

**WHAT IS CRIME?** 228

a violation of norms that have been written into law

**WHY DOES CRIME EXIST?** 235

positivists: people are social and are not prone to act criminally unless some biological, psychological, or social factor is involved  
 classicalists: people make rational choices to commit crimes based on pleasure/pain calculations

**HOW DO WE DEAL WITH CRIME?** 240

through a three-part criminal justice system: police, courts, and corrections

## get the topic: **WHAT IS A CRIME?**

Deviance vs. Crime 228  
 Historical Roots of Deviance and Crime Theories 235

Functional Explanations of Crime and Deviance 236  
 Social Interaction Theories 237  
 Symbolic Interactionist Theory 238

Social Conflict Theory 238  
 General Theories of Crime Causation 238  
 Crime Control: The Criminal Justice System 240

## Theory

**FUNCTIONALISM** 236

- crime is a response to some social factor
- Durkheim's three functions of crime and deviance: they mark the boundaries of morality, promote social solidarity, and bring about needed change
- theory of anomie: social instability caused by a wearing away of standards and ethics
- Merton: crime results because the pursuit of the American dream is blocked for some people

**CONFLICT THEORY** 238

- capitalism teaches people to be selfish and competitive, resulting in inequality
- the wealthy create the laws that punish the poor, while many illegal acts committed by the wealthy are often not considered crimes
- "the rich get rich, the poor get prison"

**SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM** 238

- labeling theory
- people react to how others view them
- people learn criminality through social interactions

## Key Terms

**deviance** is the violation of norms that a society agrees upon. 228

**crime** is the violation of norms that have been written into law. 228

**criminology** is the scientific study of crime, deviance, and social policies that the criminal justice system applies. 228

**street crime** refers to many different types of criminal acts, such as burglary, rape, and assault. 229

**Uniform Crime Reports (UCRs)** are official police statistics of reported crimes gathered from police reports and paperwork. 230

**National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)** is the measurement of crime victimization based on contact with a representative sample of over 70,000 households in the United States. 230

**crime index** is made up of eight offenses used to measure crime: homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. 230

**consensus model of law** suggests that laws arise because people see a behavior they do not like, and they agree to make it illegal. 232

**conflict model of law** proposes that powerful people write laws to protect their own interests while punishing the actions of those they wish to control. 232

**shaming** is a deliberate effort to attach a negative meaning to a behavior. 232

**stigmatized shame** is a permanent label given to an offender, which could actually increase the chances of reoffending because the guilty person is forever labeled. 233

**reintegrative shaming** is an effort to bring an offender back into the community after punishment. 233

**deterrence** is a measure that prevents a person from doing something because of fear of the consequences. 233

**general deterrence** is a measure that ensures individuals will not commit a crime because they see the negative consequences applied to others, and they fear experiencing these consequences. 233

**specific deterrence** is a measure that changes the attitude of individuals, who have already violated the law and have been punished, by causing them never to commit crime again. 233

**recidivism** is the tendency for inmates released from prison to return to prison. 233

(continued)

**differential association theory** emphasizes that criminal and deviant behavior is learned. 237

**containment theory** argues that criminals cannot resist the temptations that surround them. 237

**attachment** is the social bond that refers to our relationship to others. 238

**commitment** is the social bond that refers to our dedication to live a socially acceptable life. 238

**involvement** is the social bond that refers to the level of activity in conventional things. 238

**belief** is the social bond that refers to a person's conviction of truth. 238

**primary deviance** is the initial deviant act itself. 238

**secondary deviance** refers to the psychological reorientation that occurs when the system catches a person and labels him or her as a deviant. 238

**discretion** is the ability to make decisions. 240

**plea bargain** is an out-of-court agreement between the prosecutor and the defense attorney to some concession, usually a reduced sentence. 240

**mandatory minimums** are fixed sentences for specific crimes. 240

## Sample Test Questions

These multiple-choice questions are similar to those found in the test bank that accompanies this textbook.

1. Deviance is *not* linked to
  - a. time.
  - b. society.
  - c. legal norms.
  - d. cultural values.
2. Which type of crime is most common?
  - a. Violent crime
  - b. Property crime
  - c. White-collar crime
  - d. Drug-related crime
3. Which of the following is an alternative punishment?
  - a. Prison
  - b. Death
  - c. Torture
  - d. Shaming
4. What is the last resort in the criminal justice system?
  - a. Counseling
  - b. Probation
  - c. Parole
  - d. Prison
5. According to Robert Merton, which type of lower-class person obeys social rules and works with little chance of advancement?
  - a. Conformist
  - b. Innovator
  - c. Retreatist
  - d. Ritualist

## ESSAY

1. How are police shows different than real-life police work?
2. Do the poor commit more crimes than other members of society?
3. Why is it difficult to make international comparisons about crime statistics?
4. Why are only certain things illegal?
5. What is wrong with the U.S. prison system?

## WHERE TO START YOUR RESEARCH PAPER

To learn more about crime in the United States, go to <http://www.fbi.gov/> or <http://www.usdoj.gov/>

To learn more about positive deviance, go to <http://www.positivedeviance.org/>

To see Uniform Crime Reports, go to <http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm>

To see National Crime Victimization Survey information, go to <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/NACJD/NCVS/>

To learn more about international police organizations, go to <http://www.interpol.int/Default.asp>

To learn more about the prison system, go to <http://www.bop.gov/>