ST. JEROME'S UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND LEGAL STUDIES

SOCIOLOGY 229 - SELECTED TOPICS IN CRIMINOLOGY

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You are welcome to speak to me after class, drop by my office during my office hours, or make an appointment to discuss assignments etc.

Email etiquette: When emailing, please type in the course number in the subject heading so that it is not mistakenly identified as SPAM. Please identify yourself and the course and keep your messages/inquiries brief and to the point. Please do not ask for information that can be found on the course outline (e.g., office hours, reading assignments etc.). Please do not forward essays by email. Please do not ask for your grades by email. If you have missed classes, it is your responsibility to obtain notes from a fellow student. Please do not email me asking what you have missed or for copies of my lecture notes.

Course Description

A sociological analysis of research and theory on selected criminal activities. Motivation, modus operandi, and the social characteristics of offences and offenders will be examined in relation to such crimes as robbery, prison riots, murder and hostage taking in prison, impersonal sex in public places, drug trafficking, and organized crime.

The order of the topics to be discussed and the readings are as follows:

1. Bank robbery
2. Prison riots and hostage taking incidents
3. Impersonal sex in public places (tearooms)
4. Higher level drug trafficking and organized crime

Required Textbooks

Desroches, Frederick
1996 *Behind the Bars: Experiences in Crime*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Desroches, Frederick
2005 *The Crime that Pays: Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime in Canada.* Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Desroches, Frederick
2002 *Force and Fear: Robbery in Canada*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Humphreys, Laud
1970 *Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Places*. New York: Aldine Publishing Company.

Required Readings

Textbook Readings

Readings from *Behind the Bars: Experiences in Crime* are discussed with the essay assignment.

You are required to read *Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Places* to page 166.

Required readings from *Force and Fear: Robbery in Canada*:

Chapter 2 An Overview of Robbery

Chapter 3 The Motivation to Robbery

Chapter 4 Modus Operandi

Required readings from *The Crime that Pays*: *Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime in Canada*

Chapter 1 Drug Trafficking: The Crime that Pays

Chapter 3 Organized Crime and Higher-Level Drug Trafficking

Chapter 4 Motivation and Lifestyle of Higher-Level Drug Traffickers

Chapter 5 *Modus Operandi*: Marketing, Organization, and Security

Chapter 6 *Modus Operandi*: Fronts, Debts, and Violence

E-reserves

Prison Riots

Desroches, F.

1983 Two Theories of Prison Riots. *Canadian Journal of Criminology*, Vol. 25, No. 2, April, pp. 173-190.

Desroches, F.
1981 The Treatment of Hostages in Prison Riots: Some Hypotheses. *Canadian Journal of Criminology*, Volume 23, No. 4, October, 1981, pp. 439-450.

Desroches, F.
1974 Patterns in Prison Riots. *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Corrections*, Vol. 16, No. 4, October, pp. 332-351.

Desroches, F.
1974 The April 1971 Kingston Penitentiary Riot. *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Corrections*, Vol. 16, No. 4, October, pp. 317-331.

Bank robbery

- Desroches, F. (1997, November). Robbers and Heroes. *Canadian Banker, 104*(6), 21-24.
- Desroches F. Canada's Declining Bank Robbery Rate. *RCMP Gazette*, Vol. 75, No. 4, December 2013, pp. 28-30.
- Desroches, F. (2018) Online Drug Trafficking. Available on SOC 229 E-reserve readings.

Tearoom Trade

Desroches, Frederick
1990 Tearoom Trade: A Research Update. *Qualitative Sociology*, Vol. 13, No. 1, Spring 39-61

- Barrick, F. (2000, April 15). Net lists local sites for finding casual sex. *The Kitchener-Waterloo Record,* p. A1.
- Canadian Press. (1990, January 23). Death halts indecency appeal. *The Kitchener-Waterloo Record,* p. B3.
- Canadian Press. (1998, May 15). Pop star fined $810 for solo sex. *Toronto Sun.*
- Canadian Press. (1998, May 28). Web site lists public places for gay sex. *The Kitchener-Waterloo Record,* p. A4.

