

Course Syllabus

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HTS 3071

Sociology of Crime

Fall 2026

Instructor Information

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General Course Information

Description

Substantive issues in the study of crime. This course examines such subjects as: the perception of crime; characteristics of offenders and victims; societal reactions to crime; police discretion and imprisonment. Using a sociological lens, this course unpacks the causes and effects of crime on American society. We will examine such subjects as: how crime and criminals are perceived; methodological and theoretical approaches for studying crime; characteristics of offenders; and societal reactions to crime. The course provides a broad historical understanding of crime, with a focus on modern America.

Course Learning Outcomes

- Students will describe major concepts in the discipline of sociology and the sociological study of crime.
- Students will compare and contrast the major theoretical perspectives and methodological issues in studying crime.
- Students will identify how sociocultural and economic forces shape individual and group criminal behavior.

- Students will analyze the American criminal justice system, its disparate treatment of groups of people, and how sociocultural, political, and economic forces influence the development of criminal laws.

Required Course Materials

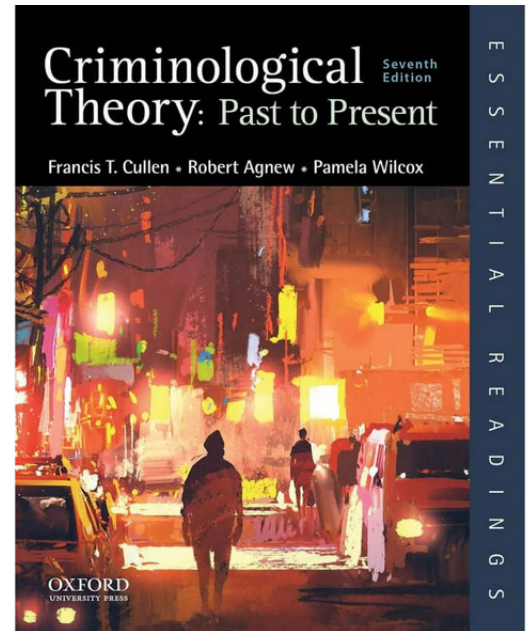
There is one required text book for the course, plus some additional readings that will be posted in Canvas. The book is:

Cullen, F.T., Agnew, R., & Wilcox, P. (2022). *Criminological Theory: Past to Present*. (Seventh Edition). Oxford University Press.

ISBN-13: 9780197619315 | Edition 7

Here are some links to where you can find the book (paperback and digital). Bear in mind that many of these sources allow you to rent the e-book at a significant discount.

- Oxford University Press:



<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/criminological-theory-past-to-present-9780197619315?cc=us&lang=en&#> ↪ <https://global.oup.com/academic/product/criminological-theory-past-to-present-9780197619315?cc=us&lang=en&#>

- Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/Criminological-Theory-Present-Essential-Readings/dp/0197619312> ↪ <https://www.amazon.com/Criminological-Theory-Present-Essential-Readings/dp/0197619312>
- VitalSource: https://www.vitalsource.com/products/criminological-theory-past-to-present-francis-t-cullen-robert-v9780197619339?srsId=AfmBOooTAXe68HFRXZWPg0czpg8ZeKN1J91ILPRCjnD5CeWD_MYHh5Vd ↪ https://www.vitalsource.com/products/criminological-theory-past-to-present-francis-t-cullen-robert-v9780197619339?srsId=AfmBOooTAXe68HFRXZWPg0czpg8ZeKN1J91ILPRCjnD5CeWD_MYHh5Vd

Course Requirements and Grading

1) "Let's Talk" discussion forum participation in Canvas is required. Most of our Modules in Canvas will include a discussion forum where we will discuss the topic(s) of the week. I will start off each discussion with an overall thread, but you are welcome and encouraged to start new threads about the topic. All discussion comments must be posted by 11:59 P.M. on Sunday of each week (except for the final week's discussion -- see the course schedule). **You must post your own response to the original question before you will be able to see and respond to others' posts.**

Discussion forum posts are graded according to the following rubric:

1 Point	2 Points	3 Points
Minimal response to the discussion topic and/or no additional posts (responses to others) by author.	Posting responds to the question, but does not stimulate further class discussion. Only one additional post (response to others) by author.	Posting fully addresses the topic and stimulates substantial follow-up. Author has responded to at least two other students' posts with substantive comment.

