Cover Page: Gerald and Deanne Gitner Excellence in Teaching Award

Nominee: Dr. Stephanie Di Pietro, PhD Assistant Professor, Criminology and Criminal Justice
University of Missouri, St. Louis
324 Lucas Hall
One University Boulevard
St. Louis, MO 63121

Nominator: Dr. Finn-Aage Esbensen, PhD
E. Desmond Lee Professor of Youth Crime and Violence
Chair, Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice
University of Missouri, St. Louis
324 Lucas Hall
One University Boulevard
St. Louis, MO 63121

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April 1, 2013

Dear Gerald and Deanne Gitner Excellence in Teaching Award Committee:

It is a pleasure and an honor to recommend my colleague, Dr. Stephanie DiPietro for the Gitner Excellence in Teaching Award. In her short time at UMSL, she has distinguished herself as an excellent teacher, a student-friendly instructor, and an outstanding colleague. Stephanie joined the Criminology and Criminal Justice Department as a Visiting Assistant Professor in August of 2010. The following year, we were able to recruit for a tenure-track position and Stephanie was the selected candidate, beginning her tenure clock in August of 2011. Stephanie has been responsible for teaching a large introduction to criminological theory class, our undergraduate capstone course, and a graduate theory seminar. The two undergraduate courses could not provide a greater difference in undergraduate teaching context; first year students, majors as well as non-majors in a 100 plus lecture class at one extreme and a small (20 students) seminar comprised of CCJ majors in their last semester at the other extreme. To date, Professor DiPietro has received outstanding evaluations from students in both teaching environments.

Early in her year as a visiting professor, it became quite clear that Stephanie took great pride and interest in her teaching and in her students. Students regularly stop by her office: not just during scheduled office hours. She always makes time to meet with these students. During Stephanie’s first year in her tenure track position, the Department experienced a higher graduate student enrollment than anticipated. This led to the need to offer additional sections of several graduate courses. Without any hesitation, Stephanie agreed to teach a section of our graduate theory class: quite a different teaching environment from the two classes she had already taught. With only a week’s notice, she coordinated closely with the other faculty member teaching a section of grad theory and developed her syllabus and course materials. As with her other classes, student evaluations were outstanding.

After reviewing the departmental teaching evaluations, I asked a former Gitner award winner and colleague, Professor Lee Slocum, if she would be willing to nominate Stephanie for the Gitner Award. She was most enthusiastic to organize the materials and to observe Stephanie’s classes. Professor Slocum’s letter and supporting material highlight the quality of Dr. DiPietro’s teaching and the enthusiasm she brings to the classroom. In reading the student comments and letters, I felt that the following two excerpts capture the essence of the students’ assessment of Stephanie’s performance in the classroom.

“Dr. DiPietro is by far and above one of the premier college professors I have had. She is extremely versed in her field and cares about the success of her students both in and out of the classroom. I wish that more instructors took their occupation as serious as she does, and many could/should learn from her example. UMSL is very fortunate to have her as a faculty member and should do everything within its power to retain her.”
“I have had a long career as a student, obtaining a double major BA and a JD from Washington University. I have had the privilege of being instructed by some of the best. Dr. DiPietro stands out among the best of those experiences.”

In her second year at UMSL, Stephanie has developed her research interest in the relationship between immigration and crime. She obtained funding from the UM Research Board to conduct an exploratory study of Bosnian immigrants in the St. Louis area. This interest has led to a Fulbright application to conduct research and teaching in Sarajevo, thereby providing additional context to her local study. This research has exposed her to a number of Bosnian students enrolled on campus and, based on personal observation, Professor DiPietro now serves as a resource for many of these students.

To conclude, Stephanie has, in a very short time, established herself as an outstanding teacher in a variety of teaching contexts and is a deserving candidate for the Gitner Award for Excellence in Teaching. I hope the committee shares in my assessment.

Sincerely,

Finn-Aage Esbensen, Ph.D.
E. Desmond Lee Chair in Youth Crime and Violence
Chair, Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice
March 27, 2013

Dear Gerald and Deanne Gitner Excellence in Teaching Award Committee:

It is my distinct pleasure to support the nomination of Dr. Stephanie DiPietro for the Gitner Excellence in Teaching Award. Dr. DiPietro has truly been an example of the dedicated and proficient instructor. While keeping an active, productive and student involved research program she has also fully committed herself to offering important, interesting and engaging courses in our Criminology and Criminal Justice Program.

I fully reviewed Dr. DiPietro’s file when the Department of CCJ recommended that she be hired as an Assistant Professor on a tenure track line. It is not usual for an individual who was hired as a visiting professor to be offered a tenure track line. Following my extensive review of her credentials I was impressed on how this young faculty member was able to balance her research with her teaching (even though research was not part of the visiting professor position). Even more impressive was the fact that she received truly outstanding evaluations from students in diverse course offerings.

I meet regularly with the College’s Undergraduate Council. These students advise me on issues related to student success, education and the entire academic experience at UMSL. Students who major in CCJ are well represented on this council. Dr. DiPietro’s name has come up several times in discussions with these students. They were very strong advocates for her being offered the tenure track position and they were complementary about her teaching abilities, her dedication to her students and the creative approaches that she takes in keeping the students excited and interested in the material.

Taken collectively, I think that Stephanie DiPietro is an outstanding candidate for the Gerald and Deanne Gitner Excellence in Teaching Award. If you have any additional questions, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Dean and Professor of Microbiology
Nominee Statement of Philosophy of Teaching

As an assistant professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice, my primary goals are to provide students with a solid foundation of information with which they can shape their own directions for future inquiry, to foster the skills with which students can critique what they learn in my courses, and to enhance their understanding of the history, culture and social context in which their own experiences as students are embedded. To this end, my key teaching objectives are four-fold. First, I strive to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the major tenets/components of criminological theory and the justice system. Second, I encourage students to be critical consumers of this information, and in particular, to consider the broader cultural, historical and political context within which our understanding of crime and the criminal justice system is constantly evolving. Third, I attempt to promote a genuine interest in and concern for the broader implications of their studies for their own lives and for other facets of social organization. Fourth, I aim to provide students with a well-rounded educational experience, by promoting their interaction with and understanding of different cultures.

With respect to my first goal, I believe that in order to disseminate knowledge in a way that goes beyond the simple transference of facts, it is crucial to use a variety of active and collaborative teaching methods. Students are variable in their learning styles; an effective teaching method must be equally dynamic. In my courses, I have supplemented lecture material with in class-exercises, group debates, documentary films, and guest lectures to maintain a high level of interest among my students and to accommodate their variable learning styles. I believe this strategy has the potential to promote students’ enthusiasm for the material as well as to encourage a more layered understanding of the material that transcends the rote memorization of facts. As a concrete example of this approach, I incorporate documentary films into my curriculum. Students in my undergraduate seminar, “Theories of Crime” and my senior-level seminar on “Immigration and Crime” are required to write a paper on
one of these documentaries; for this assignment they are asked to take a theory that we have learned in class and consider whether this theory offers a plausible and complete explanation of the behavior(s) observed in the film. My hope for this assignment is that by urging students to think beyond the basic tenets of the theory that they will develop a fuller understanding of its strengths, its weaknesses and its applicability to real life situations. Also, in addition to the required in-class exams and writing assignments included in my curriculum, I ask students to find and discuss relevant stories from major news outlets, such the New York Times, so that they will draw connections between what we learn in class and what is happening in the world outside the classroom.

Another approach I use to foster a deeper understanding of the material is to encourage in-class debates on a regular basis. It is my philosophy that students are better able to retain information when they are asked to participate in thoughtful debate about critical issues and to develop their own well-informed positions. By asking students to actively engage in classroom discussions—instead of enabling a more passive learning environment in which students predominately listen to lectures—I hope to maximize the diversity of opinions and background experiences and to promote a more comprehensive understanding of the material.

With respect to my second goal of cultivating a contextualized understanding of the course material and to foster critical thinking skills, I believe it is essential to first break down the existing preconceived notions with which students begin their study of criminology. Compared with other disciplines, criminology is highly unique in that students typically come to class with a longstanding reserve of ideas about, experiences with, and perceptions of crime and the criminal justice system. These notions often stem from their direct and vicarious experiences with crime and justice as well as from popular culture outlets, including television and mass media. Although it can be challenging to dismantle some of students’ firmly held preconceptions, I think it is essential to teach students that there are alternative “truths” in the study of crime and criminal justice. Rather than present information in a way that suggests it is value-neutral, it has been an ongoing goal of mine to
encourage students to think critically about the broader social influences that shape our criminal justice system and our understanding of crime. Usually, this pedagogical process involves questioning fundamental assumptions about our social worlds, with tremendous implications for how students understand the world around them. To illustrate, I begin all of my courses—both at the undergraduate and graduate level—with a discussion of the concept of *cultural relativism*. By engaging students in a dialogue about how our definition of crime and punishment has evolved over time and across social and historical contexts, I hope to encourage students to challenge taken-for-granted ideas about how academic knowledge is produced.