- Desroches, F. (1990). Tearoom trade: A research update. *Qualitative Sociology, 13*(1), 39-61.
- Grossman, L. (2000, May 29). The sixth sense. *Time.*
- Horowitz, J. (2000, February 14). Bad news - oral hygiene. *Time.*
- Keung, N. (1997, June 7). Police ordered to get tough on men's-room sex. *Toronto Star,* p. A15.
- Myers, T. (2008, February 22). Dinosaur *rendezvous*. *The Imprint.*
- Myers, T. (2008, February 29). I think for myself, and I don't hate gays. *The Imprint.*
- Petricevic, M. (2000, April 17). Sexual acts in park may decreasing. *The Kitchener-Waterloo Record,* p. B2.
- Unhappy Larry - Political scandal. (2007, September). *The Economist.*
- Warren, C. (1998, November 2). U of T shuts toilets used for sex trysts: Closed in evenings. *National Post,* p. A14.

High Level Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime

Desroches, F.
2007 Research on Upper Level Drug trafficking: A Review. *Journal of Drug Issues*, 37, 827-844.

Desroches, F.
Dismantle or Disrupt? Strategies Targeting Higher Level Drug Traffickers. *RCMP Gazette* VOL. 78, NO. 1 p.p. 26-29. 2016

Course Requirements

1. Essay Assignment	35%	October 18, 2018
2. Midterm Examination	40%	October 25, 2018
3. Final in-class Test	25%	November 29, 2018

The midterm examination will consist of short answer essay questions along with true/false and multiple/choice questions. The final examination will also consist of short answer essay questions along with true/false and multiple/choice questions. There will be some choice available on the essay questions. The midterm exam will cover the first three topics in the course (bank robbery, prison riots, and tearoom activity) and the final examination will cover the remaining course materials (drug trafficking and organized crime).

Essay Requirement Due date: October 18, 2018 Value 35%

Write a brief essay (4 typed pages, double spaced, one inch margins, & size 12 font) on one of the following. Late essays will be subject to a 1 (one) mark deduction per day.

Critically apply **two** of the sociological theories of crime and/or delinquency listed below to **three** cases from *Behind the Bars: Experiences in Crime*. The three cases must be chosen from the chapters listed below.

Please note that a summary/description of each of the theories is provided at the end of the assignment. You may use the summary/description of the theories as the basis for this assignment and there is no need for other references/sources.

1. Clarke and Cornish's rational choice theory and Gottfredson and Hirschi's general theory of crime.

Choose one case from each of Ch. 1, 4, & 5.

Explain how rational choice theory best explains instrumental behaviour and how Gottfredson and Hirschi's theory is more suited to explaining expressive crime.

Can bank robbery be both rational and expressive? Please explain and illustrate with case examples.

Discuss **one criticism** of each theory? Use case materials to illustrate and support your critique.

2. Merton's social structure and anomie and Agnew's anomie theory and crime.

Choose one case from each of Ch. 1, 2, & 6.

How can anomie theory be viewed as leading to both instrumental and expressive behaviour?

How can the concept "illegitimate opportunity" be incorporated into both theories?

Discuss **one criticism** of each theory?

ESSAY INSTRUCTIONS

Begin your essay by **briefly** explaining the main arguments behind each theory (1/3 page or less for each theory). **Do not** provide an extensive description or *precis* of the theories. Your synopsis of the two theories should be no more than two-thirds (2/3) of a page in total. Everything that follows should be analytical and not descriptive.

Once you have made clear the main arguments behind the two theories, begin by analysing the cases. Apply each theory to each of the cases and try to show explicitly how the theories fit or fail to fit the case materials. Do not force the theories onto the case materials if they do not fit. Explain the theory in more detail as you analyse the cases and show how the case examples (*brief* quotes, summaries of events) illustrate or fail to support the theoretical argument.

In your essay, critically discuss and analyse the **image**(s) that both theories present of offenders? What type of person is the offender according to these theories?

In other words, do the theories depict criminals as losers, followers, leaders, desperate, greedy, angry, lazy, opportunistic, caring, uncaring, cruel, narcissistic, egocentric, normal, status conscious, rational, irrational, powerless, powerful, impulsive, compulsive, alienated, victimized, oppressed, disturbed, un-socialized, violent, courageous, rebellious, justified, heroic etc.?

