Few subjects capture attention and arouse curiosity more than crime. Movie themes revolve around it, the media feeds upon it, and politicians declare war on it. While crime trends have remained relatively stable over the past twenty years, certain forms of crime, involving certain subgroups, have fluctuated significantly in recent times. The goal of this course is to better understand crime trends and the nature and causes of criminal activity. The focus of this course is on the offender, and the factors, circumstances or conditions that influence involvement in law violating behavior. We begin with a discussion of what we mean by crime and social control. We then move on to talk about the nature and extent of crime, paying particularly close attention to the way we measure crime and the impact that measurement problems have on our systems of social control. (For example, most of our measures of crime do not include white collar crimes, yet these offenses involve greater financial and physical harms that do many so-called common crimes). We will then examine the major theories that attempt to explain criminal behavior. We will begin with constitutional theories, which suggest that criminal behavior is the product of the biological and psychological constitution of the individual. This will be followed by sociological theories -- those that account for criminal behavior by examining the social environment of both individuals and groups. In the process, we will look at such factors as the community, the family, peers, schools, economic structures, etc., to better understand the role they play in shaping conduct norms. Finally, we will examine the role of opportunity structures for crime that facilitate or impede law breaking behavior.