

Department of Media, Culture, and Communication  
Crime, Violence, and Media  
MCC-UE 9012  
Spring 2019 Wednesdays 9am-12pm Room 4.01

**Instructor**

Prof. Aurora Wallace, Office 6.11

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 1-3pm and by appointment

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**Overview**

Debates about the role of crime in the media have been among the most sustained and divisive in the field of communications, and they are dependent on a foundation of equally divisive debates about “media influence.” This course will broaden this discussion to consider the culture of crime in relation to conventions of news and entertainment in the mass media, and its larger social and political context. Topics will include crime reporting, the role of place in crime stories, the aesthetics of crime, moral panics and fears, crime and consumer culture, and the social construction of different kinds of crimes and criminals.

**Required Texts**

The reader for this course is available at Mistral Photo, 40 Rue Saint-Jacques

**Assignments and Grading**

Assignment #1.....	20%
Assignment #2.....	20%
Assignment #3.....	10%
Article Presentation.....	10%
Final Paper.....	30%
Participation and regular contributions.....	10%

**Assignment #1 – Artifact Analysis from Prefecture (Due February 27)**

Choose one object from the Musée de la Prefecture de Police visit (February 22) and write a two page description and analysis using course materials. Include a photo of the artifact.

**Assignment #2 – Local Crime News Analysis (Due March 13)**

Write a 3-4 page analysis that addresses a local crime news story. After a brief description of the crime that is being reported, assess the style and structure of the story using concepts from the course. Include the story with your submission.

**Assignment #3 Research Paper Proposal (Due April 3)**

Submit a one-page proposal for the final paper including five sources.

## **Presentation**

Each student will be responsible for presenting their final paper research in class in the second half of the semester.

## **Final Paper (Due May 15)**

Final papers will be 6-8 pages in length and will explore a specific aspect of the relationship between crime and the media.

## **Evaluation Standards and Policies**

All submitted work must be typewritten on white, A4 paper. The student's name, date, and essay title should appear on the cover page, and pages should be numbered. All electronic submissions should use the file form:

[last name] [assignment #] [CVM]

A formal style manual should be consulted for proper citation and quotation formatting. Grades will be partly based on the appropriate application of the norms and conventions of Standard English. Late submissions will result in a drop in grade. No Incompletes are given for this course. Plagiarism is not tolerated, and will result in failing the course. Consult University rules and guidelines regarding this serious breach of ethics.

**A=Excellent.** Demonstrates comprehensive and solid understanding of course material, and presents thoughtful interpretations, well-focused and original insights, and well-reasoned commentary and analysis. Includes skilful use of source materials, illuminating examples, fluent expression, and contains no grammatical or typographical errors.

**B=Good.** This work demonstrates a complete and accurate understanding of course material, presents a reasonable degree of insight and broad levels of analysis. Work reflects competence, but stays at a general or predictable level of understanding. Source materials, examples, illustrations, are used appropriately and writing is clear.

**C=Adequate/fair.** This work demonstrates some understanding but remains superficial, incomplete, or expresses some significant errors or weaknesses. Source materials may be used inadequately or inappropriately, and arguments lack concrete, specific examples and illustrations. Writing or articulation may appear vague, hard to follow, or loaded with typos and other technical errors.

**D=Unsatisfactory.** This work demonstrates a serious lack or error in understanding, and fails to express the most rudimentary aspects of the course. Sources may be used entirely inappropriately or not at all, and writing is deficient.

**F=Failed.** Work not submitted or attempted, or sources have been plagiarized.

**\*\*Late papers will be graded down one point per day late unless medical documentation is provided. There will be no extra-credit assignments given for this course.**

## **Class Policies**

More than two unexcused absences will automatically result in a lower grade. Chronic lateness will also be reflected in your evaluation of participation. Regardless of the reason for your absence you will be responsible for any missed work. Travel arrangements do not constitute a valid excuse for missed deadlines or absences. Slipping in late or leaving early, sleeping, text messaging, surfing the web, doing homework in class, eating, etc. are distracting and disrespectful to all participants in the course.

Academic integrity is the guiding principle for all that you do, from taking exams to making oral presentations to writing term papers. It requires that you recognize and acknowledge information derived from others and take credit only for ideas and work that are yours. You violate the principle of academic integrity when you

- cheat on an exam,
- submit the same work for two different courses without prior permission from your professors,
- receive help on a take-home examination that calls for independent work, or
- plagiarize.

Plagiarism, one of the gravest forms of academic dishonesty in university life, whether intended or not, is academic fraud. Plagiarism is failure to properly assign authorship to a paper, a document, an oral presentation, a musical score, and/or other materials that are not your original work. You plagiarize when, without proper attribution, you do any of the following:

- copy verbatim from a book, an article, or other media;
- download documents from the Internet;
- purchase documents;
- report from other's oral work;
- paraphrase or restate someone else's facts, analysis, and/or conclusions; or
- copy directly from a classmate or allow a classmate to copy from you.

The Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development imposes heavy penalties for plagiarism in order to safeguard the degrees that the University grants. Cases of plagiarism are considered among the most serious of offenses.

## **Student Resources**

- Students with physical or learning disabilities are required to register with the [Moses Center for Students with Disabilities](#), 719 Broadway, 2nd Floor, (212-998-4980) and are required to present a letter from the Center to the instructor at the start of the semester in order to be considered for appropriate accommodation.

## **Schedule of Classes and Readings**

Week 1 Feb 6	Introduction to Course and Overview
Week 2 Feb 13	Mediating Crime Read: Cawelti, Myths of Violence Baer and Chambliss, Generating Fear
Week 3 Feb 20	Crime Aesthetics and Photography Read: Black, Murder as Fine Art Finn, Picturing the Criminal
Feb 22	Visit to Le Musée de la Préfecture de Police
Week 4 Feb 27	Crime News (Assignment #1 Due) Read: Katz, What Makes Crime News Reiner, Media Made Criminality
Week 5 Mar 6	Gangsterism Read: Ruth, Criminal Businessmen and Dressed to Kill
Week 6 March 13	Film Noir (Assignment #2 Due) Read: Krutnick, Film Noir and America
March 15	Selected screenings
Week 7 March 20	Film Noir, continued Christopher, Night and the City
Week 8 March 27	Spring Break
Week 9 April 3	Moral Panics (Assignment #3 Due) Read: Hall, Social History of a Moral Panic Cohen, Deviance and Moral Panics
Week 10 April 10	Constructing Places Read: Hausladen, Place and Police Procedurals Gilens, The News Media and the Racialization of Poverty
Week 11 April 17	Constructing Criminals Reinarman and Duskin, Dominant Ideology and Drugs in the Media Doyle, 'COPS': Television Policing as Policing Reality

Week 12  
April 24

Technologies of Detection  
Gever, The Spectacle of Crime, digitized: CSI  
Knight, CSI and the Art of Forensic Detection

May 15

Final Paper Due