

CJFS 3735: Communities & Crime

Dr. Ryan Larson

Fall 2025



Instructor

Dr. Ryan Larson

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Dr. Larson's Website: https://ryanplarson.github.io/personal_site/index.html

Class Information

Classroom: West 4

Class Hours: 2:30-4 p.m. TTh

Class Canvas: <https://canvas.hamline.edu/courses/20805>

Course description

This course is designed as an exploration into the theoretical and empirical linkages between community contexts (e.g., demographics, use of space, zoning, gentrification, etc.) and crime. The first part of the course will detail criminological theories about communities and crime, as well as survey some of the empirical foundation of these theoretical ideas. The second part of the course will involve an introduction to using, manipulating, visualizing, mapping, and analyzing spatial data in the statistical package R including geocoded crime data, Census Bureau spatial data such as the American Community Survey, police activity data, and other forms of spatial administrative data. The third part of this course will consist of the creation of student projects that involve original analysis of spatial crime and community data of different cities. In this course, students will learn not only approaches to thinking about the relationships between community social conditions and crime, but also valuable skills in handling and analyzing spatial data.

This course has the following prerequisites: CJFS 1120 + any(MATH 1200, CJFS 1980 Basic Quantitative Methods and Statistics in Criminology, CDS 1020, QMBE 1310). Therefore, introductory understanding of crime data and statistical analysis is assumed.

Objectives

Course Objectives

1. Learn the history of criminological thought in regards to communities & crime.
2. Be able to apply these ideas to empirical spatial patterns.
3. Be able to handle, clean, and manipulate spatial data.
4. Use spatial data to visually articulate patterns between community characteristics and crime.
5. Gain an introductory understanding of spatial analysis.

Hamline Plan Objectives

This course is a [Hamline Plan](#) Quantitative Reasoning, Formal Reasoning, and Social Science (MRS) course and therefore upon completion of this course you will be able to:

Formal Learning (R):

1. Understand the difference between inductive and deductive reasoning and demonstrate familiarity with basic methods of assessing inductive strength or deductive validity.
2. Understand and make use of symbolic and abstract representations.
3. Solve problems that require rigorous formal demonstrations with multiple steps.

Quantitative Reasoning (M):

1. Ability to explain information presented in mathematical forms (e.g., equations, graphs, diagrams, tables, words).
2. Ability to convert relevant information into various mathematical forms (e.g., equations, graphs, diagrams, tables, words).
3. Ability to make judgments and draw appropriate conclusions based on the quantitative analysis of data, while recognizing the limits of this analysis.
4. Calculations attempted are essentially all successful and sufficiently comprehensive to solve the problem. Calculations are also presented elegantly (clearly, concisely, etc.).
5. Ability to make and evaluate important assumptions in estimation, modeling, and data analysis.
6. Expressing quantitative evidence in support of the argument or purpose of the work (in terms of what evidence is used and how it is formatted, presented, and contextualized).

Social Science (S):

1. Identify appropriate theory(ies)/model(s)/framework(s) for analysis.
2. Apply appropriate theory(ies)/model(s)/framework(s) to specific context.
3. Findings/assertions are supported by appropriate evidence.
4. Identify limitations of theory/model/analysis.
5. Provide rich context of behavior or phenomenon.
6. Address implications of behavior or phenomenon.

Required Texts

1. Wilcox, Cullen, and Feldmeyer. 2018. *Communities and Crime: An Enduring American Challenge*.
2. Various lecture notes and analysis labs found on the class Canvas page.

Course Requirements

“Scholarly Attitude”

Some faculty members evaluate participation as a part of students’ course grades. But mere participation – how much you do or don’t talk, sit up or fall asleep – isn’t really what most of us want from our students. Instead, most of us hope to see students accept our invitation to “*the life of mind*” by adopting a “scholarly attitude.” Having a “scholarly attitude” involves developing intellectual curiosity and a genuine engagement with the ideas presented in the course. In a sense, embodying the idea of being a **student**: approaching the class as an opportunity to learn about criminology and work alongside an expert in the field, rather than treating any class period or assignment as a means to an end, such as a grade or mere box to be checked.