Another key component of these introductory lectures is a discussion of statistical methodology and the variable sources of criminological data from which much of our ideas about the scope and nature of crime are drawn. A truly comprehensive understanding of the extant explanations of crime and social phenomena demands a foundational understanding of how methodology influences knowledge construction. Throughout my courses, I make every attempt to pair theoretical readings with a discussion of the methods used to arrive at conclusions about the nature of crime and the social world.

My third goal as an educator is to stimulate genuine enthusiasm for the key issues covered in my courses and to lay the groundwork for students to pursue their own scholarly agendas. It is my hope that students will leave my class with a broader spectrum of knowledge than that with which they came, and the desire to carve new directions in research and policy. Although this is one of the more daunting tasks I have faced as an instructor, I feel that the easiest way to generate excitement is to be transparent with my own passion for the subject. I believe that by leading classes in lively debates and encouraging question formulation—rather than just question answering—I can help students see the relevance of the course material to their own lives and to the larger social world. To me, the question of “Why do we want to know this?” is often a more useful than “How do we know
this to be true?” In assessing students’ understanding of the course material and their mastery of methods, I am particularly concerned with how effectively they can answer the former question.

With respect to my fourth goal, I believe that students across all disciplines benefit tremendously from learning about other peoples and cultures. Having taught in a diverse range of academic environments, including both private and public universities with large populations of international students, as well as in an international context, I believe that the ability to adapt one’s teaching style to new languages, cultures and environments is critical to being an effective teacher. As a scholar, I am interested primarily in the consequences of immigration and cultural assimilation on criminal behavior. To this end, I am engaged in an ongoing research project with the local Bosnian community in St. Louis. It is my hope that this research will inform strategies aimed at preventing maladaptive behaviors (e.g., crime, substance use) among Bosnians and pave the way for collaboration with scholars outside my home institution. Beyond my research agenda, however, I am deeply motivated by my interest in and concern for the experiences of my students and the members of my community.

One of the most rewarding experiences I have had in my tenure at the University of Missouri—St. Louis has been the opportunity to talk at length with my Bosnian students about their experiences migrating to the U.S. and coming of age in a city that is so unlike that of their parents. In the course of these discussions I have often wished that I were more familiar with their culture, language, and customs, so that I could more fully understand some of their struggles, which include problems with crime and substance use. For the past year, I have endeavored to broaden my understanding of the history and experiences of our local Bosnian population and to find ways to bridge the divide between this group and the larger UMSL community. Although I make it a priority to be available for all of my students, I also recognize the unique challenges faced by international students, and refugees in particular. Thus, I have worked very closely with many of my international students, advising them on issues ranging from course selection to post-graduate career options.
Additionally, in collaboration with my colleagues in the Criminology and Criminal Justice department, I am planning to develop an annual study abroad program to Bosnia. Although still in its planning stages, the goal of this program (which will be open to all UMSL students) is to bring a group of students to Bosnia for a three week period over the summer to learn about its history, culture, and customs, and to situate the atrocities of the war that occurred there between 1992 and 1995 within a larger sociological framework of crime, justice, and reconciliation. My hope is that such a program would offer non-Bosnian students—who may have a limited understanding of their Bosnian neighbors in St. Louis—a chance to learn about Bosnia, and Bosnian students—many of whom left their country at a very young age—the chance to learn about their own heritage.

To conclude, I feel that teaching is an ever-evolving process, and as such, it is critical to keep challenging myself to meet the needs of my students and to enhance their educational experience. To this end, I engage in a number of activities aimed at improving my teaching style, including participating in UMSL sponsored workshops on professional development, meeting on a regular basis with colleagues to discuss their teaching pedagogy, undertaking my own language studies so that I might better communicate with students, and participating in all opportunities to acquire feedback on my teaching, including the mid-semester feedback system offered by UMSL through the Center for Teaching Excellence. Additionally, I am an avid reader of several journals and newsletters dedicated to pedagogy, including the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, the *Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy* as well as the online discussion forums of the Lilly Teaching Fellows, of which I am an alumnus. It is my hope that by staying abreast of the ongoing dialogue about teaching that I will continue to hone my skills as an educator and to provide the most comprehensive educational experience for my students.
Course Title: Theories of Crime  
Course Number: 1110-001  
Class Time: Tuesday and Thursday, 11:00PM – 12:15PM  
Professor: Dr. Stephanie DiPietro  
Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday, 12:30-1:30 or by appointment  
Contact Information: Phone: 314.516.5038  
E-mail: dipietros@umsl.edu  
Office: 338B Lucas Hall

Teaching Assistant: CheyOnna Sewell  
Office Hours: By appointment  
Contact Information: E-mail: csdzb@umsl.edu  
Office: 526 Lucas Hall

Course Description and Goals:

This course is designed to provide students with a comprehensive overview of the major tenets, assumptions, and definitions of criminological theories developed in Europe and the United States over the past three centuries. We will begin with an overview of crime measurement. As part of this unit, we will discuss the major sources of crime data upon which much contemporary criminological research is based and the research methodology used to study quantitative crime data.

We will turn next to an examination of the major Classical and Positivist theories of crime causation, which include biological, psychological, and sociological theories as well as classical theories of crime causation. This unit will focus primarily on the etiology (“causes”) of criminal behavior, with careful consideration of why some people are more or less crime prone, or why certain “macro-level units” (e.g., neighborhoods, communities, countries) have higher rates of crime than others.

Throughout the course, emphasis will be placed on the social/historical context from which these theories emerged, on the viability of each theory as an explanation of crime, and on the applicability of each theory to different cultures and contexts.

Required Text:  

Course Requirements:  
Students are expected to read all assigned material before coming to class and to participate in class discussion. Grades for the class will be based on in-class exams, class participation and a short paper.
Grading Schema:
- 4 Exams: 25% each (Only 3 exams will count toward your final grade)
- Film Critique: 20%
- Class Participation (short in-class quizzes): 5%

EXAMS: There will be a total of 4 exams given in this class. ONLY 3 EXAMS WILL COUNT TOWARD YOUR FINAL GRADE. Your lowest exam grade will automatically be dropped at the end of the semester.

Exams will cover all reading and lecture material covered during the previous portion of the course. The exams will be a combination of multiple choice, true/false, and short-answer questions. The exams will not be cumulative.

FILM CRITIQUE: We will watch a total of 3 documentary films in this class. You are required to write a reaction paper on 1 of these films in which you do the following: Choose one of the criminological theories that we have covered in this class (e.g. social learning theory, social control theory, etc.) and discuss how well this theory explains the criminal and/or delinquent behavior documented in the film. As part of this assignment, you should offer 1) a summary of the key tenets of the theoretical perspective as well as 2) a brief synopsis of the film. How does the theory you chose explain the criminal and/or delinquent behavior in the film? Does it offer a good explanation of the behavior? Why or why not?

We will watch these films in class as listed in the schedule. If you miss class and wish to critique the film that was covered, it is your responsibility to obtain these films for viewing. I do not have copies to distribute to students.

The basic requirements for the assignment are as follows:
- 3 to 5 pages in length
- Typed
- Double spaced
- 12 point font
- 1 inch margins on all sides

Due dates for each film critique are listed in the course schedule. This assignment is due in class in HARD COPY on the due date. Late papers will lose 1 letter grade per day late and emailed papers will NOT be accepted under any circumstances.

CLASS PARTICIPATION: 5% of your final grade will be based on class participation. Although this is primarily a lecture course, your participation is vital to maintaining a stimulating and interesting classroom environment. I strongly encourage you to ask questions, to participate in class discussions, and to bring stories relevant to crime and justice from media outlets (e.g., newspapers, magazines) to class for discussion.
Your participation grade will be based on *several short in-class quizzes* given periodically throughout the semester as well as *your active participation in class*. These quizzes will be based on the reading material, class lectures, and class discussions. Completion of these quizzes will count toward your participation grade. *In-class quizzes* cannot be made up.

