COURSE INFORMATION
Instructor: Haley Zettler, Ph.D.

Class Meeting: Students with last names from A-J will attend in-person on Tuesdays from 12:30-1:50 and students with last names from K-Z will attend in-person on Thursdays from 12:30-1:50. You will be notified of your in-person class day prior to the first day of class. The other day of the week you will complete assignments remotely.

Classroom Location: Gateway 131

Instructor Contact Information
Email: Haley.Zettler@unt.edu
Phone: 940-565-4338
Office Location: Chilton 273G
Office Hours: By appointment via Zoom

Email Expectations: When sending an email, please put the COURSE NUMBER (CJUS 3600) in the subject line. I can only respond to emails if they are sent through your UNT email account. You can expect to receive a response within 48 hours during the week and 72 hours on the weekend. If you have not received a response within that time, please email me back.

Course Materials
-Required materials:


Note: In addition to the required text, journal articles, documentaries, and other sources of reference will be used to further enhance student's learning.
Course Description
Crime is a complex problem. There are so many seemingly distinct types of crime, and crimes occur for different reasons and under different circumstances. In fact, the complexity of crime is increasing. For example, the globalization of communications (e.g., the internet) and conflict (e.g., terrorism) had substantial impacts on the nature of crime. Despite this complexity, it is imperative that we gain as great an understanding of crime as possible through criminology. Criminology can be defined as the study of the nature of crime, its causes, and the systemic practices that (re)produce patterns of harm. At its core, criminology attempts to understand what crime is and why it occurs. We will study the major theoretical traditions that have emerged over the past several centuries to offer insight into the crime problem. We will also evaluate each theory using extant research and identify policy implications.

Course Objectives
Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:
1. Explain that there are several different theories that offer us a wide variety of perspectives for why people offend.
2. Describe and compare criminological theories.
3. Determine theories’ policy implications and explain why some are more realistic than others.
4. Identify the obstacles faced in the policy-making process and analyze theory-inspired policy.

Course Notes and Recommendations
Please make sure to have your official UNT email forwarded to your preferred email address (if different) to receive important updates, changes, announcements, class cancellations (if applicable), and generally, so I can reach you if necessary.

Before you send email with a question, make sure to review the syllabus. Most questions can be answered in this document.

The announcement board in Canvas, and email, will be used primarily used for communication to the class as a whole.

Important: it is your responsibility to utilize a computer system that works and is compatible with the UNT online system/Canvas.

Course Requirements and Grading
Your final grade will be determined based on your performance on three film and theory reflection papers, six quizzes, and class participation. There is a total of 400 points that can be earned in this course.

1. Film and Theory Reflection Papers: 3 @ 50 points each or 150 points total
2. Unit Quizzes: 6 @ 20 points or 120 points total
3. Class Participation: 130 points total

Grading Scale:
360-400: A
320-359: B
280-319: C
240-279: D
239 or Less: F
Film and Theory Papers: Instructions for Film and Theory Reflection Papers

Many films, both feature and documentary, contain visual examples of criminological theories. Over the course of the semester, you are required to watch three films that highlight different criminological theories that we have discussed in the course. You will be required to write three papers on these movies that highlight the connection between the film and an assigned criminological theory.

For each of the three papers, you should include and do the following:

1) Provide a summary of the assigned film **(150-200 words)**.

2) Provide a summary of the assigned criminological theory that you are required to connect to the film **(150-200 words)**.

3) Connect the criminological theory to the film. This should include 1 to 3 specific examples from the film that highlight similarities you see between the theory and the film. In other words, describe how the behaviors and actions of the people, symbols, metaphors, or themes presented in the film provide examples of the assigned criminological theory **(300-400 words)**.

Each paper should be between 600-800 words and submitted on Canvas as either a Microsoft Word Document or Adobe PDF. Google documents or assignments submitted in the text box will not be accepted.