Students with a scholarly attitude take the student role seriously and demonstrate their commitment to academic pursuits by actively engaging in and **reading** the material, reflecting deeply on the readings, raising thoughtful questions and comments in class, bringing unsolicited materials to share that are directly relevant to the topics being covered, come early and/or stay late to raise their own questions about the material, and generally go above and beyond the baseline requirements of the course. Students who lack a scholarly attitude passively complete the readings and requirements, only occasionally engage in other activities during lecture and discussion, do not actively engage with research design during lab time, and are primarily concerned with obtaining a particular grade in the course.

Another exemplary aspect of having a “scholarly attitude” is how you handle a situation when you must be absent from class. A scholarly way to handle this will be to notify me of any potential absences ahead of time, as well as to take initiative to catch up on any material missed by reading the lecture slides, getting notes from a fellow student, or coming to office hours. Therefore, while this grade does encapsulate attendance to a certain extent, it is less about strict attendance and more about what you do about when you cannot attend class.

That being said, I understand that this class is likely not the top priority in your life (*and it probably shouldn’t be!*). This portion of your grade is kind of a “catch-all”: it’s about how you approach the class, engage with the material in and out of class (e.g., asking questions in class, engaging in class discussions), work collaboratively (with me or other students) on a project, etc. The main idea here is to be actively engaged with the class material we will engage this semester, and to display a genuine curiosity towards learning about the ecological causes of crime. This portion of your grade is *necessarily subjective*, so **please come see me if you have any questions or concerns about this part of your grade.**

Spatial Data Analysis Labs

We will have seven (seven) spatial data analysis labs throughout the semester that will guide you through how to perform spatial data manipulations, visualizations, and analyses in RStudio using real world crime data from Minneapolis, MN. Each lab will have an accompanying RMarkdown (.rmd) template that can be located on Canvas for each week in which we have a scheduled lab. Each lab is graded for completion and is worth 10 pts. Labs not completed will be at risk for partial or no credit.

For these analysis labs, each lab will only consist of code that has examples from either the lecture before or on the lab itself. **In other words, you will not have to come up with code on your own, but rather adapt and append examples to suit your purpose.** These assignments will guide

you through how to perform introductory level spatial data analysis, and will be workshopped during set-aside lab time in class. These labs will build upon one another, and the content within them will be *integral* for completion of the research poster project (see below). Each lab will be a formatted RMarkdown PDF file, which you will fill out and turn in the “knitted” PDF via Canvas. We will discuss how to “knit” these PDFs in our first lab of the semester. *Due dates for each lab can be found on the tentative course schedule below (11:59pm).*

Exams

There will be both a midterm and final exam, each of which cover material previously covered in each half of the semester respectively. The exams will cover ideas and topics from the class lecture, course readings, and class discussions, and will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. The class period before each exam will consist of a review day and study period, where we will review the relevant material for the exam. Students are expected to come to the review/study day with questions, concerns, and ideas, and we will “study together” before each exam. I know exams can bring about worry and anxiety, and I know that you will likely have exams in other classes to study for as well. However, there will be no “trick” questions on the exams, and students who come to lecture and actively participate in class should be well situated for the exams. Please come prepared for each review/study day, as it is likely other students have the same or similar questions that you do. More details about each exam will be discussed in class. Exams are in-person and on pen and paper. **Dates for the midterm and final exam, as well as the study days, can be found on the tentative course schedule below.**

Winter Showcase Research Poster

In order to delve deep on an ecology of crime research question of interest, you will construct a research poster in the style of a social science poster presentation and present it at Hamline University’s Winter Showcase for Student Scholarly Inquiry (12/9/2025 11:20-12:40pm).

This project invites you to pick a **city** that has publicly available geocoded crime data (e.g., Minneapolis, St. Paul, etc.) and merge these data to other social data (e.g., Census Bureau, police departments) etc. to “test” a prediction from a theoretical perspective we are engaging in the theoretical part of the class. Integral to this project is to pick a city with robust publicly available geocoded (or geocodeable) data. The purpose of this assignment is to learn 1) to ask a good criminological question, 2) to formulate and support a clear and sophisticated thesis, 3) gain skills in finding appropriate and valid research to support your thesis, and 4) to go deeper on a perspective on communities and crime of *your own interest*.

In the early weeks of the semester, do some thinking about what theoretical perspectives you find engaging or valid, and then think about how you can “test” a prediction that perspective holds for the empirical patterns of crime across communities.