The grading scale is as follows:

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<td>73-76.5%</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>70-72.5%</td>
<td>C-</td>
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<td>65%-69.5%</td>
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<td>below 65%</td>
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Class Policies:

**MAKE-UP POLICY:**

- Make-up exams will only be granted for students who are able to provide me with written and verifiable proof of an emergency situation preventing you from taking the final exam. **You must inform me PRIOR to the exam.** *There will be no opportunity to make up an exam if you miss it without informing me first.* The make-up exam will differ from the regular exam and will follow an essay format.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

- Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and any violations will be reported to the Dean of Students. Academic dishonesty includes cheating, fabrication of information used in assignments, plagiarism, and knowingly facilitating the academic dishonesty of another. The student conduct code can be found at: [http://www.umsl.edu/studentlife/dsa/student_planner/policies/conductcode.html](http://www.umsl.edu/studentlife/dsa/student_planner/policies/conductcode.html)

**CLASSROOM CODE OF CONDUCT:**

- *The use of laptops and cell phones during class is not allowed.* If you need to use these devices please do so in the hallway outside the classroom.
LECTURE NOTES:

- Lecture notes will be posted on MyGateway. However, much of the material that is covered in class is not included on the lecture notes. If you miss a lecture it is your responsibility to get the notes from a fellow student or to obtain the notes from me during my posted office hours.

EXAMS:

- All exams are closed book/closed note. Please note that you may not bring any laptops, books or notes into classroom on exam day. If you wish to study in the final minutes before the exam, you must do this outside the classroom.

RECORDING CLASS LECTURES:

- Students may NOT record any portion of the course meetings without first obtaining the permission of the instructor. Recording includes reproductions of course content via audio, video, transcription software, and other similar methods. Even if permission is granted, these recordings cannot be shared with others outside of the course unless required by the University of Missouri System and conforming with the UM System guidelines for release.

Class schedule (subject to change)

**January 22**
- Course Overview
- Lecture Topic: What is Criminology and Why Should we Study It?
- Reading for next class: Chapters 1 & 3

**January 24**
- Lecture Topic: Crime Measurement
- Reading for next class: Chapter 4

**January 29**
- Lecture Topic: The Distribution of Crime
- Reading for next class: Chapter 5, pgs 153-168

**January 31**
- Lecture Topic: The Classical School
- Reading for next class: Chapter 5, pgs 168-194

**February 5**
- Lecture Topic: Deterrence Theory
- Reading for next class: Chapter 5, pgs 194-208

**February 7**
- Lecture Topic: Rational Choice & Routine Activity Theory
- Reading: STUDY FOR EXAM
February 12
- **1ST EXAM!**
- Reading for next class: Chapter 6, pgs 217-232

February 14
- Lecture Topic: The Positivist School
- Reading for next class: Chapter 6, pgs 232-258

February 19
- Lecture Topic: Biological Theories of Crime
- Reading for next class: Chapter 7, pgs 265-280

February 21
- Lecture Topic: Anomie and Strain Theory
- Reading for next class: Chapter 7, pgs 280-291

February 26
- Lecture Topic: Anomie and Strain Theory continued
- Reading for next class: Chapter 7, pgs 292-302

February 28
- Lecture Topic: Ecological Theories of Crime
- Reading for next class: Anderson (1999) *Code of the Street* *Posted on MyGateway*

March 5
- In class film: *The Boys of Baraka*
- Reading for next class: Chapter 8, pgs 309-323

March 7
- Reading for next class: STUDY FOR EXAM

March 12
- **2ND EXAM!**
- Reading for next class: Chapter 8, pgs 323-341

March 14
- **FILM CRITIQUE DUE IN CLASS: The Boys of Baraka**
- Lecture Topic: Subcultural Theory
- Reading for next class: Chapter 8, pgs 341-346

March 19
- Lecture Topic: Social Control Theory
- Reading for next class: Chapter 8, pgs 346-356
March 21
- Lecture Topic: Self Control Theory
- Reading for next class: No reading for next class

March 26 SPRING BREAK

March 28 SPRING BREAK

April 2
- In class film: *The Devil’s Playground*
- Reading for Next Class: Chapter 9, pgs 363-365, 382-398

April 4
- Lecture Topic: Introduction to Critical Criminology
- Reading for next class: Chapter 9, pgs 366-382

April 9
- Lecture Topic: Labeling Theory
- Reading for next class: Braithwaite (2000) Shame and Criminal Justice *Posted on MyGateway*

April 11 FILM CRITIQUE DUE IN CLASS: *The Devil’s Playground*
- Lecture Topic: Shame and Defiance Theory
- Reading for next class: STUDY FOR EXAM

April 16
- 3rd EXAM!

April 18
- Lecture topic: Immigration and Crime

April 23
- Lecture Topic: Immigration and Crime continued
- Reading for Next Class: Chapter 10, 417-434

April 25
- Life Course/Developmental Criminology
- Reading for next class: No reading for next class

April 30
- Lecture Topic: Gender and Criminality
- In class film: *Girlhood*
- Reading for next class: Chapter 10, pgs 405-417
May 2
- Lecture Topic: Theoretical Integration
- Reading for next class: To be announced

May 7  FILM CRITIQUE DUE IN CLASS: *Girlhood*
Lecture Topic: Review

May 9  4th EXAM!
Course Title: Seminar in Criminology and Criminal Justice: Special Topic: Immigration and Crime  
Course Number: CRIMIN 4390  
Class Time: Tuesday, 2:00PM-4:40PM  

Professor: Dr. Stephanie DiPietro  
Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday, 12:30-1:30 or by appointment  
Contact Information: Phone: 314.516.5038  
E-mail: dipietros@umsl.edu  
Office: 338B Lucas Hall  

Course Description:  
At the heart of the contemporary immigration debate is the topic of criminality. Does immigration increase crime? Is the militarization of U.S. borders necessary to control crime? How has public sentiment toward immigration shaped public policy throughout history? How do these issues vary across geographic and cultural contexts? The goal of this course is to provide students with a solid foundation for understanding the key issues in the immigration debate, particularly with respect to the relationship between immigration and crime. We will review the research literature on the relationship between immigration and crime, paying particular attention to its historical evolution and its variability across cultures and contexts. Further, we will discuss the unique experiences of different immigrant and refugee groups, and consider how their migration and adaptation experiences shape criminal behavior. Students are expected to demonstrate the ability to work independently, integrating theory and research in a major paper supervised by the instructor.  

Below are some of the topics we will discuss:  

- Historical Immigration Trends  
- Theories of Immigrant Criminality  
- The Changing Face of American Cities  
- The Militarization of U.S. Borders  
- Immigration and Crime across Racial-Ethnic Groups & Geographic Contexts  

Prerequisites:  

CCJ 1110, CCJ 1120, 1130, 2210, 2220, English 3100, and senior standing or consent of instructor.  

Required Texts: (Available at the University Book Store)  

1) *Immigration and Crime: Race, Ethnicity, and Violence* (Martinez Jr., Ramiro and Abel Valenzuela Jr.). NYU Press  


**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING SCHEMA:**

**Attendance and Class Participation:** Your participation is vital to maintaining a stimulating and interesting classroom environment. Students are expected to attend class and to participate actively in class discussion. Students must complete the required readings before class and come to class prepared to discuss them. Your participation grade will be based on your attendance and on your contribution during class discussions. **Students who miss more than 2 classes will lose a letter grade (for participation) for each additional class missed.**

- Exceptions: Religious Holidays: Please let me know during the first two weeks of the semester if you will be missing classes (and the dates) due to religious holidays.
- University Events: If you are participating in university-sanctioned events (e.g., intercollegiate athletics, music ensembles, performing arts troupes, field trips, student government), please let me know by submitting a “Student Absence Form” identifying the scheduled event.

**Midterm Exam:** The midterm exam will be open note, open book, and will include 3 essay length questions covering the reading and lecture material from the first half of the semester. You will have a choice of questions (e.g., choose 3 out of 5). I will distribute sample questions prior to the exam.

**Paper Presentation:** Each student is required to make a formal presentation of their term paper. Student presentations will take place during the last 2 weeks of class. Students are expected to prepare a 10-15 minute powerpoint presentation summarizing the key points of their research papers. You will be evaluated on both the written part (i.e., slides) and oral delivery. We will discuss the details of the presentation as we move closer to the presentation dates.

