

# NATURE OF CRIME – C J 511

Professor: **Robert J. Durán, Ph.D.**

Email: rjduran@nmsu.edu

Class Hours: T 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Class Room: Garcia Residence Hall Room 241B

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Office Hours:

August 21<sup>st</sup> – September 18<sup>th</sup> **T** 5:20-5:50; **T&TR** 10:30-11:45; 1:15-2:15  
September 22<sup>nd</sup>- December 12<sup>th</sup> **W** 2:00-5:30; **TR** 4:00-5:30

## **Course overview**

This course is designed to provide you with an overview of the key theories that guide our understanding of crime. In addition, we will outline how criminological theories are implemented within the criminal justice system.

## **Required Readings:**

Delgado, Richard and Jean Stefancic. 2001. *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*.  
New York: New York University Press.

Einstadter, Werner J. and Stuart Henry. 2006. *Criminological Theory: An Analysis of its Underlying Assumptions*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Jacoby, Joseph E. 2004. *Classics of Criminology*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

## **Grading**

Attendance	10%
Presentation	10%
Participation	20%
Theory paper	20%
Bi-Weekly Papers (Six total)	40%

## **Course Requirements**

**Attendance:** Attendance at all class meetings is **required**. We only meet once a week and therefore any absence past one will result in a 5% reduction, per absence, in your overall grade. Missing four classes will result in an overall grade of F. To ensure that you have the background information necessary for seminar discussions, you will need to read all assigned reading by class time on the day it is assigned. Compose a reading log with your own personal comments and thoughts while you read to help facilitate the discussion.

**Presentation:** You will be required to present once during the semester by signing your name for a particular chapter from the Jacoby book. Please provide a summary of the

reading including key concepts. You will be given 10 minutes to present your information. Provide a 1 page handout for your presentation. If desired, you can present with PowerPoint.

**Participation:** Your active participation in class is **mandatory**. Graduate courses are called seminars because they require a higher level of discussion and involvement. I will grade participation after each class.

In addition, I will utilize WebCT to encourage weekly discussions beyond the classroom. You will be required to make one post each week. I will look for comprehension of the class material and knowledge accumulated during your educational and life experiences. I expect well thought out and explained answers. If you write something, be aware of whether you can empirically prove your statements. I will expect correct spelling. I will be actively involved in the knowledge creation of this list. These posts are graded on the quality of participation. Cite your sources, if any, and minimize your usage of quotes. At a minimum these should be no less than one paragraph in length.

**Negative Participation:** There is no reason for rude or disrespectful comments. I will not tolerate sexist, racist, or derogatory language in class or on WebCT. Don't bother coming to class if you feel like a nap, want to play on your cell phone, hold side conversations, or engage in some other activity that wastes our time! I document negative participation into your overall grade. Disruptive behavior that conflicts with the course will result in a warning to change the behavior. If this behavior cannot be corrected by the third warning you will be administratively dropped from the course.

**Theory Paper:** For your final assignment, you will be required to write a 15 to 20 page theoretical paper. This format is designed to allow a great deal of latitude and encourage serious thinking about the subject matter in relation to your own interests and or research. Choose an empirical issue related to crime or criminal justice and utilize a theory to explain what is occurring and what type of policy would be most appropriate. The completed paper is due by 2 p.m. on December 11<sup>th</sup>.

A 1-2 page description of your preliminary thoughts about your paper topic and theory chosen is due the eighth week of the semester (October 7). This is an ungraded assignment, but will serve as an opportunity for you to get early feedback from me about your paper ideas (and for you to get started on your paper). Due to the amount of time given to responding to your preliminary thoughts you will not be able to change your paper topic without prior approval.

**Bi-Weekly Papers:** Nature of Crime is core class for the Criminal Justice Masters Program at New Mexico State University. The readings, discussions, and assignments can contribute toward your knowledge and preparation for the graduate comprehensive exam. To help improve your odds for success with this exam, you will be required to put together a portfolio that covers key concepts and themes. Every other week you are to turn in (a) a question that you think gets at the heart of one or more of the issues explored in the set of readings assigned for that week, and (b) an "answer" to it (i.e., your thesis

statement in two pages). Ask a definite question and provide a definite answer to it double spaced, typed or legibly printed. Please see attached guidelines for this assignment on the back of the syllabus. **Dates Due:** September 9, September 23, October 7, October 21, November 4, and November 18.

**Late policy for writing assignments:** Work turned in late is an inconvenience to me, as it requires me to adjust my grading schedule. I will deduct 2% for each day late.

Plagiarism is **UNACCEPTABLE** and will result in a zero grade for that assignment.

Please consult the university policy:

<http://www.nmsu.edu/%7Evpsa/SCOC/misconduct.html>.

