Instructor: Denise Mayfryer
Email: dm1221@crimjust.rutgers.edu
Days/Time: Tuesday/Thursday 1:40-3:00pm. Place: Tillets 246, Livingston Campus
Office Hours: 1-1:30pm Tuesday/Thursday. Place: Lucy Stone Hall, A-355, Livingston Campus
Course Number: 01:202:496:02; Index Number: 09900

Course Overview: This course will cover the criminal justice system from the perspective of the offender. The course will provide students with an understanding of how and why offenders make the decisions that lead them to commit crime. The course will help students understand offenders’ motives, perceptions, decision-making strategies and the rationalizations for crime featuring first-hand accounts from all types of offenders including murderers, robbers, illegal drug manufacturers, shoplifters, sex workers and white collar offenders.

Objectives:
1. Students will learn from field studies about offenders’ motives for committing crimes. By understanding offenders’ perspectives, decision-making processes and motivations, students will have insight into the minds of the offenders.
2. Students will be exposed to research about the everyday activities of offenders including how they interact with others, how they perceive the objects and events in their lives and events in their daily lives, and how they perceive the sanctions and threat of the criminal justice system.
3. The course will allow offenders to “speak for themselves,” a different way for students to understand offenders’ decision to engage in crime.
4. The course textbook places the offenders’ words in a theoretical context and provides analyses and conclusions about the offenders’ motivations.

Readings -
Required Book: 
*In Their Own Words: Criminals on Crime*, Michael Birzer and Paul Cromwell

Articles, etc.:
Articles/podcasts/videos will be posted in Sakai (referenced as “posting(s)”) in the Course Outline. These media enhance learning and are mandatory when assigned.

If guest speakers are available, they will be announced during the semester. However, reading assignments will still be due on the date assigned.
Course Outline:

Lecture Topics and Reading Assignments*

9/4/18  Course introduction – Presentation of the syllabus, readings and requirements

9/6/18  Topic One – Why Talk?
Why incarcerated offenders decide to discuss their crime and behaviors with researchers and why there are inherent dangers in studying street criminals.
Chapter 1 – “Researching Crack Dealers: Dilemmas and Contradictions”
posting(s)+

9/11/18  Chapter 2 – “Consenting to Talk: Why Inmates Participate in Prison Research”
posting(s)

9/13/18  Topic Two - Criminal Lifestyles and Decision Making
In Topic Two, we will explore criminal lifestyles and what gives some the drive to decide to commit a crime. We will look at this issue as an individual decision-making process and through the decision-making processes working in groups. We will also look at the restrictive deterrence decision making process of active auto thieves.
Chapter 3 – “Deciding to Commit a Burglary,” posting(s)

9/18/18  Chapter 4 - “Opportunities and Decisions: Interactional Dynamics in Robbery and Burglary Group;” posting(s)

9/20/18  Chapter 5 – “Auto Theft and Restrictive Deterrence;” posting(s)
Topic for paper due and must be handed in (The topic must be approved.)

9/25/18  Topic Three - Property Crimes
In Topic Three, we will look at aspects of those who engage in property crime— their motives might not be all economically based. We will examine the gendered nature of motor vehicle theft; look at the justifications, excuses, and neutralizations used by shoplifters to explain their crimes; and gain insight into the motives, perceptions and strategies involved in identity theft.
Chapter 6 - “Establishing Connections: Gender Motor Vehicle Theft, and Disposal Networks;” posting(s)

9/27/18  Chapter 7 – “’The Devil Made Me Do It’: Use of Neutralizations by Shoplifters”
posting(s)

10/2/18  Chapter 8 – “Identity Theft: Assessing Offenders’ Motivations and Strategies”
posting(s)
### Topic Four - Violent Crime

In Topic Four, we will explore some reasons why people commit violent offenses. The rationales are often unexpected. We will explore the strategies used by abusing males to portray themselves as rational and non-violent. We will look at how robbers select their victims based not on rational choices but rather on serendipity and how white, working class males in a southern U.S. city participate in bar fights based on a code of violence as part of a system of order and honor.