**Term Paper:** A 15-20 page research paper (with a minimum of 12 external academic references) will be the primary product of this course. The paper will address a key issue in the immigration-crime debate. To keep you on track throughout the semester, the paper is divided into components, due incrementally throughout the semester (see due dates below).

**Grading Schema:**

- Class Participation/Attendance: 15%
- Midterm Exam: 15%
- Term Paper Components: 15%
- Term Paper: 40%
- Paper Presentation: 15%

**The grading scale is as follows:**

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- 73-76.5%  C
- 70-72.5%  C-
- 65%-69.5%  D
- below 65%  F

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

- Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and any violations will be reported to the Dean of Students. Academic dishonesty includes cheating, fabrication of information used in assignments, plagiarism, and knowingly facilitating the academic dishonesty of another. The student conduct code can be found at:
  - [http://www.umsl.edu/studentlife/dsa/student_planner/policies/conductcode.html](http://www.umsl.edu/studentlife/dsa/student_planner/policies/conductcode.html)

**CLASSROOM CODE OF CONDUCT:**

- Please be courteous and listen with respect and attention to what your fellow classmates have to say. Please turn off all cell phones, and other electronic devices upon entering the classroom. Additionally, *please do not disturb class by arriving late.*

- All email correspondence related to the course must be conducted through your assigned UMSL email account or MyGateway. I will do my best to respond to your inquiries within 24 hours.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- **WRITING LAB** The Writing Lab, a division of the Center for Academic Development, is a place to bring your essays, reports, resumé, or term papers for a critique. No appointment is necessary. Some of the issues covered in the lab include organization, sentence clarity, development, grammar and usage. Regular visits to the Writing Lab help you maximize your writing effectiveness. I encourage you to get in the habit of working with the Writing Lab (available on MyGateway).

- **SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS** Students requiring special accommodations should meet with me during office hours so that we can discuss how to meet your needs this semester. Prior to our meeting be sure you have met with someone in the campus offices that supports student with disabilities (MSC 144).

Class schedule (subject to change). All readings (besides book chapters) will be posted on MyGateway under “Course Documents.”

**January 22**  
**Lecture Topic:** Course Overview: Why Study Immigration and Crime?  
- **Reading:** Martinez and Valenzuela (2006), *Immigration & Crime*, Chapter 1  
- Q & A Guide to State Immigration Law Available online at:  
January 29
- **Lecture Topic:** Theoretical Perspectives on Immigration and Crime; Social Disorganization Theory and the Chicago School of Criminology

February 5
- **Lecture Topic:** Public Perceptions of Immigrants
  Reading: Mann et al (2006) Chapters 1, 3, 8, & 13
  Kubrin et al. (2012) Chapters 1 & 2

February 12
- **Lecture Topic:** Does Immigration Increase Crime?
- **Reading:** Press (2006) "Do Immigrants Make Us Safer?" *The New York Times Magazine*

February 19
- **Lecture Topic:** Immigration and the community

February 26 **Lecture Topic:** Assimilation and Second Generation Decline
  - In Class Film: “Amreeka”

March 5 **PAPER TOPIC DUE**
- **Lecture Topic:** Immigration Policy: Causes and Consequences
  Reading: Kubrin et al. (2012) Chapters 4, 6 & 10

March 12 **Lecture Topic:** Immigrants in a Global Context
  - Kubrin et al. (2012) Chapter 7
March 19  MIDTERM EXAM

March 26  Spring Break

April 2  Lecture Topic: Border control and illegal immigration
        Reading: Martinez and Valenzuela (2006), Immigration and Crime, Chapters 8-9
        Cornelius. 2001. "Death at the Border: Efficacy and Unintended Consequences of U.S.
        Immigration Control Policy." Population and Development Review 27
        In Class Film: “Wetback”

April 9  Lecture Topic: Research Paper Tutorial; How to Find Appropriate Sources & Drafting
        your paper
        Reading: What is an academic paper? Available online at:

April 16  **ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE**
        Lecture Topic: MAJOR FIELD EXAM (Required for Graduation)

April 23  **PAPER OUTLINE DUE**
        Lecture Topic: To be announced

April 30  -  STUDENT PAPER PRESENTATIONS

May 7    -  STUDENT PAPER PRESENTATIONS

FINAL PAPERS DUE IN HARD COPY TO ME BY 4PM ON May 10th!!
FOUNDATIONS OF CRIMINOLOGICAL THEORY
CCJS415, Fall 2011
Monday 5:30-8:10

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to provide graduate students with a thorough understanding of the origins and development of major theoretical explanations of crime. Attention is focused on the nature and importance of theory, the social and historical context of theoretical developments, and the methods used to critically assess theoretically derived hypotheses and assumptions. We will also consider the relevance of theory for the study of crime, the level of empirical support from peer-reviewed research, and the scientific and political implications of different theoretical perspectives.

READINGS

Because this is a graduate course, students are required to read many of the original classics in the field as published in peer-reviewed journal articles and elsewhere. These readings will be made available on the course website. In addition, one summary textbook, available in the bookstore, is required: Cullen and Agnew (2011), Criminological Theory: Past to Present (4th Edition), Oxford University Press. Students are expected to have read the material for each week prior to coming to class, and to participate in class discussions. Another summary textbook, available in the bookstore, is highly recommended: Bernard et al. (2010), Vold’s Theoretical Criminology, Oxford University Press.

GRADES

Grades for this course are based on the results of two in-class essay exams (midterm and final), one presentation, and on a “theory portfolio” that you will turn in at the conclusion of your final exam. Students may use notes during exams. The midterm exam and the final exam are worth 70 points each, the presentation is worth 20 points, and your theory portfolio is worth 40 points. Final grades will be based on the following percentage distribution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
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PRESENTATION

Each student will do a brief in-class presentation summarizing two empirical articles designated for that week. Students will select their presentation readings on the first day of class. Instructions for the presentation will be made available at the first class meeting.

THEORY PORTFOLIO (Due December 12th)

The theory portfolio will consist of an expanded version of material in Table 1, pp 6-9 in Cullen and Agnew. An example entry will be provided during the first class. Students will prepare a 2-page summary for each of the designated theories, which will include the following details:

1) A brief description of the general perspective or theory, including key concepts and hypotheses,
the primary independent and dependent variables and how they are linked.
2) A brief description of the level(s) of analysis at which the theory is stated and should be tested.
3) A listing of implicit and explicit assumptions made by the theory.
4) A summary of the key strengths and weaknesses of the theoretical model.
5) A brief summary of the types of public policies that would follow from the logic of the theory if supported by empirical research.
6) A listing of methodological and substantive challenges to the theory.

EXAMS (Midterm on October 24th; Final exam on December 12th)

The exams are in-class, and students are allowed to use their notes. These are essay exams that allow for some option (e.g., choose 2 of 3, or 3 of 4 questions to answer). An example question will be distributed two weeks before the midterm so students will have a sense of the nature of the typical question. Students are encouraged to use their theory portfolio entries as notes for the exams.

ACADEMIC POLICIES

Attendance records are not kept, however you are responsible for all of the material covered in the readings and in class lectures and discussion. If you miss a class, be sure to ask another student if they would be willing to share their class notes with you.

Make-up exams are given in emergency situations, and in unavoidable job conflicts (such as court appearances), but only when advance notice is given. I will respond to such notifications via email, however if you do not receive a confirmation email, re-contact me to make sure it arrived. I do not check emails on Saturdays and Sundays, but I will respond first thing Monday morning.

Student behavior must conform to the policies of the UMSL (http://www.umsl.edu/current_students/policies.htm) Academic dishonesty of any form will not be tolerated. Faculty are required to report all instances of academic dishonesty to University Administration. In addition, please turn off your cell-phones/pagers before class and refrain from responding to text-messages during class. If you must respond to electronic communication, please show respect for your fellow students and step out of the classroom to do so. Similarly, if you use a laptop for note taking, please type quietly and refrain from accessing the internet during class so as not to distract others around you.

Auxiliary aids and reasonable accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Contact the Coordinator of Disability Access Services for further information about obtaining special accommodations (http://www.umsl.edu/studentlife/dsa/student_planner/policies/disabilities.html). This University office works with instructors to ensure that equal educational opportunities are made available to all qualified students without regard to disabling condition.