Example research questions could include, but are certainly not limited to:

- How does crime relate to patterns of gentrification?
- Is crime higher in places of concentrated disadvantage?
- Is crime higher in places with higher residential mobility?
- Does historical structural racism (e.g., redlining) correlate with crime today?
- Does the crime vary with the number of bars in a neighborhood?
- Does community trust in police relate to levels of crime?
- Do police stops/uses of force/shootings correlate with neighborhood violence?

This project is **big** in scope, and each poster will likely have data and analytical choices that differ from one another. That is OK, as each research question deserves its own sound analytical design. Therefore, we will work iteratively, and *collaboratively*, on it together throughout the semester. We will have six (6) set aside project workshops (on top of our spatial analysis labs) to work on the projects during class time, alongside the following stepping stone deadlines:

1. Project Proposal (9/25/2025): your initial ideas and sketches about your projects.
2. Project Synopsis (10/9/2025): your finalized project proposal, alongside three (3) scholarly journal article sources that relate to your research question of choice.
3. Poster Draft (11/20/2025): a completed draft of the research poster with prospective analyses, visualizations, etc.
4. Final Winter Showcase Presentation (12/9/2025 11:20am-12:40pm): presenting your research to the Hamline Community at the Winter Showcase for Student Scholarly Inquiry.

Each will have a template to fill out that can be located on the class Canvas page. I will give feedback on each step as well as in workshops, so you'll have plenty of time to run ideas by me and ask any questions you may have. *Due dates for each component are listed in the tentative course schedule below.*

The research poster should have the following sections:

1. *Introduction* - overview of your topic and background information to inform the audience using at minimum three (3) scholarly journal articles.
2. *Research Question(s)* - explicit statement of the projects research questions and any subsidiary questions.
3. *Methods* - description of the data, methods, and analytical choices taken to complete your analysis.
4. *Results* - presentation of the results of your study (e.g., visualizations, tables, interpretations, etc.). **This should consist of at minimum three (3) analysis output items.**
5. *Conclusion* - Overall, what do these studies conclude about your research question? What questions remain unanswered? How might future research study these remaining questions?
6. *References* - all citations (including in-text) should be in APA or ASA format.

More detailed project information and a grading rubric can be found on the project explainer on the class Canvas page.

Extra Credit

In each theoretical perspective we will discuss, there will be many exemplary empirical journal articles, some of which I will discuss during lecture to give a glimpse into how criminologists **test** the theory under consideration. For extra credit (going *above and beyond* the required classwork), you may optionally choose to read an empirical journal article that engages the ecological causes of crime. For the reading you choose, you will fill out a simple worksheet that guides you in reading and making sense of the research article. This will a) allow you to distill often complex, scientific writing into your own observations, b) gain insight into how criminologists actually “test” the theories we are discussing, and c) be prepared with critical thoughts and reflections to bring back to class for discussion. If you would like to complete this opportunity, I'd be happy to discuss early in the semester how to read empirical journal articles, which is an essential skill to have as a social science student. These extra credit worksheets will be primarily graded for completion, but lower scores can be obtained if the worksheets are not filled out **satisfactorily or**

to completion. Each article must be approved ahead of time by Dr. Larson. If you would like assistance locating a suitable article to complete the extra credit, I have a bevy of articles that I think you'd find interesting! The submission is worth 10 points. *The due date for the extra credit assignment can be found on the tentative course schedule below.*

Course Policies and Information

General

First and foremost, welcome to CJFS 3735: Communities and Crime! I am excited to go on this criminological journey and meet all of you! I find questions surrounding the ecological causation of crime to be truly fascinating, and they speak directly to not only the social forces that are big time drivers of patterns in crime, but also point us toward policy solutions to make our communities safer over time. I hope we can have a great time this semester exploring these criminological ideas alongside enhancing your analytical toolkits with an introductory dose of spatial data analysis!