How well do these personality characterizations fit the case materials? What characteristics of offenders do you believe are poorly explained by the theories?

Illustrate your answer with brief, clear, and precise quotes and/or summaries of case materials.

Please include the following in your essays:

The paper should be well organized and well written. You must present a precise explanation of each theory and show clearly how the theories apply or do not apply to the case materials. Use examples to illustrate your arguments and please provide **brief** quotations with page references.

There is no need for an introduction or a conclusion.

Do not force a theory onto a case when it clearly does not fit.

Highlight the cases in bold (e.g., **Papa Was a Rolling Stone** or **Papa**).

Don't assert! Explain, analyse, illustrate, and document. Do not summarize or describe the cases.

Apart from your brief introduction to the theories, do not discuss the theories without reference to the cases and do not discuss the cases without reference to the theories.

Number each page.

Your **cover page** should include your name, I.D., date, and clearly indicate the two theories and three cases that are the subject of the essay. Also list the chapters of the text from which the cases are chosen.

Do not hand in an essay that is longer than 4 pages double spaced. Use a 12 size font and one inch margins at the top, bottom, and on the right and left sides of the paper. Your

cover page does not count as one page. Use a minimum of 3 paragraphs per page – this is absolutely mandatory. Essays that do not conform to these instructions are subject to penalties.

A SUMMARY OF THE THEORIES

Rational Choice Theory

Clarke, Ronald V. & Cornish, Derek B (See Ch. 1 pages 1-4 from *Behind the Bars*)
1985 Modelling Offender's Decisions: A Framework for Research and Policy. In M. Tonry and N. Morris (eds.) *Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research*. Volume 6:147-85 Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Economists have long held the view that property offences are the result of rational decision-making reached by men/women who confront a problem faced by many others – a need or a desire for money.

Implicit in the economic perspective is an actor who views theft as a rational and productive activity despite the fact that capture, imprisonment, and death may be part of the equation.

The expected utility model in economics (Becker, 1968) is based on the assumption that offenders rationally attempt to maximize the monetary and psychic rewards of crime. If crime has a higher utility than conforming behaviour – that is, an acceptable chance at not getting caught and a desirable amount to gain, then the individual should decide in favour of committing the crime.

On the other hand, if the perceived risk of capture is high and the expected penalty is great, the would-be-criminal should be deterred.

In contrast to the economic or "normative" rationality underlying the expected utility model, rational choice theory (Clark and Cornish, 1985) suggests that criminal decision making is characterized by a very rudimentary cost-benefit analysis. The theory analyzes the decision making process as it relates to the various stages of criminal involvement including initial motivation, the motivation to continue, and the decision to cease criminal involvement. The basic assumption is that people are rational and goal oriented and will rationally choose criminal activities after considering risks and rewards. The theory is best applied to instrumental versus expressive criminal activities.

Choice theory also analyzes decisions of a more tactical nature (e.g., modus operandi) relating to the criminal event itself including the selection of a specific type of crime and target, the getaway, or the decision to use or not use a weapon. The rational choice approach explicitly recognizes **situational variables** and their importance in relation to the criminal event.

Although the rational choice perspective on crime is best suited to utilitarian offences such as theft, burglary, and robbery, its proponents argue that even behaviours that appear to be pathologically motivated or impulsively executed have rational components present.

Rational choice theory portrays criminal behaviour as the outcome of choices and assumes that decisions made by offenders exhibit **limited or bounded rationality** (Simon, 1957) rather than normative rationality.

The bounded rationality hypothesis assumes that human information-processing limitations place constraints on decision processes and that people make simplifications and shortcuts that are reasonable but which may produce inferior outcomes.

Criminal behaviour may be planned and premeditated but not fully rational in the strict sense that the expected utility model assumes. The picture that emerges from research on criminal decision making is that of a limited information processor, often working under pressure of time, who uses many different strategies to simplify the task of evaluating choice alternatives in the complex environment of everyday life.

The planning and rationality used may subsequently be seen to be in error, but at the time the offender feels he/she has considered the risk vs reward and taken sufficient precautions.

Rational choice theory considers the offender's perspective, how he/she makes sense of his/her world in order to understand which factors offenders take into account when planning a crime. Choice theory does not judge the rationality of criminals in an objective manner; rather the rationality studied is the **subjective** motivation and thought processes of criminals as they consider their crimes.