**Plagiarism** is using another person's work without acknowledgment, make it appear to be one's own. Any ideas, words, pictures, or other intellectual content taken from another course must be acknowledged in a citation that gives credit to the source. This is irrespective of the origin of the material, including the Internet, other students' work, unpublished materials or oral sources. Intentional and unintentional instances of plagiarism are considered instances of academic misconduct. It is the responsibility of the student submitting the work in question to know, understand, and comply with this policy.

Even with a citation, failure to put quotation marks around direct quotations also constitutes plagiarism, because it implies that the writing is your own. Material should either be paraphrased or clearly designated as a quotation. Note that replacing words with synonyms, changing verb tense or other minor alterations do not qualify as paraphrasing.

Feel free to call Michael Armendariz, Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities, at 505-546-6840 with any questions you may have on student issues related to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. All medical information will be treated confidentially.

As the professor, I reserve the right to change any part of the class.

Please keep all returned exams (and other returned work) in the event that you have a grade dispute at the end of the semester.

## FALL SCHEDULE

**Week 1      Introduction**  
August 26    Overview of the class-Introductions

**Week 2:      Theme: What is Criminological Theory?**  
September 2  
Einstadter and Henry, chapter 1: Introduction to the Analytical Framework  
Einstadter and Henry, chapter 2: Demonological Theories

**Week 3 Theme: Deterrence and Rational Choice Theories**

September 9

Einstadter and Henry, chapter 3: Classical and Postclassical Rational Choice Theories

Chapter 9-Social Change and Crime: A Routine Activity Approach-Lawrence E. Cohen and Marcus Felson.

Chapter 14-An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation

Chapter 15-Modeling Offenders' Decisions: A Framework for Research and Policy

Chapter 45-Of Crimes and Punishment-Cesare Beccaria

Chapter 47-Doing Justice: The Choice of Punishments-Andrew von Hirsch

**BI-WEEKLY PAPER DUE (1)**

**Week 4 Theme: Biological & Psychological Theories**

September 16

Einstadter and Henry, chapter 4: Individual Positivism I: Biological Theories

Einstadter and Henry, chapter 5: Individual Positivism II: Personality Theories

Chapter 6-Victim-Precipitated Criminal Homicide-Marvin E. Wolfgang

Chapter 19-Criminal Man-Gina Lombroso-Ferrero

Chapter 20-The Jukes-A Study in Crime, Pauperism, and Heredity-Richard Dugdale

Chapter 21-Feeble-mindedness-H.H.Goddard

Chapter 23-The American Criminal-Ernest A. Hooton

Chapter 37-Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency-Sheldon Glueck and Eleanor Glueck

**Week 5 Theme: Social Disorganization**

September 23

Einstadter and Henry, chapter 6: Sociological Positivism I: Social Ecology Theories

Chapter 4- Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas- Clifford R. Shaw and Henry D. McKay

Chapter 10-Environmental Criminology-Paul Brantingham and Patricia L. Brantingham

Chapter 30-Differential Systems of Values-Clifford R. Shaw and Henry D. McKay

Chapter 56-Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety-James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling

**BI-WEEKLY PAPER DUE (2)**

**Week 6 Theme: Strain and Subculture**

September 30

Einstadter and Henry, chapter 7: Sociological Positivism II: Strain and Subculture Theories

Chapter 26-Suicide-Emile Durkheim

Chapter 27-Social Structure and Anomie-Robert K. Merton

Chapter 36-Delinquency and Opportunity-Richard Cloward and Lloyd E. Ohlin

Chapter 28-Foundation for a General Strain Theory of Crime and Delinquency-Robert Agnew

Chapter 31-The Content of Delinquent Subcultures-Albert K. Cohen  
Chapter 32-Lower Class Culture as a Generating Milieu of Gang Delinquency-Walter B. Miller

**Week 7            Theme: Social Learning Theory**

October 7

Einstadter and Henry, chapter 8: Social Process Theories I: Learning, Bonding, and Social Control

Chapter 3-White-Collar Criminality- Edwin Sutherland

Chapter 12-Crime and Deviance over the Life Course: The Salience of Adult Social Bonds-Robert Sampson and John H. Laub

Chapter 33-Techniques of Neutralization-Gresham M. Sykes and David Matza

Chapter 35-A Differential Association-Reinforcement Theory of Criminal Behavior-Robert L. Burgess and Ronald L. Akers

Chapter 38-A Control Theory of Delinquency-Travis Hirschi

Chapter 39-A General Theory of Crime-Michael R. Gottfredson & Travis Hirschi

**BI-WEEKLY PAPER DUE (3)**

**Week 8            Theme: Labeling of Crime**

October 14

Einstadter and Henry, chapter 9: Social Process Theories II: Interactionism, Labeling, and Social Constructionism

Chapter 13-Seductions of Crime: Moral and Sensual Attractions in Doing Evil-Jack Katz