SCHEDULE OF MATERIAL

Below is the schedule of readings for each week. This schedule may change depending on class needs. Changes made to the schedule will be announced in class and posted on the class website.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic/Readings</th>
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| 1.   | 8/22  | **Introduction**  
Class overview and presentation of necessary terminology. Assignments for article presentations. |
| 2.   | 8/29  | **The Origins of Modern Criminology**  

Garland and Sparks (2000), “Criminology, social theory, and the challenge of our times,” British
### Deterrence Theory and the Classical School


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<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
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### 3. 9/5 Labor Day – no class

### 4. 9/12 ******** Individual Traits and Crime

Cullen and Agnew, pp. 32-85
Bernard, Snipes and Gerould, pp. 37-64
Healy (1915), “The individual delinquent.”
Achorn (1936), “Wayward youth.”
Hakeem (1985), “The assumption that crime is a product of individual characteristics: A prime example from psychiatry.”


### 5. 9/19******** Social Systems and Crime: Émile Durkheim (1858-1917)

“The normal and the pathological”
“Suicide and social cohesion”
“Anomie and suicide”
Bernard, Snipes and Gerould, pp. 115-132


### 6. 9/26 ******** The Chicago School: The City, Social Disorganization, and Crime

Cullen and Agnew, pp. 89-117, pp. 630-639.
Shaw and McKay (1929, 1942), Excerpts from Juvenile Delinquency in Urban Areas.


### 7. 10/3 ******** Differential Association, Social Learning, and Subcultural Theories

Cullen and Agnew, pp. 118-154.


Sellin (1938), “Crime as violation of conduct norms,” and “Culture, conflict and crime.”
Miller (1958), “Lower class culture as a generating milieu of gang delinquency.”


8. **Anomie and Strain Theories**
Cullen and Agnew, pp. 155-197
Cohen (1955), Ch. 5, “A delinquent solution.”


9. **Varieties of Control Theory**
Cullen and Agnew, pp. 198-236
Bernard, Snipes and Gerould, pp. 203-225


Wright et al. (1999), “Low self-control, social bonds, and crime: Social causation, social selection, or both?” Criminology 37:479-514.

10. **Midterm Exam**

11. **Social Psychology and Societal Reaction Theories**
Mead , Overview.
Cooley (1902), “The social self.”
Thomas (1923), “The definition of the situation.”
Tannenbaum (1938), “Definition and dramatization of evil.”
Lemert (1951), “Secondary deviance and role conceptions.”
Garfinkel (1956), “Conditions of successful degradation ceremonies.”
Becker (1963), “Deviance as a master status.”
Cullen and Agnew, pp. 239-269


12. 11/7 ********Critical Criminology and Marxist Theories of Crime
Cullen and Agnew, pp. 270-319

  Karl Marx (1818-1883)
Excerpts from A Primer in Radical Criminology, Lynch and Groves (1989), Ch. 2 “Marxist theories on state and law,” Ch. 3 “The radical concept of crime,” Ch. 5 “Causes of crime: The radical view.”


  White-Collar Crime Introduction
Cullen and Agnew, pp. 510-549
Black (2010), “Former regulator talks fraud and the big bank getaway,” PBS Newshour:
  http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/business/jan-june10/solman_02-17.html (8 minutes)

13. 11/14 ********Feminist Theories: Gender, Power, and Crime
Cullen and Agnew, pp. 320-380


14. 11/21 No meeting, Thanksgiving Holiday.

15. 11/28 ********Deterrence, Rational Choice, and Environmental Criminology
Cullen and Agnew, pp. 381-450, pp. 640-645.

  Osgood et al. (1996), “Routine activities and individual deviant behavior,”


16. **12/5 Developmental Theories of Crime**
   Cullen and Agnew, pp. 465-509, pp. 646-655


17. **12/12 FINAL EXAM, 5:30-7:30**

   THEORY PORTFOLIO DUE
Dear Gerald and Deanne Gitner Excellence in Teaching Award Committee:

It is with great enthusiasm that I recommend Dr. Stephanie DiPietro for the Gitner Excellence in Teaching Award. From the moment Dr. DiPietro arrived at the University of Missouri – St. Louis, it was obvious that she is a gifted educator who inspires her students. During her short time here, a number of graduate students have sought her out to serve on their advisory committees, dissertation committees and to oversee directed readings. Informal conversations with Dr. DiPietro reinforced my perceptions that she is an innovative instructor who works hard to keep students engaged in the learning process. In addition, over the past year Dr. DiPietro has begun to work closely with the Bosnian students at UMSL, serving as an informal mentor. This letter details my classroom observations of Dr. DiPietro and briefly summarizes her outreach work in the Bosnian student community at UMSL.

I observed Professor DiPietro’s undergraduate Theories of Crime class, which is a relatively large introductory course that fulfills general education requirements. My opinion of Dr. Pietro was only enhanced when I had the opportunity to observe her work in the classroom. Students often find this course to be onerous because it covers a lot of theoretical ground for an introductory class. In addition, most students hear the word “theory” and immediately fall asleep. However, this trepidation was not at all evident in Dr. DiPietro’s class. Students were actively engaged in class discussions and excited by the material. Dr. DiPietro used a number of innovative and effective teaching strategies.

First, I noticed that Dr. Pietro engages in many of the practices used by instructors who promote effective learning among their students. Dr. DiPietro began the class by briefly reviewing the material that was covered the previous week. This served to not only reinforce the material students had already learned and prepare them mentally for the day’s learning, but also acted as a bridge to the new theoretical concepts to be covered in class that day. This reinforcement of old material was not limited to the beginning of class. In fact, throughout the lecture Dr. Pietro asked students to link the material they were learning to concepts they had studied in past weeks, comparing and contrasting old ideas with new. This helped students to keep the old material fresh in their minds and enabled them to better distinguish theories that, at first glance, seem very similar. This technique seems to pay off. I noticed that on several occasions, unsolicited by Dr. Pietro, students compared the new theory they were learning to older ones. These students received high praise from Dr. DiPietro.

Second, Dr. Pietro uses a dialectical style of teaching that features students as co-producers of knowledge. Dr. Pietro introduced initial propositions of the theory, but had the students derive specific aspects of the theory through questioning. For example, she introduced the idea that in
order for delinquency to occur the would-be offender must first “neutralize” their belief that delinquency is wrong. Students were then asked to brainstorm examples of neutralizations and to discuss how these neutralizations “free” someone to engage in crime. In addition, Dr. Pietro reinforced abstract theoretical concepts and developed student critical thinking skills by asking students to generate policy implications from theories.

Many instructors find that their best efforts to generate discussion fall flat, but this certainly was not the case in the class I observed. Dr. Pietro created a classroom environment where students felt safe to ask and answer questions. Students who participated were praised even if their responses were not exactly on target. The large number of different students who participated in class discussion is evidence that Dr. Pietro is effective at getting students engaged. Importantly, Dr. DiPietro has created an environment in which students are able to respectively express contradictory opinions and are encouraged to challenge her ideas and their assumptions.

Theory can be a difficult class to teach because it involves explaining abstract concepts; yet, Dr. DiPietro is able to present abstract theoretical concepts in a manner that makes them accessible to her students. Her success is partially due to the fact that she relates the abstract concepts to everyday life. For example, when discussing the idea that conduct norms may vary from place to place and time to time, she drew on variation in laws regarding public consumption of alcohol. She also related theoretical ideas to current events. The notion of honor killings was discussed in class. One of the assigned readings for the day was an article about a woman who was killed by her own father for violating religious and cultural norms. This one article was linked to a number of theoretical concepts discussed in class that day: techniques of neutralization, conduct norms, and honor cultures.

There were other hallmarks of a good teacher on display that day. Slides for the class are posted so students can review them and use them to guide their studying. Dr. DiPietro knows most of the students by name despite the fact that this is a large lecture class. Finally, her ability to generate active participation allows her to make certain that students understand the material that she presents before moving on to the next topic.

Dr. DiPietro has an engaging teaching style in which she is able to capitalize on her own excitement about the material to engage students. For one theory, she had what she referred to as “story time” where she relayed the historical foundations of the Southern Subculture of Violence and described the unorthodox experiments that researchers used to test these ideas (they involved comparing how men from the south and from the north reacted to an unprovoked insult).

Dr. DiPietro’s interest in her students extends beyond the classroom. For the past year, she has devoted herself to learning about the history and experiences of the local Bosnian population, including her students. By studying the immigration and assimilation experiences of this group, Dr. DiPietro’s work will inform strategies targeted at preventing problem behaviors among Bosnian youth and will help to bridge the divide between this group and the larger UMSL community. In addition to collecting detailed life narratives of Bosnian refugees, Dr. DiPietro has acted as a mentor to UMSL students from the Bosnian community. Students often line up outside her office to seek her guidance and advice. To better serve this population, Dr. DiPietro has started studying the Bosnian language. In addition, she has applied for a teaching and
research Fulbright Fellowship in Bosnia-Herzegovina and is in the early stages of developing a study abroad program to take UMSL students to Bosnia. She is truly dedicated to the Bosnian community at UMSL.

