

Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology

CRIJ 7371 – 01

Biosocial Criminology

Fall 2017

Professor:	Eric J. Connolly, Ph.D.
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Class Hours:	Thursdays 1:00 pm – 3:50 pm
Classroom:	A205 George J. Beto Criminal Justice Center
Office Hours:	Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. or by appointment

Textbooks

Beaver, Kevin M. (2016). *Biosocial Criminology* (3rd edition). Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt.

Raine, Adrian. (2013). *The Anatomy of Violence: The Biological Roots of Crime*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

Course Description

Over the past 15 years, a growing body of research has shown that criminal and delinquent behaviors – previously thought to be the sole product of environmental influences – are explained by both biological and social (biosocial) influences. Studies, within and outside the field of criminology, continue to show that genetic, physiological, psychological, neurological, and environmental factors work together to explain why some individuals are more or less likely to develop antisocial behavior. Based on this body of evidence, criminology is currently going through a transitioning period where scholars and practitioners are trying to make sense of what this line of evidence means for the future of criminology and criminal justice at large. This course is designed to offer an introduction to the new and emerging perspective of biosocial criminology. The course will present current findings on the biosocial foundation to a wide range of criminal and delinquent behaviors and theoretical perspectives on developmental patterns of offending across the life course.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Understand the underlying logic and current empirical support for the biosocial perspective;
2. Apply a theoretical and methodological biosocial approach to answer contemporary criminological questions;

3. Understand the biosocial perspective and how it benefits criminological theory and research and;
4. Comprehend how the human brain, genes, and environmental influences interact with one another to explain individual differences in antisocial behavior.

Course Requirements

Exams (80% of final grade): There will be two exams. Each exam will be worth a total of 40 points and will consist of 40 multiple-choice, true/false, fill in the blank, and short answer questions. If you miss an exam you are required to notify me within 24 hours before or after the exam is administered and provide me with an acceptable reason for missing the exam. Depending on the reason I may request written documentation for the excuse. If you do not follow this procedure you will receive a zero on the exam. Information regarding the material on each exam will be discussed as the exam date approaches. If you would like to review your midterm or final exam, you are welcome to stop by my office during office hours to review both exams. If you have any other questions about an exam, please feel free to email me. The midterm exam will be administered at the beginning of class on Thursday, October 5th and the final exam will be administered in the same classroom we have met in all semester on Thursday, December 7th at 2:30 p.m.

Paper Assignment (20% of final grade): There will be a paper assignment assigned during the semester where you will be required to choose a hypothesis and conduct your own biosocial test of the hypothesis. The summary assignment should be at least 12 pages in length (double-spaced) and summarize previous research on the hypothesis, the reason for a genetically informative test of the hypothesis, the results, and the implications of the results for future research. Additional information about the expectations and formatting requirements for the paper assignment will be discussed in class. Students need to inform me of their hypothesis and have it approved by the end of class on Thursday, October 19th. The summary assignment is due at the beginning of class on Thursday, November 9th. Please feel free to contact me or stop by my office during office hours if you have any questions regarding the format of the assignment or your hypothesis.

Grading:

Final grades will be based on the following:

Final Exam	40 points (40%)
Midterm Exam	40 points (40%)
Summary Assignment	<u>20 points (20%)</u>
	100 points (100%)

Grading Scale

A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	59% and below

Make-Up Exam

If you miss the midterm exam, you will need to contact me within 24 hours after the exam is administered and provide a sufficient reason for missing the exam. If there is sufficient reason, I will schedule a time, which is convenient for the student, to make-up the exam.

Course Expectations

1. You are expected to read all required material before the assigned date.
2. You are expected to attend each class.
3. You are encouraged to be respectful to your fellow classmates and myself.
4. Emails should include a salutation such as “Dear Dr. Connolly” or “Hi Professor Connolly” and a signature so I know whom I’m responding to. Emails without a salutation *and* signature will not be answered.
5. This syllabus is not a contract and may be slightly modified during the semester. You are responsible for staying up-to-date on any and all changes.
6. Any type of cheating or plagiarism will not be tolerated.

Student Academic Policies

All students are expected to adhere by Sam Houston State University academic policies. Academic policies for attendance, academic honesty, disabled student and services for disabled students, and absences on religious holy days can be found at:
<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/aps/aps-students.html>.

Use of Telephones and Text Messages in Academic Classrooms and Facilities

Students are not allowed to text or use their cell phones during class time. If an emergency arises, the student may answer and use their cell phone outside of the classroom environment. To see more information regarding university policies for cell phone use, please visit:
<http://www.shsu.edu/dept/academic-affairs/aps/aps-curriculum.html>.

Course Schedule and Assigned Readings

Biosocial Criminology Course Schedule		
Date	Topics	Readings
Week #1 (8/20 – 8/26)		
Thursday	What Does the Biosocial Perspective Offer Criminology?	Beaver (2013): Chapter 1
Week #2 (8/27 – 9/02)		
Thursday	The Genetic and Environmental Origins of Human Behavior	Beaver (2013): Chapter 2
Week #3 (9/03 – 9/09)		
Thursday	Gene-Environment Correlation	Beaver (2013): Chapter 3
Week #4 (9/10 – 9/16)		
Thursday	Gene x Environment Interaction	Beaver (2013): Chapter 3
Week #5 (9/17 – 9/23)		
Thursday	The Human Brain	Beaver (2013): Chapter 4
Week #6 (9/24 – 9/30)		
Thursday	Neurocriminology	Raine (2013)
Week #7 (10/01 – 10/07)		
Thursday	Midterm Exam	No readings
Week #8 (10/08 – 10/14)		
Thursday	Environmental Influences on Antisocial Behavior	Beaver (2013): Chapter 5
Week #9 (10/15 – 10/21)		
Thursday	Biosocial Research Methodologies	Beaver (2013): Chapter 7
Week #10 (10/22 – 10/28)		
Thursday	Implications of Biosocial Criminology for Theory and Research	Assigned readings
Week #11 (10/29 – 11/04)		
Thursday	Common Biosocial Research Methodologies	Beaver (2013): Chapter 7
Week #12 (11/05 – 11/11)		
Thursday	Implications of Biosocial Criminology for Prevention Policy Paper Assignment Due	Assigned readings
Week #13 (11/12 – 11/18)		

Thursday	No Class	No readings
Week #14 (11/19 – 11/25)		
Thursday	No Class	No readings
Week #15 (11/26 – 12/02)		
Thursday	Implications of Biosocial Criminology for Intervention Policy	Assigned readings