

PRELIMINARY

The Psychology of Criminal Behavior  
PS 584  
Spring, 2001  
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Required Text: ***Criminal Behavior***, Elaine Cassel & Douglas Bernstein, Allyn & Bacon, 2001.

Broad Purpose of the Course:

Develop the understanding of the biological, psychological, social, and environmental causes and correlates of violent and criminal behavior. Understand violence and criminal behavior as a developmental process that may begin in childhood and endure through adolescence and into adulthood. Recognize the roles of legislatures, criminal and juvenile justice systems, law enforcement, and corrections in the development of violence and criminal behavior. Determine future directions for policy, prevention, policing, and punishment that can help ameliorate the causes and outcomes of crime and violence.

Objectives of the Course:

See the TOC for text at web link.

Take Home Final given out April 28, due by email May 5, 2001

NOTE: YOU MUST READ CHAPTERS 1, 2, & 3 BEFORE THE FIRST CLASS.

Date	Text	Other
March 24	Chapters 1, 2, & 3	
March 31	Chapters 4, 5, & 6	Topic of Paper/presentation provided
April 7	Chapters 7, 8, & 9	Test - Chapters 1-6; Abstract, outline of paper/presentation
April 21	Chapters 10, 11, & 12	Presentations (first half of class roll)
April 28	Chapters 13 & 14	Test - Chapters 7-12; Presentations of papers (second half of class roll)

Papers/Presentations -Research programs effective in the areas for effective crime prevention or reduction or for dealing with crime in a better way (punishment, prisons, victims). The focus of the intervention may be on individuals, families, communities, adult criminal justice system, juvenile justice system, jails and prisons, mental health system, victims, or society as a whole. Summarize the state of research in one narrow area that has some promise for the future of crime

prevention or reduction or for dealing with crime in a way that benefits the offender, the victim, and society. Your search for a topic should begin with a particular section or chapter in the text. Use the references in the text as a resource, as well as web resources like ncjrs.org and other government sites, and APA forensic psychology sites. Your focus should be as specific and narrow as possible. Examples and suggestions (you may use these or choose others. This is by no means a complete list).

- Restorative justice (vs. retributive justice) and victims, offenders, and community
- Treatment for juvenile offenders - focus on rehabilitation and not punishment
- Changes in civil commitment laws and treatment of the mentally ill
- Stop jailing the mentally ill
- Interventions in the homes of infants at high-risk for crime (preceded by abuse and neglect)
- Stop treating addiction (alcohol, drugs) as a crime and start treating it as an illness
- Change the focus of prisons from punishment and revenge to rehabilitation (what kinds of prisons and programs are forward-looking?)
- Improve psychology's contributions to the legal system
- Eliminate racism and unfairness in arrest, conviction (juries) and punishment (juries and judges)
- Interventions with high-risk children (learning disorders, dysfunctional families)
- Repeal death penalty laws
- Stop long mandatory prison sentences for non-violent offenders and for older, elderly violent offenders
- Balance "punishment" with the effect on children of the incarcerated men and women (punishment policies are tearing apart families and entire communities (Girl Scouts has an excellent program)
- End keeping prisoners incarcerated so far away from home, depriving them of contact with family and depriving their family
- Reform prisons to get rid of abusive, violent, prejudiced prison wardens and guards
- Reform police forces to get rid of abusive, violent, prejudiced police officers
- Treatment programs in prison that work/rehabilitate/improve quality of life and give hope to prisoners
- Medical treatment for prisoners
- Mental health treatment for prisoners
- Incarceration of juveniles with adults

Good resources: Anything on the ncjrs.org web site, anything from National Institute of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Department of Justice,

**YOU MUST DOCUMENT YOUR SOURCES. EVERYTHING HAS TO BE BACKED UP BY RESEARCH OR RECOGNIZED AUTHORITY IN THE FIELD.**

Paper length: no minimum, no maximum. May be produced in bullet format and must be heavily document. All sources must be cited. Class presentation limited to 10 minutes of the highlights, to peak our interest in further research.

Tentative Schedule

9-10:15 -  
10:15-10:30 - break  
10:30-11:45 -  
11:45 - 12:30 - lunch  
12:30-1:45  
1:45-2:00 - break  
2:00-3:15  
3:13-3:30 - break  
3:30-5:00  
5:00 - class ends

Grading component:

You must attend all of every class to receive an A. This means not being late and not leaving early.

Two objective tests	40%
Take home final	30%
Paper/presentations	20%
Attendance/articles	10%

Each week: Bring in three articles from current media (current week) about a crime or crime-related issue (something covered in the text) and write a sentence or two about its relationship to crime. Attach the article to your statement. May be a crime itself (in which case state what might be causes of the crime), police or cj system issue, jury, victim, mental illness, prison & punishment. We will open the class with a selected couple of "cases."