

SOCIOLOGY 401D – CRIME AND THE LIFE COURSE

Spring Quarter 2013

SYLLABUS

LECTURES: 2:30-3:50 Denny 306

INSTRUCTOR: Professor Ross L. Matsueda

Office Hours: Tue, Thur 4:30-5:30pm

Office: 227 Savery Hall

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course examines crime and deviance within a life course framework. How does crime evolve across the life span? What explains systematic patterns of crime over the life course? A life course framework views an individual's life span as a set of trajectories (upward, downward, or flat paths over time) and turning points (important life events, such as graduation, parenthood, marriage, work, and incarceration) that alter the direction of trajectories. We will examine early child behavior patterns, juvenile delinquency, adult crime and incarceration over the life course. We begin by discussing important theories of deviance over the life course, including low self-control theory, informal control theory, learning theories, and rational choice theory. We cover life stages, beginning with how trajectories develop in early childhood, focusing on genetic predispositions, parent-child interactions, and child development. We discuss the transition to adolescence and the role of peers and schools in the development of delinquent behavior. We then examine the transition to adulthood, and key turning points, such as parenthood, marriage, work, and incarceration.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Provide you with an appreciation of the life course perspective in studying crime.
- Provide you with an understanding of basic theories, concepts, and research methods used by life course criminologists.
- Show you the connection between life course theories and ideas and real-world phenomena.
- Allow you to simulate the work of social scientists by applying theoretical tools to case studies and other data.
- Make you a critical consumer of media reports and politicians' claims about crime and crime policies.
- Give you an opportunity to sharpen your critical and analytical skills through oral participation and written assignments.

COURSE WEBPAGE: <http://faculty.washington.edu/matsueda/courses/401D/web401d.htm>

Check here weekly for readings, assignments, course notes, exam reviews, and other information.

REQUIRED TEXT:

1. Benson, Michael L. 2013. *Crime and the Life Course: An Introduction*. Second Edition. New York: Routledge. Available for purchase at the [University Bookstore](#), 4326 University Way. 206-634-3400
2. Other readings are available from the course webpage.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Active participation in the course, which means completing readings and homework assignments on time and contributing positively to discussion in lecture. Credit will be given for *positive participation* in lectures.
2. Two in-class examinations, each of which will be equally-weighted and non-cumulative. The exams will consist of objective questions. The exams are scheduled for **Thursday April 18th** and **Tuesday, May 14th** in lecture. ***We are not planning make-ups*** for exams; plan accordingly now.
3. A final exam, which is **cumulative**, but weighted heavily toward the material since the second exam. The final will be held on **Tuesday, June 11th 4:30-6:20**.
4. A class debate, in which students will be broken into groups and apply a theoretical perspective to a life history reading.

5. A short (5 page) paper assignment, in which students conduct a brief interview with an adult and explore their deviance over the life course **due Thursday June 6th** in class. For assistance on writing, consult the Sociology Writing Center (http://www.soc.washington.edu/academics/undergrad_program/experientiallearning/SocWritingCenter.htm), the Odegaard Writing Center (<http://depts.washington.edu/owrc>), and CLUE (<http://depts.washington.edu/clue/index.php>). We also highly recommend the little book, *The Elements of Style* by Strunk and White. The first edition is available on the web at: <http://www.bartleby.com/141>.

GRADING:

Grades will be based on points. Each exam is worth 50 points. The quiz is worth 20 points. Positive contribution to lecture discussion is worth 5 points. Participation in discussion sections is worth 25 points. The theory application paper is worth 50 points.

Two Exams:	80 points
Lecture Discussion:	10 points
Class Debate	20 points
Paper Assignment	50 points
<u>Final Exam:</u>	<u>40 points</u>
Total:	200 points

Final grades will be based in part on a curve, in which you will be compared to your classmates. The median grade—in which 50% of students grade higher and 50% grade lower—will be approximately 2.9-3.1. All grades are final and, with the exception of errors, non-negotiable.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Papers and tests are to be original work. It is a breach of academic honesty to hand in work that is not your own or to use parts of someone else's work. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to: copying of phrases, sentences, or paragraphs without proper citation, paraphrasing another person's ideas or words without proper attribution, replicating the overall presentation structure from another source. Sources include textbooks, journal articles, newspaper articles, published or unpublished text, the World Wide Web (e.g., Wikipedia), verbal communication, paper writing "services" or any other source or person, regardless of whether you know him/her. Any form of plagiarism is grounds for failure in the class and removal from the University.

A lack of familiarity with the rules of plagiarism or the student conduct code in no way constitutes an excuse for acts of misconduct. Knowledge of these rules is your responsibility. A clear definition of plagiarism and other types of academic misconduct is provided at <http://depts.washington.edu/grading/issue1/honesty.htm#misconduct>. For detailed information about other forms of academic misconduct and information about disciplinary sanctions for academic misconduct read the University's Student Conduct Code <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=478-120>.

