The Course:

This course is an introduction to some of the major variables that research suggests account for the etiology, nature, demographics and societal responses to crimes committed by girls/women versus boys/men currently and historically. We will also look at criminal behavior itself as gendered behavior, that is, one of the many ways that people “do” masculinity and femininity and ways that are shaped by other, intersecting dimensions of social status such as race/ethnicity, social class, and age. Because girls/women commit relatively few crimes compared to men as well as a different constellation of crimes, and because crime itself, our legal system, and the whole criminal justice apparatus is socially constructed as “male,” the course will also considered the gendered nature of criminal justice and how theory, research and practice in this area are affected by gendered, heteronormative assumptions and societal beliefs about gender differences and gender-appropriate behavior. Such considerations quickly lead to a focus on the role of the criminal justice system in both creating, naturalizing, and controlling a gender system that polices the lived performance of gender identities as well as the expression of myriad forms of desire. Thus another focus of the course must necessarily explore not only the crimes of the cis-gendered, but the crimes of the gender queer and the ways the lives of members of the LGBT community are affected by the threats of both criminalization and victimization.

In addition, especially because over the last half-century as the result of The War of Drugs, crime and criminal justice have increasingly become a racialized domain, race/ethnicity will be a central dimension of analysis in the course. The deep literature on hegemonic masculinity will ground the analysis in the course of the criminality of all men, but particularly the criminality of poor men and men of color. Materials used in the class will highlight the important roles of concentrated poverty, the history of welfare and drug policy, changes in the financing of large cities, deindustrialization, globalization, and structural racism, especially in access to quality education and criminal defense, in shaping the nature and distribution of crime in the U.S., and in focusing national attention on the crimes of poor people of color rather than on the crimes of the affluent.
**Course Objectives:**

1) to introduce students to a corpus of work that examines how gender, race, social class, and age are related to criminal behavior, how these social statuses affect the probability that individuals are victims of crime or come to the attention of agents of social control, and, with what effect; 2) to give students experience in the analysis, critique and discussion of academic writing and to develop their expertise in each area; 3) to provide students with the opportunity to write both informal, clarifying precis of academic arguments and to pursue a sustained argument in a longer paper using generally acceptable forms of logic, argumentation, proof, and style; 3) to give students experience and foster student confidence in organizing and delivering critiques and analyses verbally and responding to such critiques; 4) to provide students who are inclined toward political activism with knowledge of an area fraught with inequity that could benefit from citizen attention and involvement; and 5) to give students who think that some specific aspect of this area of study might provide a forum for an honors’ thesis with the opportunity to begin to define a problem, investigate a relevant literature, and develop a research strategy in this regard.

**Required Books for Course:**


**Schedule of Topics and Readings:**

**Jan 20:** Introduction to the Course, the Instructor, and Each Other

**Jan 22:** U.S. Crime Data: What Makes a Behavior a Crime?

“Two Major Sources of Crime Data:” [http://www.ucrdatatool.gov/twomeasures.cfm](http://www.ucrdatatool.gov/twomeasures.cfm);


**Jan 25:** Crime/Incarceration Trends: Men


Jan 27: Crime/Incarceration Rates: Women


Jan 29: No Class

Use the time between the Jan. 27th class and the Feb 3rd class to begin the work of choosing a paper topic

Feb 1: Racialized Mass Incarceration, the War on Drugs, and the Privatization of Prisons

Screening of “The House I Live In”

Feb 3: Structural and Cultural Explanations of Disadvantage and Crime


Feb 5: Explanations of Disadvantage and Crime: Jobs and Social Networks


Feb 8 and 10: Two Lecture Classes on the History and Current State of Criminological Theory

No Reading Assignments; Begin to Research Term Paper Topic
Feb 12: Gender, Race/Ethnicity and Age as Individual versus Constructed Attributes/Structured Action Theory: Masculinities


Feb 15: Hypermasculinity and Violent Crime

Screening of “Tough Guise II”

Feb 17: A Case Study of Subordinate, Racialized Masculinity and Crime: I-History


**Paper Topic Memo Due (Schedule an Appointment to Discuss)**

Feb 19: A Case Study of Subordinate, Racialized Masculinity and Crime: II-Work


Feb 22: A Case Study of Subordinate, Racialized Masculinity and Crime: III-Reinforcing the Gender Binary and Reproducing Class Status in the Next Generation


Feb 24: Producing Criminals through the Criminalization of Racialized Masculinity in Boys of Color: I


Feb 29: Producing Criminals through the Criminalization of Racialized Masculinity: II

Part II.

