

Sociology 341: Criminology  
College of Charleston  
Spring 2015

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**OFFICE HOURS:** Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and by appointment.  
**SKYPE OFFICE HOURS:** If you are not in Charleston while taking this class, I am happy to meet with you via Skype. I will not keep regular Skype office hours but I am available by appointment.

**METHODS OF CONTACT:** For questions of an individual or personal nature, please send me an email at [hoffmannh@cofc.edu](mailto:hoffmannh@cofc.edu). We can also talk on the phone or meet in person as I will have regular office hours (see above) and can meet by appointment.

For course-related questions, please post questions on the OAKS (see below on how to access OAKS) discussion board forum titled "Course Lounge"—this is a place for us to address frequently asked questions of interest to everyone in the class.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class will introduce you to the sociological and social psychological study of crime. We will explore the most commonly discussed causes of crime in American criminology. We will also examine the motivations for and organization of different criminal offenses and enterprises. Throughout the class, we will look at a range of programs developed largely at the grassroots levels to prevent crime. By the end of the class, you should be equipped to intelligently engage and make sense of the media and political discussions of crime.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Critically evaluate news coverage of crime and analyze how the news media "talks" about crime and the extent to which the news accurately reports crime and justice issues.
- To think sociologically about the causes of crime so that you are able to identify and talk about causal factors beyond the psychology or biology of individual offenders.
- To become well versed in the various social and social psychological theories of crime that offer explanations of criminal behavior. To accomplish this, you will be asked to write an autobiographical sociological analysis explaining why you (or somebody close to you) have or have not engaged in criminal behavior.

**OFFENSIVE MATERIAL WARNING:** In studying crime and deviance you will encounter subjects, language (e.g., curse words in readings, videos and songs), depictions, and attitudes that you may find disturbing or offensive.

### CLASS DELIVERY FORMAT

This is a distance education course, which means that all of our interaction will occur virtually over the Internet and not in a traditional face-to-face classroom setting. Distance education courses require students to be self-motivated, disciplined, organized and task-driven. **SOME STUDENTS ARE UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT DISTANCE EDUCATION CLASSES ARE EASIER THAN TRADITIONAL FACE-TO-FACE CLASSES. THIS IS NOT TRUE. IN FACT, DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSES ARE OFTEN MORE CHALLENGING THAN TRADITIONAL CLASSES AND YOU SHOULD BE PREPARED TO SPEND SEVERAL HOURS ON THIS CLASS EACH DAY, INCLUDING ADDITIONAL TIME ON THE WEEKENDS.**

In this class, you will be able to complete readings and assignments when it is most convenient to you—you are not required to login to the Internet at a specific time to interact with your classmates or me. **HOWEVER, YOU MUST HAVE REGULAR ACCESS TO A COMPUTER WITH A RELIABLE HIGH-SPEED INTERNET CONNECTION AND COMPUTER WITH A**

**MICROPHONE AND/OR WEB-CAM THROUGHOUT THE DURATION OF THIS COURSE. COMPUTER FAILURE/UNAVAILABILITY DOES NOT CONSTITUTE AN EXCUSE FOR NOT COMPLETING ASSIGNMENTS (INCLUDING ASSIGNED READINGS) BY THE DUE DATES.**

This class will be administered through OAKS, the College of Charleston's learning management system. To access OAKS go to <http://my.cofc.edu> and login to My Charleston. The OAKS icon is the acorn located in the upper right hand corner of the screen.

Since we are not meeting face-to-face for class, I expect you to regularly login to OAKS to complete assignments, look for course updates (in the News section of the course homepage), complete readings, etc. I will use OAKS to update you on class events and assignments and you can use OAKS to communicate with me and/or your classmates via e-mail (click on the Communication link on the toolbar, then click on Classlist and you can send me or your classmates an email from there). Regularly communicating with each other will enhance the learning experience for us all.

### **CLASS ORGANIZATION**

As you will see below, I have broken the class down into discrete Units. Each Unit consists of assigned readings, lecture(s), related assignments (response papers and/or Discussion Board posts), quizzes and sometimes videos that I have asked you to watch. Each Unit will open at 12:01 a.m. on the day specified on the course outline below (see pages 6 and 7) and the due dates for assignments are listed in that outline as well.

**Each Unit contains a checklist for the readings and assignments associated with that Unit. The best way to stay on top of everything and do well in this class is to complete the items for each Unit as I have listed them in those checklists.**

### **COMMUNITY STATEMENT**

Learning is something you do, not something that is done to you. Thus, in every class that I teach, I expect students to be active participants in the learning process. In my face-to-face classes, I sometimes lecture but most of the class time is spent with students discussing the assigned readings. The success of this format is contingent on students reading the assigned articles and chapters before coming to class and to be willing to engage me and their classmates in thoughtful discussion. While the online format of this class is obviously different than a face-to-face class, my expectations are the same.

I expect each of you to complete the readings, participate in the various opportunities for discussion of the topics (many of those discussions are a required component of your grade) and to thoughtfully engage each other in critical examinations of the topics. Each of you brings invaluable knowledge and experiences to this class and you should draw on those assets to explore the topics on crime that we cover in this class.

If you are one who is shy and generally feels uncomfortable talking in class, the distance education format is perfect for you. However, the key is that each of you remain committed to engaging the class through OAKS—I've structured the class so that you are actively engaged with each other and me in the learning process.

The class will be as good as you make it—so, let's make it great. We will not always agree with each other on the issues and that's good. So, express yourself but please do so intelligently and respectfully.

## REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

All assigned readings are available electronically in OAKS. To locate the readings, select the "Content" link on the main toolbar. All articles are posted as PDF files, which will require you to use Adobe Acrobat Reader (all library computers should have this program) to view these files. Please make sure you have an updated version of Acrobat Reader (version 11.0 is now available) installed on your home computer <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>, click "Download Now" for the program you want and it will be installed on your computer legally and for free.

**Hardware:** You need regular access to a computer with a reliable high-speed Internet connection.  
**Your laptop, tablet or computer needs to have a microphone and/or a Webcam.**

**Software:** [Firefox Mozilla Internet Browser](#) (OAKS is said to work best on this browser)  
[Adobe Reader](#)  
[Adobe Flash Player](#) (necessary to view some of the lectures)

**Other:** [Voice Thread](#). There is a link to VoiceThread on the OAKS page for our class. Click on that link and you will be taken directly to the VoiceThread content for this class. However, you have to click on the Voice Thread within our Criminology OAKS class page in order for your access to go smoothly.  
[Skype](#). Download and create a Skype account for optional live office hours with me by appointment.  
**Amazon, iTunes or Netflix Account.** There will be one or more movies that I ask you to rent and stream from an online source of your choosing.

## STUDENT HONOR CODE

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Each instance is examined to determine the degree of deception involved.

Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible for academic dishonesty will receive a XF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This grade will appear on the student's transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the X to be expunged. The student may also be placed on disciplinary probation, suspended (temporary removal) or expelled (permanent removal) from the College by the Honor Board.

It is important for students to remember that unauthorized collaboration--working together without permission-- is a form of cheating. Unless a professor specifies that students can work together on an assignment and/or test, no collaboration is permitted. Other forms of cheating include possessing or using an unauthorized study aid (such as a PDA), copying from another's exam, fabricating data, and giving unauthorized assistance.

Remember, research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or in part for any assignment in this class without obtaining prior permission from the professor.

You can find a complete version of the Honor Code and all related processes in the *Student Handbook* at <http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index.php>.

## ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

The College of Charleston is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a documented disability (or think you may have a disability) and, as a result, need a reasonable accommodation to fully participate in this class, complete course requirements, or benefit from the College's programs or services, contact the Center for Disability Services (CDS) (Lightsey Center, Suite 104) as soon as possible. To receive any academic accommodation, you must be appropriately registered with the Center for Disability Services. The CDS works with students confidentially and does not disclose any disability-related information without their permission. The CDS serves as a clearinghouse on disability issues and works in partnership with faculty and all other student service offices. For further information about services for students with disabilities, please contact the CDS.

Each of us learns in different ways, and the organization of any course will accommodate each student differently. Please talk to me as soon as you can about your individual learning needs and how this course can best accommodate them. If you do not have a documented disability, remember that other support services, including the Center for Student Learning (Addlestone Library, room 116) and the Counseling Center (843.953.5640), are available to assist you with writing, mathematics and general study skills.

Students with documented disabilities should talk with me personally at the beginning of the semester to make necessary accommodations. I will not make special accommodations during an exam period or after a deadline has passed so you must make arrangements with me now.

### DISCUSSION BOARD PARTICIPATION AND LECTURE COMMENTARY

(some of the material below is adapted/quoted from  
<https://onlinelearning.rutgers.edu/resource-grading-threaded-discussions-model>)

Each unit of the course will include several required and/or optional opportunities for you to participate in a discussion of the material. You will be asked to participate in two ways. First, you will be asked to participate by responding to discussion questions that I have posted on the OAKS Discussion board relating to assigned readings or related issues (the Discussion board is located beneath the Communications link in OAKS). Second, you will be asked in most Units to comment and/or pose question on the lectures in Voice Thread.

These discussions are the way that we participate in class. So, I expect you all to post thoughtful and meaningful messages and hopefully your comments move the conversations forward in some way. Responding with "Yeah, I agree," and "Me, too" are not acceptable and will not earn any points. "After the [Unit] due date for the discussion, you will be graded on your overall participation...Late posts are welcome for their intellectual value but will not be considered in your grade" unless you have previously arranged with me to turn in late material because of an excused absence.

Your participation (whether in OAKS or Voice Thread) "should show that you have read the material" covered in the Unit. "You should do more than merely spit back what the text says; you should engage with the material by analyzing and interpreting it. Your posts should be grammatically clear enough not to present [a lay person] with a problem in understanding your point. It's not a formal writing forum, but it's not Facebook [or text] either."

Special Note on Voice Thread Lecture Participation: Voice Thread allows for you to comment on lectures using video, audio or text responses—I expect you to at least provide an audio or video lecture response...I will accept text responses but points will be deducted. Past experience has proven to me that students' audio or video participation offer much more depth and quality of response than text responses. More importantly, audio and video responses forces us to practice public speaking (in a way) and help to humanize the distance education course that is mediated by technology.

Below is a rubric showing the criteria I will use to evaluate your participation via the Discussion Board in OAKS or your lecture commentary in Voice Thread. Each required (as opposed to optional/bonus participation opportunities) participation assignment is worth 5 points. Participation is worth 25% of your final grade.

	<b>Excellent (5 points)</b>	<b>Satisfactory (4 points)</b>	<b>Needs Improvement (3 points)</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory (2-0 points)</b>
Application and Comprehension	Demonstrates grasp of key concepts and ideas.	Demonstrates grasp of most concepts and ideas.	Demonstrates a shallow/superficial grasp of the material.	Participates shows no understanding or familiarity with content.
Engagement	Stimulates discussion and/or provides critiques or responses to others' comments.	Occasional critique of others' posts and/or response to others' posts.	Inadequate effort to engage other students by stimulating new discussion or addressing others' comments.	No effort to engage or interact with students or professor through posts/comments.
Supporting Evidence	Provides ample examples as supporting evidence.	Provides some evidence to support opinions.	Offers inadequate levels of support.	No evidence or examples offered to support opinions.
Clarity of Ideas	Ideas are expressed clearly and appropriate vocabulary is used.	Some signs of disorganization with expression.	Ideas are not clearly articulated such that the message is difficult to discern.	Participations posts and/or comments read more like Facebook or Twitter feeds.