You are welcome to utilize outside sources and your textbook to write these papers. However, you must cite outside sources or textbook materials included in your papers both in the paper and on the reference page. Additionally, all writing must be your own and no one else’s. Contact me or a UNT librarian if you have questions about avoiding plagiarism. **A rubric and sample paper are provided at the end of this document.**

The three films that you will be required to watch and their respective criminological theories you will be required to connect them to are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Film</th>
<th>Criminological Theory</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Rock and a Hard Place” – Directed by Jon Alpert and Matthew O’Neill. (1 hour and 21 minutes)</td>
<td>Deterrence Theory</td>
<td>Friday February 26th at 11:59 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Starless Dreams” – Directed by Mehrdad Oskouei. (1 hour and 16 minutes)</td>
<td>General Strain Theory</td>
<td>Friday March 26th at 11:59 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>“The Woodsman” – Directed by Nicole Kassell. (1 hour and 27 minutes)</td>
<td>Labeling Theory</td>
<td>Friday April 23rd at 11:59 PM</td>
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</table>
All three of these movies can be accessed on Kanopy. As a UNT student, access to Kanopy is included in your tuition. Kanopy is a video streaming service that can be accessed through the UNT library. To access Kanopy, please visit the following link https://unt.kanopy.com/. This will take you to the Kanopy website where you will sign in with your UNT account and can access the films.

How to Create a Kanopy Account

1. Go to www.kanopy.com/signup and click on “Find Your University”

2. Type “University of North Texas” and select it from the dropdown menu.

3. You will be redirected to the university’s login screen - follow the prompts to log in.

4. Complete the signup process by creating your Kanopy account, or select Skip if you would prefer not to create an account
Your account can be created using your Google or Facebook login, or can be done directly on Kanopy using your email address and password. Your password will need to be at least 6 characters.

Creating an account on Kanopy will allow you to save videos to your Watchlist to view later, create clips and playlists, and view through our mobile and TV apps.

5. After creating your account, you’ll receive a verification email in your inbox. Click on the link in this email to verify your email address.

6. You’re ready to start watching! Browse or search for a film to begin.

**Unit Quizzes:** There will be seven (7) unit quizzes in this course, with the six (6) highest scores counting towards your grade for a total of 120 points (each worth 20 points). *Therefore, your lowest quiz score will be dropped.* Quizzes will be completed on Canvas. Each quiz will consist of 10 multiple choice and true/false questions. Each quiz will cover unit lecture material, videos, assigned material in the classroom text, and other assigned reading material. Once you start the quiz you will have only 15 minutes to take it. *Quiz due dates are listed in the course calendar below.*

**Class Participation:** Students are expected to participate in in-class activities using iClicker during each in-class meeting. They are designed to measure the understanding of course material and support the course learning objectives. The three lowest grades will be dropped from the calculation of this component of the final grade. Thus, the total amount of points you can earn for participation is 130.
There are no make-up opportunities for these exercises, as they require class attendance to be completed.

**iClicker Instructions:** All of these activities will be completed individually during in-class meetings. Students should bring a mobile device or a laptop in order to access the iClicker app or desktop site during class. Instructions on how to create an iClicker account and instructions for use are found at the following link: [https://macmillan.force.com/iclicker/s/article/How-to-Create-an-iClicker-Reef-Student-Account?r=129&ui-knowledge-components-aura-actions.KnowledgeArticleVersionCreateDraftFromOnlineAction.createDraftFromOnlineArticle=1#SignUp](https://macmillan.force.com/iclicker/s/article/How-to-Create-an-iClicker-Reef-Student-Account?r=129&ui-knowledge-components-aura-actions.KnowledgeArticleVersionCreateDraftFromOnlineAction.createDraftFromOnlineArticle=1#SignUp)

**Class Policies**

**Attendance Policy.** The course is specifically designed to make the most of the time we spend together as a class. As such, students are expected to attend every class. Since this is an active-learning course, it is much more difficult to keep up with the class when you do not attend. Participation points will be earned in every class. The professor will only make accommodations for missed assignments for students under exceptional circumstances. This includes illnesses lasting over one week, illness or death of family member, or major religious observances. These will be extremely rare events and will require proper documentation.

