



## Book Review of Criminology (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)

**Tara Harrison<sup>1</sup>**

Truman State University, United States of America

*Criminology (2nd Edition)*. (2014) Frank Schmalleger, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 312 pages. ISBN-13: 978-0132966757.

According to Schmalleger, information contained within this text is, “engaging to students, and focuses on key learning objectives” (pg. xiii). It consists of thirteen chapters containing charts and graphs. Chapter titles include, *What is Criminology? Understanding Crime and Criminals (1)*, *Psychological and Psychiatric Foundations of Criminal Behavior - It's How We Think (4)*, *Social Structure - It's How We Live (5)*, *Social Conflict - It's How We Relate (7)*, *Crimes against Persons - It's What We Fear (8)*, *White-Collar and Organized Crime - Crime as a Job (10)*, *Public Order and Drug Crimes-Recreational Offences (11)*, *Technology and Crime - It's a Double-Edged Sword (12)*, and *Globalization and Terrorism - Our Small World (13)*. Review questions and informative website addresses are provided at the end of each chapter.

For years, people have been fascinated by violent crime. Consequently, criminality has become a source of entertainment. This phenomenon is used effectively by Schmalleger to encourage his readers to examine crime, its changing definitions, and its various forms. Furthermore, it is acknowledged that conflicting viewpoints about crime-causation exists. This diversity of opinion is considered a strength by Schmalleger since it provides insight into the many motivations behind contemporary crime. It is within this exploration that the author considers current crime rates, ultimately concluding that “we may be on the cusp of a new cycle of increased crime” (p. 13). The early chapters of this text will prove especially valuable to readers since it is there that the author delves into a number of explanations for violent and bizarre behaviors.

The thematic question that permeates this work in its entirety and begs to be answered is, “why do people commit crime?” It is within the context of this question that gender, genetic makeup, body-type, and other physiological characteristics are analyzed as contributory factors to criminality. Pertaining to diet and its affect on the body's chemistry, “researchers have pointed to the role of excess sugar consumption in crime causation” (p. 49). Experiments testing the relationship between nutrition and criminality have revealed that individuals receiving proper nutrients (akin to a well-balanced diet) displayed a 47% reduction in antisocial activity as opposed to those that received placebos (p. 48). Additionally, the possibility of a biological component to criminality is explored.

---

<sup>1</sup>Sophomore Justice Systems and Psychology Major, Justice Systems Department, Truman State University, Kirksville, Missouri, USA.

In particular, studies examining the brain have revealed potential predictors of future criminality (p. 52). Also presented is the possibility for the existence of a crime “gene” and the implications that such a discovery would have on public policy, policing and correctional intervention.

Schmallegger acknowledges society’s growing anxiety about criminality and the burgeoning industry centering on the sale of goods and services that promote personal safety and security. It is in Chapter Eight where the crimes of rape, robbery, assault, workplace violence, hate crimes, stalking and murder are presented. Unfortunately, crimes including the 2012 shooting spree by James Holms are impossible to foresee and therefore prevent. Holms opened fire in a movie theater in Aurora, Colorado, killing twelve people and wounding fifty-eight others (p. 156). According to Schmallegger, acts such as these are isolated, unpredictable, and tend to be motivated by a desire to terrorize a particular community or segment of the population. “These people want to send a message to society” that promotes fear and apprehension (p. 157). Statistics about aggravated assault are also presented, showing that most “assaults involve victims and offenders who are known to each other” (p.165). It is surmised that overall, the probability of being the victim of a serious personal crime by a stranger(s) is extremely low (p. 165) making it especially difficult to avoid.

Chapter Twelve focuses on technology and crime. Schmallegger concludes that, “the world isn’t run by weapons anymore, or energy, or money. It’s run by ones and zeros – little bits of data – it’s all electrons....it’s all about information” (p. 230). For example, rapid advancements in technology have created opportunities for innovative offenders to promote their personal agendas by preying upon unsuspecting victims. Cyber crime, the term used to describe this modern criminal adaptation, has far reaching consequences since most financial transactions and forms of communication are electronically-based. As technology continues to progress it is essential that individuals learn more about the emergence and various categories of cyber crime (table 12-1; p. 232). The author recognizes however, that technology also makes it easier to combat criminality through DNA testing/matching, computerized finger printing and data-based repositories, and record keeping.

*Criminology* provides readers with information on topics relevant to the study of crime and criminality. With its many charts and graphs, it enables individuals to gain a greater understanding of how the justice system operates. It also provides a great deal of insight into offender motivation and how victims are perceived and treated by the system. Topics are presented in an easy to follow format, facilitating reader comprehension. View points and statistics that appear throughout this text are lent credibility via real-world examples. Furthermore, this book provides websites that students can visit for timely and supplemental information. I strongly recommend this text for its visual aspects, comprehensive information and its ability to link theory to practice. Frank Schmallegger has improved on an already strong text by providing updated information, expanded sections and access to a variety of support materials.