Chapter 16-The Normal and the Pathological-Emile Durkheim

Chapter 40-The Dramatization of Evil-Frank Tannenbaum

Chapter 41-Primary and Secondary Deviation-Edwin Lemert

Chapter 42-Outsiders-Howard S. Becker

**Week 9            Theme: Power in the Creation of “Crime”**

October 21

Einstadter and Henry, chapter 10: Critical Criminologies I: Conflict, Anarchist, and Marxist Theories

Chapter 17-Class Conflict and Law-Karl Marx

Chapter 18-Class, State, and Crime-Richard Quinney

Chapter 29-Culture Conflict and Crime-Thorsten Sellin

Chapter 49-The Law of Vagrancy-William J. Chambliss

**BI-WEEKLY PAPER DUE (4)**

**Week 11          Theme: Theme: Critical Race Theory**

October 28

Delgado, Richard and Jean Stefancic. 2001. *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction*.  
New York: New York University Press. Entire Book.

**Week 12 Theme: Theme: Feminism and Masculinity Theories**

November 4

Einstadter and Henry, chapter 11: Critical Criminologies II: Feminist Theories

Chapter 43-The Etiology of Female Crime: A Review of the Literature-Dorie Klein

Chapter 44-Girls' Crime and Woman's Place Toward a Feminists Model of Female  
Delinquency-Meda Chesney-Lind

Chapter 63-Society of Women: A Study of a Women's Prison-Rose Giallombardo

Messerschmidt, James W. 1993. Chapter 2: Rethinking Feminist Theory and

Chapter 3: Structured Action and Gendered Crime. In *Masculinities and Crime: A  
Critique and Reconceptualization of Theory*. Rowman & Littlefield. On WebCT.

**BI-WEEKLY PAPER DUE (5)**

**Week 13 Theme: Postmodern Theory**

November 11

Einstadter and Henry, chapter 12: Critical Criminologies III: Postmodernist Theories

Chapter 59: Discipline and Punish. Michel Foucault

**Week 14 Theme: Integrating Theories**

November 18

Einstadter and Henry, chapter 13: Integrating Theorizing: Fission or Fusion?

**BI-WEEKLY PAPER DUE (6)**

**Week 15 Theme: No School**

November 25 Thanksgiving Holiday-No School

**Week 16 Theme: Focus on Final Papers and making sense of theory**

December 2

Einstadter and Henry, conclusion.

## **Bi-Weekly Paper Guidelines**

**Ask Question:** Your question can often be the most important part of your paper because it organizes your discussion and logic. It allows you to situate the theory into your own framework for how the theory operates. There is no right or wrong question. Some questions do not allow the opportunity for you to answer without doing outside research. You are not recommended to do outside empirical research and so ask a question that will allow you the opportunity to lay out the theory and apply it to your question. The question should be at the top of your paper.

**Introduction (first paragraph):** Explain to the reader how your paper will explain the following. Set up the theory. Einstadter and Henry are not the original authors of the theories that we are using and so do not rely on their interpretation to guide your argument. Use the original work whenever possible from the Jacoby book. For example, Durkheim (1938) argued. You can use Einstadter and Henry to help provide supplemental support for your answer.

**Body of your paper (second and third paragraph):** Make it clear to me, the reader, what this theory is arguing. Cite as many of the original authors as you can to help substantiate this reasoning. Use their concepts. Don't make it too cluttered so that it does not help your argument, but use it to build a structure. Set up the logic. Explain how the authors use the concepts. Show your knowledge of the authors' concepts by placing them in quotes. Don't use all of your space quoting entire sentences and paragraphs. Use your space better by paraphrasing and emphasizing key terms. Once you set down the foundation of the theory you can then apply it to your questions. Borrow the bones of the theory to apply to your question. This is when you can allow your knowledge and insight to shine. Remember, "It's time to quit being a consumer of knowledge and start becoming a producer of knowledge." I have read all of these theories, but I want to see how you are interpreting their reasoning. What works and what doesn't? Can the theory answer your question?

**Conclusion (fourth paragraph):** Make sure it is clear to me, the reader, what significant points were made in your paper and how they support or contradict the theory. Remember a theory is often not falsified by focusing on one piece but rather the entire theory itself. I've read too many papers where a weak link is the central focus and then I am told the theory did not answer the question. However, in most of these circumstances the theory was not adequately explained in the paper, and the weak link did nothing to discredit the theory as a whole. Plus, don't forget to answer your question. Make it clear how the theory would attempt to answer the question that you provided.

I recommend using two full pages with four full paragraphs. This will at least allow you the organizational space to fill in the gaps. I still recommend the writing lab for everyone. I'm not kidding. I was at the writing lab three times a week getting feedback on everything that I wrote. It always helps to have an extra pair of eyes to look over your grammar, logic, and spelling. **Cite whatever work you used in your paper.**