Students are expected to manage all other absences, such as minor illnesses, travel, car trouble, etc., as they would in a professional work environment. You are given a fixed number of excused absences for in-class assignments (three). You should use these like personal days in a work environment. When you must miss a class due to such circumstances, then you can miss these assignments for that day without any documentation or approval from the instructor. Note that these excused absences only apply to the in-class activities and not to the online quizzes. Keep in mind that this is a fixed number so you should use them judiciously. In order to be fair to all students, no other accommodations will be made except in the exceptional circumstances discussed above.

**Authorized Absences:** Absences are authorized only in cases of participation in school sponsored activities and/or religious holidays. For an excused absence due to a school sponsored activity, students must be 6 approved in advance by the department chair and academic dean. Within three days after the absence, students must obtain authorized absence cards from the Dean of Students for presentation to instructor. Students who wish to request an excused absence for religious holidays can do so and will be excused from class as long as they make a request within the required time frame set by the University (see the most recent undergraduate catalog). Notification must be in writing so that I may have it for my records. You must arrange to make up any work missed during the excused religious absence or school sponsored activity.

Students who have fallen behind, are failing and/or choose to not complete the coursework for the semester are responsible for officially withdrawing themselves from the course; failure to do so will result in a performance grade of “F.” Last day to withdraw with a grade of “W” is April 2nd, 2021.

**COVID-19 impact on attendance**
While attendance is expected as outlined above, it is important for all of us to be mindful of the health and safety of everyone in our community, especially given concerns about COVID-19. Please contact me if you are unable to attend class because you are ill, or unable to attend class due to COVID-19 including
symptoms, potential exposure, pending or positive test results, or if you have been given specific instructions to isolate or quarantine from a health care provider or a local authority. It is important that you communicate with me prior to being absent so I may make a decision about accommodating your request to be excused from class.

If you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu) or your health care provider PRIOR to coming to campus. UNT also requires you to contact the UNT COVID Hotline at 844-366-5892 or COVID@unt.edu for guidance on actions to take due to symptoms, pending or positive test results, or potential exposure. While attendance is an important part of succeeding in this class, your own health, and those of others in the community, is more important.

**Class Materials for Remote Instruction**
Remote instruction may be necessary if community health conditions change or you need to self-isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19. Students will need access to Zoom, a webcam and microphone to participate in fully remote portions of the class. Learn more about how to be successful in a remote learning environment.

**Class Recordings**
Synchronous (live) sessions in this course will be recorded for students enrolled in this class section to refer to throughout the semester. Class recordings are the intellectual property of the university or instructor and are reserved for use only by students in this class and only for educational purposes. Students may not post or otherwise share the recordings outside the class, or outside the Canvas Learning Management System, in any form. Failing to follow this restriction is a violation of the UNT Code of Student Conduct and could lead to disciplinary action.

**Face Coverings**
Face coverings are required in all UNT facilities. Students are expected to wear face coverings during this class. If you are unable to wear a face covering due to a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Access to request an accommodation. UNT face covering requirements are subject to change due to community health guidelines. Any changes will be communicated via the instructor.

**Make-Up Policy**
There are no make-up tests/assignments in this class with the exception of authorized absences according to University policies prescribing authorized absences in certain situations. I reserve the right to consider extreme circumstances and modify this rule. Those in athletics, those who are absent for religious holidays, and/or those involved in other school supported activities that require being absent from class will be allowed make up if proper procedures are followed in requesting an excused absence. I must have written documentation in advance that you will be away from class for the absence to be excused (e.g., traveling for a basketball game, observing a religious holiday). If you were critically ill in such a way that you could not complete any required assignment or exam, you must submit a doctor’s note to me within calendar 3 days.