**Bonus Participation Points:** The Discussion Board in OAKS includes a forum titled "In the News." This is a place for you to start discussions with the class around crime issues appearing in contemporary news outlets. Posting a link to a news piece and relating it to the topics of our class makes you eligible for bonus participation points. Responding to other classmates' news posts also entitles you to bonus participation points.

### UNIT QUIZZES

Most units will include a short quiz based on the readings and lectures. Quizzes will consist of a mix of multiple choice/objective questions and short answer questions and the quizzes will be timed so you will not have an infinite amount of time to look up the answer to every single question or to consult your notes from the lectures. The quizzes will account for 35 percent of your grade.

**It is critical that, in answering the short answer and essay questions, that you use complete sentences and explicitly articulate your ideas. Please do not assume that I will know what you are talking about as I cannot make such assumptions when grading written responses to quiz questions.**

**YOU SHOULD NOT COLLABORATE WITH OTHER STUDENTS WHEN TAKING THE QUIZ. IF I FIND THAT YOU HAVE COLLABORATED WITH ANOTHER STUDENT OR MULTIPLE STUDENTS, OR SOMEBODY HAS TAKEN THE QUIZ FOR YOU, YOU WILL BE REPORTED TO THE DEAN OF STUDENTS FOR VIOLATING THE COLLEGE'S HONOR CODE.**

### QUIZ MAKEUP POLICY

Each Unit will open at 12:01 a.m. on the date shown beneath the Unit number and subject title listed on pages 6 and 7 below. Once opened, you will normally have one week—sometimes two weeks—to complete the work associated with that Unit, including the quizzes. If you do not take the quiz within the timeframe associated with that Unit, I will not extend the time or reopen the quiz for you unless you have experienced the 1) death of a friend or family member, 2) are ill or are helping an ill parent, or 3) you are away from campus for a school-related academic or athletic event.

**However, it is up to you to communicate with me to request an extended window for completing the quiz before or during the open quiz period.**

## RESPONSE PAPERS

I have created 12 response paper assignments to coincide with the different Units we will cover during this course. You are responsible for completing 4 of these assignments over the course of the semester. You choose the 4 assignments that are most interesting to you. However, you must complete each assignment by the due date for the respective Unit, which is listed in the Course Schedule on pages 6 and 7 below. The Response Paper assignments are defined on the “Content” page of OAKS. Late assignments will not be accepted and you will not be able to complete a response paper before the unit has been discussed in class.

Your Assignments should be typed, edited and be at least 2 pages in length (double-spaced, 1” margins and 12 point font). Of course, you can write more than 2 pages if you have interesting things to say about the topic. I will grade your papers on the substance of your ideas and responses as well as the quality of your writing. Please carefully edit your papers before turning them in.

Each assignment should be submitted as a PDF file in the appropriate OAKS Dropbox folder by the respective due date. You can convert your paper to a PDF file at <http://www.pdfonline.com/convert-pdf/>. The 4 response papers are worth a total of 15% of your final grade.

### **“AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL” PAPER: Why You Have or Have Not Engaged in Criminal Behavior.**

See the last page of the syllabus below for an outline of the requirements for this paper. This paper is worth 25% of your final grade.

#### **FINAL GRADE POINT DISTRIBUTION**

Unit Quizzes	35%
Response Papers	15%
Paper: Why You Have or Have Not Engaged in Crime.	25%
Discussion Board Participation and Lecture Commentary	25%

#### **FINAL LETTER GRADES**

Your final grade will be calculated by adding the weighted scores on the above graded elements. OAKS will be set up to make these calculations throughout the semester and you can check your progress at any time (go to OAKS and click on “Grades”).

