

NOVA COLLEGE-WIDE COURSE CONTENT SUMMARY SOC 236 – CRIMINOLOGY (3 CR.)

Course Description

Studies research and causal theories of criminal behavior. Examines crime statistics, crime victims, and types of criminal offenses. Introduces the role of the police, the judicial system, and the correctional system in treatment and punishment of offenders. Lecture 3 hours per week.

General Course Purpose

The course will provide an introduction to the field of criminology- the study of crime and criminal behavior. Students will study theoretical explanations of crime including biological, sociological, and psychological theories of why individuals and groups engage in criminal behavior. Students will be expected to apply these explanations to a variety of scenarios and will study the extent of crime in our society, the major types of crimes, how crime is measured, and how crime data is collected. The course encourages critical thinking and challenging commonly held beliefs about criminal behavior.

Course Prerequisites/Corequisites

Ability to read in English at the college level.

Course Objectives

Upon completing the course, the student will be able to:

- a) Discuss the historical origins of crime and it's changing interpretations over time.
- b) Identify specific patterns of criminal behavior that are present in today's society.
- c) Explain the underlying causes of criminal behavior including the biological, social structures, and socialization.
- d) Contrast the motivations for different types of crimes.
- e) Distinguish gender, racial, and ethnic differences in crime participation and data.
- f) Identify myths in the media and their impact on the criminal justice system.
- g) Apply theoretical explanations to current issues.
- h) Distinguish between the various research methods used to study crime and criminology.
- i) Identify and define the various types of crimes and their associated patterns.

Major Topics to be Included

- a) Nature and extent of crime
- b) Victims and Victimization
- c) Rational Choice theory
- d) Trait theory
- e) Social Structure theory
- f) Social Process theory
- g) Social Conflict and Critical Criminology
- h) Development theory
- i) Violent Crimes
- j) Property Crimes
- k) Enterprise Crimes
- l) Public Order Crimes
- m) Criminal Justice System

Extra Topics (Optional)

- Gang activity
- Transnational crimes (guns, narcotics, and human trafficking)
- Hate crimes and hate crimes hoaxes