Given this is an upper-level class, many of you will have already developed strategies that help you be successful in the college classroom. However, I also have some tips that will be useful in this class and the others you may be taking:

General

- Come to class as much as possible! This will allow you to keep up to date with everything, and really engage with the class material. There will be experiences, discussion, and explanation that takes place in class that cannot be replicated otherwise (e.g., by just reading the material).
- **Read!** I know your lives can be a bit busy and hectic, but this is a time in your life where you are afforded relatively more time to **read, digest, think, process, and explore**. Trust me, this goes away fast. Too fast. Lightning fast. Even if the ecological causes of crime aren't your primary interest in life (definitely OK!), take some time to read and invest in yourself as a budding scholar of crime. Your future self (and career!) will thank you for it.
- Take notes! Either electronically or the old fashioned way with pen and paper, take notes during lecture and discussion. These will help you when you are studying for exams and working on your projects. I structure my lecture slides to be somewhat partially-constructed notes, so that student driven notes and additions from lecture can be added to them. In addition, this gives a baseline structure for students who have to miss class to get caught back up.
- Ask questions! **Please, please, please**, ask questions whenever you have them. They can be simple logistical things or in depth questions about the class material. *Grappling with class material is what college is all about*, so I encourage you to ask questions whenever you find something confusing or fascinating! I'm happy to answer any questions as I am able, no matter how big or small. If I don't know the answer to something, I will work with you to find the answer! We have tons of set aside lab and workshop time, so there'll be a good amount of time to work together on whatever is needed!
- Come to office hours! Faculty members love when you come to see them. At least I do. Take this time to get to know me and your other professors, which I personally found to be one of the most rewarding experiences of a liberal arts college experience as an undergraduate student. I am paid to be here to be a resource for you, and expect to serve in that capacity for your learning. *Take advantage of that!* Further, I want this to be explicit: no matter how cheesy it sounds, I care about each of you and want you to have the best experience possible in this course. I love to help!

- Use a calendar! Whether it be your Google calendar or an old school planner book, write out all the relevant dates for the course: assignment deadlines, exam dates, class times, my office hours, etc. This will help you stay a bit organized and keep tabs on what's to come in the semester.
- **Take advantage of this opportunity!** College is a time where you are given significant time and flexibility to engage in questions in a collaborative environment that in other times in your life you will not have the bandwidth for. This is an invitation to treat this class less as a barrier or stepping stone to a degree/employment, but rather as an opportunity for learning, growth, and exploration.

Please make use of this syllabus and the class Canvas site. They will both give a guide to what's coming next, and Canvas is also the hub for all assignment submissions. All supplementary class reading materials and other resources will also be posted to the class Canvas site.

Grading and Absences

Overall, I'd love for everybody to not worry about their grades and instead spend that energy with the readings and engagement in class and workshops. If you do so, I am *confident* that the grades you wish for will follow, and I want everybody in the class to succeed however you define that for yourself. With that being said, keeping up to date on the readings and class material will be *essential* to obtaining a high grade in this class. Keep in mind that grades **do not** define your worth as a person, nor as a student. Its institutional inertia manifest, or something like that.

The grading breakdown, course requirements, and letter grade distributions are listed below. Please come see me if you have any questions related to grading or general course expectations.

I encourage you to turn in assignments on time, as this will allow me to give you feedback: to pat you on the back and give pointers for improvement for the submissions to come. I cannot encourage you strongly enough to take this feedback seriously, as they often will key you in to where the project could use some improvement. Much of our feedback time will be informally in workshops and labs, so please be sure to attend whenever you can.

Late assignments are deducted one letter grade if they are turned in within 24 hours of the due date and an additional letter grade for each additional 24 hours beyond this; assignments will not be accepted more than 1 week after the due date or all assignments are graded (whichever is later). Emailed assignments are not accepted unless otherwise arranged, and all submissions will take place via Canvas.

Incompletes will not be granted except in rare or extraordinary circumstances and cannot be given without prior written agreement. Incompletes at Hamline University are for exceptional circumstances where the majority of student work in the semester is complete (e.g., classes attended, assignments complete), and some unforeseen event or barrier prevents a student from successfully completing the course. Incompletes will **not** be granted in the case of students falling behind, not attending classes or exams, or turning assignments in, or scrambling at the last minute to complete the class. As per Hamline University policy, *"Incomplete grades should be given only in unusual circumstances that are beyond the control of the student. An incomplete cannot be granted if a student is failing or has not completed a substantial portion of the course."*

If you have questions about how you have been graded on a particular assignment, I have a general policy for handling these situations: please briefly put in writing your thoughts or comments on the grading and see me in the next available office hours. We will then discuss your grade(s).