In sum, despite that fact the Dr. DiPietro is relatively new to teaching she displays the characteristics of a seasoned educator who know the techniques for engaging students and helping them achieve their learning objectives. In fact, by observing Dr. DiPietro I learned new teaching techniques that I will apply in my own classrooms. I strongly support her nomination for the Gerald and Deanne Gitner Excellence in Teaching Award.

Sincerely,
Lee Ann Slocum
Assistant Professor, Criminology and Criminal Justice
April 2, 2013

Dear Selection Committee:

This letter is to support Dr. Stephanie DiPietro’s nomination for the Gitner Award for Excellence in Teaching at the University of Missouri – St. Louis. I recommend Dr. DiPietro without reservations for this prestigious honor as she has evidenced stellar performance in the classroom since arriving at UMSL.

Dr. DiPietro has a reputation as a rigorous (but fair) instructor. She works hard to convey research findings in a digestible fashion for students at both the undergraduate- and graduate- levels. Students generally report learning very important substantive material from her, as well as commonly reporting that her classes are challenging but interesting.

Of particular import, Dr. DiPietro uses a variety of media to stimulate analytical/critical thinking skills and class discussion. While lectures are a common feature of her courses, so too are individual projects, group debates, documentary films, and guest lectures. These varied strategies target students with different learning styles, make the class more interesting, and encourage students’ self-reflection of their own positions related to criminology and criminal justice.

I have had the good fortune to observe Dr. DiPietro teach several sections of a 1000-level course within the CCJ department. She gave interactive lectures about social disorganization theory and the connection between immigration and crime in ways that made students (and me) truly understand it. She was truly outstanding.

In short, Dr. Stephanie DiPietro is a world-class educator who continues to strive to make classes more relevant and interesting to students. One need only look at the comments former students have shared regarding her classes to see how successful her approach to teaching is.

For these reasons, I strongly support Dr. Stephanie DiPietro’s nomination for the Gitner Award for Excellence in teaching. Please do not hesitate to contact me by phone (314-516-5075) or email (taylortj@umsl.edu) if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Terrance J. Taylor

Terrance J. Taylor, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Appendix A: Letters of Support from Students
March 27, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

I am honored to write a letter of support for the nomination of Professor Di Pietro for the Gitner Excellence in Teaching Award.

I have known Professor Di Pietro for two years. Since meeting Stephanie in her Theories of Crime class she has been nothing less than helpful. Her class was challenging and required constant involvement and review of class materials. She is able to provide the structure that the class needs while allowing students to comfortably involve themselves in class discussions at the same time. This was one of the few lecture classes that incorporated various presentations such as video and power point to cover course material. The different approach to the lecture allows students with different learning styles to thoroughly understand the material and the comfortable environment encourages students to ask questions and participate in discussion.

Stephanie showed genuine interest in my academic progress and is always available to provide advice and guidance. Many of the Bosnian students at UMSL share my gratitude toward the work that Stephanie is doing with the Bosnian community. The majority of Bosnian students do not have the opportunity to rely on their parents for advice when it comes to college and continuing education because they are in a completely different educational system than the one’s their parents are used to. Stephanie understands the challenges we face and is eager to help her Bosnian students. Specifically, she has assisted me in my application process for graduate school and provided helpful advice for future education and employment plans. I cannot express the appreciation that I have for Stephanie Di Pietro and her willingness to go above and beyond to help her students.

Sincerely,

Adela Salihovic
April 1, 2013

Dear Lee Slocum:

I understand that Stephanie Di Pietro was nominated for the Gitner Excellence in Teaching Award. Professor Di Pietro is very deserving of this reward. As a former student of hers she proved to me in many ways of what an excellent professor she is in her field.

I was enrolled in Professor Di Pietro’s Theories of Crime course. From day one I noticed she has fully planned out the course for the whole semester, and was determined for us students to finish the course with knowledge that would stick with us throughout our college education. Her style of teaching was pleasing as well. I enjoyed listening to her lectures. She used various interesting examples and demonstrated them well throughout the course. She also engaged with students and made sure they fully understand the material. Professor Di Pietro was a big help to me even after I was finished with her course. She gave me advice and helped me understand material from my other courses all the way until I graduated. Professor Di Pietro was very easy to contact. It seemed as if she always had time for her students and is fully committed to help them succeed. Even though I was in a class of 100 plus students Professor Di Pietro still tried to fully engage with each student individually. She actually even memorized each students name, which proved to us that she is fully dedicated to help us succeed.

In addition, Professor Di Pietro is also a big help in the Bosnian community. It is a great feeling to know that someone actually cares and wants to know why and how so many Bosnians have immigrated into the St. Louis area. It’s nice to know that someone is willing to listen to our stories and give us great feedback. I hope she continues her work with the Bosnian people and she actually gets a chance to go and see the country herself. I believe her study would be a great help for the community. Just knowing that someone actually wants know what is happening is good to know. Professor Di Pietro is a very caring person and is willing to help anyone.

Thank you for putting in the time to read this letter. Dr. Di Pietro in my opinion if overqualified for the Gitner Excellence in Teaching Award.

Sincerely,

Adis Fajic
March 26, 2013

The common story that you will hear among the students in the campus is what class did you take and with whom? I was a transfer student, the first semester at UMSL, when I heard Dr. DiPietro's name among other students. She was described as a passionate professor. Of course, that did not mean much to me until I had a chance to be one of her students. As a Bosnian student, I sometimes have a problem understanding English, especially questions which include vocabulary I don't know. Dr. DiPietro was very helpful in going out of her way to help me understand. She would spend extra hours in her office with me so that I could grasp the words and concepts of her theory class.

When I lost my job due to a business closing and being a single mother, it did not motivate me to be great student. My worries took place, and I fell behind in my studies. Dr. DiPietro let the class earn extra credit by giving pop quizzes. Furthermore, she is one professor that cared about her students. To her we were not just a number. She saw us as individuals with goals. She would spend time with you in her office breaking down the theory concepts piece by piece until you got the concept. Her classes were fun! The assignments were fair. Lectures were open to discussion. In addition, why is Dr DiPietro called a professor with passion among the campus? It is, because she knew how to teach her students in such a way that they understand. It was the same concept, but a different approach. Dr. DiPietro is my inspiration.

I am ever so grateful to have had Dr. DiPietro as my instructor

Kadika Selimovic
Re: Letter of Recommendation for Stephanie M. DiPietro, PhD.

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great pleasure and a humble hand that I write this letter in strong favor of Dr. Stephanie M. DiPietro. She was my CCJ4390 Senior Seminar professor for the Spring 2011 semester at the University of Missouri-Saint Louis. I was a non-traditional transfer student who had not attended a university in many years, and her course was the capstone project to culminate my undergraduate degree. Stephanie quickly showed her professionalism and expertise in teaching by outlining exactly how the course was designed, and what the expectations were to achieve both its completion and marks desired. The majority of the grade attained was, as it should have been, reliant on our ability to understand the deep rooted criminological theory, an extensive literature review, and a thesis based upon a topic of our choosing concerning Immigration/Assimilation and its relevance to crime trends.

Dr. DiPietro allowed our class to have independent freedom to read the required texts that were assigned, come to class prepared, and have an open discussion about thoughts we had regarding the subject. She not only facilitated this forum, but also interjected her own talking points based on her expertise to broaden our thinking to a macro-level view of the correlations (or lack there of) to crime and immigration. This was a very effective technique to which I was unaccustomed. It showed her enthusiasm for the subject and a great ability to convey it to students. I felt as though we were treated as peer equals in our educational journey, and I have never been treated as such from any other college professor at any level. That trait alone gives Stephanie a great advantage, and even greater respect from her students, which is directly responsible for them taking ownership in the learning experience. She supplemented classic lecture with use of film, web content, and daily newspaper articles as well, which I believe important to stay current on national events and technologies.