2) "Check your knowledge" quizzes will be administered through Canvas each Module throughout the semester. The quizzes will be a combination of multiple choice, true/false, and similar types of questions, and of course, they will be open-book. Please bear in mind, though, that the questions may reference information that I provide in my own lecture notes or videocasts, so the book will not provide all the answers. Quiz questions will not include information from the discussion forums. Student collaboration on the quizzes is **forbidden**. Your answers must be your own. All quiz responses must be posted by 11:59 P.M. on Sunday of each week (except for the final Module's quiz -- see the course schedule for the exact date).

3) Three Essays/Video Presentations Answering Questions of Importance in the Sociology of Education At the end of Modules 5, 10, and 15, you will be required to submit an Essay to Canvas *OR* to present a video in Canvas (or attach an external video file to the Assignment page).

Note: You can decide which type of assignment you'd like to submit over the course and change as you like. In other words, you could submit an essay for one assignment, a video for the next, and another essay for the third.

- Essay papers must be at least 1,250 words long (that's the equivalent of about 5 pages of double-spaced text in a word processing document). **Pick an available**

topic (from the list provided in each Module) that is of interest to you, and write about 1,250 words to answer it. Full credit will be given for responses that apply scientific and evidence-based proposals for solving problems. (**HINT:** Use information from our readings, my lecture notes, and external scholarly sources to craft your proposal. Proposals based on idealism, relative morality, or ideology will not receive full credit.) The rubric below shows how these will be graded. Each Essay is worth a maximum of 50 points.

- Video presentations can be recorded directly in Canvas, or you can use the application of your choice (YouTube, iMovie, etc.). Videos should be about six (6) minutes long. **Pick an available topic (from the list provided in each Module) that is of interest to you**, and create a 6 - 10 minute video to answer it. These should be as polished as any essay you would write, so *practice* what you want to say before creating your video and edit as necessary. (**HINT:** Similar to the above, use information from our readings, my lecture notes, and even external scholarly sources to craft your video proposal. Proposals based on idealism, relative morality, or ideology will not receive full credit.) The rubric below shows how these will be graded. Each Presentation is worth a maximum of 50 points.

Each essay or presentation will be graded according to the following rubric:

Criteria	Superior	Sufficient	Substandard	Problematic	Not done	Points
Amount of Information	All topics are addressed and all questions answered with at least 3 paragraphs (in addition to the introduction and conclusion). Essay/presentation meets the minimum required length of 1,250 words or six	All topics are addressed and all questions answered with at least 3 paragraphs (in addition to the introduction and conclusion). Length is somewhat shorter than 1,250 words or	All topics are addressed and most questions answered with fewer than 3 paragraphs (in addition to the introduction and conclusion). Length is significantly shorter than 1,250 words or	One or more topics were not addressed. 1 pts	Not addressed 0 pts	Total: 10

	minutes. 10 pts	presentation is shorter than six minutes. 7 pts	presentation is significantly shorter than six minutes. 4 pts			
Quality of Information	Information clearly relates to the main topic. It includes several supporting details and/or examples. 10 pts	Information clearly relates to the main topic. It provides adequate supporting details and/or examples. 7 pts	Information clearly relates to the main topic. No details and/or examples are given. 4 pts	Information has little or nothing to do with the main topic. 1 pts	Not addressed 0 pts	Total: 10
Organization	Information is very organized with well-constructed paragraphs and subheadings. 8 pts	Information is organized with well-constructed paragraphs. 7 pts	Information is organized, but paragraphs are not well-constructed. 4 pts	The information appears to be disorganized. 2 pts	Not addressed 0 pts	Total: 8
Sources	At least three sources have been referenced. 10 pts	Two sources have been referenced. 7 pts	One source has been referenced. 4 pts		No sources of information have been referenced. 0 pts	Total: 10
Citations	All sources (information, graphics, Web pages) are accurately documented. Information is cited using correct APA	Most sources (information, graphics, Web pages) are accurately documented. Information is cited, but not using APA	Few sources (information, graphics, Web pages) are accurately documented. Information is not accurately cited using	Needs assistance or supervision to use appropriate sources where applicable to find information	Use of accurate sources not addressed 0 pts	Total: 8

