

SOCI 434 A01¹

Topics in Law, Crime, Deviance, and/or Control

Instructor: Dr. Tamara Humphrey

Course Description and Objectives

This course examines the development of crime over the life course. We will consider the factors that impact offending over the life span and consider such questions as: Why do people begin committing crimes? Can we predict with any certainty who will start offending and when? Can we distinguish between offenders who commit violent offenses and those who commit non-violent crimes? Do individuals ever stop committing crimes? Why might lifelong “criminals” stop offending? These questions will be examined using major theoretical perspectives in criminology such as developmental and life course theories of crime, feminist criminology, critical race theories, as well as criminal justice system responses to what is considered offending.

Empirical research along with case studies of individuals who have committed serious offenses over a lengthy period of time will also be used in this course as a way to engage with various theories and assess how well theories of crime fit the reality of offending. By the end of the course, students will gain an understanding of the development of crime over the life span and will be able to critically discuss the systemic and structural factors implicated in these pathways. Students will also be able to assess theoretical arguments and illustrate whether empirical research and real life examples support key claims that have been made within the field of criminology.

Format of classes

Given the university’s announcement regarding the switch to online courses in Fall 2020, Sociology 434 will be taught using CourseSpaces and Zoom or Blackboard Collaborate (this will be confirmed in the summer). All course content will be accessible via CourseSpaces including links to the appropriate online platforms necessary for lecture content. Resources for learning how to use Zoom and/or Blackboard Collaborate will be included – we are all in this together!

This course will be delivered in a hybrid format where lectures will be comprised of pre-recorded content and live-streaming. Course material will include assigned readings, links to other online resources, and a combination of pre-recorded (asynchronous) short lecture videos and live content. Each week, you will be responsible for accessing pre-recorded material prior

¹ This online outline is only intended to give an overall sense of the course. Detailed course outlines will be made available for all registered students on the first day of class. Only those outlines are to be considered official.

to our scheduled classes on Monday and Thursday. Because this is a seminar course, class discussion time is integral to its success and to your learning. We will hold live sessions during our scheduled class time where we come together as a group to engage with the material that is covered each week. In groups of 2-3, you will also be responsible for presenting class material and facilitating discussion during at least one session during the term.

Office hours will be held via Zoom 2-3 times each week in the late afternoon. Additional times are also available to accommodate various time zones and schedules.

Required Textbook

There is no assigned textbook for this class. Readings will be comprised primarily of peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, and possible e-books.