

CRM 216: White Collar Crime

T & Th: 11:45-1:00
Luther Bonney 410

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Office Hours: M: 2:30-4:00
T: 1:00-3:30
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an analysis of different criminological perspectives on white-collar crime, and focuses on some specific types of white-collar crime: occupational crime, corporate crime, and political crime.

Required Books

Stephen Rosoff, Hentry Pontell and Robert Tillman, *Profit Without Honor: White Collar Crime and the Looting of America*. Hoboken: Pearson, 2020.

ASSIGNMENTS

Attendance, Preparation & Participation (30 points): *You are expected to attend all class meetings.*

Please contact me if you are ill or have another reason to request an excused absence. Three or more unexcused absences will result in a lower final letter grade. Just attending class meets the minimal satisfactory requirements for the course. To perform at an above average or excellent level in this area, students must prepare for class. This means reading material and bringing questions, and comments to discuss. It means taking notes on lectures and readings. It means coming to class ready to make most of our time together.

Note on Technology: Students may use laptops in the class room to take notes. Cell phones have no place in the classroom and will not be tolerated. If you misuse technology in the classroom, you will be asked to leave class and your attendance, participation, and preparation grade will be negatively impacted.

Homework (40 points): Throughout there are several writing assignments required to prepare for particular class periods. It is essential to have this work completed at the start of the assigned class period, as class time will revolve around the work students are asked to prepare. The specific homework assignments are described in detail in the class schedule and readings section of the syllabus. As a general rule, students should be able to adequately answer each homework assignment with **500 to 800 words of writing**. There are 10 homework assignments and each is worth 4 points. **Homework assignments are due in class on the day they're assigned.** No late work be accepted or partial credit awarded.

Mid-Term (10 points): The mid-term exam covers the first half the course material. The exam will consist of terms to define and short answer questions. I'll post a study guide to blackboard in the week before the exam.

Final (20 points): The final exam is cumulative. The exam will consist of terms to define, short answer questions, and one essay. I'll post a study guide to blackboard in the week before the exam.

Learning Outcomes and Assignments

Understanding and evaluating data	Lectures, assigned readings, homework
An review of different types of white collar crimes	Lectures, assigned readings, and homework
Develop and employ skills to critically evaluate information and arguments	Homework and in-class discussions
Cooperation and group dynamics	Class discussions
Describe, explain, and analyze course concepts, orally and in writing.	Homework, class discussions, and exams
Engage in respectful dialog with others that honors diversity	Class discussions

GRADING POLICIES

The expectations for each assignment are laid out in the description of the assignment in the syllabus and related course documents posted to blackboard. Your submitted work will be assessed based on the defined criteria and scored according to: Meets Expectations (A- or B-level work), Satisfies Minimal Expectations (C-level work), or Does Not Meet Expectations (D- or F-level work).

Late Policy: If you are concerned that you are not going to meet a due date, you are expected need to let me know before the class meeting. You can contact me via email or speak to me during office hours or just before or after class. I will consider negotiating an extension with you based on your reasons. Without approval for an extension, an assignment must be submitted on time or its grade will be reduced by one letter grade per day late. The only exception to this policy is a serious illness or accident.

Citation Policy: You must cite your sources in all the written assignments for this course. This means citing something every time quote the text, or refer to a specific argument or piece of information that is not general knowledge. In this course, we will use Chicago-B citations. See the guide to citations on blackboard specifics. Failure to cite sources or incorrect citations will negatively impact your grade.

COURSE EVALUATIONS

At the end of each semester every student has the opportunity to provide constructive feedback on the course. It is important to me that you take the time to let me know your thoughts about the course. I use your feedback to make improvements in the course materials, assignments, and outcomes.

CLASS CANCELLATION

If I have to cancel class, I will notify the class via email as soon possible and adjust the syllabus and assignments as necessary.

Inclement Weather: From time to time USM will close the University due to inclement weather. When the cancellation is for an entire day, the class content will be made up at another time or through additional, outside of class, assignments.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY & PLAGIARISM

Everyone associated with the University of Southern Maine is expected to adhere to the principles of academic integrity central to the academic function of the University. Any breach of academic integrity

represents a serious offense. Each student has a responsibility to know the standards of conduct and expectations of academic integrity that apply to academic tasks. Violations of academic integrity include any actions that attempt to promote or enhance the academic standing of any student by dishonest means. Cheating on an examination, stealing the words or ideas of another (i.e., plagiarism), making statements known to be false or misleading, falsifying the results of one's research, improperly using library materials or computer files, or altering or forging academic records are examples of violations of this policy which are contrary to the academic purposes for which the University exists. Acts that violate academic integrity disrupt the educational process and are not acceptable.