Chapter 9 – “Gendering Violence: Power in Men’s Accounts of Domestic Violence”

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<td>Chapter 11 – “Peaceful Warriors: Codes for Violence Among Adult Male Bar Fighters;” posting(s)</td>
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<td>Chapter 18 – “Gender and Victimization Risk Among Young Women in Gangs” posting(s)</td>
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<td>Chapter 19 – “Voices from the Barrio: Chicano/a Gangs, Families and Communities;” posting(s)</td>
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*Postings are various media that will be posted on Sakai. They are supplemental to the text but can be modified as needed.*

*Reading assignments are required on the date listed. Availability of guest speakers and the pace of instruction may require modifications. Students will be informed of any changes are expected to update the syllabus*
GRADING:

- Quizzes: 20 points
- Participation: 10 points
- Term paper: 20 points
- Midterm Exam: 25 points
- Final Exam: 25 points
- **Total:** 100 points

The final grade will be assigned based upon the following scale:

- A = 90-100
- B+ = 85-89.9
- B = 80-84.9
- C+ = 75-79.9
- C = 70-74.9
- D = 60-69.9
- F = 59 and below

**Preparation:**
The assigned readings are the basis of class discussion each session. Students are expected to have read the assigned textbook chapters and other material prior to class. *All reading assignments are due on the specified date.*

**Attendance/Participation/Lateness:**
- Each student is expected to attend each class and arrive on time. If you expect to miss class, please use the University absence reporting website [https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra](https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra) indicating the date and reason for your absence.
- You will not receive full credit for the participation grade if you miss more than three classes or are consistently late for class. Full credit will be denied for lack of civility.
- Students who miss a class are responsible for obtaining class notes. I will not provide the class notes to students who miss class. **I do not provide Powerpoint presentations.**
- All cellphones must be stowed away unless they are needed for a class activity. Laptops are authorized only for notetaking. Students observed using laptops for any other purpose will be denied the continued use of them. If anyone is seen using phones (except as needed for a class activity), they will be asked to leave the lecture.

**Exams/Quizzes**
Quizzes and exams will be comprised of information from class lectures, media presentations and reading material. **All exams and quizzes start on time and anyone who arrives late will not be permitted to take the quiz or exam.**
- All quizzes are unannounced but should be expected each class. There are no make-ups for quizzes.
- For exams, I do not provide study guidelines. Reviews for exams will briefly provide areas of focus but all material in the course (readings, lectures, media, etc.) is considered within the scope of the exam.

Any make-up exam is entirely at the discretion of the professor and will not be given unless there is a serious, legitimate and verifiable excuse.
Term Paper:
The research paper for this course is a research paper of at least five pages in length, intended to focus on the offender in the field of criminal justice. The paper should not exceed seven pages. The five pages are of content, exclusive of references, tables, etc. **ALL PAPERS MUST BE PRINTED and TURNED IN ON TIME.**

- You will submit a *one-paragraph topic/outline or summary* on or before class **Tuesday, September 27, 2018.** The outline will include the topic and what aspect of the topic to be explored.
- Papers *(5 to 7 pages)* are due **Thursday, November 15, 2018** and must be on the approved topic. The paper rubric is attached.

Some ideas for topics are at the end of these syllabus but are not mandatory. The focus of the paper should focus on how and why offenders make the decisions that lead them to commit crime.

Make-Up Exam:
Make-up exams are a privilege that may be granted only under extenuating circumstances at the discretion of the professor. Make-up exams will be contingent upon a legitimate, bona fide excuse (such as death in the family, debilitating illness, emergency) that is presented prior to the test period (in almost all cases). The make-up exam will be given immediately upon cessation of the condition that caused the student to miss the exam. Failure to take the make-up as scheduled will result in a zero grade.

Cheating:
*Do not do it.* Sanctions for cheating and plagiarism will be levied in accordance with the University Policy in Academic Integrity. Each student should review the policy at [http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/). Suspected cases of policy violations will be reported to the Department Chair and to the appropriate Dean.

Special Accommodations:
Students with disabilities who need special accommodations for this class are encouraged to meet with the professor or the appropriate disability service provider on campus as soon as possible. In order to receive accommodations, students must be registered with the appropriate disability service provider on campus and must follow the University procedure for self-disclosure. Students will not be afforded any special accommodations for academic work completed prior to disclosure of the disability and completion of the registration process with the appropriate disability service provider on campus.

If you need special accommodations, you need to let me know immediately and not at the time of the exam.
The maximum score for the term paper is **20 points**.

Two points will be removed if the topic/outline or summary is not handed in. Two points will be removed if the paper turned in is not on the approved topic.

All papers are due on or before Thursday, November 15, 2018. All papers not received by that date will receive a zero for the assignment.

**NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED. All papers must be printed.**
Some possible (but not mandatory) topics:

1. What factors make offenders stop engaging in crime?
2. Why would offenders discuss their offenses with researchers?
3. What about a criminal lifestyle appeals to offenders and causes them to keep offending?
4. How/why is crime addicting?
5. How/why do offenders justify their crimes?
6. How/why have offenders used social media to commit crimes?
7. In what ways are offenders successful and unsuccessful in their criminal careers?
8. Why are some criminal careers more successful than others?
9. What skills do offenders need to be successful? How are the skilled developed?
10. How/why do offenders pass along their skills?