Any requests must be submitted within one week of the date the grades for that assignment are distributed.

If you miss a class, please ask a classmate to share their notes with you (in advance, if possible). If you are uncomfortable asking another student, please let me know and I will find a volunteer to share notes. **We are in this together!** Note that while attendance is not strictly required, multiple absences without proper notice and adequate reasoning will be reflected in your “scholarly attitude” grade, and may impact your preparation and performance on exams and papers.

You must notify me in person or via email **at least 24 hours prior** to missing an assignment due date or exam for me to *consider* giving you a makeup or extension. Exams may not be made up except in the rare event of an excused absence (e.g., doctors note, familial emergency with documentation, etc.).

I know your lives are busy and hectic, and this class is likely not going to be the most important thing in your life (and it probably shouldn't be!). I'm also cognizant that many Hamline students have external work, child/family care responsibilities, etc., that, apart from some work study, I was privileged to avoid in my undergraduate education. I pride myself of being understanding of these issues, and I ask that you be open with me in regards to the pressures you may face. The key here is to **be in communication with me** when you are going to be gone or would request an extension, and I will do my best under the circumstances to work with you to find a solution.

Grade Distribution:

Grade	Range
A	93+
A-	90-92.99
B+	87-89.99
B	83-86.99
B-	80-82.99
C+	77-79.99
C	73-76.99
C-	70-72.99
D+	67-69.99
D	63-66.99
D-	60-62.99
F	< 60

Assignment Weighting:

Item	Weight(%)	Points
Scholarly Attitude	15.6	50
Labs	21.9	90
Research Poster	29.4	100
Exams	29.4	100

Communication

The best way to reach me is by email or come in-person to office hours (Wednesday 2-5pm in 306-A or virtual). I will attempt to return email within 24 hours M-F and within 48 hours over the weekend. There will be times I cannot respond within 24 hours. If you wait until the last minute to email me with questions, I may not be able to respond in time. However, I will do my best to respond to all email inquiries in a timely fashion. I'm usually pretty on top of my email, it's something I take pride in! Or obsess about, I'm unsure. Should an email go unresponded to beyond these parameters, feel free to reach back out with a friendly bump reminding me of your message. I will also often be available after class to chat about any issues/questions you may have.

Inclusivity and Discussion

Hamline University values diversity and inclusion; we are collectively committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. My goal is to create learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive, and welcoming. In other words, an open, inviting path for everyone to the fascinating world of criminology. As your professor, I hold the fundamental belief that everyone in the class is fully capable of engaging and mastering the material. Our classroom should be an inclusive space, where ideas, questions, and misconceptions can be discussed with mutual respect for others' ideas, beliefs, and experiences. There is usually more than one way to see and solve a problem and we will all be richer if we can be open to multiple paths to knowledge. Further, this class may challenge some of the beliefs and/or assumptions you hold about the nature of crime and causes of it at the community-level. We will all be challenged intellectually at some point in the semester, and I expect that everyone handle differing opinions and thoughts with grace and respect.

Content Warning

This course will cover topics of a sensitive nature such as but not limited to class, race, ethnicity, violence, victimization, and criminality. These are sensitive social topics, and I expect each of you to broach with maturity and scholarly curiosity. In addition, I expect students to show respect toward the subjects of our study, particularly those who have engaged in crime or have criminal legal system contact, as well as to treat your classmates and myself with respect and dignity at all times. Some in class will have participated in crime, some will have had family members that are currently undergoing punishment. It is our duty as a classroom community to ensure everyone feels welcome, heard, and is respected.

Because I cannot possibly know each student's life history and what you may/may not find distressing (although, I certainly hope to learn about you throughout the semester!), I am unable to alert the class to each possibility. Thus, this is a content warning of a sort for the entire course. If you have concerns over a particular topic/issue, please review the syllabus and if there is a concern, please let me know.

Office Hours

Please come to office hours! This is dedicated time (of mine!) set aside for **you**, the student, to:

- Ask questions or get clarifications on topic that weren't clear in the lecture or readings
- Get caught up to speed should you miss a day of lecture
- Get feedback on assignments and papers

- Just talk “shop”: research, criminology, etc.
- Talk about concerns you have inside or outside of class
- Get to know me! It also lets me get to know you as well, which is one of the best parts of my job.