**Class Content Warning:**
Please be aware that this course and the related course materials, (including audio/visual material), may include material and topics that could be offensive and/or disturbing to some students. This could include violence, offensive or foul language, difficult topics such as sexuality, quotations with offensive or foul language, case studies, and many other subjects inherent to the criminal justice world. We are all adults and will be required to act professionally and respectfully with these topics and language. Anyone who
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does not act accordingly will be asked to leave at the instructor’s discretion, be subject to student conduct policies, and will forfeit participation points. Due to the class content and expected discussion, no visitors, including children, are allowed in class.

**Student Behavior and University Policy**

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students’ opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student’s conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university’s expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [www.unt.edu/csrr](http://www.unt.edu/csrr).

**Additional Policies:**

- Recording devices are not allowed in the classroom unless specifically approved by the instructor.
- Tobacco products of any kind (including e-cigs) are not allowed in the classroom.
- Cell phones, pagers, or any other electronic devices that make noise should be turned off before class.
- Due to liability concerns and the content of course discussions, children are not permitted in the classroom at any time.
- Laptops and similar devices can be used during class as long as they are used for taking notes and/or other related classroom functions. If surfing the web, instant messaging, sending emails or otherwise, they will not be allowed in the classroom.

To be successful at learning and understanding the material in this class, it is essential that you read and complete the assigned material and engage in thoughtful discussions. Your active participation, along with your willingness to engage in thoughtful discussions will be considered at all times during the semester.

A classroom, especially during times of discussion, is a place to express ideas, opinions, and engage in thoughtful discussions. Students will respect the views and opinions of others at all times or their status in the course will be examined. In sum, simply be appropriate during all interactions. Each student brings unique insight and perspectives, and that can make for a very interesting and lively discussion forum, but please be appropriate and respectful of others.

**Academic Dishonesty/Integrity:**

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a “0” for that particular assignment or test. Additionally, the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students, who may impose further penalty. According to the UNT catalog, the term “cheating” includes, but is not limited to: a. use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; b. dependence upon the aid of sources
beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; c. the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a faculty or staff member of the university; d. dual submission of a paper or project, or resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructor(s); or e. any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage. The term "plagiarism" includes but is not limited to: a. the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment; and b. the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

Office of Disability Accommodation:
UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one’s specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu.

Student Evaluation of Instruction
Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13, 14 and 15 of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey, they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website at www.spot.unt.edu or email spot@unt.edu.

Syllabus Changes
I reserve the right and have the discretion to change this syllabus. While every effort will be made to follow this syllabus as closely as possible, it is sometimes the case that the syllabus must be modified. In the case that the syllabus needs to be adjusted, I will announce such adjustments to the class. I will make every effort to ensure that any changes to the syllabus benefit the class as a whole. It is the student’s responsibility to check announcements/email so that any and all syllabus changes are documented. Failure to obtain syllabus changes because of failure to check and read announcements does not constitute a defense against missed assignments, test dates, and other applicable changes.

Succeed at UNT:
UNT endeavors to offer you a high-quality education and to provide a supportive environment to help you learn and grown. And, as a faculty member, I am committed to helping you be successful as a student. Here’s how to succeed at UNT: Show up. Find Support. Get advised. Be prepared. Get involved. Stay focused. To learn more about campus resources and information on how you can achieve success, go success.unt.edu/.

Emergency Notification & Procedures:
UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify you with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). The system sends voice messages (and text messages upon permission) to the phones of all active faculty, staff, and students. Please make certain to update your phone numbers at my.unt.edu. Some helpful emergency preparedness actions include: 1) know the evacuation routes and severe weather shelter areas in the buildings where your classes are held, 2) determine how you will contact family and friends if phones are temporarily unavailable, and 3) identify where you will go if you need to evacuate the Denton area suddenly. In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Retention of Student Records:
Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. You have a right to view your individual record; however, information about your records will not be divulged to other individuals without the proper written consent. You are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the university's policy in accordance with those mandates at the following link: essc.unt.edu/registrar/ferpa.html

Sexual Assault Prevention:
UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct. Federal laws and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex as well as sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565-2648.