Rational choice theory is criticized for largely ignoring background factors commonly thought of as root causes of crime such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, race, family, and peer influences.

Another critique of the rational choice perspective is the tendency to overemphasize the intellectual sophistication of the offender, viewing him/her as more rational, reasoning, thoughtful and clever than is actually the case. Many crimes show very little evidence of planning and forethought.

A GENERAL THEORY OF CRIME

Gottfredson, M. R., and T. Hirschi
1990 *A General Theory of Crime*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Gottfredson and Hirschi offer a general theory that applies to all forms of crime including consensual and predatory offences. They argue that there is no need to offer distinct explanations

for different types of criminal conduct. Crime is defined as "acts of force or fraud undertaken in pursuit of self-interest" (1990:15) and the authors suggest that acts labelled as criminal share a number of characteristics:

They provide immediate gratification of desires
They are exciting, risky, or thrilling.
They provide few or meagre long-term benefits.
They require little skill or planning.
They result in pain or discomfort for the victim.

In short, Gottfredson and Hirschi argue that crime appeals to people who are impulsive, short-sighted, physical, risk-taking, and non-verbal. They characterize people who are drawn to crime as having low self-control and suggest that such people will be attracted to a variety of harmful and self-destructive behaviours such as illicit drug usage, theft, robbery, impaired driving etc.

Gottfredson and Hirschi suggest that the sources of low self-control originate in the family and child rearing practices. Parents who effectively monitor their children and who recognize and punish deviant behaviour, will instil in their children self-control through the socialization of values, norms, and habits. These children will develop internal social controls and develop pro-social norms and behaviours that are goal and future oriented.

Parents, on the other hand, who do not care much about their children or who are unable to supervise them and effectively punish offending behaviour, will raise children who have little self-control. These children will be more impulsive, present oriented, and will tend to seek immediate gratification. They will be less controlled by internalized values, norms, and traditions.

Gottfredson and Hirschi argue that low self-control is the key cause of criminality and this explains why some people engage in criminal acts while others do not. Crime occurs when individuals with low self-control encounter situations and opportunities that are conducive to offending.

They suggest that deviant activity is often natural, more exciting, and more rewarding than conformity and that most people would be deviants if they were not held in check by some combination of formal and informal social controls.

Anomie Theory

Merton, Robert K. (See Ch. 1 pages 1-4 from *Behind the Bars*)
1938 Social Structure and Anomie. *American Sociological Review*. 3:672-682.

Emile Durkheim first coined the term anomie in his study of suicide published in 1899. Anomic suicide results from a situation in which one's goals and aspirations are blocked and this leads to a diminished will to live. Durkheim argues that our levels of aspiration are controlled by society and a de-regulation of these controls can lead to a situation of anomie.

Robert Merton also argues that we learn our goals and aspirations and that these are controlled by society. He focuses upon two elements of the social structure - culturally approved goals and culturally approved means - and argues that lower class persons find themselves in a situation of anomie. According to Merton, society holds out as available and desirable the goal of financial success. At the same time, however, the legitimate means for attaining that goal for most lower-class persons are blocked. The lower-class have less educational and job opportunities to achieve monetary success and find themselves in a situation of anomie. They are under pressure or strain and many thus choose illegitimate means by which to obtain their goals.

Cultural approved goals of financial success are held out as being available for all yet a substantial number of people in the lower socioeconomic classes have no legitimate opportunity to achieve material wealth. Thus, lower class persons are in a situation of strain or anomie and may choose illegitimate means to obtain success goals.

Egalitarian beliefs or myths suggest that everyone can become rich if they have what it takes. This myth increases strain and leads to self-blame for failure.

Failure to obtain financial success goals may be due, however, to lack of legitimate opportunities.

Merton provides a typology of individual adaptations to legitimate or culturally approved goals and means.

Innovation refers to an acceptance of cultural goals and a rejection of legitimate means because these means are blocked. Thus illegitimate means are used to obtain goals. This is the common view of utilitarian crime such as theft and robbery.

Anomie theory best explains the utilitarian and instrumental character of crime such as theft. It is less useful in explaining expressive-emotional crimes such as murder.

Merton appears to assume that success goals are internalized by one and all at the same high levels.

Albert Cohen criticizes this theory for being atomistic or individualistic and ignoring the fact that one's actions are influenced by the actions of others. The choice of adaptation is therefore not made in a vacuum, others influence whether we conform or innovate, etc.

Cohen also argues that Merton implies that deviant behaviour involves a leap from conformity to deviance because of the strain of anomie. Human actions, he argues, involves tentative, exploratory moves with involvement and dis-involvement common.

Merton further fails to explain why people continue in crime or delinquency once they have achieved their initial goals.

Cloward and Ohlin point out that crime is not simply a matter of will, it also requires illegitimate opportunity. This refers to opportunities for learning criminal motivations, rationalizations, and techniques for committing crimes. It also includes contact with other criminals as well as access to illicit goods, weapons, knowledge, and other material or non-material elements that facilitate the crime.

STRAIN THEORY

Agnew, R.
1992 Foundations for a General Theory of Strain Theory of Crime and Delinquency. *Criminology*. 30:47-87.

Agnew's use of strain theory deals with behaviours that are generated because of expressive and emotional factors in contrast to Merton's focus on instrumental crime. In particular, he discusses the effects of stress on individuals and refers to the research literature on social justice/equity as well as psychological research on frustration-aggression behaviours and social learning theory.

Agnew's theory is social-psychological and focuses on the individual and his/her immediate social environment. He suggests that people are often pressured into crime/delinquency by the negative affective states - most notably anger and related emotions - that result from negative relationships. This negative affect creates pressure for corrective action and may lead people to (1) make use of illegitimate channels of goal achievement; (2) attack or escape form the source of their adversity; and/or (3) manage their negative affect through the use of illicit drugs.

The theory suggests that outside sources create strain that leads to negative affect/arousal which results in criminal conduct. Agnew argues that strain typically results directly from negative relationships.

Three sources or types of strain are discussed:

1. Strain that occurs because others prevent them from achieving positively valued goals (i.e., goal blockage). Agnew argues that the goals are often immediate rather than long-term and include such things as status, popularity, and acceptance.

2. The removal or threat of losing positively valued stimuli that one possesses.

3. The inability to escape from painful situations.

Strain in relationships result in negative affect such as anger, disappointment, depression, fear, and other emotions that are heightened by any sense of injustice or inequity. Anger is the primary motivation and results when people blame their adversity on others. This leads to an increased sense of injury and victimization; a desire for retaliation/revenge; and energizes the individual for action. Anger and other emotions lower inhibitions and justify aggressive behaviours.

Crime and delinquency may be perceived an methods of alleviating strain by achieving goals, protecting or retrieving positive stimuli, or for terminating or escaping negative stimuli. Strain creates a predisposition for crime whenever it is chronic and repetitive.

Agnew argues that his theory can explain a broad range of criminal behaviours. For instance, crime may be a form of revenge and result in assault or murder; robbery may be used for goal attainment; and some persons attempt to escape from their problems through drug usage.

GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT THE ESSAY ASSIGNMENT

Critically discuss how well the theories account for the offender's behaviour along with any shortcomings the theories have in explaining the cases.

Identify and analyze the relevant variables that the theories explain and those variables that are poorly explained (e.g., socioeconomic status, gender, race and ethnicity, age etc.).

How well do these theories explain the motivation to each criminal activity? What aspects are not explained by each theory with respect to robbery?

In your answer, briefly discuss why offenders are not deterred by the possibility of arrest and imprisonment. How well do the theories incorporate and account for the issue of deterrence?

Please note that this assignment does not require you to prove that these theories “work” for the data reported. On the contrary, you are expected to offer criticisms of the theory and show those areas in which the theories fail to explain the research findings. Do not attempt to force the theory to fit the data if there is no fit.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Academic Integrity: To maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo and its Affiliated and Federated Institutions of Waterloo (AFIW) are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. See the UWaterloo Academic Integrity webpage and the Arts Academic Integrity webpage for more information.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for their actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to University of Waterloo Policy 71 - Student Discipline. For typical penalties check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties.

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances.

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to the St. Jerome's University Policy on Student Appeals.

Note for Students with Disabilities: The AccessAbility Services office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.