I’m excited to meet and get to know each of you personally, and office hours are a great time to do that. I have a sign up link at the top of this syllabus, please sign out a open slot if you’d like to stop by for office hours. The link can be found on Canvas and at the top of this syllabus (also [here](#)).

I will be there and drop ins are always welcome, but if a student has a signed out slot I will prioritize that student’s time first. Signing out a slot also allows me to be prepared for students that want to come! If my usual office hours do not work with your schedule, please email me to schedule an office hours appointment and I will find a time that works our collective schedules. I’d love the opportunity to learn about you, what is bringing you to study criminology, and how I can help you in your future studies/research/career. Please don’t hesitate to stop by and chat!

Academic honesty

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, making multiple submissions, fabricating information, using materials in an unauthorized manner, misrepresenting academic records, and facilitating academic dishonesty. A student found guilty of academic dishonesty can receive failure for an assignment, failure for the entire course, or academic suspension or expulsion. For more information on the Honor Code, please visit the [Honor Code website](#).

Technology is rapidly changing; in some ways online tools have outpaced some of the skills of students and professors. One such tool is ChatGPT and other LLMs. Students should be aware that not only is using Chat GPT for assignments a gray area for the honor code, but the artificial intelligence (AI) used by ChatGPT may make significant mistakes - providing information that is clearly incorrect to those with subject-matter expertise. It is possible that AI will eventually get to the point where those mistakes rarely happen; that day, however, is not today. As such, we do not recommend using Chat GPT for course assignments and labs. If you do choose to use these tools, they can be useful in fine tuning your research questions, brainstorming or fine tuning your ideas, and checking grammar and spelling. We urge extreme caution for using these tools for wholesale drafting, as the output may contain significant mistakes and not adhere to the assignment structure and requirements.

Further, we are generally interested in your ideas, designs, and analysis. We care far more about the “aliveness” and substance of your writing as opposed to the polish, perfection, or sheen of the final product. There is also burgeoning research that suggests that using AI can stifle student’s cognitive development (Zhai 2024). While AI can be a useful aid, overreliance on it for scholarly productions (e.g., coding, writing) can stunt the development of your critical thinking, decision making, and analytical reasoning. These are crucial skills to incubate during your collegiate years, and will be useful to you both in your future career and in life far beyond it.

If you do choose to use ChatGPT or any other AI system (e.g., Google Bard) for language and writing generation, please cite the program in your references. In addition to citing the language model used, you must also include a brief paragraph at the end of your work explaining how and why you used the model, including any prompts you used to generate output. Failure to

do so constitutes an honor code violation as using AI's words without citation and representing another's words as your own.

Discussion of class material and readings amongst students is encouraged, and helping each other out is expected!

Preparedness

I promise to be prepared, engaged, and as helpful as I can be in each class period, as well as outside of class time. We will be wrestling with new and difficult topic matter during the course of the semester, and I understand it can seem daunting especially given your other responsibilities on and off campus. All I ask is that you give your best effort on each assignment, reading, and class period and I promise to reciprocate.

Campus Resources and Policies

Accessibility

If you have a documented disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Steve Anderson (sanderson65@hamline.edu, West Hall 108) as soon as possible to discuss accommodations. If you have already arranged accommodations through Disability Resources, **please be sure to meet with me within the first two weeks of class** to initiate conversation about how we might work together to make the course as accessible as possible. Although I will receive the letter electronically, I would like to touch base on how I can best accommodate each student in the course. Ultimately, I wish for you to only share with me what you are comfortable with and how we might arrange accommodations in the course.

COVID-19 policy

Any requirements for use of face masks on campus will be determined by the [Hamline University COVID-19 shift plan](#). See [Hamline's Mask Policy](#) for more information.

In general, if you were exposed to COVID-19, please follow the recommendations as follows from the CDC. Please keep the safety of your fellow students as well as faculty and staff at Hamline at the forefront in your decision making.

- [What to Do If You Were Exposed to COVID-19](#)
- [What to Do If You Test Positive for COVID-19](#)

Writing Assistance

The ability to communicate effectively in writing is an important skill that will be required in all classes at Hamline University and in life outside of the University. While we will workshop papers/projects throughout the semester and you will receive feedback before your final submission, there are also resources on campus to assist you with your writing.