96.0-100%	A (4.0)	74.0-76.9%	C (2.0)
90.0-95.9%	A- (3.7)	70.0-73.9%	C- (1.7)
87.0-89.9%	B+ (3.3)	67.0-69.9%	D+ (1.3)
84.0-86.9%	B (3.0)	64.0-66.9%	D (1.0)
80.0-83.9%	B- (2.7)	60.0-63.9%	D- (0.7)
77.0-79.9%	C+ (2.3)	≤59.9%	F (0)

**NOTE:** I do not round grades up. If your final percentage is 89.9%, you will receive a “B+”. And, extra credit assignments will not be given after the last day of class.

**COURSE SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

Module Name	Assignments	Due Date	
Unit 1: Overview of the Class.	Please review the Unit 1 Checklist for each Unit in OAKS for a list of readings and associated assignments	OPENS:	Mon., 1/12, 12:01 a.m.
		DUE:	Thurs., 1/22, 9:00 a.m.
<p><b>JANUARY 19: MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY...NO CLASSES</b></p> <p><b>JANUARY 20 IS LAST DAY FOR DROP/ADD FOR FULL SEMESTER CLASSES</b></p>			
Unit 2: Sociological Study of Crime.	Please review the Unit 2 Checklist in OAKS.	OPENS:	Mon., 1/12, 12:01 a.m.
		DUE:	Mon., 1/26, 9:00 a.m.
Unit 3: The Media and Our Perceptions of Crime.	Please review the Unit 3 Checklist in OAKS.	OPENS:	Mon., 1/26, 12:01 a.m.
		DUE:	Mon., 2/2, 9:00 a.m.
Unit 4: Patterns of Crime and Justice.	Please review the Unit 4 Checklist in OAKS.	OPENS:	Mon., 2/2, 12:01 a.m.
		DUE:	Mon., 2/16, 9:00 a.m.
Unit 5a: Theories of Crime: Rational Choice and Deterrence Theories	Please review the Unit 5a Checklist in OAKS.	OPENS:	Mon., 2/16, 12:01 a.m.
		DUE:	Mon., 2/23, 9:00 a.m.
Unit 5b: Theories of Crime: How Social Bonds Protect Us from Crime.	Please review the Unit 5b Checklist in OAKS.	OPENS:	Mon., 2/23, 12:01 a.m.
		DUE:	<b>Sat., 2/28, 9 a.m.—Due Saturday because of Spring Break</b>
<b>March 2-8: SPRING BREAK...NO CLASS.</b>			
Unit 5c: Theories of Crime: Social Psychology of Crime.	Please review the Unit 5c Checklist in OAKS.	OPENS:	Mon., 3/9, 12:01 a.m.
		DUE:	Mon., 3/16, 9 a.m.
Unit 5d: Theories of Crime: Structural Theories of Crime: Why are some crimes concentrated in particular places?	Please review the Unit 5d Checklist in OAKS.	OPENS:	Mon., 3/16, 12:01 a.m.
		DUE:	Mon., 3/23, 9 a.m.
Unit 5e: Theories of Crime: Crime and the American Dream.	Please review the Unit 5e Checklist in OAKS.	OPENS:	Mon., 3/23, 12:01 a.m.
		DUE:	Mon., 3/30, 9 a.m.
Unit 6: Crime and the Self.	Please review the Unit 6 Checklist in OAKS.	OPENS:	Mon., 3/30, 12:01 a.m.
		DUE:	Mon., 4/6, 9 a.m.
Unit 7a: Crime Snapshots: Entrepreneurial Crime or Exploitation? The Case of Sex Workers.	Please review the Unit 7a Checklist in OAKS.	OPENS:	Mon., 4/6, 12:01 a.m.
		DUE:	Mon., 4/13, 9 a.m.

