

Introduction to Criminology

Course Overview

This one-semester course is intended as a guide to the field and theories of criminology. It's structured into lessons and Course Activities as follows:

- The first lesson discusses criminology as a field of study.
- The next two lessons discuss theories, which suggest that people engage in crime to satisfy self-interests and individual traits influence criminal behavior.
- The next lesson discusses the theory that motivated offenders are most likely to commit crimes when they are influenced by routine activities of potential victims.
- The next three lessons describe theories that suggest that people engage in crimes when social institutions fail to have a positive influence on them, they are labeled as criminals, and they associate with peers with criminal backgrounds.
- The next lesson familiarizes you with the theory that people engage in or refrain from criminal activities based on how they respond to certain events (*turning points*) in their lives.
- The next three lessons describe theories that influence of political and social powers, inability to achieve societal goals, and breakdown of social order contribute to criminal behavior.
- The next two lessons discuss theories that crimes and criminal behavior can be reduced by advocating peace and justice, reducing physical opportunities, and increasing the risks of being caught.
- The last lesson familiarizes you with the theory that focuses on preventing the escalation of serious crimes in a community.

You will grade your work in the Lesson Activities by comparing them with sample responses and submit the Course Activity documents to your teacher. Each lesson also has a multiple-choice mastery test. A multiple-choice end-of-semester test completes the course.

The Course Activities (submitted to the teacher) and the Lesson Activities (self-checked) are major components of this course. They will guide your learning as you work through this course.

Course Goals

This course will help you meet the following goals:

- Describe criminology as a field of study.
- Explain the classical theory of criminology.
- Analyze the theory that individual traits influence interactions with the social environment.
- Explain the view that situational components may lead to opportunities for crime.
- Identify the factors that may cause people to deviate from social norms with regard to their criminal behavior.
- Explain the view that people become criminals when society labels them as such.
- Analyze the theory that people engage in crime due to their association with others.
- Explain the theory that focuses on the desistance from criminal activity and why some offenders do not desist from a life of crime.
- Explain how political and social power may contribute to criminal behavior.
- Analyze the theory that individuals may turn to crime when they are unable to achieve goals of society.
- Describe the theory that crimes result from a breakdown of social order because of a loss of standards and values.
- Analyze the role of peacemaking criminology in attempting to reduce criminal behavior in society.
- Explain how situational crime prevention measures may be used to prevent crimes from occurring.
- Explain the broken windows theory, which proposes to stop the escalation of serious crimes in cities and neighborhoods.

Prerequisite Skills

Introduction to Criminology has the following prerequisites:

- basic computer skills
- ability to structure and process information
- general familiarity with the writing process and following guidelines

General Skills

To participate in this course, you should be able to do the following:

- Perform basic operations on a computer.
- Perform online research using various search engines and library databases.
- Work with basic word processing software such as Microsoft Word.
- Work with presentation software such as Microsoft PowerPoint.
- Communicate through email and participate in discussion boards.

For a complete list of general skills that are required for participation in online courses, refer to the Prerequisites section of the Plato Student Orientation document, found at the beginning of this course.

Credit Value

Introduction to Criminology is a 0.5-credit course.

Course Materials

- Notebook
- Computer with Internet connection and speakers or headphones
- Microsoft Word or equivalent
- Microsoft Power Point or equivalent

Course Pacing Guide

This course description and pacing guide is intended to help you stay on schedule with your work. Note that your course teacher may modify the schedule to meet the specific needs of your class.

Course Components and Grading Rubric

The table gives a breakdown of the weight for each component in the course. Weight represents the percentage of the total score coming from each activity.

Course Components	Count	Weight
Module. Each module in this course contains an interactive tutorial and an associated mastery test. Tutorials may include one or more Lesson Activities that constitute tasks associated with the tutorial. The module score comes from a student's score on the mastery test.	14	30%
Discussion. Online discussions allow for higher-order thinking about terminal objectives. An online threaded discussion mirrors the educational experience of a classroom discussion. Teachers can initiate a discussion by asking a complex, open-ended question. Students can engage in the discussion by responding both to the question and to the thoughts of others. Each unit in a course has one predefined discussion topic; teachers may add more discussion topics.	5	20%
Course Activity. Course Activities are similar to Unit Activities in scope but may be found at any point in the course, either to prepare the student for new learning or to act as a performance-based activity required for a learning objective. Like Unit Activities, Course Activities include simple rubrics, and sample answers are available for teachers. Course Activities are teacher graded.	5	30%
End of Semester Test. The end of semester test (EOS) appears at the end of the course. Students are delivered a few items from every tutorial in the course in order to assess the major course objectives.	1	20%
Total	25	100%

*Teachers may manually adjust these weights if desired, per district grading requirements.