COURSE TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS:

Required readings are either available for purchase at the University Bookstore or available from the course website. The following is a list of topics and *approximate* dates:

I. PRELIMINARIES, DEFINITIONS, AND THE AGE-CRIME CURVE

- Apr 1 **Introduction to the Course**
Readings: None.
- Apr 4 **Definitions: Life Course, Child Behavior Problems, Delinquency, and Crime**
Readings:
Bensen (2013), Chapter 1. Pages 1-31.
Elder, Glenn H. 1985. "Perspectives on the Life Course". Pp. 23-48 in *Life Course Dynamics: Trajectories and Transitions, 1968-1980*, edited by G.H. Elder. Ithaca: Cornell,*
Caspi, Avshalom, Glen H. Elder, and Daryl J. Bem. 1987. "Moving Against the World: Life-Course Patterns of Explosive Children." *Developmental Psychology* 23:308-313.

3. Apr 9-14 **Age-Crime Curve and Latent Classes of Trajectories***Readings:*

Bensen (2013) pp. 84-94 and pp. 96-104.

APRIL 18, THURSDAY: FIRST EXAMINATION

II. LIFE COURSE THEORIES OF CRIME

5. Apr 23-25 **Low Self Control and Informal Social Control***Readings:*

Bensen (2013), pp. 94-96 and pp. 104-107.

Gottfredson, Michael R., and Travis Hirschi. 1990. *A General Theory of Crime*. Stanford, CA: Stanford, Chapter 5 (pp. 85-120).

Sampson, Robert J., and John H. Laub. 1993. *Crime in the Making*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard, Chapter 1 pp. 6-24.

6. Apr 30-
May 2 **Social Learning, Symbolic Interaction, and Rational Choice***Readings:*

Bensen (2013) pp. 144-145.

Matsueda, Ross L. 2001. "Differential Association Theory," In *Encyclopedia of Criminology and Deviant Behavior, Vol.1*, edited by Clifton D. Bryant. New York: Taylor and Francis.*

Sellers, Christine S., and L. Thomas Winfree, Jr. 2010. "Ronald L. Akers: Social Learning Theory." Pp. 21-29 in *Encyclopedia of Criminological Theory*, edited by F. T. Cullen, and P. Wilcox. Beverly Hills: Sage.

Matsueda, Ross L., and Karen Heimer. 1997. "A Symbolic Interactionist Theory of Role Transitions, Role Commitments, and Delinquency." *Advances in Criminological Theory, Vol. 7, Developmental Theories of Crime and Delinquency*, edited by Terence P. Thornberry. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.

III. STAGES AND TRANSITIONS OF THE LIFE COURSE

7. May 7-16 **Genetics, Families, and Child Behavior Problems***Readings:*

Bensen (2013), Chapters 2 and 3 (pp. 33-77).

Sandra Scarr and Kathleen McCartney. 1983. "How People make their Own Environments: A Theory of Genotype → Environment Effects." *Child Development* 54:424-435.

Guo, Guang, Michael Roettger, and Tianji Cai. 2008. "The Integration of Genetic Propensities into Social Control Models of Delinquency and Violence among Male Youths." *American Sociological Review* 73:543-568.

***May 9, THU: CLASS DEBATE

MAY 14, TUESDAY: SECOND EXAMINATION

7. May 21-23 **Adolescence, Peers, and Schools***Readings:*

Caspi, Avshalolm, et al. 1993. "Unraveling Girls' Delinquency: Biological Dispositional, and Contextual Contributions to Adolescent Misbehavior." *Developmental Psychology* 1:19-30.

Lochner, Lance. 2007. "Education and Crime." Unpublished Manuscript. University of Western Ontario.

8. May 28-
June 4 **Adulthood: Work, Marriage, Motherhood, and Desistance***Readings:*

Benson (2013), Chapter 5 (pp. 123-148).

Uggen, Christopher, and Sara Wakefield. 2008. "What Have we Learned from Longitudinal Studies of Work and Crime?" Pp. 191-219 in *The Long View of Crime: A Synthesis of Longitudinal Research*. Edited by A. Liberman. New York: Springer.

Kreager, Derek A., Ross L. Matsueda, and Elena A. Erosheva. 2010. "Motherhood and Criminal Desistance in

Disadvantaged Neighborhoods.” *Criminology* 48:221-258.

Laub, John H., and Robert J. Sampson. 2003. *Shared Beginnings: Divergent Lives: Delinquent Boys to Age 70*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard. Chapter 6.

10. Jun 6 **Incarceration as a Turning Point**

Readings:

Pettit, Becky and Bruce Western. 2004. “Mass Imprisonment and the Life Course: Race and Class Inequality in U.S. Incarceration.” *American Sociological Review* 69:151-69.*

Maruna, Saad. 2001. *Making Good: How Ex-Conficts Reform and Rebuild their Lives*, Chapters 4 and 5 (pp. 73-108).

****Papers are due in Class, Thursday, June 6****

***** JUNE 11, TUE, 4:30-6:20PM SECOND EXAMINATION *****

*reading is available on the course web page.