<b>Unit 7b: Crime Snapshots: Predatory Crime and Sexual Assault.</b>	<b>Please review the Unit 7b Checklist in OAKS.</b>	<b>OPENS:</b>	<b>Mon., 4/13, 12:01 a.m.</b>
		<b>DUE:</b>	<b>Mon., 4/20, 9 a.m.</b>
<b>Unit 7c: Crime Snapshots: Child Prostitution and Child Sex Tourism.</b>	<b>Please review the Unit 7c Checklist in OAKS.</b>	<b>OPENS:</b>	<b>Mon., 4/20, 12:01 a.m.</b>
		<b>DUE:</b>	<b>Mon., 4/27, 9 a.m.</b>
<b>Autobiography Paper Due</b>		<b>DUE by 9:00 a.m. on May 5, 2015</b>	

## **“Autobiography) Paper Assignment: Why You Have and/or Have Not Engaged in Criminal Behavior<sup>1</sup>**

This paper requires you to *apply* at least two of the criminological theories we discussed in class to explain why you have or have not become involved in criminal behavior and/or why, on isolated occasions, you broke the law. By breaking the law, I am not thinking about driving above the speed limit or drinking underage. Think of shoplifting, drug dealing, illicit drug use (other than alcohol), robbery, assault, vandalism, etc. “This paper requires you to use critical thinking skills to apply abstract theories to personal experience and to complete a critical self-analysis of your own behavior. If you do not feel comfortable revealing your behavior to me, choose someone you know *very well* and apply theories of crime to” (Schwartz) explain why she/he did or did not engage in criminal behavior.

The opening paragraphs of your paper should introduce the reader to the topic of your paper and the theory or theories you are using to explain why you have or have not engaged in criminal behavior. Describe the theory or theories you use in some detail. “For example, according to the theories you are using, why do people commit crime and what factors are most important in predicting if someone will commit crime? Then, using the theories you selected, explain why you have or have not engaged in criminal behavior” (Schwartz). In doing this, you might explore the following questions:

- “What factors led you to engage (or not engage) in crime? Relate these factors directly to the crime theories. In other words, use the terms of the theory to explain/describe the behavior. Evaluate how well this theory works based on your personal experience.
- “Why did you cease your criminal activity or why have you continued? Would the theory predict this? Explain.
- “Given your personal characteristics (race, gender, social class, the neighborhood in which you were raised, etc.), why might you be more (or less) likely to engage in crime (in general) and in the particular type(s) of crime you have engaged in? Explain.” (Schwartz)
- What other social factors (e.g., peers, family dynamics, etc.) might help explain your involvement or non-involvement in crime?
- While this is a sociology class and your paper should primarily discuss sociological factors, feel free to briefly discuss any biological (e.g., genetics, neurochemical impairment, etc.) or psychological factors (e.g., personality, self-esteem, etc.) that might shed light on your involvement or non-involvement in crime.

Please refer to and/or draw from the content of at least two of the assigned readings for this class and/or lecture material when writing your paper. Please be sure to properly cite these readings within your paper (e.g., (Hoffmann 2011). You are also welcome to use materials not assigned in class (which is not required), but *be sure to appropriately cite these materials within the text as well as in a reference page!* Go to <http://www.calstatela.edu/library/guides/3asa.pdf> for help with how to cite sources.

Finally, do not plagiarize or use somebody else’s words as your own. If I discover that you have plagiarized you will receive zero points for this paper and you will be reported to the Dean of Students for an honor violation. You can learn more about the College of Charleston Honor System at <http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/index.php>.

Papers should be 5 – 7 pages, double-spaced and typed in 12 point font with 1-inch margins. Please proofread and edit your paper before turning it in. It would be even better if you asked one of your fellow students to read and edit your paper before turning it in as I will evaluate you both on the quality of your ideas and the quality of your writing.

**THIS PAPER IS DUE BY 9 A.M. ON TUESDAY, MAY 5<sup>TH</sup>.** Submit your paper **as a PDF file** into the appropriate **OAKS Dropbox folder**. You can convert your paper to a PDF file at <http://www.pdfonline.com/convert-pdf/>. This paper is worth 25% of your final grade.

<sup>1</sup>This paper assignment is adapted from Dr. Jennifer Schwartz (<http://cooley.libarts.wsu.edu/schwartzj/soc361.htm>).