There is free student writing support at the [Writing and Communication Center](#). The writing center can assist you in all stages of the writing process and I encourage all students to take advantage of this valuable resource. To schedule an appointment call (651) 523-2026 or visit the [Hamline University Writing and Communication Center Website](#) [Hamline University Writing and Communication Center Website].

Mental health

Mental health is important to be a successful university student, and aspects of university life can be stressful and can negatively impact mental health. Hamline University Counseling and Health Services provides confidential, free counseling and crisis intervention services to students. More information can be found at the [Counseling and Health Services Website](#).

Sexual Assault, Relationship Violence, and Stalking

Hamline University also provides academic and other accommodations to students who have experienced sexual assault, relationship violence (physical, emotional, or other form of abuse by a dating or other intimate partner), or stalking. For more information about Hamline's policy and the resources available to you, consult [Hamline's website](#) or contact our Title IX Coordinator and Associate Dean of Students, Patti Kersten, (651) 523-2421, pkersten01@hamline.edu.

Final thoughts

I am excited to discuss the community patterns and causes of crime with you this semester, and I hope you all find this class to be interesting and engaging! I am especially excited to help shepherd your poster projects and see what cool questions and badass analyses and viz you all cook up.

This class will likely be challenging on three different fronts:

- 1) it may challenge your preconceived notions of the nature and causes of crime, particularly as it relates to the relationships between disadvantage, race, and crime
- 2) it will delve deep into criminological perspectives and their empirical foundation. This second challenge will present new, sometimes terse, terminology, complex theoretical relationships, as well as discussion of methodological and statistical issues (e.g., causality).
- 3) we will be diving headfirst into statistical computing and spatial data analysis in R, which has a *steep* learning curve. But if you hang on for the ride, I think you'll see how powerful these tools are and what cool visualizations and analyses are possible. It becomes fun to be able to make cool maps, I promise. Despite these challenges, you are not alone in this endeavor. We will work through these challenges **together** this semester!

I reserve the right to amend any part of this syllabus as appropriate including the tentative schedule below. If this document is updated, a copy will be supplied to you via Canvas and changes will be announced and discussed in class.

Tenative Course Schedule

Date	Week	Lecture	ToDo
2025-09-04	1	Course Overview	Google Form
2025-09-09	2	Crime & Communities	CC Ch.1
2025-09-11	2	Lab 1: R Install	
2025-09-16	3	Community as Socially Disorganized	CC Ch.2
2025-09-18	3	Project Workshop 1	Lab 1
2025-09-23	4	Community as a System	CC Ch.3
2025-09-25	4	Lab 2: R/dplyr Basics	Project Proposal
2025-09-30	5	Community as The Truly Disadvantaged	CC Ch.4
2025-10-02	5	Lab 3: Spatial Data	Lab 2
2025-10-07	6	Project Workshop 2	
2025-10-09	6	Project Workshop 3	Project Synopsis
2025-10-14	7	Community as Criminal Culture	CC Ch.5
2025-10-16	7	Lab 4: tidycensus	Lab 3
2025-10-21	8	Study Day #1	
2025-10-23	8	Midterm Exam	Lab 4
2025-10-28	9	Exam Review/Project Check-Ins	
2025-10-30	9	Lab 5: Spatial Viz	
2025-11-04	10	Community as a Broken Window	CC Ch. 6
2025-11-06	10	Lab 6: Spatial Analysis 1	Lab 5
2025-11-11	11	NO CLASS(ASC)	Lab 6
2025-11-13	11	NO CLASS(ASC)	
2025-11-18	12	Community as Criminal Opportunity	CC Ch.7
2025-11-20	12	Project Workshop 4	Poster Draft
2025-11-25	13	Community as Collective Efficacy	CC Ch. 8
2025-11-27	13	Lab 7: Spatial Analysis 2	
2025-12-02	14	Project Workshop 5	
2025-12-04	14	Project Workshop 6	Lab 7
2025-12-09	15	Winter Showcase 11:20-12:40pm	Final Poster
2025-12-11	15	Study Day #2	Extra Credit
2025-12-17	16	Final 5:15-7:15pm	Final Exam