Miscellaneous:
The material posted online is my personal intellectual property or that of the University of North Texas. You may not utilize the material for other than class purposes. A variety of resources services are available to students in the Academic Support tab in Canvas.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR
Read the assigned reading for each day prior to coming to class; additional readings may be added and these will be announced in class and on Canvas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATES: WEEK</th>
<th>UNIT, READING ASSIGNMENTS, AND DUE DATES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/11-1/15: 1</td>
<td>Review Syllabus and Course Format</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Readings: None</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/18-1/22: 2</td>
<td>UNIT 1: Origins of Criminology</td>
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<td>Readings:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• CrimComics Issue 1: Origins of Criminology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date Range</td>
<td>Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/25-1/29: 3</td>
<td>UNIT 1: Origins of Criminology</td>
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<td>2/1-2/5: 4</td>
<td>UNIT 2: Classical and Neoclassical Criminology</td>
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<td>2/8-2/12: 5</td>
<td>UNIT 2: Classical and Neoclassical Criminology</td>
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<td>2/22-2/26: 7</td>
<td>UNIT 3: Neighborhoods and Crime</td>
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<td>3/1-3/5: 8</td>
<td>UNIT 4: Anomie and Strain Theories</td>
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<td>3/8-3/12: 9</td>
<td>UNIT 4: Anomie and Strain Theories</td>
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<td>3/22-3/26: 11</td>
<td>UNIT 5: Learning Theories</td>
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<td>3/29-4/2: 12</td>
<td>UNIT 6: Control Theories</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Course Content</td>
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<td>4/5-4/9: 13</td>
<td>UNIT 6: Control Theories</td>
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<td>4/12-4/16:14</td>
<td>UNIT 7: Labeling Theory &amp; Developmental Theories</td>
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<td>4/19-4/23:15</td>
<td>UNIT 7 Labeling Theory &amp; Developmental Theories</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/26-4/30:16</td>
<td>Course Wrap-Up</td>
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Grading Rubric: Film and Theory Reflection Papers

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Inadequate 0 Points</th>
<th>Beginning 4 Points</th>
<th>Progressing 8 Points</th>
<th>Developing 12 Points</th>
<th>Proficient 16 Points</th>
<th>Mastery 20 Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Film and Criminological Theory Summaries</td>
<td>Not attempted</td>
<td>Summary is incomplete and only includes a summary of the film or the criminological theory; not both.</td>
<td>Incomplete summary of the film and criminological theory.</td>
<td>Somewhat clear summary of the film and criminological theory.</td>
<td>Mostly clear summary of the film and criminological theory.</td>
<td>Clear and complete summary of the film and criminological theory.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0 Points</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 Points</td>
<td>10 Points</td>
<td>15 Points</td>
<td>20 Points</td>
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<td>Connection between the Film and Criminological Theory</td>
<td>Not attempted</td>
<td>Incorrect overview of connections between the film and the criminological theory. Does not include 1-3 specific examples from the film that are related to the assigned theory.</td>
<td>Incomplete overview of connections between the film and the criminological theory. Includes 1-3 somewhat clear and specific examples from the film that are related to the assigned theory.</td>
<td>Somewhat clear and complete overview of connections between the film and the criminological theory. Includes 1-3 somewhat clear and specific examples from the film that are related to the assigned theory.</td>
<td>Mostly clear and complete overview of connections between the film and the criminological theory. Includes 1-3 mostly clear and specific examples from the film that are related to the assigned theory.</td>
<td>Clear and complete overview of connections between the film and the criminological theory. Includes 1-3 clear and specific examples from the film that are related to the assigned theory.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>0 Points</td>
<td>1 Point</td>
<td>2 Points</td>
<td>3 Points</td>
<td>4 Points</td>
<td>5 Points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing, Spelling, Grammar, and Word Count</td>
<td>Not attempted</td>
<td>Spelling and grammatical errors throughout that make comprehension difficult. Paper is not between 600-800 words.</td>
<td>Significant errors in spelling or grammar that hinder the reader’s understanding. Paper is not between 600-800 words.</td>
<td>Significant errors in spelling or grammar that are somewhat distracting to the reader. Paper is between 600-800 words.</td>
<td>Minor spelling or grammar errors that are not distracting to the reader. Paper is between 600-800 words.</td>
<td>Writing is clear and virtually free of spelling and grammar errors. Paper is between 600-800 words.</td>
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Reflection Paper on the Film Parasite and its Connection to Conflict Criminology (SPOILERS AHEAD!)