Mar 2: The Gender, Race and Class Nexus of Girlhood, Family and Juvenile Justice
Screening of “Girlhood”

Mar 4: Producing Women Criminals through Victimization in Childhood: I


**Mar 6-13: Spring Break**

Mar 14: Producing Women Criminals through Racialized, Classed, and Gendered Forms of Code Switching: The Social World as Context


Mar 16: Producing Women Criminals through Racialized, Classed, and Gendered Forms of Code Switching: Reaction to Vulnerability


Mar 18: Producing Women Criminals through Domestic Violence
Screening of “Defending Our Lives”


Mar 21: Illegal/Ilicit Work as Crime


Mar 23: Gendered Strategies for the Rehabilitation of Women I: The End of Rehabilitation

Mar 25: Gendered Strategies for the Rehabilitation of Women II: The Practice of Habilitation

Mar 28: Gendered Strategies for the Rehabilitation of Women III: Contesting the Boundaries of the Self

Mar 30: The Color of Criminal Justice I

Apr 1: The Color of Criminal Justice II
Screening of “Gideon’s Army”

Apr 4: The Race, Class and Gender Effects of the Threat and Stigma of Incarceration


Apr 6: Violence against Gender “Outlaws”


Apr 8: The Gendered Nature of Imprisonment


Apr 11: The Effect of Incarceration on the Children of the Incarcerated


Apr 13: Social Movements to Address Racialized Mass Incarceration


Apr 15: Reforming the Criminal Justice System

The Remaining Classes Will Be Dedicated to the Presentation of the Preliminary Findings of Term Paper Research

Course Requirements

There are no quizzes or examinations in this course. The course is designed as a communication-intensive seminar with the following requirements:

1) Each student is expected to write a brief journal memo (no longer than one page, even if there is more than one reading) responding analytically, critically, and emotionally to the reading/s for each class. **Students must upload a copy of their respective comments to the appropriate Blackboard site by 9:00 p.m. the day before the seminar.** In general, each response should include a) a brief summary of the main theme(s) of each reading and a statement about how the author supports claims made; b) an analysis of some aspects of the reading that the student found compelling or that warrants further discussion and a personal/ emotional response. These comments may reach back to consider themes or questions raised by prior readings. Comments will be graded as a set at the end of the course. **Students may be exempted from providing journal comments during the semester on three occasions without penalty. Late submissions will not be accepted. Each missing memo, starting with the fourth will result in a reduction of grade for this part of the course by 1/3. This requirement in worth 20 percent of the final grade.**

2) Each student is expected to submit a 15 page paper on a topic related to the course. (The paper should be typed and use standard margins and fonts only and should not be enclosed in any sort of cover.) This product may be research-based or critically or analytically reflective of an issue raised in the course. Where appropriate, students should consider this requirement an opportunity to develop a research proposal that draws on theoretical perspectives and/or existing empirical work to identify an interesting and until now unsolved theoretical or empirical question that might be the basis of an honor’s thesis. **Final papers are due in hardcopy in my box in the Department of Sociology (Benedict House, 31 S. Prospect) on Wednesday, May 11 before 4:30, when the building is locked. Late papers will receive a 1/3 grade reduction for each day late. The term paper is worth 40 percent of the final grade.**

**Students must get approval for their projects by submitting one-page memo to me at the beginning of the February 15th class.** This memo should contain a complete, if brief, first pass at a bibliography that must go beyond internet sources. These memos will be the basis of face-to-face conversations with me to brain-storm a project, but will not be graded

3) Students will present their research in progress during one of the last several weeks of classes. These presentations are designed to provide an opportunity for students to share work and get feedback from me and the other seminar participants. **Presentations will count for 20% of the final grade.**
4) The success of a seminar is very much dependent on the informed participation of all members. It is expected that all students will participate in each meeting of the class. **Quantity and quality of contributions will count for 20% the course grade. Students may miss three classes without penalty. For each absence beyond three, the final grade in the course will drop by 1/3. For example, a student earning a final grade of B who misses five classes will earn a grade of C+. It is expected that students will reserve their absences for situations that are unavoidable such as illness, and adjust their personal plans, vacations, etc., accordingly, or graciously accept the grade reductions they have earned as a result of absences that are not bona fide emergencies documented by their Dean’s Office.**

**Students Covered by the American with Disabilities Act**

Every effort will be made to make reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students who have been approved for specific accommodations by ACCESS should insure that evidence of this approval is provided to the instructor and discuss their needs with the instructor on the first day of class or as soon thereafter as possible. Because the instructor’s office in accessed by a narrow, steep and winding staircase, students for whom these stairs will be a challenge should arrange with the instructor to access her office for meetings via the locked, side entrance to the building, or the instructor will be happy to arrange meetings in another, more accessible place.

**Cheating**

Plagiarism or cheating of any kind will not be looked upon kindly by this instructor. With regard to issues of intellectual dishonesty, students should consult the UVM Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities.