

## **ENVIRONMENTAL CRIMINOLOGY**

Criminal Justice 7350-F-251

Course 40084

Spring, 2019

<b>Instructor:</b>	Professor Marcus Felson
<b>Class Location:</b>	Hines 203
<b>Time:</b>	6:30 – 9:20 Mondays
<b>Hours:</b>	Arrange meetings by email or just after class
<b>Email:</b>	mf38 @ txstate . edu
<b>Office:</b>	110 Hill House
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<b>Appointments:</b>	Easy to reach me via email or ask after class. Much of my initial communication is by email.

### **GOAL OF THIS COURSE**

Environmental criminology is the study of how crime fits within a larger tangible environment. It opens the door for reducing crime by making specific and tangible changes to that environment, often on a local level. This course teaches you how to think about crime events and how they unfold. As you proceed in the course you will learn ways to reduce the likelihood that they will occur by limiting crime opportunities. This course is less about offenders than about crimes, but you will also learn how offenders think and act as they carry out illegal acts, and how you use that information for crime reduction. This course focuses on ordinary crimes, not the dramatic ones that get the most attention. However, preventing ordinary crimes often makes it less likely that dramatic crimes will occur.

### **BACKGROUND**

The field of criminal justice can be divided into roughly three parts.

1. What happens *well before the crime* (criminality, social structural);
2. What happens *near the time of the crime*; and
3. What continues to happen *afterwards* – police actions and the justice system.

Most of the criminal justice curriculum emphasizes the first and last of these three. In contrast, the current course focuses on the middle part – the crime event and the period *just before, during, or immediately after* that event. Crime analysis considers criminal acts, how they happen, where they happen, when they happen, how they unfold, how one crime leads into another crime in nearby times and places.

Crime data are important for understanding crime and its control. This course helps you learn how to evaluate and synthesize local crime data and present it to others. I expose you to crime data, crime maps, and practical local police responses. This is not, however, a technical or methodological course as such. We do not learn here how to do the computer mapping or other computer work, or the statistics. We do however focus on how to THINK about crime data, how to organize it in your mind and hopefully put what you know on a piece of paper or a screen. We learn how very good crime analysts describe and assess very specific crime patterns. But we also learn how to generalize from these patterns.

Generalization can be skilled or naïve. Glittering generalizations include stereotypes of groups or neighborhoods, bad guys and good guys. These generalizations sometimes have some truth but also a lot of falsehood. Crime analysis looks at risky situations, not at good guys and bad guys.

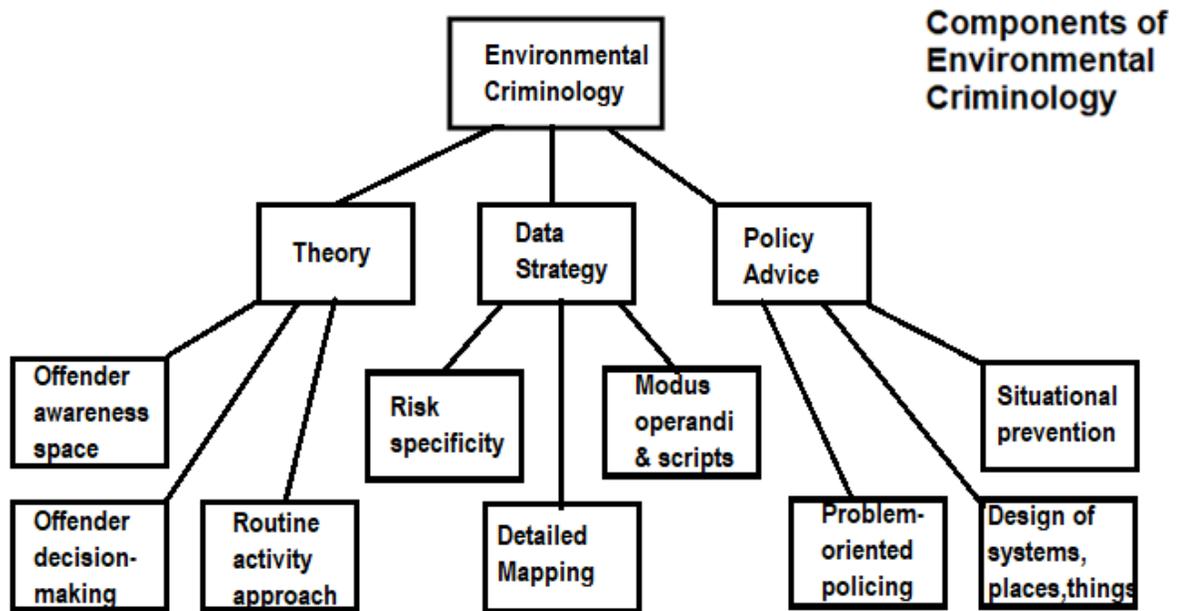
This course is based in routine activity theory, situational crime prevention, and problem-oriented policing. Collectively these are known as environmental criminology. These approaches are also akin to crime geography, since they look at distributions of activities and crimes over space and time. They offer a way to think about crime as a tangible event. That requires examining crime in spatial terms, while learning crime's tempos, rhythms, and timing. *Indeed, crime changes greatly in the course of a single day!* Knowing these crime patterns and their relationship to conventional activities helps with crime control.

Environmental criminology is charted below. First, it is a theory that considers how offenders move through and respond to their awareness space, within which they commit criminal acts. The theory also reflects the routine activity approach to crime rates and crime analysis, helping us understand each criminal act as well as a population of criminal acts. The theory also tells us a lot about how offenders make decisions to commit a crime or not, what targets to choose, and how to proceed with crime.

Second, environmental criminology is a data strategy. It tells us how to specify risks that a crime target will be attacked or that a person will have access to it for illegal purposes. It examines closely the modus operandi for carrying out offenses, including the scripts that offenders often follow in so doing. The data strategy often includes detailed mapping of crime data.

Third, environmental criminology is a source of very practical policy advice that can usually be implemented at low monetary cost. Its implementation includes the 25

techniques of situational crime prevention, the many ideas for problem-oriented policing, and the design of systems, places, and consumer problems.



## USING THIS INFORMATION IN AN ACADEMIC CAREER

An ever-growing literature and list of journals includes environmental criminology research. A growing number of researchers are quite successful in their careers, using this approach. Many of their publications are widely cited and they tend to be promoted to Associate Professor and beyond. Journals in environmental sciences and geography also include publications on environmental criminology, widening the publication opportunities, and many researchers have received funding, sometimes generously.

The success of environmental criminology reflects the fact that statistical coefficients are often higher and prediction more successful than in other branches of criminology. Measurement gets sharper and sharper because the independent and dependent variables are more focused. Thus, an environmental criminologist is likely to focus separately on nighttime commercial burglary and daytime residential burglary, and to use predictor variables that more closely relate to the dependent variable. An environmental criminologist is likely to study night-time non-domestic assaults within an entertainment district. This increase in scientific and intellectual precision leads to better results than research that confuses all assaults in all times and places – in effect, mixing apples and oranges. Moreover, environmental criminology avoids using vague theoretical terms that spawn inconsistent measurement efforts. Its measures usually have face validity, leading to sharper hypotheses that are rejected or accepted more quickly.

The empirical success of environmental criminology also reflects its focus on epidemiological concepts, such as “victimization per million person hours exposed to risk.” By shifting away from individuals or social groups and towards situational exposures, this approach gives a greater chance of finding something strong at the outset that’s likely to stand the test of time.

Wk	Date	Topic	Assignment
1	Jan 28	Introduction to course	No reading. We will discuss <b><i>finding a useful dependent variable</i></b> . Each student will try to find a provisional dependent variable to work on and ways to reduce that <b><i>very specific crime type</i></b> .
2	Feb 4	A-Brantinghams list	Write a ten-page paper using the Brantingham readings to understand the risks and potential reduction of the very specific crime type you picked.
3	Feb 11	B-Clarke list	Write a ten-page paper applying the Clarke readings to understand the specific crime type you picked and how it can be reduced.
4	Feb 18	C-Routine activity list	Write a ten-page paper applying the routine activity readings to understand the specific crime type you picked and how it can be reduced.
5	Feb 25	Harries, K. A. (1999). Mapping crime: Principle and practice. NCJ 178919. <b>Download.</b>	Draw ideas from the Harries reading to imagine useful maps of the specific crime type you picked. Draw some of these maps with dummy data. Offer a practical discussion of your imagined maps.
6	Mar 4	<i>Start with:</i> Eck, J. (2005). Mapping crime: Understanding hotspots. <b>Download</b>	After you read, write up the hotspot literature relevant to your key dependent variable.
7	Mar 11	<i>Start with:</i> Eck & Weisburd, Crime Places in Crime Theory, Crime and Place, 1995 (2015), 4 (pp. 1-33) <b>Download</b>	Paper: How does crime concentration help you understand your key dependent variable and its reduction?

Monday, March 18 NO CLASS – **SPRING BREAK**

8	Mar 25	D - Malicious land use list	What land uses are most dangerous for the crime you have decided to study?
9	Apr 1	E – Temporal variation list	Which hours of day and days of week are most dangerous for the crime you have decided to study?
10	Apr 8	F. Alternative denominators list	What alternative denominators should you consider for the crime that interests you?
11	Apr 15	G - Qualitative list	From the qualitative studies you read, what ideas do you have about modus operandi for your crime of interest?
12	Apr 22	Problem-oriented policing	Pick four pamphlets from POPCENTER-ORG that help understand your crime of interest. No written paper. Report informally in class
13	Apr 29	H-Geographic profiling list	No written paper. Report informally in class
14	May 6	Last Day of Class	No written paper

**A - Brantinghams list**

1. Brantingham, P. L., & Brantingham, P. J. (1993). Nodes, paths and edges: Considerations on the complexity of crime and the physical environment. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 13(1), 3-28.
2. Brantingham, P. L., & Brantingham, P. J. (1981). Mobility, notoriety, and crime: A study in the crime patterns of urban nodal points. *Journal of Environmental Systems*, 11(1).
3. Beavon, Daniel JK, Patricia L. Brantingham, and Paul J. Brantingham. The influence of street networks on the patterning of property offenses. *Crime prevention studies* 2 (1994): 115-148.
4. Fleming, Z., Brantingham, P., & Brantingham, P. (1994). Exploring auto theft in British Columbia. *Crime prevention studies*, 3, 47-90.

## **B - Clarke list**

1. Clarke, R. V., & Mayhew, P. (1989). Crime As Opportunity A Note On Domestic Gas Suicide In Britain And The Netherlands. *The British Journal of Criminology*, 29(1), 35-46.
2. Clarke, R. V. G. (Ed.). (1997). *Situational crime prevention* (pp. 53-70). Monsey, NY: Criminal Justice Press.
3. Clarke, R. V., & Cornish, D. B. (1985). Modeling offenders' decisions: A framework for research and policy. *Crime and justice*, 6, 147-185.
4. Felson, M., & Clarke, R. V. (1998). Opportunity makes the thief. *Police research series*, paper, 98.
5. Clarke, R. V., & Bowers, K. (2017). Seven misconceptions of situational crime prevention. *Handbook of crime prevention and community safety*, 109-142.

## **C - Routine activity list**

1. Cohen, L. E., & Felson, M. (1979). Social change and crime rate trends: A routine activity approach. *American sociological review*, 588-608.
2. Felson, M. (1986). Linking Criminal Choices, Routine Activities, Informal Control, and. *The reasoning criminal: Rational choice perspectives on offending*, 119.
3. Felson, M. (1995). Those who discourage crime. *Crime and place*, 4, 53-66.
4. Madensen, T. D., & Eck, J. E. *Crime Places and Place Management*. In *The Oxford Handbook of Criminological Theory*.
5. Felson, M. (2006). *The ecosystem for organized crime*. Helsinki: European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations.
6. Felson, M. (2009). The natural history of extended co-offending. *Trends in Organized Crime*, 12(2), 159-165.

## **D. Malicious land use list**

1. Roncek, D. W., & Bell, R. (1981). Bars, blocks, and crimes. *Journal of Environmental Systems*, 11(1), 35-47.

2. Roncek, D. W. (1981). Dangerous places: Crime and residential environment. *Social Forces*, 60(1), 74-96.
3. Roncek, D. W., Bell, R., & Francik, J. M. (1981). Housing projects and crime: Testing a proximity hypothesis. *Social Problems*, 29(2), 151-166.
4. Roncek, D. W., & LoBosco, A. (1983). The effect of high schools on crime in their neighborhoods. *Social Science Quarterly*, 64(3), 598.
5. Kinney et al. (2008). Crime attractors, generators and detractors: Land use and urban crime opportunities. *Built environment*, 34(1), 62-74.

### **E. Temporal variation list**

1. Felson, M., & Poulsen, E. (2003). Simple indicators of crime by time of day. *International Journal of Forecasting*, 19(4), 595-601.
2. Linning, S. J. (2017). Crime seasonality: Examining the temporal fluctuations of property crime in cities with varying climates. *International journal of offender therapy and comparative criminology*, 61(16), 1866-1891.
3. Andresen, M. A., & Malleson, N. (2013). Crime seasonality and its variations across space. *Applied Geography*, 43, 25-35.
4. Linning, S. J. (2015). Crime seasonality and the micro-spatial patterns of property crime in Vancouver, BC and Ottawa, ON. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 43(6), 544-555.
5. Andresen, M. A., & Malleson, N. (2015). Intra-week spatial-temporal patterns of crime. *Crime science*, 4(1), 12.

### **F. Alternative denominators list**

1. Boggs, S. L. (1965). Urban crime patterns. *American Sociological Review*, 899-908.
2. Lemieux, A. M., & Felson, M. (2012). Risk of violent crime victimization during major daily activities. *Violence and victims*, 27(5), 635-655.
3. Felson, M., & Boivin, R. (2015). Daily crime flows within a city. *Crime Science*, 4(1), 31.

4. Clarke, R. V., & Mayhew, P. (1994). Parking patterns and car theft risks: Policy-relevant findings from the British Crime Survey. *Crime prevention studies*, 3, 91-107.

### **G. Qualitative list**

1. Cromwell, P. F., Olson, J. N., & Avary, D. (1991). How residential burglars choose targets: An ethnographic analysis. *Security Journal*, 2(4), 195-199.
2. Jacobs, B. A., & Cherbonneau, M. (2017). Nerve management and crime accomplishment. *Journal of research in crime and delinquency*, 54(5), 617-638.
3. Jacobs, B. A. (2004). A typology of street criminal retaliation. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 41(3), 295-323.
4. Jacobs, B. A., Topalli, V., & Wright, R. (2003). Carjacking, streetlife and offender motivation. *British journal of criminology*, 43(4), 673-688.
5. Summers, L., & Rossmo, D. K. (2018). Offender interviews: implications for intelligence-led policing. *Policing: An International Journal*.

### **H. Geographic Profiling**

1. Rossmo, D. K. (2014). Geographic profiling. In *Encyclopedia of criminology and criminal justice* (pp. 1934-1942). Springer New York.
2. Beauregard, E., Rossmo, D. K., & Proulx, J. (2007). A descriptive model of the hunting process of serial sex offenders: A rational choice perspective. *Journal of Family Violence*, 22(6), 449-463.
3. Leclerc, B., & Felson, M. (2016). Routine activities preceding adolescent sexual abuse of younger children. *Sexual Abuse*, 28(2), 116-131.

**END OF SYLLABUS**