	style. 8 pts	style. 6 pts	APA style. 4 pts	and critically evaluates its value. 2 pts	
Quality of Writing	Writing is clear, concise, and contains few grammatical/syntax errors. 4 pts		Writing is informal at times and/or contains many errors in grammar and syntax. 2 pts	Writing is sloppy and/or outside the quality of academic writing. 0 pts	Total: 4
Total					Total: 50

Grading

Assignment Group	Weight
Let's Talk Discussion Forums	33%
Check Your Knowledge Quizzes	34%
Essays/Presentations	33%



Your final grade is determined on a scale from 1 to 100 as follows:

Grade	Scale
A	90 - 100%
B	80 - 89.99%
C	70 - 79.99%
D	60 - 69.99%
F	Below 60

Course Policies

USG Required Course Policies

Academic Integrity

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. [Review Georgia Tech's Honor Code](https://catalog.gatech.edu/policies/honor-code/)  and the [student Code of Conduct](https://catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18/)  [\(https://catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18/\)](https://catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18/).

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarism on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the social sciences area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad orienting question:

- How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following learning outcome:


- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social, or geographic relationships develop, persist, or change.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following career-ready competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion


Additional Georgia Tech Required Policies

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, [contact the Office of Disability Services](http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/)  [\(http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/\)](http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/) (404-894-2563) as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please

also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. [The Student-Faculty Expectations](http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/22/)  (<http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/22/>) articulate some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.


Optional Course Expectations, Policies, and Resources

Policy on Late Work

I will accept late work, however **10% will be deducted from your grade for EACH DAY that your work is turned in late**. So, keep in mind, for example, that submitting a response to a discussion forum after the 9th late day will result in a zero.

Writing Styles and Standards

You have elected to participate in this course online. However, that does NOT mean that this is a typical online environment (like social media). This is an academic course, and academic standards are expected in your writing and course communication. Write like you would with any academic assignment. That means fully articulated *real* words, spelled correctly, sentences that start with capital letters and end with correct punctuation.

If you have problems with your grammar, syntax, organization, or style when writing, please visit the Naugle Writing and Communications Center in Clough 447 or visit their Web site at <https://communicationcenter.gatech.edu/>  (<https://communicationcenter.gatech.edu/>).


Use of Generative AI

I encourage the responsible use of Generative AI tools, such as Copilot, ChatGPT, and Gemini. However, when I say "responsible" I mean that the tool can be an aid for outlining, drafting, and checking/editing your own writing. The key to responsible use is not to let the tool do the thinking for you. All work that you submit must be your own. You should never include anything in your assignment that was not written by you



without proper citation. If you're unsure what uses of GenAI may be allowed, send me an email so we can set up a time to discuss it.

Campus Resources for Students

Undergraduate Student Academic Success Resources

Academic Support: Academic Success and Advising (a unit in the Office of Undergraduate Education & Student Success) provides free support for your courses. Students can attend scheduled supplemental review (PLUS) sessions, stop by Drop-In Tutoring, or schedule a one-on-one appointment through Knack. To explore what options work best for you, please visit us online at [success.gatech.edu/tutoring](https://www.success.gatech.edu/tutoring/) , email us at tutoring@gatech.edu (<mailto:tutoring@gatech.edu>), or come see us at Clough Undergraduate Learning Commons, Suite 283.

Student Well-Being

At Georgia Tech, we are concerned about your overall physical, social, and mental well-being. A [comprehensive list](https://students.gatech.edu/student-resource-guide) , of wellness related resources has been compiled and maintained by the Office of the Vice President for Student Engagement and Well-being ([student-resource-guide \(gatech.edu\)](https://students.gatech.edu/student-resource-guide) ) (<https://students.gatech.edu/student-resource-guide>).