In sum, Stephanie M. DiPietro is by far and above the best college professor I have ever met and rekindled my desire to learn at the university level. She was strict but fair, and her grading reflected that. A more professional, hardworking, caring, and capable professor—-you will find none. It is my sincere hope that you give her great and careful consideration for the Gerald and Deanne Gitner Excellence in Teaching Award as she has, and I have no doubt will continue to provide outstanding instruction within the Criminology field. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any additional information or correspondence, as I will lend all the support possible to recognize Stephanie M. DiPietro.

Sincerely,

Kyle A. Beck
Specialist
314.620.4759
Letter of Nomination for Dr. Stephanie DiPietro

I was most pleased to hear that Dr. DiPietro had nominated for the Gerald and Deanne Gitner Excellence in Teaching Award. Her teaching style and overall demeanor as an instructor is top grade. Dr. DiPietro’s approach to teaching and assessment was one reason for my immediate attraction to her teaching style. Dr. DiPietro engaged students by using humor as well as videos and games. One example of this is a game Dr. DiPietro played with us that matched an offender to their crime. This game was entertaining as well as informative. Dr. DiPietro’s high standards always promoted an atmosphere of educational excellence. Professor DiPietro always exhibited fairness and equality in her classroom and was always available to help students with issues/problems. I got to know Dr. DiPietro relatively well in these support sessions. Another reason I enjoyed learning under Dr. DiPietro was her effective teaching strategies. Her lessons in class were always presented in highly-structured and concise PowerPoint slides, which helps students enormously in note-taking and in grasping the overall concepts. Professor DiPietro also designed very structured and logical exams. While her tests were in no way easy, if a student had studied and come to class they would have no problem in doing well in the exam. Dr. DiPietro was always concerned with making sure that we, as her students, understood the concepts and that no student was falling behind. She would often repeat the last slide or two from the previous class so that we could remember what we had covered and link it to the current lesson. Lastly, Dr. DiPietro knows and remembers how students learn and process information. Two examples of this can be seen in Professor DiPietro’s teaching style, which utilized text, PowerPoint and video material as well as Professor DiPietro’s study guides for her exams. They were laid out rationally and provided a good overview of the information covered in previous classes. Overall, I cannot praise Dr. DiPietro enough. Her teaching style, structured classroom and amiable personality all make Dr. DiPietro an award-winning teacher (in my book, at least.)
To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for Dr. Stephanie DiPietro for the Gerald and Deanne Gitner Excellence in Teaching Award. I was fortunate to have Dr. DiPietro as my professor last semester. This was one of my first courses in the graduate program. As such, I was unsure of what to expect. Dr. DiPietro was outstanding. I have had a long career as a student, obtaining a double major BA and a JD from Washington University. I have had the privilege of being instructed by some of the best. Dr. DiPietro stands out among the best of those experiences.

Dr. DiPietro is very knowledgeable in the field. That is likely typical of the UMSL program, since it is so high ranking, but Dr. DiPietro is different in that she shows a passion for the material with both her research and her teaching. She acknowledges the weaknesses of the field but also offers a challenge by encouraging discussion on the potential solutions. She engaged us in critical thinking in ways that I never anticipated. She was willing to look at the big picture instead of focusing on small, digestible pieces of material which helped me absorb what I was learning and helped me to understand how the information could be applied. She demanded participation by requiring assignments that encouraged it but more specifically she questioned us during our participation and challenged us to look at the material in new or different ways.

She was also very approachable. She was willing to listen to students and occasionally asked for our input on what was most effective for us while never compromising the work load. While doing the assignments and the exams I was learning every step of the way. There were no blow-off assignments and I was grateful. She is engaging and connected and interested in students walking away with as much knowledge as possible but also having us walk away with expanded thinking skills. I am lucky to have had her.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Lorentz
UMSL student
Dear Award Selection Committee,

As a Criminology and Criminal Justice graduate student, I would like to support Dr. DiPietro’ nomination for the Gerald and Deanne Gitner Excellence in Teaching Award. As her student, I think that she is suitable to obtain this award, because she has many characteristics of a good professor. I enjoyed her class very much. She taught me in Criminological theory class. The content in this class is complicated and it requires a lot of reading, but Dr. DiPietro uses her way of teaching to help us understand the content. I myself do not have previous background knowledge about criminological theory.

She especially helps me and my classmates to understand the main purpose of each theory, including the way to apply theory to real world and policy. I like her teaching, especially using mind maps. These maps are used to summarize the important issues in each theory. Importantly, this method helps me imagine the connection between each topic and each theory. She also likes to draw pictures that link the content.

Dr. DiPietro creates a good atmosphere in our room. Her voice and gestures encourage her students to participate in discussion. Also, she gives clear explanations in the class, but if a student does not understand, she will try to explain in another way until the student does understand. I feel that she pays very much attention to her students.

In addition, I am impressed with how Dr. DiPietro helps me as the only international student in her class. She does not pay attention to my language barrier, but focuses on my ideas and efforts to study in her class. Many times I have stopped by her office to ask her advice. She will discuss the class with me and recommend useful books. Moreover, she encourages me to create many ideas and helps me succeed in her class in many ways. This help from her makes me feel comfortable about studying and makes me enjoy attending her class very much.

Finally, I strongly support Dr. DiPietro to obtain the Award because of her good characteristics as professor in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice.

Sincerely

Aekkamol Luadlai
I was in Professor Stephanie Di Pietro’s *Theories of Crime* and a senior seminar she instructed on *Immigration and Crime* courses. Both classes I had the pleasure of learning from someone I regard as a dedicated instructor.

The most effective aspect of Dr. Di Pietro’s teaching style, and what sets her apart from other professors, is her ability to use text materials (research articles, books, essays) as a tool aiding in instruction. After sitting in Dr. Di Pietro’s lecture I and my fellow students did not simply learn what a particular theory entails, but how that theory was formed. In this way I and others learn the practical reasoning behind the ideas that lead to the theory. Not only did this enhance her student’s ability to understand and perform in her class, but they learn how to apply these cognitive constructs into real world situations.

Too many professors in my undergraduate career teach the book. I could learn the same amount from reading the pages on my own. In Dr. Di Pietro’s classes, many times, she deviates from the material and uses her own models to explain the ideas presented in the course work. I have found her explanations to be more sound and complete than some of the readings.

Di Pietro engages her students in the course work and pushes them to challenge themselves. Di Pietro expects full commitment to the course from her students and goes out of her way to make that possible for everyone. She is always open to critique and questions about anything related to her field of study. The dynamic approach which Di Pietro possesses creates an energy within each of her students to do better.

During my senior seminar with Professor Di Pietro, I was faced with a choice many students have: an easy over done paper topic, or the more difficult more time consuming topic. I posed the question to Dr. Di Pietro and she urged me to pursue the more challenging topic, even when she hadn’t fully mastered the topic. I met her challenge, and when I struggled she guided me to find the solutions on my own. I grew as a student under her instruction more so than any other professor before.

Even when not enrolled in Dr. Di Pietro courses, her students feel at ease to contact her and ask questions. As a student of Professor Di Pietro, I strongly endorse her as the recipient of the Gerald and Deanne Gitner Excellence in Teaching Award.

Erica Preiss
March 3, 2012

Re: Nomination for Dr. Stephanie DiPietro

Dear Gitner Award Selection Committee,

I had the pleasure of taking *Foundations of Criminological Theory* last fall with Dr. DiPietro and I acquired a firm grasp on the material because of her teaching methods.

Dr. DiPietro has the special and rare ability to synthesize and convey complex criminological theories into clear teaching. Her presentations were always well planned, thorough, comprehensive, and easy to understand. She chose empirical research articles that really highlighted and exemplified the subject matter in a way that consistently enhanced my understanding of the utility that defined certain concepts. Even when she temporarily substituted for one of my other classes, her presentation of the material radiated clarity and captured students’ attention to the extent that it seemed as if she was our permanent teacher.

Dr. DiPietro loves questions, is approachable, and is very supportive of students’ goals—all of which are important teaching qualities to possess. She caringly listens to students’ concerns and makes timely adjustments that constructively improve the class’s structure so that learning is increased. Whenever I was unsure of the material, her class notes reduced my confusion and she was always available to offer further clarification and extra assistance. She genuinely has a desire to help everyone succeed in criminology and criminal justice as well as their future career paths.

As a former student, I am honored to write a recommendation letter on her behalf for the Gerald and Deanne Gitner Excellence in Teaching. Dr. DiPietro truly deserves this award.

Regards,
Ashleigh Reuter
March 15, 2012

Re: Letter of Support for Stephanie DiPietro, Ph.D.