Day	Activity / Plato Objective	Type
1 day: 1	Course Orientation <i>Review the Plato Student Orientation and Course Syllabus at the beginning of this course.</i>	
4 days: 2-5	What is Criminology? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify and discuss the differences between the roles of a criminologist and criminalist.</i> • <i>Describe why we consider criminology an immature discipline.</i> • <i>Identify the various disciplines that form a part of the field of criminology and its theories.</i> • <i>Define a theory, and discuss its advantages and disadvantages.</i> • <i>Differentiate between the concepts of causation and correlation.</i> • <i>Identify the role that these concepts play in criminological theories.</i> 	Lesson
4 days: 6-9	Classical Theory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify the classical theory of criminology.</i> • <i>Explain principles and ideas that govern this theory and the three major deterrent components defined by it.</i> 	Lesson
4 days: 10-13	Positivist Theory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Discuss the basic premise of the positivist theory.</i> • <i>Define the concept of atavism.</i> • <i>Identify and discuss the main aspects of the positive theory.</i> • <i>Discuss how individual traits, along with environmental factors, influence a person's propensity to commit crimes.</i> • <i>Discuss the key differences between the classical school of thought and the positivist theory.</i> 	Lesson
1 day: 14	Punishing Offenders	Course Discussion
1 day: 15	Para Jumble	Activity
4 days: 16-19	Comparing Classical and Positivist Theories	Course Activity

Day	Activity / Plato Objective	Type
4 days: 20-23	Routine Activity Theory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify the components of routine activity theory and how they may be responsible for criminal behavior.</i> • <i>Discuss the major dimensions of opportunity that may give motivated offenders reasons to commit crimes.</i> • <i>Examine how consumer purchase trends increase the possibilities of crime.</i> 	Lesson
4 days: 24-27	Social Disorganization Theory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Describe social disorganization theory and how it relates to the positivist theory.</i> • <i>Identify the factors that cause social disorganization in communities.</i> • <i>List crime prevention methods suggested by social disorganization theory.</i> 	Lesson
4 days: 28-31	Labeling Theory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Explain the concept of the labeling theory.</i> • <i>Discuss how this social process theory differs from other criminological theories.</i> • <i>Examine the different ways in which we can reduce the ill effects of labeling.</i> • <i>Analyze the argument that labeling can eventually lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy.</i> 	Lesson
1 day: 32	Labeling Law-Abiding Citizens of Disorganized Communities	Course Discussion
1 day: 33	Space Jumble	Activity
4 days: 34-37	Applying Social Disorganization and Labeling Theories	Course Activity
4 days: 38-41	Social Learning Theory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Describe how some people in an individual's life act as teachers and groom that individual's beliefs and behavior.</i> • <i>Discuss how people are drawn to criminal activities suggested by social learning theory.</i> • <i>Examine the role of balanced, anticipated, or actual rewards, and punishments that are the outcome of any behavior.</i> 	Lesson

Day	Activity / Plato Objective	Type
4 days: 42-45	Life Course Theory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Examine the concept of a turning point and how it influences people and prevents crime.</i> • <i>Identify why some people may continue to lead a criminal life even after experiencing turning points in their lives.</i> 	Lesson
4 days: 46-49	Conflict Theory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Discuss the social conflict theory of criminology.</i> • <i>Discuss the history of social conflict in the United States.</i> • <i>Identify the five principles of social conflict theory that discuss the causal factors for criminal behavior in society.</i> • <i>Examine the interrelationship between capitalism, inequality, and criminal justice that lays the foundation of conflict theory.</i> 	Lesson
1 day: 50	Is the Criminal Justice System Really Favoring the Rich?	Course Discussion
1 day: 51	Para Jumble	Activity
5 days: 52-56	Desisting Criminal Behavior	Course Activity
4 days: 57-60	General Strain Theory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Discuss why certain groups or communities in society engage in crime and how economically deprived people tend to become criminals.</i> • <i>Explain how budget cuts and a low quality of education cause criminal activities in society.</i> 	Lesson
4 days: 61-64	Institutional Anomie Theory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify the term anomie in the context of institutional anomie theory.</i> • <i>Describe the four social institutions on which the theory focuses.</i> 	Lesson

Day	Activity / Plato Objective	Type
4 days: 65-68	<p>Peacemaking Criminology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Discuss the concept of peacemaking criminology, and its unique perspective of crime in contrast to other criminological theories.</i> • <i>Discuss how the war metaphor, which society and media use in general, can affect criminal behavior.</i> • <i>Examine how peacemaking theory argues that suffering is the root cause of crime.</i> • <i>Identify the role that peace and justice could play in making our society a better and safer place.</i> • <i>Discuss other criminological theories that also argue that suffering in one's social environment encourages criminal behavior.</i> 	Lesson
1 day: 69	Eliminating Injustice with Peace	Course Discussion
1 day: 70	Space Jumble	Activity
4 days: 71-74	Role of American Society and Institutions in Deterring Criminal Activity	Course Activity
4 days: 75-78	<p>Situational Crime Prevention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Describe social crime prevention.</i> • <i>Differentiate between the crime prevention strategies presented by dispositional crime theories and situational crime prevention.</i> • <i>Discuss the effects of displacement.</i> 	Lesson
4 days: 79-82	<p>Broken Windows Theory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Explain the broken windows theory.</i> • <i>Describe how zero tolerance is applied to curb the escalation of serious crimes in urban areas.</i> • <i>Discuss the differences between the broken windows theory and other crime theories.</i> 	Lesson
1 day: 83	Is There a “One-Fits-All” Explanation for Crime?	Course Discussion
1 day: 84	Para Jumble	Activity
4 days: 85-88	Analyzing the Behavior of Perpetrators of a Crime	Course Activity

Day	Activity / Plato Objective	Type
1 day: 89	Course Review	
1 day: 90	End of Course	Assessment

Course Map

You will achieve course level objectives by completing each lesson's instruction, assignments, and assessments. For a detailed look at how the materials meet these objectives, review the [course map](#).