on the internet or elsewhere is a violation of the intellectual property rights of the instructor.

Video/Audio: You may not video or audiotape material without the instructor’s express consent.

Contacting Me: I will generally try to respond to your emails within 24-48 hours, but I do not guarantee a response within 24-48 hours. My response time may be extended for questions sent over the weekend. Please feel free to contact me at eg345@scj.rutgers.edu at any time.

General Conduct: You have a right to learn in an environment that is free from disruptions or offensive comments. I have the right to set appropriate standards of conduct that foster respectful and dignified treatment of faculty, students, and staff. As such, please be mindful of the general code of conduct that would be appropriate in any classroom setting. It is important to engage in a professional and respectful manner with me and your peers at all times.

In learning about criminology and criminal justice, students may encounter language, depictions, or attitudes that they find disturbing or offensive. It is important, then, to be respectful of the thoughts, ideas, and contributions of others in order to foster participation in a non-threatening and comfortable environment for learning. Please feel free to discuss with me any concerns you may have regarding sensitive issues in course materials.

Inclement Weather and Emergencies: For the safety and well-being of its students and employees, the university may close or limit its services based on inclement weather or other emergencies. Except in rare circumstances, notice of campus closing and delayed opening will be announced on the Rutgers University-Newark website by 5am, and evening class cancellations will be announced by 3pm. Refer to the following sources for information on closings or delays:

- https://www.newark.rutgers.edu/weather-and-campus-operating-status
- https://www.newark.rutgers.edu/

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://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/). 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. Plagiarism, academic dishonesty, and cheating are serious violations. Ensure that you cite references appropriately in your written work. When you paraphrase from others, cite their work in the text, and reference the citation in your bibliography. When you use direct quotes from others, insert quotation marks around the borrowed text and cite appropriately. Violations of the university’s policy will result in disciplinary action.

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, which is located in Blumenthal Hall, room 101 (www.counseling.newark.rutgers.edu; 973-353-5805).
center offers a variety of free, confidential services to part-time and full-time students who are enrolled at Rutgers.

RU-N Accommodation and Support Statement

Rutgers University Newark (RU-N) is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students and the University as a whole. RU-N has identified the following resources to further the mission of access and support:

For Individuals Experiencing Disability: The Office of Disability Services (ODS) works with students with medical, physical, and/or mental conditions who encounter disabling barriers in order to determine reasonable and appropriate accommodations for access. Students who have completed the process with ODS and have approved accommodations are provided a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) specific to each course. To initiate accommodations for their course students must both provide the LOA to and have a conversation with the course instructor about the accommodations. This should occur as early in the semester as possible. More information can be found at the RU-N ODS website (ods.newark.rutgers.edu). Contact ODS at (973) 353-5375 or via email at ods@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Individuals who are Pregnant: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy. Students may contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance at (973) 353-1906 or via email at TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Short-term Absence Verification: The Office of the Dean of Students can provide assistance for absences related to religious observance, emergency or unavoidable conflict (illness, personal or family emergency, etc.). Students should refer to University Policy 10.2.7 for information about expectations and responsibilities. The Office of the Dean of Students can be contacted by calling (973) 353-5063 or emailing deanofstudents@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Individuals with temporary conditions/injuries: The Office of the Dean of Students can assist students who are experiencing a temporary condition or injury (broken or sprained limbs, concussions, or recovery from surgery). Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury should submit a request using the following link: https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu.

For Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance can assist students who are experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking. Students can report an incident to the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance by calling (973) 353-1906 or emailing TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu. Incidents may also be reported by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm. For more information, students should refer to the University’s Title IX Policy and Grievance Procedures located at https://uec.rutgers.edu/wp-content/uploads/60-1-33-current-1.pdf.

For support related to Interpersonal Violence: The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance (VPVA) can provide any student with confidential support. The office does not have
a reporting obligation to Title IX. Students can contact the office by calling (973) 353-1918 or emailing run.vpva@rutgers.edu. There is also a confidential text-based helpline available to students; students can text (973) 339-0734 for support. Students do not need to be a victim/survivor of violence; any student can receive services, information and support.

For Crisis and Concerns: The Campus Awareness Response and Education (CARE) Team works with students in crisis to develop a plan of support plan and address personal situations that might impact their academic performance. Connect with the CARE Team by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNCARE or emailing careteam@rutgers.edu.

For Stress, Worry, or Concerns about Well-being: The Counseling Center has confidential therapists available to support students. Students should reach out to the Counseling Center to schedule an appointment: counseling@newark.rutgers.edu or (973) 353-5805. If students are not quite ready to make an appointment with a therapist but are interested in self-help, check out Sanvello for an easy, web-based approach to self-care and support. Visit https://my.rutgers.edu/, click on Sanvello: Wellness @ RUN, and log in with your netid to begin your journey toward wellness.

For emergencies, call 911 or contact Rutgers University Police Department (RUPD) by calling (973) 353-5111.