



MARTHA BRADLEY EVANS
Center for Teaching Excellence

THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

SOC 3566 Society and The Criminal Mind

Spring 2025

Online

Course Description

This course will explore the etiology, development, and current practice of the criminal thinking approach. The course will begin with a brief overview of sociological and criminological theory as it relates to the criminal thinking perspective. The origin of this approach will be traced through the works of early contributors to the criminal thinking perspective. Specific criminal thinking patterns and errors will be discussed in accordance with the works of Samenow and Yochelson (*The Criminal Personality*, Vols I, II and III). More contemporary applications of the criminal thinking approach will be addressed in the context of the "Psychology of Criminal Conduct" perspective as detailed in the theories of Canadian criminologists James Bonta and Don Andrews.

Course Outcomes and Objectives

Course Goals

1. Analyze the psychological, social, and environmental factors that influence criminal behavior.
2. Examine and apply various criminological, psychological, and sociological theories to understand criminality and societal responses to crime.
3. Critically evaluate the role of social institutions (e.g., family, education, media, law enforcement) in fostering or preventing criminal behavior.
4. Discuss the ethical considerations related to criminal justice policies, focusing on rehabilitation and punishment.
5. Investigate the impact of socioeconomic factors, mental illness, and social disorganization on criminal behavior and society's response.

Student Outcomes

1. Identify and explain the key psychological, social, and environmental factors contributing to criminal behavior.
2. Apply criminological, psychological, and sociological theories to real-world criminal cases and societal issues.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of how social institutions influence both criminal behavior and societal perceptions of crime.
4. Critically assess the ethical implications of criminal justice policies and their impact on rehabilitation and recidivism.
5. Evaluate and discuss the effects of mental illness, juvenile delinquency, and socioeconomic status on criminal behavior and justice responses.

Course Requirements

What do you want to learn = 10 points

Video Introduction = 20 points

Discussion Responses = 13 @ 20 points (260 points total)

Case Study Assignments = 3 @ 100 points (300 points total)

Introduction to Scholarly and Peer-Reviewed Sources = 50 points

Total: 640 points

I have a 48-hour “cool down” period for all course work. This means that you must wait at least 48 hours before you approach me about your grade regarding your course work. I will provide comments on your work. During this cool down period and before you talk to me, please read my comments and reflect on your work as it relates to my comments. Example, if your work is returned on Monday, you must wait until Wednesday to approach me with questions about your grade.

What do you want to learn: I want to provide you, as students, with the information you want out this class and the information you are interested in. This assignment will help me ensure that I cover your questions and interests throughout the semester. Please provide 3-5 questions or statements about what you would like to learn more about this year based on the topics in the course schedule and table of contents in your textbook. The due date for this assignment is on the course schedule.

Video Introduction: Please introduce yourself to the class using a video introduction. Please see the Video Introduction Discussion Board post for more assignment details.

Discussion Responses: You are responsible for meaningful engaging with at least 1 of the posted discussion questions posed by the weekly leaders. Furthermore, you must engage with 2 of your other peers’ responses to the discussion leader questions. You must post all responses by Friday by 11:59pm Mountain Time. I will be grading the quality of your answer, depth of your post, and that you've written a thoughtful reply. It is your responsibility to read the mandatory readings for the week. Remember, discussion leaders will assume you have done the readings for the week. Please see Canvas for discussion response rubric. One helpful hint is to subscribe to the discussion forums so you can receive an email update when someone posts to the forum.

Case Study Assignments: This assignment aims to explore psychological theories and concepts in the context of criminal behavior. By analyzing a real or hypothetical criminal case, students will apply psychological perspectives to understand the motivations, influences, and potential interventions for criminal behavior. More details will be provided via handouts in Canvas.

Grading Scale

Final grades will be based on a point system; your total points/total class points.

A = 93%-100%	B+ = 87%-89%	C+ =77%-79%	D+ = 67%-69%
A- = 90%-92%	B = 83%-86%	C = 73%-76%	D = 63%-66%
	B- = 80%-82%	C- = 70%-72%	D- = 60%-62%
			F = 0%-59%

University Policies

Updated mandatory syllabus policies regarding the ADA Act, Safety at the U, Addressing Sexual Misconduct, and Academic Misconduct can be viewed at: <https://cte.utah.edu/instructor-education/syllabus/institutional-policies.php>

Preliminary Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Assignments Due
Week 1		
01/06	BB – Ch.1 Introduction to Criminal Behavior	
01/08		
01/10		What Do You Want to Learn
Week 2		
01/13	BA – Ch.1 An Overview of the Psychology of Criminal Conduct BA – Ch.2 The Empirical Basis to the Psychology of Criminal Conduct	
01/15		
01/17		Discussion 1 Due
Week 3		
01/20	No Class – Martin Luther King, Jr Day	
01/22	BA – Ch.3 From Criminology Theories to a Psychological Perspective of Criminal Conduct	
01/24		Discussion 2 Due
Week 4		
01/27	BB – Ch.3 Origins of Criminal Behavior: Biological & Neurological Factors	
01/29		
01/31		Discussion 3 Due
Week 5		
02/03	BA – Ch.4 The Biological Basis of Criminal Behavior	
02/05		Case Study 1 Due
02/07		Discussion 4 Due
Week 6		
02/10	BA – Ch.5 Antisocial Personality Pattern	
02/12		
02/14		Discussion 5 Due
Week 7		
02/17	No Class – President’s Day	
02/19	BB – Ch.4 Origins of Criminal Behavior: Learning & Situational Factors	
02/21		Discussion 6 Due
Week 8		
02/24	BB – Ch.7 Psychopathy	
02/26		
02/28		Discussion 7 Due
Week 9		
03/03	BB – Ch.8 Crime and Mental Disorders	
03/05		
03/07		Discussion 8 Due

Week 10		
03/10	No Class – Spring Break	
03/12	Enjoy your break!	
03/14		
Week 11		
03/17	BA – Ch.6 The Role of Procriminal Associates and Attitudes in Criminal Conduct	Case Study 2 Due
03/19		
03/21		Discussion 9 Due
Week 12		
03/24	BA – Ch.7 The Person in Social Context: Family, Marital, School, Work, Leisure, Recreation, and Neighborhood	
03/26		
03/28		Discussion 10 Due
Week 13		
03/31	BA – Ch.8 Substance Misuse	
04/02		
04/04		Discussion 11 Due
Week 14		
04/07	BB – Ch.9 Homicide, Assault, and Intimate Partner and Family Violence	
04/09		
04/11		Discussion 12 Due
Week 15		
04/14	BB – Ch.10 Multiple Murder, School, and Workplace Violence	
04/16		
04/18		Discussion 13 Due
Week 16		
04/21	BB – Ch.11 Psychology of Modern Terrorism	Case Study 3 Due
04/23		
04/25	Finals Start	
Week 17		
04/28	Finals Week	
04/30	Good luck on your finals!	
05/02		