Evidence of a violation of the academic integrity policy will normally result in disciplinary action. A copy of the complete policy may be obtained from the office of Community Standards and Mediation, online at usm.maine.edu/community-standards-mediation/academic-integrity or by calling and requesting a copy at (207) 780-5242.

CLASS SCHEDULE & READINGS

Tuesday January 21

Introduction and review of syllabus

Thursday January 23

Rosoff et al, "Introduction" in *Profit Without Honor*

Tuesday January 28

Edwin H. Sutherland, "White Collar Criminality" in *American Sociological Review* (pdf on BB).

Homework and Class Discussion: Consider Sutherland's definition of white-collar crime. Break down its components and the definition. Evaluate the merits of the concept: does it cover all kinds of white collar crime?

Thursday January 30

Homework and Class Discussion: What is more harmful white collar crime or street crime? In your response, do not just consider the immediate harms of crime (lives lost, injuries, property damage, environmental destruction). What is the impact of these different crimes on the integrity of institutions (government, businesses and civil society)? What

Tuesday February 4

Last Day to Drop at 100% Refund

Rosoff et al, "Crimes Against Consumers" in *Profit Without Honor*

Thursday February 6

Homework & Class Discussion: Complete one of the following exercise and write up a response of at least 500 words:

1. Bring three examples to class of advertisements that sound too good to be true. Think about direct mail, telephone, e-mail, road signs, television, and classified ads. Why do you believe the offers are too good to be true?
2. Find some examples of financial or debt-service advertisements. Which ones do you believe to be questionable? Why? What are the costs of the public being exposed to these techniques?

Tuesday February 11

Rosoff et al, "Unsafe Products" in *Profit Without Honor*

Thursday February 13

Homework & Class Discussion: find a newspaper article that details a case of either food adulteration or dumping. Write summarize the article in about 500 words. If you find an article about food adulteration, try to determine who was responsible? Is the example and accident or negligence? If you find an article about dumping, why was the product banned in the Global North? Has there been any reaction to dumping the product on the Global South?

Tuesday February 18 & Thursday February 20

No Class: Professor is Away

Tuesday February 25

Rosoff et al, "Environmental Crimes" in *Profit Without Honor*

Thursday February 27

Homework & Class Discussion: Read the articles about oil companies and awareness of climate change. Did oil companies commit white collar crimes? Did they commit crimes against the environment? Is justice necessary? What would it look like? Should oil companies be nationalized or otherwise made to fund a transition to post-fossil fuel economy?

Shannon Hall, "Exxon Knew about Climate Change almost 40 years ago." *Scientific American* (link on BB)

Benjamin Franta, "Shell and Exxon's secret 1980s climate change warnings." *The Guardian* (link on BB)

Lee Wasserman, "Did Exxon Deceive Its Investors on Climate Change?" *The New York Times* (link on BB)

Carla Santos Skandier, "Time has come to nationalize the US fossil fuel industry." *Roar Magazine* (link on BB)

Christian Parenti, "Make Corporations Pay for the Green New Deal." *Jacobin* (link on BB)

Tuesday March 3

Rosoff et al, "Institutional Corruption" in *Profit Without Honor*.

Thursday March 5

Homework & Class Discussion: Why have some been so successful in using religion to accomplish massive fraud? Why are the devoutly religious so susceptible? Consider the following articles on the prosperity gospel in your response.

Vicky Baker, "The preachers getting rich from poor Americans." *BBC* (link on BB)

Kate Bowler, "I'm a scholar of the "prosperity gospel." It took cancer to show me I was in its grip." *Vox* (link on BB)

Scott Cohn, "Religious-based financial fraud is rampant. Here's how to fight it." *CNBC* (link on BB)

Tuesday March 10

Mid-Term Exam

Thursday March 12

In Class Film: *Inside the Meltdown*

Tuesday March 17 & Thursday March 19

No Class: Spring Break

Tuesday March 24

Rosoff et al, "Securities Fraud" in *Profit Without Honor*

Thursday March 26

Last Day to Withdraw

Rosoff et al, "Corporate Fraud" in *Profit Without Honor*

Tuesday March 31

Rosoff et al, "Fiduciary Fraud" in *Profit Without Honor*

Thursday April 2

Homework & Class Discussion: Why has there been almost no prosecutions for the multiple white collar crimes that caused the Great Recession? Consider the textbook, *Inside the Meltdown* and the articles below in your answer.

Joe Pinsker, "Why Aren't Any Bankers in Prison for Causing the Financial Crisis?" *The Atlantic* (link on BB)

Gretchen Morgenson and Louise Story, "In Financial Crisis, No Prosecutions of Top Figures." *The New York Times* (link on BB)

Jesse Eisinger, "Why Only One Top Banker Went to Jail for the Financial Crisis." *The New York Times Magazine* (link on BB)

Tuesday April 8

Rosoff et al, "Crimes by the Government" in *Profit Without Honor*.