Conflict theories of crime and delinquency posit that crime is the result of conflict between persons in different social classes. Conflict criminology assumes that members of society are stratified into two social classes based upon social and economic differences: those in the upper-class and those in the lower-class. People in the upper class have social and economic power, exhibit control over societal resources, and influence how society is run. Importantly, the upper class define what is and is not criminal and oversee the implementation of laws to control those in the lower class as a means to maintain their social and economic status (Morin, 2014). The inequality and unequal distribution of resources leads to conflict between the two groups. Persons in the lower class are more likely to become involved in the criminal justice system relative to those in the upper-class “regardless of their behavior” (Bernard et al., 2010, p. 247). Further, those in the lower-class may to be more likely to engage in crime as a means to obtain material and financial wealth to reduce their level of inequality with the upper class. Conflict theories broadly posit that countries with a greater difference between the upper and lower class are characterized by higher crime rates.

Conflict criminology can be applied to the film Parasite. Parasite follows four members of the lower-class Kim family. The Kim family struggle financially and have difficulty obtaining and maintaining work. An opportunity for work as a tutor for an upper-class Park family is presented to son Ki-Woo. Slowly, the other three members of the Kim family to obtain jobs with the upper-class Park family. Ki-Jung becomes an art tutor for the Park’s son while the father and mother, Ki-Taek and Chung-Sook, obtain work as the family chauffeur and the housekeeper, respectively, by working with their children to have the previous chauffer and housekeeper fired. The Kim’s do not indicate to the Park’s that they are related, use pseudonym’s instead of their real names, and work together to deceive the Park family. Eventually, the judgement and biases of the upper-class Park family towards the social and economic status of the Kim family lead to conflict and result in the unravelling of the charade that the Kim family has put on.

In Parasite, the Kim and Park families are representative the social classes defined in conflict criminology: the Kim family represent the lower class while the Park family represent the upper or ruling class. The social inequality and financial struggle of the Kim family could have encouraged them to engage in illegal behavior as a means to increase their social status. For example, Ki-Woo has his sister, Ki-Jung, forge a university diploma to obtain the tutoring job with the Park’s, which made way for the other family members to infiltrate the family. Additionally, when the Kim family is threatened to have their ruse exposed by the former housekeeper and her husband (who resides hidden in the Park’s basement), the Kim family resort to murder to keep the secret hidden. Engaging in crime provided the Kim’s with the opportunity to increase their financial security and reduce their inequality.

However, the film also presents a tale of the difficulty that the lower class has in trying to increase their social status. Though the Kim’s secure good paying work for the Park family, they are never viewed as equal to the Park’s. The Parks look down upon the members of the Kim family. For instance, both the parents in the Park family comment and hint throughout the movie that the Kim family members “smell poor.” This leads to conflict and frustration from members of the Kim family,
especially Ki-Taek, who eventually lashes out at the father of the Park family, Dong-Ik, for his judgement. Further, the knowledge stone presented to the Kim’s by Ki-Woo’s friend at the beginning of the movie can be viewed as a metaphor for the difficulty that the lower-class face in moving to a better social or economic status. The scholar stone is supposed to act as a “good-luck-charm” for the family to make them wealthy and successful. But in the film’s climax, the scholar stone is used by the former housemaid’s husband to bash Ki-Woo’s head with the stone, leaving him brain damaged. The scholar stone, like the Park’s, can represent the upper class, which does what it can to benefit themselves by keeping the lower class down.

Word Count: 735

References