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my immense pleasure to support the nomination of Dr. Stephanie DiPietro for the Gerald and Deanne Gitner Excellence in Teaching Award. I first had the pleasure of getting to know Dr. DiPietro in the fall of 2010, which was my first semester in the Criminology and Criminal Justice Department. That semester was an extremely crucial fragment of my educational experience. Being a non-traditional student and having changed majors a handful of times, my need for excellent professors was imperative. Dr. DiPietro was not only excellent; she exceeded my expectations, as well.

During that semester, without delay, Dr. DiPietro set the class standards high, ensuring everyone knew what was expected. With the levels of standards being understood, Dr. DiPietro also made it clear that she was there for any one of us if we ever needed her assistance. With that being said, her teaching style is truly one that I would assume most students would desire. Rather than mundane, straight-from-the-book lectures, she brought every class to life with her personal experiences. From discussions about her time in Boston, to working with young men in Baltimore, she was able to relate these stories to the subject at hand, speaking openly and honestly about everything. For instance, there was a documentary she showed us called, The Boys of Baraka. In short, it was a narrative focused on young, at-risk African American boys from Baltimore that went to Africa for school. Dr. DiPietro had worked with one of the young men in the film. The simple fact of introducing the film was helpful on its own, but for her to have input and an actual background concerning one of these young men made a huge impression upon me. It was then that I decided to shift my initial career focus from law enforcement to juvenile justice.

Dr. DiPietro is truly one of the finest professors I have had the pleasure of knowing. Being a knowledgeable, witty, sincere, and genuine person, she honestly does carry those qualities over, utilizing them as essential teaching strategies to gain a student’s trust and respect. If presented with the honor of your award, there is no doubt in my mind that Dr. DiPietro will hold this recognition with the highest of respects and will continue to perform at a level of excellence.

Sincerely,

Amanda D. Wood
Dear Dr. Slocum,

Dr. DiPietro is one of the best professors I have ever had the pleasure of being instructed by. She is extremely knowledgeable in the Criminology and Criminal Justice field and it shows by the informative material she uses in class and the knowledge I have gained from being her student. She is very well spoken and her vocabulary is just right, which is another important quality I find in a professor. She is easy to understand and lays out the information so each can get the same opportunity to succeed as the next. She is very fair and has a very pleasant personality; you can tell she absolutely loves what she does and that is the best professor you can ever have, in my opinion, because what you have a passion for, you will excel in.

Dr. DiPietro has always kept the classroom vibrant and very interesting. She makes the material interesting to even the slightest bit interested person. The expert knowledge I have received first hand from her in "Theories of Crime" and "Immigration and Crime" was astronomical. It is also the reason that they are my favorite subjects to research and learn about in criminology and criminal justice. We also viewed a documentary called "The Boys of Baraka" that reinforced what we had learned in class. The documentary was about a few troubled youth in the inner city of Baltimore who grew up around drugs and violence and were sent to attend a school in Africa to get them the opportunity for them to experience a different life. It tied into one of the theories we (the class) had discussed. We understood how the environment, parents, and other factors can really tie into people decisions. It was a very good movie and I had never heard of it, and the way Dr. DiPietro broke it down was superb. We (the class) received the chance to explain what we had observed and the behaviors and examined why they imitated what they saw and referenced it right back to our textbook.

Dr. DiPietro also has a different approach on making sure you learn the class material and not just the definition. Her tests consist of material she state it will cover but the questions approach the tetms at different angles that require the student to think a lot more than a majority of tests I have ever taken. You have to know more than just a simple definition to do well on her tests and you are often required to explaining it thoroughly. It is no way you can pass her class by "luck" or by the "trial and error" approach; her tests will determine whether you know the material or you not. For example you might have to list examples of a type of theory and might be asked to elaborate more on it in your own words to make sure you understand it. This is exactly how tests should be, you either know it or you don’t and if you do how well you know it is also important because the upper level classes require you to have extensive knowledge on the theories and if you don’t you will be in serious trouble.

Dr. DiPietro will assist you in any way possible. I have come to her inquiring knowledge about questions regarding something she's discussed in class or something I've heard discussed in another criminology class and she has explained things better than any book I’ve ever read. I have also come to her uncertain about how to approach an assignment and she pointed me in the right direction to understanding what exactly is being asked and how I should approach the
question. She also has a ton of books in her office that she is more than happy to let students borrow for any academic reasons. I have taken advantage of this offer because books are expensive and it was needed for one of my assignments for another class.

Dr. DiPietro deserves the Gerald and Deanne Gitner Excellence in Teaching Award if no one else does. I’ve had the pleasure of being taught by her; her very first semester at the University of Missouri St. Louis and loved her for her knowledge, energy, helpfulness, fairness, and innovative teaching strategies. Her winning personality also makes students want to learn and easy to approach when something is not clear. She is very eager to answer questions and explains things to where the student can understand it considering each student learns at their own pace and in their own way. She will make it very far with her attitude, knowledge, and teaching methods and I speak very highly of her to others who are very serious about learning and want their money’s worth from an excellent professor.

Former Student,

Jerron C. Jones
Greg Burch  
Letter of Recommendation for Dr. Stephanie DiPietro for the Gerald and Deanne Gitner Excellence in Teaching Award

I was advised that Theories of Crime, the class I took with Dr. DiPietro, would be a difficult one. I walked into the class, nervous about how I would perform. But I would soon come to learn that there was absolutely nothing to worry about.

Dr. DiPietro began the class by showing a slide that listed a bunch of crimes and told us to rank them in terms of severity. She was showing this because she knew we were expected to have a basic understanding of crime. One of those crimes on the list was about a man who had sexual intercourse with his girlfriend when she was passed out drunk. One of the women in the class piped up and said “That’s not a crime, how is that bad?” I distinctly remember that Dr. DiPietro said without missing a beat: “Are you serious? I think I’m having a stroke.” Dr. DiPietro knew how to get people to listen even if it was by those means and to get them to learn.

This was the first class, which I was late to because the shuttles were having major issues. I felt so bad because I always pride myself on being on time. I heard that we had to get graded for attending the first class by turning in a sheet with our name on it. Before the second class I went down and talked to her, telling her my situation and that I didn’t mean to be late. She simply smiled and told me that it was alright and all I had to do was turn in the sheet to her after class. That is how I came to like the class because she was extremely understanding like in this case.

From reviewing the syllabus, she told the entire class right off the bat that she would not give us the notes, and that we would have to write them as she went through the slides. At first, I was apprehensive, but I came to realize that when the test came around that I was better prepared. This was one of her effective teaching strategies. She made each student accountable
for being in class and to pay attention, otherwise they would possibly miss a critical part of the notes. This was one of the things that I admired is that she wanted each student to remember it to learn it, because criminal theory would be the base for what we would learn in the future in our studies of criminology and criminal justice. I believe and also a few of my friends in that class as well, that if you didn’t come to class and didn’t take notes, that was your own fault because not only would you not do well in the class, you would miss out on learning new things. I would always look forward to coming to that class and excited to learn the theory that I read in the book for the class.

Another strategy for learning that I believed was key was giving real world examples of the theories that we were learning. For example, towards the middle of the semester we were learning about criminal behavior in children and she showed us a movie about an extremely violent little girl. It went with the theory that we were learning at the time, and when it came to remember that theory on the test, one would just remember the movie and it would come back instantly.

I remember reading the book and some of the theories really confused me and I did not understand them at all. It would frustrate me and I would wonder if I would ever get it. But Dr. DiPietro always knew how to explain it so that anyone could understand it. She would ask questions in the way that it would force us to look in the book or look at our past notes, so that it would reinforce the learning of that theory.

What I liked about Dr. DiPietro was that she made the student accountable, and for no reason she would not give the notes out if a student missed a class. She did make one exception and that was when my friend Courtney broke her writing arm and hand and physically could not
take notes. Otherwise she would make us interact with other students and get the information that we needed from them.

The one moment that I really remember was the last class of the semester which was an exam. I remember finishing my exam and thinking that I didn’t want the class to end, and I really didn’t want to turn in my final because that meant the end to the learning of theory. I turned in my test to Dr. DiPietro and she pulled me to the side and said, “If you are interested, you are more than welcome to join the other classes I teach, I’m glad that you enjoyed my class.” In that moment, it inspired me to continue in my criminal justice education and gave me something to look forward to because I learned the best with her strategies for teaching. I can make a promise that I will take another class with Dr. DiPietro because in her class it was inspiring and it made me want to learn and do my best.

Sincerely, Greg Burch