Thursday April 9

Homework & Class Discussion: Was the assassination of Iranian General Qasem Soleimani a political crime? Was it a violation of Iraqi sovereignty? Refer to the textbook and articles below in your response.

Arwa Ibrahim, "Iraqis denounce Iran missiles as 'violation of sovereignty.'" *Al Jazeera* (link on BB)

Reality Check Team, "Soleimani attack: What does international law say?" *BBC* (link on BB)

Mitch Prothero, "Iran has a 'shockingly strong' war-crimes case against Trump over Soleimani's killing — and it could win." *Business Insider* (link on BB)

Agnes Callamard, "The Targeted Killing of General Soleimani: Its Lawfulness and Why It Matters." *Just Security* (link on BB).

Tuesday April 15

Rosoff et al, "Corruption of Government Officials" in *Profit Without Honor*.

Thursday April 17

Homework & Class Discussion: Is President Trump corrupt? Refer to the textbook and the articles below in your response.

Noah Bookbinder, "From hush money to Trump impeachment, 2019 was a dizzying year of corruption and scandal." *USA Today* (link on BB)

Alex Shultz and Jay Willis, "How Trump Corrupted the American Presidency in Every Imaginable Way." *GQ* (link on BB)

CREW, "Trump's 2000 Conflicts of Interest (and Counting)." *Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington* (link on BB).

Tuesday April 21

Rosoff et al, "Computer Crime" in *Profit Without Honor*.

Thursday April 23

Homework & Class Discussion: Do you take any measures to protect yourself online? Why or why not? Did anything in the "Computer Crime" make you want to your online security more seriously? If so, look into some specific ways you can protect yourself

Tuesday April 28

Rosoff et al, "Conclusion" in *Profit Without Honor*.

Thursday April 30

Concluding Discussion and Finals Review

Final Exam TBD

UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND RESOURCES

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

The university is committed to providing students with documented disabilities equal access to all university programs and services. If you think you have a disability and would like to request accommodations, you must register with the Disability Services Center. Timely notification is essential. The Disability Services Center can be reached by calling 207-780-4706 or by email dscusm@maine.edu. If you have already received a faculty accommodation letter from the Disability Services Center, please provide me with that information as soon as possible. Please make a private appointment so that we can review your accommodations.

TUTORING AND WRITING ASSISTANCE

Tutoring at USM is for *all* students, not just those who are struggling. Tutoring provides active feedback and practice, and is available for writing, math, and many more subjects. Walk-in tutoring is available at the Glickman Library in Portland, the Gorham Library, and the LAC Writing Center. For best service, we recommend making an appointment at <https://usm.maine.edu/learningcommons/schedule-tutoring-appointment>. Questions about tutoring should be directed to Naamah Jarrot at 207-780-4554. Interested in becoming a more effective, efficient learner? Check out <https://usm.maine.edu/agile!>

COUNSELING

Counseling is available at USM. The best way to schedule an appointment is by phone at 780-5411. More information is available at <https://usm.maine.edu/uhrs>.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

The University of Southern Maine is an EEO/AA employer, and does not discriminate on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, transgender status, gender expression, national origin, citizenship status, age, disability, genetic information or veteran's status in employment, education, and all other programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies: Sarah E. Harebo, Director of Equal Opportunity, 101 North Stevens Hall, University of Maine, Orono, ME 04469-5754, 207.581.1226, TTY 711 (Maine Relay System).

STATEMENT ON RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE FOR USM STUDENTS

Absence for Religious Holy Days: The University of Southern Maine respects the religious beliefs of all members of the community, affirms their rights to observe significant religious holy days, and will make reasonable accommodations, upon request, for such observances. If a student's religious observance is in conflict with the academic experience, they should inform their instructor(s) of the class or other school functions that will be affected. It is the student's responsibility to make the necessary arrangements mutually agreed upon with the instructor(s).

TITLE IX STATEMENT

The University of Southern Maine is committed to making our campuses safer places for students. Because of this commitment, and our federal obligations, faculty and other employees are considered mandated reporters when it comes to experiences of interpersonal violence (sexual assault, sexual

harassment, dating or domestic violence, and stalking). Disclosures of interpersonal violence must be passed along to the University's Deputy Title IX Coordinator who can help provide support and academic remedies for students who have been impacted. More information can be found online at <http://usm.maine.edu/campus-safety-project> or by contacting Sarah E. Holmes at sarah.e.holmes1@maine.edu or 207-780-5767.

If students want to speak with someone confidentially, the following resources are available on and off campus: University Counseling Services (207-780-4050); 24 Hour Sexual Assault Hotline (1-800-871-7741); 24 Hour Domestic Violence Hotline (1-866-834-4357).